

Friends Meeting House, St Andrews

2 Howard Place, St Andrews, KY16 9HL

National Grid Reference: NO 50548 16750



Statement of Significance

The meeting house at St Andrew's is a good example of a listed terraced house adapted for Quaker use, with minimal intervention. The former residential building was built in 1860s and is typical of early Victorian planned development in Scottish towns and cities, continuing Georgian architectural traditions.

Evidential value

The building and site has low evidential significance and limited archaeological potential.

Historical value

The building has high historical value as part of 1860s planned residential development on the edge of St Andrew's. It has been associated with the Quakers for less than 25 years, and has low significance for this connection.

Aesthetic value

The building has high architectural value as part of a formal terrace of houses built in the 1860s, in the Georgian tradition. The interior has been little altered and retains features such as fireplaces and staircases, which have high aesthetic value.

Communal value

The meeting house has high communal value as a place of Quaker worship since 1993 and as a building valued by the wider community.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *East Scotland*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0008400*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Fife Council*
- 1.5 Historic Environment Scotland: *Fife*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *St Andrews and St Leonards*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Category B*
- 1.8 Reference: *LB4093*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Central*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date: *1860s*
- 1.13 Architect: *John Chesser*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *28 June 2016*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Marion Barter*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Busa Cochrane-Muir*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information sources:

David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. II, pp. 884.

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

2.1. Historical background

The early history of Friends in St Andrews is not known. In the twentieth century, Friends rented the ground floor of 3 Rose Lane for meetings from 1967, before buying the building in 1974 for £6000. The building was adapted for a meeting house but they sold it in c.1982, when they bought a first floor flat on the corner of South Street/City Road. In 1993 they

moved again, selling the flat and buying the lower two floors of a town house in Howard Place, for their existing premises. The interior was adapted for Friends to provide a large ground floor meeting room and a children's room or classroom and flat on the basement floor.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house occupies the lower two floors of a terraced house built in the 1860s, designed by architect John Chesser. The building is faced in sandstone ashlar, with a slate roof. The building is two-storey over a basement, with attic, and three windows wide. The front elevation has stone steps (concrete repair) with iron railings up to the ground floor: panelled door to the right with transom light and two plate glass sashes to the left, all in matching moulded architraves. The windows have moulded sills on stone brackets. The basement area is accessed by stone steps, and has two 4-pane sashes to the front. The first floor has a moulded sill band and three matching plate glass sashes, in similar architraves. There is a moulded eaves cornice, lead-lined gutter on the wall top, and a decorative iron balustrade in front of two attic dormers with shallow pitched roofs and pairs of sashes. Cast-iron downpipes run through the string course and cornice. The rear elevation has similar sashes and details.

The interior retains domestic character with a shared front entrance lobby, with tiled floor and inner part-glazed panelled door. The front reception room is used as the meeting room with a painted stone chimneypiece and decorative plaster cornice. The rear reception room is used as the library and small meeting room, with blocked fireplace. Rooms have 4-panelled doors in moulded architraves and retain window shutters. A small kitchen adjoins the rear room overlooking the garden. From the inner hall a staircase with stick balusters and cast-iron landing balustrade leads down to the basement flat and children's room; the hall floor is carpeted and walls plastered. The basement has a large chimneypiece in the former kitchen, and French windows to the rear onto the garden. The first and second floor are in separate residential ownership.

2.3. Loose furnishings

The meeting uses loose chairs for meetings, and has a small circular oak table as a centre piece,

2.4. Attached burial ground

N/A

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is located on the west side of a formal terraced street, developed as part of the expansion of the town in the 1860s, at the west end of St Andrew's. The medieval core of the historic university town is to the east with a grid of attractive streets lined with buildings of all ages. The harbour and St Andrew's Cathedral (ruin) is at the east end of the town, facing the North Sea. The town is busy with students and visitors throughout the year. The building has a walled garden to the rear (west), and to the south is a large Church of Scotland church. A labyrinth has recently created in the gardens of the art gallery to celebrate fifty years of Quakers in St Andrew's, on land owned by Fife Council.



Fig.1: the meeting house is part of a formal terraced street

2.6. Listed status

The building is listed Category B, as part of the terrace.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

There is no Historic Environment Record for the site, but due to the planned development of the street with basements, archaeological potential is likely to be low.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

i) Meeting House: Good

A QI has not undertaken, but roof repairs & external stone repointing have been carried out.

ii) Attached burial ground (if any): N/A

3.2. Maintenance

The meeting has a 5-year maintenance and repair plan for the building. The rental income from room lettings and the basement flat covers the maintenance costs.

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting used the Sustainability Toolkit years ago, but has not carried out improvements recently.

3.4. Amenities

Meeting has access to all the amenities it needs, with a kitchen and WC, main meeting room and library on the ground floor, and a basement room which can be used on Sundays (the rest of the week it is for the use of the tenant). There is no car parking.

3.5. Access

Access into the building is via four steps up to the front door, and wheel chair users and some people with disabilities need assistance. A toilet suitable for disabled people was installed 1993. There is a hearing loop, but no particular facilities for partially-sighted people.

The Meeting is accessible by public transport and is close to the bus station, which connects to Leuchars railway station. There is on-street parking, and bicycles can be locked to the front railings.

3.6. Community Use

Friends use the Meeting House three hours per week for their own meetings. 40 hours per week are available for lettings, and the actual use is 8 hours. The meeting has a lettings policy; users must be compatible with Quaker principals. It is a popular venue as it is a good location and is generally quiet, suitable for meditation groups and counselling.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There has been no general crime, heritage crime or anti-social behaviour at the Meeting House. The area is generally well-cared for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and there is high community confidence. The meeting has not needed to liaise with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

3.8. Plans for change

There are no immediate plans for change, but the meeting room is sometimes found to be too small, and the lack of good access is a problem.

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 is listed and part of a terrace which limits changes to the exterior and interior. Improving disabled access is a challenge, but there are examples of similar properties where access has been improved. There could be scope to combine the two ground floor rooms, subject to consent.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: the same points above apply to wider use.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: the meeting house could easily be returned to residential use, if the meeting decided to relocate.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List description

Summary

1-15 Howard Place
LB40903

Information

- Category: B
- Date Added: 28/04/1959

Location

- Local Authority: Fife
- Planning Authority: Fife
- Burgh: St Andrews

National Grid Reference

- NGRNO 50536 16827
- Coordinates 350536, 716827

Description

1860s, John Chesser. Classic, ashlar; Nos. 1-7 2-storey basement and attic with c.i. parapet at wallhead; Nos. 8-15 3-storey part with attic, consoled doorpiece at 15; openings architraved throughout; slated.

Statement of Special Interest

References

Bibliography

Georgian St. Andrews p.29.

Sasines

R. G. Cant, St. Andrews Architects pt.II.