

Friends Meeting House, Settle

Kirkgate, Settle, BD24 9DX

National Grid Reference: SD8181963663



Statement of Significance

Settle meeting house has high significance as an early example of a Yorkshire Quaker meeting house built in the 1670s and extended and remodelled in the nineteenth century, and more recently. It retains some original fittings and has an attractive setting within a walled burial ground.

Evidential value

The building and site has medium evidential value, as a purpose-built Quaker meeting house site developed in phases from the 1670s, with burial ground.

Historical value

The meeting house has high historical value as a Quaker meeting house developed from 1678, with educational facilities provided in the nineteenth century. Notable Quakers from Settle include George Birkbeck, pioneer of adult education and mechanics' institutes. The interior retains historic fittings such as hinged shutters which reflect past patterns of use.

Aesthetic value

The building has high significance for its aesthetic value as a good example of a vernacular meeting house built in domestic style in the 1670s, retaining an attractive historic interior. The nineteenth century addition and 2004 extension have not spoilt the character of the building. The burial ground and garden setting enhances the significance of the building.

Communal value

The meeting house is used for Quaker worship and also serves a wide range of local community groups; it has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *Craven & Keighley*

1.2 Property Registration Number: 0006570

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Craven District Council*

1.5 Historic England locality: *Yorkshire*

1.6 Civil parish: *Settle*

1.7 Listed status: *II**

1.8 NHLE: *1166732*

1.9 Conservation Area: *Settle*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *1678; 1729-32; 1860s; 2004*

1.13 Architect(s): *Not known; not known; not known; Mason Gillibrand*

1.14 Date of visit: *13 June 2016*

1.15 Name of report author: *Marion Barter*

1.16 Name of contact made on site: *Alison Tyas (warden)*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Quaker Garth (Warden's Cottage)*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*

1.19 Information sources:

David Butler, *The Quaker Meeting houses of Britain*, Vol 2, 1999

Jean Asher, *The Story of Settle Meeting House*, 2015

Volunteer survey by Alison Tyas, 2016

Yorkshire Quaker Heritage Project: <http://www.eservices.hull.ac.uk/quaker/index.cfm>

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

2.1. Historical background

Early followers of George Fox preached in Settle in the 1650s, including William Dewsbury and John Camm who were sheltered from hostile crowds by local families such as the Armisteads and Kidds. A meeting was settled around this time. In 1661 a plot of land known as Howson's Croft on Kirkgate was leased for burials, where meetings were also held, perhaps in a barn on the land. In 1678, over ten years before the 1689 Act of Toleration, a new meeting house and stable were constructed, costing about £80. In 1713 more land was acquired for a garden and orchard, land later used to build the schoolroom (now Quaker Garth, the warden's house). External changes since then include blocking early windows and inserting sash windows on the south gable. In 1729-32, the roof was raised to create space for a gallery as a women's meeting room. Inside, the stand was altered; the present arrangement dates from c1800. From 1860 the gallery was used for an Adult School, and soon afterwards, an extension was built to the rear of the meeting house, known as the Institute, with access from Kirkgate. To meet growing demand for education, a separate Adult School was built on the east side of the site (Fig.1), in 1872 by Ellwood Brockbank. After this, the Institute was used as a library and reading room.



Fig 1: Kirkgate in c.1900 with 1872 Adult School to left and the meeting house beyond
(Settle Meeting collection)



Fig.2: meeting house in 1912, by E.H.Horner (Settle Meeting collection)

In 1927, a kitchen and toilet were added. During the Second World War evacuees lived in the meeting house and Adult School, and the latter was later used as government offices. The gravestones were cleared to the burial ground perimeter in the 1950s. The meeting was in decline during the 1960s and it was decided to convert the School to a house for the warden in 1963 (plans by James Hartley & Son, Skipton). The house is now known as Quaker Garth. During the 1960s, the wardens, Kevin and Ruth Petrie revived the meeting and converted the Institute to a hostel for Friends' use. For a while the gallery was used as a Traidcraft shop and other faith groups also used the meeting room. More recently, in 2004 a new extension for meeting room, kitchen, toilets and library was built (the previous kitchen was demolished), designed by architects Mason Gillibrand. Around the same time, the interior of the north wing (former Institute) was altered to improve circulation by lowering the floor. In 2009, the meeting house was repaired and the heating and ventilation upgraded. In 2015, the roof was repaired.

