

**Friends Meeting House, Brant Broughton**

3 Meeting House Lane, Brant Broughton, LN5 0SH

National Grid Reference: SK 91653 54217



**Statement of Significance**

***A timber-framed barn was given to the Quakers in 1701 by Thomas Robinson and almost completely rebuilt in stone to serve as the meeting house. A cottage attached to the south end was later converted to provide a ground floor room with a women's room in a loft above. Some of the external walls were partly rebuilt in brick in the early nineteenth century. The interior appears to be largely unaltered since that time and may incorporate some earlier fittings. Besides the meeting house there is also a late eighteenth century stable building, now converted to a meeting space, and a corrugated- iron carriage***

**shed, now also converted as a meeting space. The complex of buildings and burial ground is of high heritage significance.**

**Evidential value**

**All the buildings on the site contains elements of their original arrangement and construction and overall the buildings are of high evidential value.**

**Historical value**

**A very well-preserved example of an early eighteenth century meeting house with some early nineteenth century alterations. The building has been in continuous use for Quaker worship since 1701 and is closely associated with the local Burt family. The building is of high historical value.**

**Aesthetic value**

**The stone and brick exterior of the building is very attractive and the interior of the original meeting room still preserves a great deal of its original character. The building is of high aesthetic value.**

**Communal value**

**The meeting house has been in continuous use for worship since 1701 and the facilities are now also used by other local community groups. The buildings has high communal value.**

**Part 1: Core data**

1.1 Area Meeting: *Lincolnshire*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0026640*

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *North Kesteven District Council*

1.5 Historic England locality: *East Midlands*

1.6 Civil parish: *Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe*

1.7 Listed status: *I*

1.8 NHLE: *1061898*

1.9 Conservation Area: *Brant Broughton*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *1701, but incorporating some earlier fabric and with later alterations*

1.13 Architect (s): *Not established*

1.14 Date of visit: *12 February 2016*

1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Andrew James*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*

1.18 Attached burial ground: Yes

1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol.1 pp.363-4.

Gwatkin, John , *Brant Broughton Quaker Meeting House 1701-2001*

Stell Christopher, *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting houses in Eastern England*, English Heritage, 2002. pp.200-1.

Lincolnshire HER number 63028-MLI85956

Local Meeting survey by Andrew James, January 2016.

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

### 2.1. Historical background

In 1665 a London Quaker named Thomas Robinson purchased land in Brant Broughton and built a house in the village. He initially attended the meeting at Beckingham, five miles east of Newark, but by 1678 he was holding meetings in his own house. The house was licensed for religious meetings in 1689. In 1701 Robinson gave a timber-framed thatched barn with a cottage attached at the south end for use as a meeting house. The barn was largely rebuilt in stone c1701 but retaining the southern truss next to the cottage. Robinson died in 1709 and was buried at Beckingham. The cottage at Brant Broughton was later converted to provide an additional room on the ground floor with a women's meeting room in the loft above. A timber partition with shuttered openings on both floors was formed in the preserved southern truss of the former barn. Land adjacent to the meeting house was given to Friends by John Scrimshaw in 1727 for use as a burial ground. In 1776 a small brick stable was built on the north side of the meeting house. It appears that the south gable and the west wall of the meeting house above window cill level were rebuilt in brick *circa* 1800, and it may have been as part of this refurbishment that the thatched roof-covering was replaced in pantiles. Butler notes that the building was 're-fitted' at this time. The meeting has a long association with the local Burt family, who provided most of its members in the eighteenth, nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries.

In the 1950s the stable building was adapted to provide a children's schoolroom and other accommodation. Major repairs to the main building were carried out in 1986 including the relaying of the timber floors. In the early 1990s a late nineteenth or early 20th century open carriage shed with a curving corrugated iron roof standing some way south of the meeting house was converted by the County Council to become a Village Heritage Centre. That use has now ceased and the building is managed by the Local Meeting. In recent years the former Heritage Centre and the stable building have been refurbished and the garden newly laid-out under the supervision of Andrew James, the Area Meeting Property Adviser who is also a member of the Brant Broughton meeting.

