

Friends Meeting House, Wimbledon

40 Spencer Hill Road, Wimbledon, London, SW19 4EL

National Grid Reference: TQ 24398 70382



Statement of Significance

A modest interwar terraced house, in use as a meeting house since the 1970s, and of overall low heritage significance.

Evidential value

The building has been in use as a meeting house only since 1973 and still has the character and appearance of a domestic property. As such it is of low evidential value.

Historical value

The building belongs to the interwar suburban expansion of Wimbledon. It has been a meeting house since 1973. As such it is of low historical value.

Aesthetic value

The building is a pleasant interwar suburban house, and is of medium aesthetic value.

Communal value

The building is well used by Friends and other community use, though its facilities are inevitably modest given its small size. It is of medium communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Kingston & Wandsworth*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0032880*
- 1.3 Owner: *Six Weeks Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *London Borough of Merton*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *London*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Wimbledon NPA*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*

- 1.8 NHLE: *N/a*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *Inter-war period*
- 1.13 Architect(s): *Not established*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *10 November 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Andrew Derrick*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Stuart Wallace*
- 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, p. 596
The Friend, 2 March 1973, p.252
Local Meeting Survey, by Susanna Riviere, 14 June 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

Quakers began meeting in Wimbledon in the 1950s. After a succession of short-term hirings, a three-bedroom interwar terraced house was acquired by Preparative Meeting in 1973 for £15,000. The first floor was made into a flat and let. A gate at the bottom of the small rear garden led to an alley with access to the hall of a nearby synagogue, with whom good relations were developed (the Reformed Jewish congregation has since removed, and the site redeveloped). A rear conservatory/classroom was added in 1985-6.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The property is a typical interwar terraced property, two-storey and pebbledashed, with a tile-hung gabled bay and arched recessed porch. Inside, the meeting room is formed from the two interconnected ground floor rooms, with separate kitchen and WCs. Upstairs there is a separate flat.

2.3 Loose furnishings

There are no loose furnishings calling for special mention.

2.4. Attached burial ground

None.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house lies within an area of interwar, mainly residential development.

2.6. Listed status

The house is not listed and is not considered to be listable.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

Low.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

- i) Meeting House: Good
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): Not applicable

3.2. Maintenance

The last QIR was in 2008. Works carried out since then include roof repairs, external redecoration, replacement of some windows and an electrical overhaul. Recommended works to boundary walls and fences have not been carried out, in the case of fences on account of uncertainty over ownership. The Meeting funded the installation of a new kitchen in 2014.

3.3. Sustainability

The Meeting has used the Sustainability Toolkit. An eco-audit took place in 2009 and as many of its recommendations as practicable have been put into effect. The possibility of solar PV panels has been investigated, but the roof found to be unsuitable. Insulation has been improved, with new double glazed doors and windows, and by stopping up draughts. More efficient heating controls and radiator valves have been installed. The new kitchen is a 'Moore's sustainable kitchen'. The Meeting recycles rubbish and encourages hirers to do the same. Friends are encouraged to bring local sustainable food to shared lunches.

Outside, there is a dry garden, and some fruit, vegetables and herbs are grown. There is a compost heap and water butts collect rainwater.

Transport: The Meeting shares cars and gives lifts when possible. The local council has installed two cycle racks opposite the meeting house. The mainline, tram and tube station is less than ten minutes' walk away and the meeting house is on a bus route. There is some parking in the street at weekends, but at other times a residents' permit is required.

3.4. Amenities

The Meeting considers that it has the facilities it needs, with adequate kitchen, WCs and meeting space.

3.5. Access

An access audit was carried out in September 2011. As a result the WC was enlarged and access improved. The door to the meeting room was moved to enable wheelchair access. A front ramp and rail were provided and the ledge at the front door reduced. There is a hearing loop, but no special provision has been made for partially-sighted people.

3.6 Community Use

Wednesdays and Sundays are prioritised for Quaker use, and Friends use the meeting house for approximately five hours each week. The ground floor (essentially one room) is used by other groups for 36 hours a week. The Hirings Officer is authorised to arrange hirings to individuals or groups deemed compatible with the Quaker ethos, such as counsellors, homeopaths, spiritual healers and mental health support groups. Users cite the good location, nice garden and reasonable price.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

No instances of crime or antisocial behaviour are reported. The meeting house is in a relatively affluent area, with low levels of crime and social deprivation.

3.8. Plans for change

None.

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 meets the current needs of the local Meeting. Any changes would be governed by normal planning and building controls; there are no heritage constraints.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: The building is already widely used by local groups. Again, there are no heritage constraints.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: The building could very readily be returned to its original use as a single house.

Part 5: Category: 4