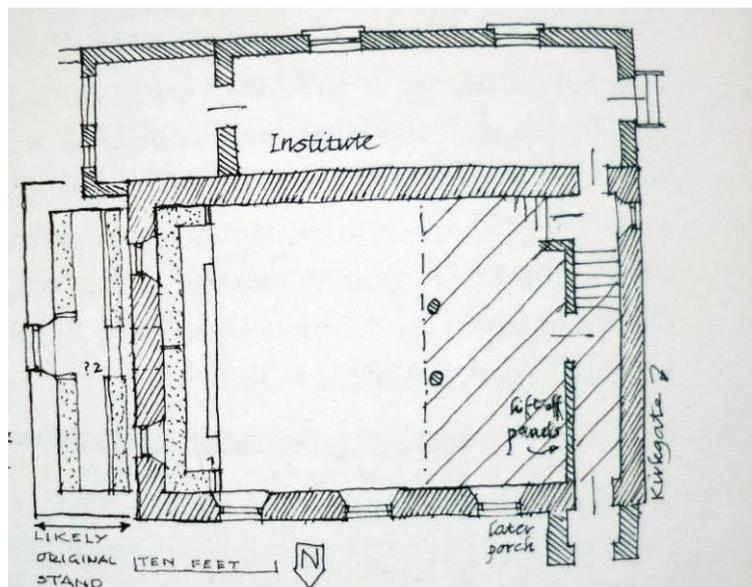


Fig.3: extract from Butler with reconstruction plan, 1999, p828 (north is to the right)

Notable Quakers associated with the Settle meeting include the Birkbecks; Dr George Birkbeck (1776-1841) was a pioneer in adult education and founder of the first mechanics'

institutes including in Glasgow and London; the latter was the forerunner of Birkbeck College, now part of the University of London.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The 1678 meeting house is built of roughly coursed rubblestone (mostly limestone), with sandstone details and a stone slate roof with deep eaves, cast metal gutter on a modern fascia board and a gable end ashlar stack to the north. The building is aligned roughly north-south with the entrance elevation facing east into the garden and the gable end facing north onto the street. The historic plan consists of one large meeting room with a passage across the north end, next to the gable, and a large first floor gallery at the north end of the room. Later extensions are to the west and south-west. The front east elevation has a gabled stone porch to the right end, with cambered timber lintel to the outer doorway and inner chamfered stone doorway with the date 1678 in relief and seventeenth century door with moulded shaped panels. To the left of the porch are three recessed chamfered stone windows with timber casements (mullions missing) lighting the meeting room and two similar, but shorter 2-light windows to the first floor, above a string course. There is one blocked window to the south end of the first floor. The south gable end has a blocked central window (as at Calf Cop) and a pair of 12-pane sashes at a higher level, dating from the early 1800s and set in deep reveals. To the rear is a gabled 2-storey wing with Cumbrian slate roof, built as the Institute in the 1860s; pair of 12-pane sash windows facing west and a gable end stack. The north gable end of the meeting house has two 2-light casements to first floor and modern barge boards to the roof. The side wall of the rear extension faces Kirkgate with an entrance up steps; over the 4-panelled door is a transom light with the word INSTITUTE on the glass. Attached to south-west corner is the 2004 addition by Mason Gillibrand with a partly glazed link between the west wing and a new single-storey meeting room. This is stone-built with a slate roof, designed in a sympathetic modern vernacular style with windows facing east.

The interior has one large meeting room that occupies all of the ground floor of the 1678 building, except for a passage across the north end, separated by a screen made of re-set oak wainscot panelling with a part-glazed door. The room has a plain panelled dado with grained finish, and plain plastered walls and flat ceiling. The deep gallery to the north is carried on a beam (reinforced in 2009 with steel) supported on cylindrical columns; the front of the gallery has hinged oak shutters with fielded panelling. The Elders' stand is to the south with late eighteenth century fielded panelling to the back and side walls (post-dating the blocking of the central window), a fixed bench and a nineteenth century panelled stand in front with moulded rail and turned finials. The floor is carpet on pine boards. The gallery is reached by a new staircase from the west wing and contains a nineteenth century chimneypiece. The floor of the west wing has been lowered to create a library and circulation area; the chimneypiece is retained but high on the west wall.



Fig.4: hinged shutters in gallery

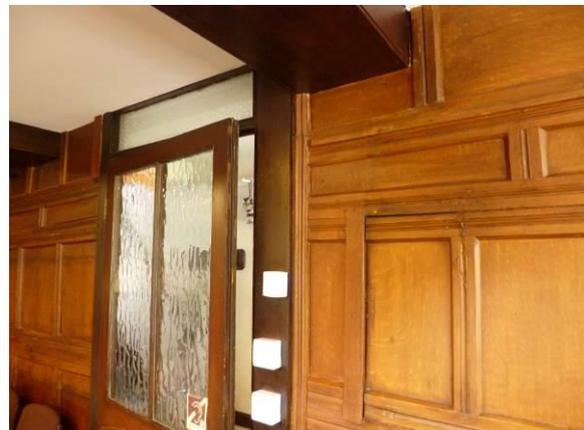


Fig.5: re-set wainscot in the entrance hall



Fig.6: remodelled former institute, from the north

2.3. Loose furnishings

The meeting room is furnished with a set of nine handsome pine benches with turned legs; these are probably Victorian. An oval table, probably of early nineteenth century date, is used in the centre of the room.