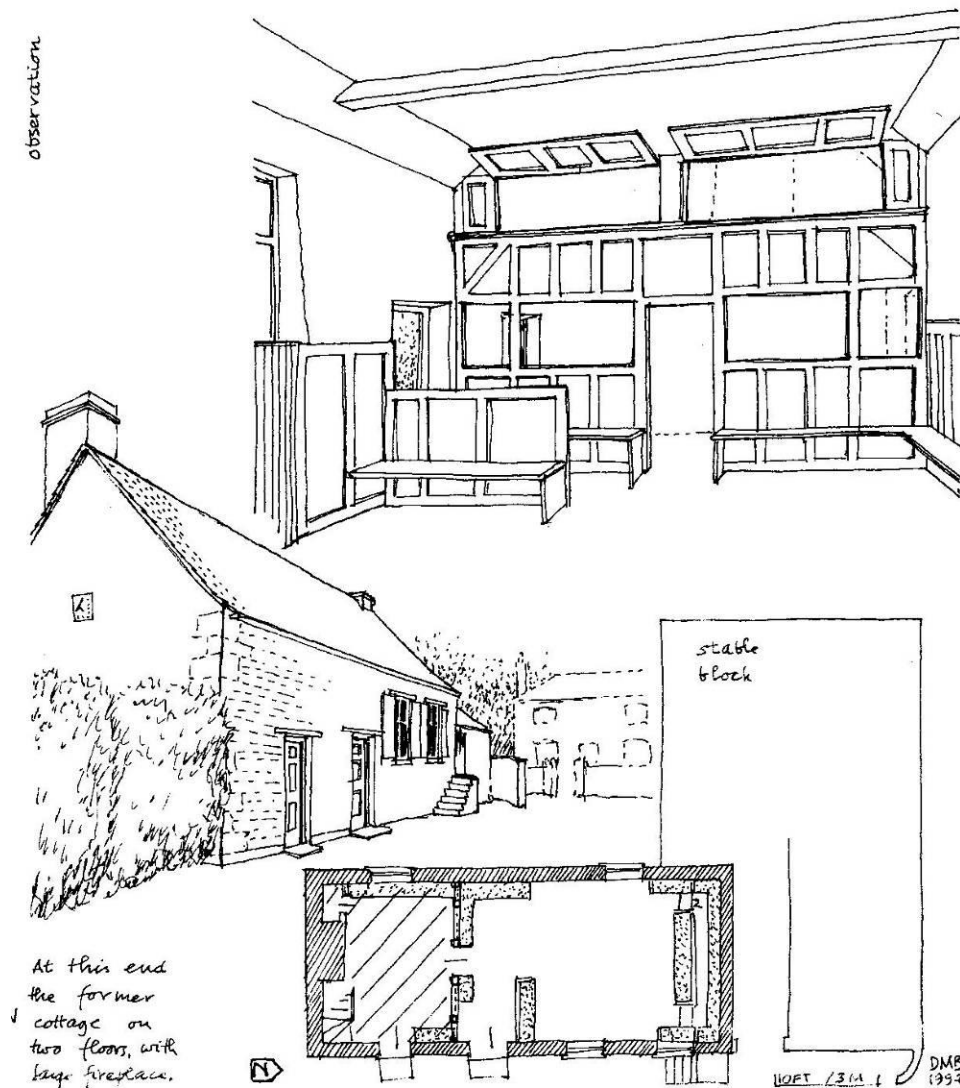


Fig.1 A plan and perspective view of the meeting house, with an internal view showing the loft and shutters. *Butler 1999 vol.1 p.364.*

