

Friends Meeting House, Rugby

28 Regent Place, Rugby, CV21 2PN

National Grid Reference: SP 50457 75505



Statement of Significance

A small meeting house built in 1908/9 in a simplified Olde English style to the designs of H Bedford Tylor of Bourneville. Both the exterior and the interior have seen some alteration but the building is still of medium heritage significance overall.

Evidential value

There is no early fabric concealed in the building, which together with the site is of low evidential value.

Historical value

As a reasonably well preserved example of an early twentieth century Quaker meeting house, the building is of medium historical value.

Aesthetic value

The exterior of the building is attractive and little altered. The interior has been modernised. The building is of medium aesthetic value.

Communal value

The meeting house has been used by Quakers continuously since 1909 and more recently by other local groups. The building has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Rugby*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0001860*
- 1.3 Owner: *Friends Trust*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Rugby Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *East Midlands*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Rugby*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *N/A*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Rugby Town Centre*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1909*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *H Bedford Tylor*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *7 January 2016*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*
- 1.16 Name of contact made on site: *Chris Myers*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol.2 pp.643-4

Rugby Quaker Meeting House, The History 1909-2009

The Friend, 1909, p.732

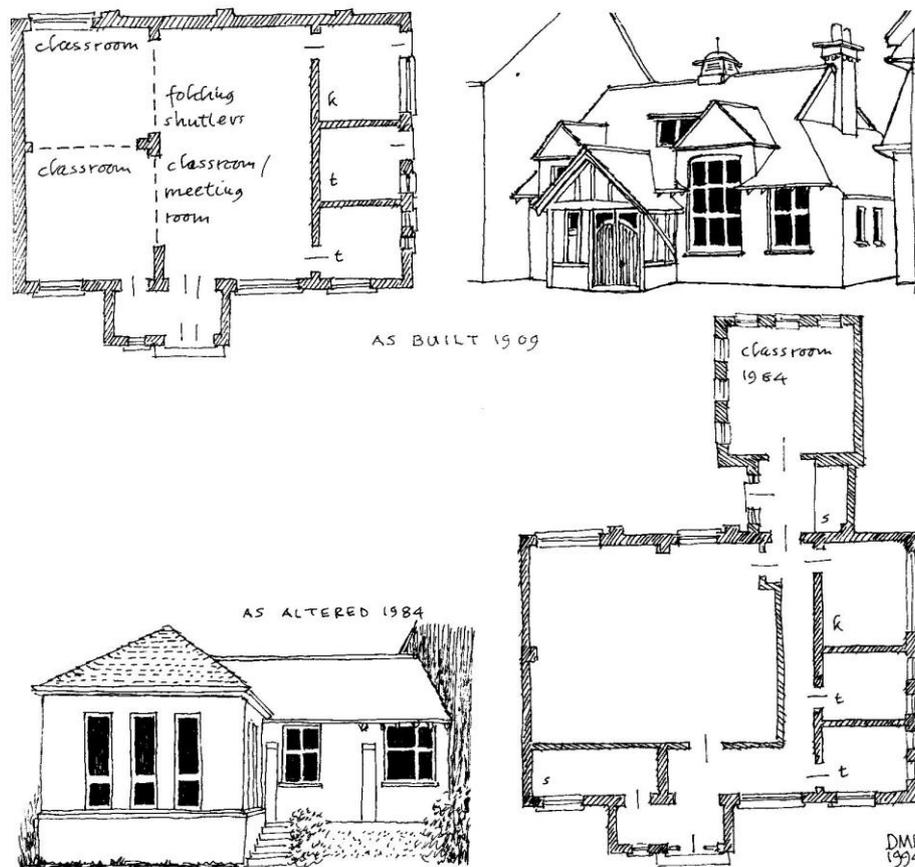
Local Meeting survey by Peter Burley, October 2015

Part 2: The Meeting House & Burial Ground: history, contents, use, setting and designation

2.1. Historical background

A meeting was settled in 1907 and a new meeting house was opened in 1909, serving also as an institute and adult school. The architect of the new building was H Bedford Tylor (1871-1915). Between 1904 and 1912 Tylor was chief architect and surveyor for George Cadbury's model industrial village of Bourneville on the edge of Birmingham, and the Olde English style of the Rugby meeting house has a strong family resemblance to his Bourneville houses. Originally the building contained three classrooms of varying sizes divided by folding timber shutters, with a central brick pier. The building was renovated in 1955 and the internal plan altered. Further alterations were made in 1984 when the divisions between the main rooms

and the central pier were all removed to create a single large space with a perimeter corridor. At the same time a small extension with an additional classroom was built at the rear of the original meeting house.