Fig.7: pine benches in the meeting room

2.4. Attached burial ground

The rectangular site has the meeting house to the north-west corner and the area for burials to the south. The whole site is bounded by rubblestone walls with weathered copings; the

front wall along Kirkgate was topped with iron railings until the War (see Fig.1). There is a Victorian single iron gate through the wall to Quaker Garth, double gates with gate piers and pyramidal caps to the meeting house entrance and another single iron gate to the former Institute doorway. New paths were laid out in 2004, and a new gate fitted to the south-west corner, made by a local blacksmith, giving access suitable for wheelchair-users from the car park. Burial records begin in 1793 and are kept in the Brotherton Library in Leeds. There is a plan of burials in the meeting house (Fig.8).

Notable Quakers buried here include Ellwood Brockbank (1841 – 1913) who set up the Adult School, John Delaney (1846 – 1921) and Edward Horner (1890 -1960).

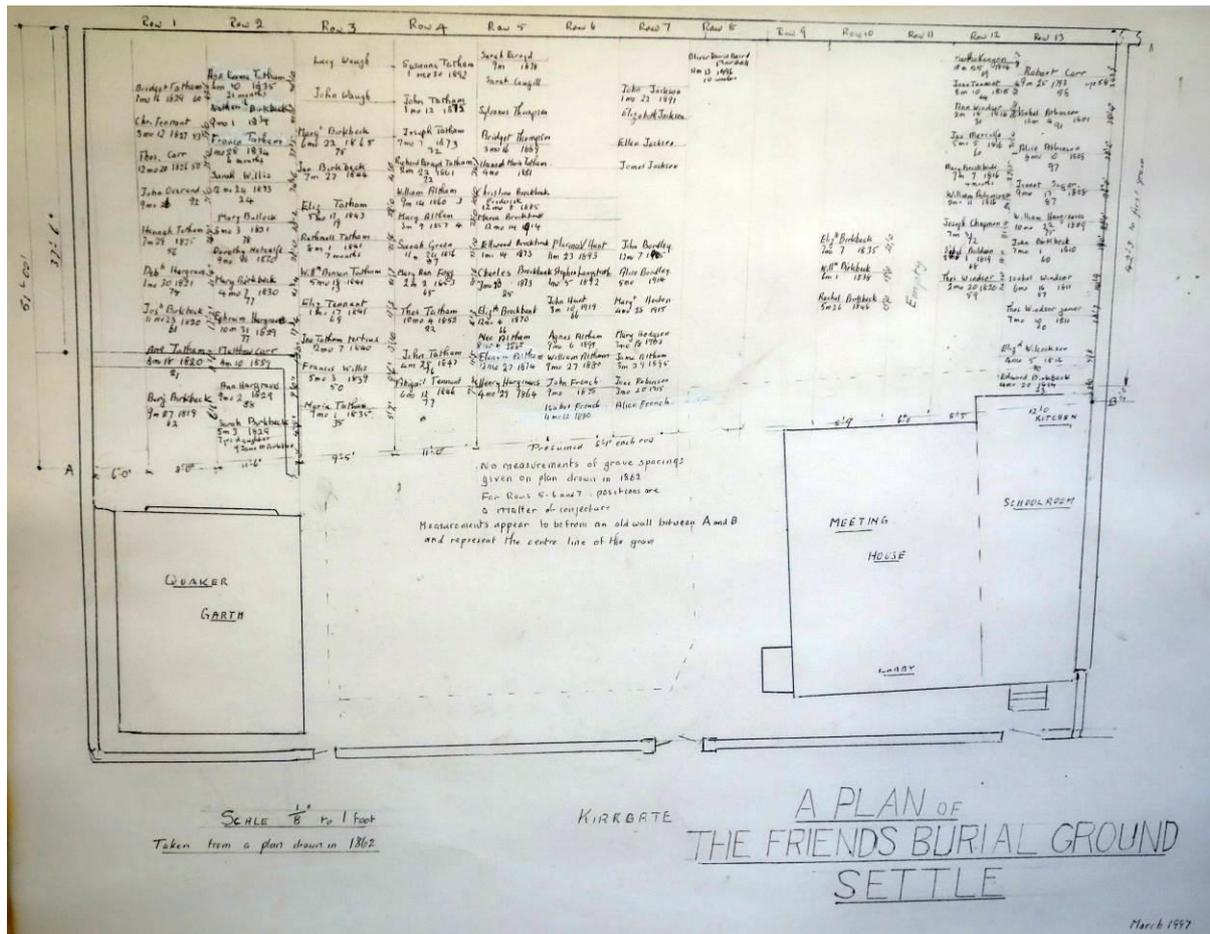


Fig.8: 1997 plan of Settle Meeting House Burial Ground, taken from a plan dated 1862 (north to the bottom of the map)