## 2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house building is rectangular on plan with a pitched roof, originally thatched but now covered in pantiles. At the north end is a later stable building set at right angles. The main east front is of coursed Ancaster stone. Towards the northern end are two timber cross windows of early eighteenth century pattern with timber lintels and timber external shutters. Below the northern window is a mounting block of red brick with stone capping. Towards the southern end of the front are two doorways with timber lintels and early nineteenth century panelled doors. Over the right hand door is a circular stone plaque with the letters RTS (for Thomas and Sarah Robinson) and the date 1701. The stone facing of the southern part of the wall is of better quality than the northern part and may represent the later rebuilding or re-facing of the original cottage. The south end wall has a stone base, with upper parts of red brick laid in Flemish bond with a square stone sundial of uncertain date. The long rear (west) wall is of coursed stone below with red brick above, except at the north end where the stone is continued up to the eaves. In this stonework is a single timber cross-window with a wooden lintel. In the brick part of the wall is a single segment-headed window of a different pattern three lights, with a small dormer in the roof slope above.

The former stable building attached to the north end of the meeting house is of red brick laid in a mixture of Flemish and garden wall bond, with a tiled roof which is hipped on the street elevation. In the west wall is a wide opening, with a timber door.

The interior of the meeting house is divided by a timber screen, set between the uprights of a timber truss, which is probably the original south end truss of the timber-framed barn (Stell). The main meeting room has a floor of narrow pine boards, a tall dado of painted timber panelling and plain-plastered walls and ceiling with the tie-beams exposed. At the north end is a stand with perimeter seating and a fixed bench of painted timber in front. The full-height timber screen at the south end is also of painted timber panelling with shutters to both the lower and upper levels. The room below the gallery has a panelled dado of painted timber with perimeter benches and a fireplace with a later eighteenth century cast iron hob grate. A stair with winders in the south east corner leads to the gallery above, which is also heated. The main internal space in the stable building has recently been refurbished and the collar and tie-beam roof trusses exposed.

The former carriage shed to the south of the meeting house was originally an open shelter and has cast-iron columns supporting a segmental roof covered with corrugated iron. Under the roof is now a modern timber 'pod' built in the 1990s to house a local heritage centre.

### 2.3. Loose furnishings

The meeting house contains a number of open-backed benches, some with solid ends and some with open ends and unusual shaped arms. All are painted white. Stell dates them to the early nineteenth century, but it is very possible that the benches with solid ends are original.

### 2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

The burial ground to the south and west of the meeting house apparently dates originally from 1727 and is still in use. It appears to have been enlarged several times and is made up of several separate spaces; a red brick wall between the main burial ground and what is now the Peace Garden behind the meeting house is dated 1860. Part of the space has recently been laid out as a Quiet Garden with ornamental grasses and a pattern of paving stones which will gradually be replaced by inscribed stones to commemorate interments.

### 2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

Brant Broughton is a very attractive small village with a highly important mediaeval parish church. The settlement has a rectilinear grid of streets which are loosely lined with red brick houses many dating from the eighteenth century. The Meeting House is set back from Meeting House Lane in the centre of the village and largely hidden behind the former stable building on a site enclosed by back gardens and other open ground.

### 2.6. Listed status

The building is listed Grade I. The high grading is slightly surprising, given the apparent extent of early nineteenth century reconstruction, although the building is certainly of more than special architectural and historic interest and the interior appears unusually complete. Comparison with other meeting houses suggests that if the reconstruction can be documented, a II\* grading might be more appropriate.

The current list description has some minor inaccuracies and omissions. The mounting block on the east front is of brick, not stone; the external shutters to the windows on the east front are not plank shutters, but are panelled and have moulded decoration; there is no firm evidence that the benches in the building are original. Despite the fact that the stable building is named in the listing, there is no mention of the structure in the listing description.

## 2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The site has been in continuous occupation since at least 1700 and is of medium archaeological potential.

## **Part 3: Current use and management**

### 3.1. Condition

- i) Meeting House: Good
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): Optimal

### 3.2. Maintenance

The meeting has abandoned Quinquennial Inspections in favour of annual inspections by the Area Meeting Property Adviser who is a qualified architect. Works are assessed on an annual basis by the Premises Committee and implemented by an architect member. The meeting has adequate income to repair and maintain the building.