Sources for the drawing:
architect's plan 1909; photos.

Fig.1 The original plan (top left), with the plan as altered in the 1980s (bottom right)
Butler 1999 vol.2 p.644, (north is to the top of the plans).

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The original building was rectangular on plan with an overall pitched roof parallel to the street, a projecting front porch and a single-storey lean-to addition on the east side. A small rectangular extension was added at the rear in 1984. The walls of the main building are of soft red brick laid in Flemish bond; the rear extension has red brick walls in stretcher bond and a pitched hipped roof. All the roofs are covered in plain tiles. The main roof originally had a small central cupola but this has been removed. On the main (south) front a large projecting porch with half-timbered walls and gable flanked by tall timber windows rising above eaves level as gabled dormers. The original oak door surround has been replaced by a modern timber door. On the rear elevation to the large garden the meeting room has brick walls with half-height pilaster buttresses and large rectangular timber windows, while the 1980s addition has three narrow windows on both the north and west sides. Internally, the main meeting room is a rectangular space lit by two windows on the north side. All the finishes and detailing of the room appear to date from the 1980s.

2.3. Loose furnishings

There are no loose furnishings of historic interest.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

None.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting.

When first built, the meeting house stood immediately north of Rugby Public baths. The baths were demolished in 1974 and the site made into a triangular public open space. The meeting house stands in a largely residential street with houses dating mainly from early twentieth century, some of which are in use as offices. There is a lawned garden to the rear and a small blocked paved parking area to the street frontage.

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house has seen several alterations, both external and internal, and is not a candidate for the statutory list. The building stands within a conservation area, to which it makes a positive contribution, and would certainly be a good candidate for a local list.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The meeting house appears to have been built on a greenfield site and the archaeological potential is probably low.

Part 3: Current use and management

3.1. Condition

- i) Meeting House: Good
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): N/a

3.2. Maintenance

The last Quinquennial Inspection report, prepared by George & Co., chartered surveyors, was issued in 2013. No major structural issues were identified. Some internal decoration has been carried out recently. There is no formal maintenance plan but external redecoration is done every five years. The meeting has enough money to cover the costs of maintenance

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit, but an energy sustainability audit was undertaken in 2010. Major improvements are beyond the means of the meeting but good housekeeping has been employed to improve sustainability. A group was set up in 2012 to consider the use of the Climate Change Calculator, but it never reported back. The building does not have an EPC.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs in the meeting house. There are two meeting rooms, plus kitchen and toilets. There is no resident warden.

There is reasonable public transport, with buses along North Road which is about 5 minutes walk. Sunday buses are much less frequent. Rugby railway station is 15 minutes walk away. There is on-site parking for two cars. Cycle rails are provided outside the meeting house, to which bicycles can be secured.

3.5. Access

The meeting house is fully accessible to people with disabilities. There is level access into and inside the building. There is an accessible WC and a hearing loop in the main meeting room, but no special facilities for partially-sighted people. A Disability Access Audit has been completed (date uncertain) which guided alterations to the building.

3.6. Community Use

The building is reserved for Friends' use for about 2 hours per week. The building is theoretically available for community lettings for a maximum number of 138 hours per week and is let for an average of 18 hours per week (less out of school term time). The meeting has a lettings policy. Use is welcomed by local Community groups for worthwhile purposes. No alcohol or gambling is allowed. No groups have free use but some have a reduced rate at the discretion of the Meeting. Users value the pleasant room, the peaceful atmosphere, the large garden and the central location.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There are no signs of general crime or heritage crime at the site. The locality is generally well cared-for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence. There is no liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team and the matter has not been considered.

3.8. Plans for change

No changes to the meeting house are currently planned.

Part 4: Impact of Change

4.1. To what extent is the building amenable or vulnerable to change?

i) As a Meeting House used only by the local Meeting: the meeting house has all the facilities it currently needs. There is probably some scope for change, if required subject to Conservation Area constraints.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: the meeting house is already used by community groups. There is probably some scope for related change, if required.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: the building could potentially serve a wholly secular use if laid down.

Part 5: Category: 3