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is located on the west side of the Yorkshire Dales market town of Settle, on the south side of Kirkgate. The Settle-Carlisle railway crosses the street on a high bridge just to the west of the meeting house (Fig.1). Settle is a Dales tourism centre but also serves the local rural community; the busy town centre has shops, banks, cafes and pubs and the parish church is on the north side of the town centre. The west side of the meeting house overlooks a small public park.

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house is listed Grade II*. The list entry needs amending to include a description of the interior and to take account of recent alterations.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

North Yorkshire County HER was consulted but holds no records on the site (apart from the list description). The site is likely to have some archaeological potential due to the burial ground and the late seventeenth century meeting house.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey by Alison Tyas

3.1. Condition

i) Meeting House: Good. The last QI survey was carried out in 2002. The meeting has undertaken most of recommended works since then including the roof repairs in 2009. Works to Quaker Garth will be undertaken in 2016. A new QI is due.

ii) Attached burial ground: Optimal/satisfactory

3.2. Maintenance

The meeting does not have a 5-year maintenance plan but there are sufficient funds to maintain the building. The meeting has a Premises Reserve Fund with a target of £30,000. The attached burial ground is maintained by the resident Friend.

3.3. Sustainability

Meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit but has taken some steps to reduce its environmental footprint including

Climate change & energy efficiency: Planted trees to offset impact of new extension.
Improved roof insulation. Installed more energy-efficient heating and a heat exchanger ventilation system in both meeting rooms, as part of recent extension.

Resource use, recycling & waste management: An active recycling programme is used

Building maintenance & refurbishment: Low energy lighting

Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: Small wildlife area in garden

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs, including a recently fitted kitchen, two toilets and four meeting spaces. There is a cottage for a resident warden in the grounds. There is a library.

3.5. Access

Meeting has not conducted a Disability Access Audit, but in 2004 on the advice of their architect various access improvements were made including widening internal doors and providing a WC suitable for disabled people. The ground floor is accessible and there is a hearing loop.

There is some public transport with trains on Sundays and an hourly bus service on weekdays. There is no on-site car park but there is a Council Carpark adjacent, and on-street parking nearby. The meeting house has secure bicycle parking.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the building for four hours per week and it is available for up to 240 hours per week for the community. The average weekly lettings are for 25 hours. The meeting uses a lettings policy which excludes users at odds with Quaker testimonies, and forbids alcohol or gambling. Charges are not made for all Quaker activities, Churches Together and Amnesty International. Very reduced rates are charged for some groups with permission of the local meeting. The building is popular due to its convenient town centre location, flexibility, friendly, pleasant rooms, the quiet location and acceptable price.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

The meeting reports no general crime, or heritage crime. There has been some anti-social behaviour including a football through a window, a security light broken, and a bottle thrown through a window, all over five years ago. These incidents were reported and the meeting has liaised with the police, although this has not been needed recently. The meeting house is in an area that is generally well-cared for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence.

3.8. Plans for change

The meeting has no plans for change to the meeting house, having recently refurbished and extended the building. There are plans to refurbish the warden's house in 2016.

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 building contains some historic features such as late seventeenth century joinery that that are sensitive to change and should be retained in the future.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: the building is already well used by the community, and recently remodelled. Future changes should also take account of significant fittings and features.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: in the unlikely event that the meeting house would be laid down, it will need a sympathetic new use that retains the particular character of the building and its fittings.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List description

Name: **FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE**

List entry Number: 1166732

Location

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, KIRKGATE

County: North Yorkshire

District: Craven

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Settle

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 13-Sep-1988

List entry Description

SETTLE KIRKGATE SD 8063-8163 (south side) 10/22 Friends' Meeting House GV II*

Friends' Meeting House. Dated 1678. Slobbered rubble, stone dressings. Stone slate roof. Gable end to street. Entrance front: 2 storeys and 3 bays. Entrance to right under later gabled porch has chamfered surround and lintel with restrained decoration and date in two panels; stud and panel door. Three tall chamfered windows on ground floor with a dripmould. 3 unequally spaced double chamfered windows on upper floor, all formerly 2-light but mullions now gone and left-hand window now blocked. Right-hand gable end ridge stack. Interior has panelled ground floor and gallery supported by two turned posts. One of the oldest Friends' Meeting Houses in the country.

Listing NGR: SD8181963663