### 3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit, but has implemented measures to reduce its environmental impact.

- All roofs have been insulated to 200mm level or rafter depth.
- Most windows have secondary or double glazing
- The interior of the 1990s Heritage Room has been relined to improve insulation.
- Solar panels have been mounted on the rear slope of the roof of the former carriage shed (over the Heritage Room).
- The large garden is maintained by 12 volunteers and planted to support wildlife.

The meeting house does not have an EPC and the meeting would not consider obtaining one.

### 3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs on the meeting house site - including meeting rooms of different sizes, a well-equipped kitchen and toilets. A Resident Friend lives adjacent to the meeting house (though she does not allow the title as her services are voluntary).

There is no public transport. There is no on-site parking at present but there is adequate street parking and scope for provision of parking on site if necessary. There is secure parking for bicycles in the garden.

### 3.5. Access

There are removable ramps to negotiate single threshold steps and level access to the ground floor of the meeting house and the community room adjoining. There is an accessible WC; a hearing loop is to be installed in 2016; there are no specific facilities for partially-sighted people. A Disability Access Audit has not been carried out.

### 3.6. Community Use

Friends use the building for 6 hours per week. The detached Heritage Room has been fitted out specifically for letting to village organisations; it is available for community lettings for a maximum number of 40 hours per week and is used for approximately 10 hours per week. Lettings are regulated by the Premises Committee; no uses are permitted which are political, or inconsistent with Friends testimonies. Users value the central location, comfortable surroundings, and modest charges.

### 3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There has been no general or heritage crime. The area is generally well cared-for, has low deprivation, high community confidence, low crime levels. Contact with the local policing team is considered unnecessary.

### 3.8. Plans for change

There are no major works in prospect.

## **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:* There is very little scope for external or internal change to the main meeting house, principally because of the Grade I listing. There is more scope in the attached stable.

*ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use:* Both the community Room and the detached Heritage Room have recently been upgraded, partly to encourage wider community use. There is probably some scope for further limited change

*iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House:* The high listing grade and the rural location probably mean that it would be difficult to find an alternative use for the building if the meeting should be laid down.

## **Part 5: Category: 1**

## Part 6: List description

Name: **MEETING HOUSE AND ATTACHED STABLE**

List entry Number: 1061898

MEETING HOUSE AND ATTACHED STABLE, MEETING HOUSE LANE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

CountyDistrict District Type

Parish

Lincolnshire North Kesteven District Authority Brant Broughton & Stragglethorpe

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: I

Date first listed: 17-Jun-1986

### List entry Description

BRANT BROUGHTON AND STRAGGLETHORPE MEETING HOUSE LANE SK 95 SW (south side) 6/52 Meeting House and - attached stable - I Meeting house of the Society of Friends, reputedly converted from a barn. 1701. Coursed rubble and brick with pantile roof. 2 brick gable stacks. Dressed stone quoins. Brick decorated eaves, and brick gable walls. Single storey plus attic to south. Main east front has large off-centre main doorway with double, 6 panel door, and plaque above inscribed 'R T S 1701'. To left a smaller doorway with 8 panel door, and to the right, 2 wooden cross windows with iron glazing bar casements and original plank shutters. To the right again a stone 3 step mounting block. Rear, west front has single wooden cross window to the left and a 3-light sliding sash to the right and above a small flat dormer with a 2-light casement. Interior of main Meeting House has original plain dado panelling, raised slightly higher on the north wall behind the raised stand. Original benches and to the south a wooden panelled screen with openings below and moveable partitions above, screening off the lower small Meeting House and the upper Womens Meeting House. These both have original benches, connecting staircase and cupboards. All the fittings and panelling are painted white. Source 'The Friends Meeting House', Hubert Lidbetter.

Listing NGR: SK9165454220

### Selected Sources

#### Books and journals

'The Friends Meeting House' in Hubert Lidbetter, ()

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