

Friends Meeting House, Ettington

Halford Road, Ettington, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 7TH

National Grid Reference: SP 26772 48701



Statement of Significance

The meeting house was built in the 1680s on land bequeathed by the local Friend Samuel Lucas. It has been very little altered since then, retaining its stand and four benches, as well as a rare example of a rush matting dado. A small extension was added in the 1980s. Overall, the meeting house has exceptional heritage significance.

Evidential value

The meeting house and the burial ground have been in Quaker use since the 1680s. The building has the potential to yield further evidence about its past

use and development, as well as the people associate with it. Both the meeting house and the burial ground have exceptional evidential value.

Historical value

The building has exceptional historical value as a typical small, rural meeting house of the late seventeenth century which retains a typical layout with wall-benches, stand and loose benches. The rush matting dado (albeit renewed) is an important remnant of a local craft and vernacular tradition.

Aesthetic value

The building's aesthetic value derives from its patina, small scale, fine details (such as the window furniture), regular stone coursing, and semi-rural setting. The later extension detracts somewhat from the overall appearance although this is diminished by its small scale and discreet location behind the meeting house. Overall, the building has high aesthetic value.

Communal value

The meeting house and the burial ground have been in Quaker use since the 1680s. There is currently no additional community use of the building. The building has medium communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Banbury and Evesham*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0026300*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Stratford-on-Avon Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *West Midlands*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Ettington*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II**
- 1.8 NHLE: *1382580*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1684-9; 1986 (extension)*
- 1.13 Architect(s): *Not established; Peter White (1986 extension)*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *21 January 2016*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Johanna Roethe*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Paul Mobbs*
- 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. 638-9
Lidbetter, H., *The Friends Meeting House*, 1979, pp. 15, 16, 26, 27
Pevsner, N., and A. Wedgwood, *Warwickshire (The Buildings of England)*, 1966, p. 291
Salzman, L.F., *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 5, Kington Hundred*, 1949, p. 78, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/warks/vol5/pp77-84> [accessed 13 January 2016]
Stell, C., *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-houses in Central England*, 1986, pp. 233-4
Wood, J.V., *Some rural Quakers. A history of Quakers and Quakerism at the corners of the four Shires of Oxford, Warwick, Worcester and Gloucester*, 1991
Warwickshire Historic Environment Record, MWA2443
Historic England Archive, Red Box Collection, photos of 1944 and 1952
Historical documents and information in the Meeting House
Local Meeting survey by Tony Yelloly, September 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

The first record of a Quaker meeting at Ettington dates from 1660, possibly held in the house of Samuel Lucas. In 1681 he bequeathed land for a meeting house and burial ground. The meeting house was built in 1684 and registered as a place of worship in 1689. According to Lidbetter, this is the 'smallest old meeting house in the country', whose single room measures just 23 by 16 feet. In 1894, the roof of stone flags was replaced with slate. In 1942, a letter was found in the roof, recording the details of the roof repairs in August and September 1894; this is preserved in the meeting house. Other nineteenth-century alterations include the insertion of a window in the southeast gable, the replacement of the wall-benches, and, according to Butler, the replacement of dado panelling with rush matting. A note in the meeting house suggests that the dado has always been of rush matting, in addition to a possible thatched roof, rush hangings and rush bench mats. In 1942, a ceiling was inserted. Photos of 1944 in the Historic England Archive show the interior with a central stove. An undated sketch of the meeting house (displayed in the meeting house) shows a bottom-hinged external shutter to one window; this had been removed by 1952 (photograph in the Historic England Archive). In 1976, the original studded oak door was replaced by a replica. In 1984-86, the worn and decayed rush matting dado was replaced by new matting woven by local Friends. In 1986, a small L-shaped extension was added containing a kitchen, toilet and a classroom (now children's room) to a design by the architect Peter White. On 29 May 1988, a time capsule was placed by Young Friends and the Ettington Youth Group outside the central southwest window. In c.2005, structural repairs were made by Michael Bonnick, chartered architect.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

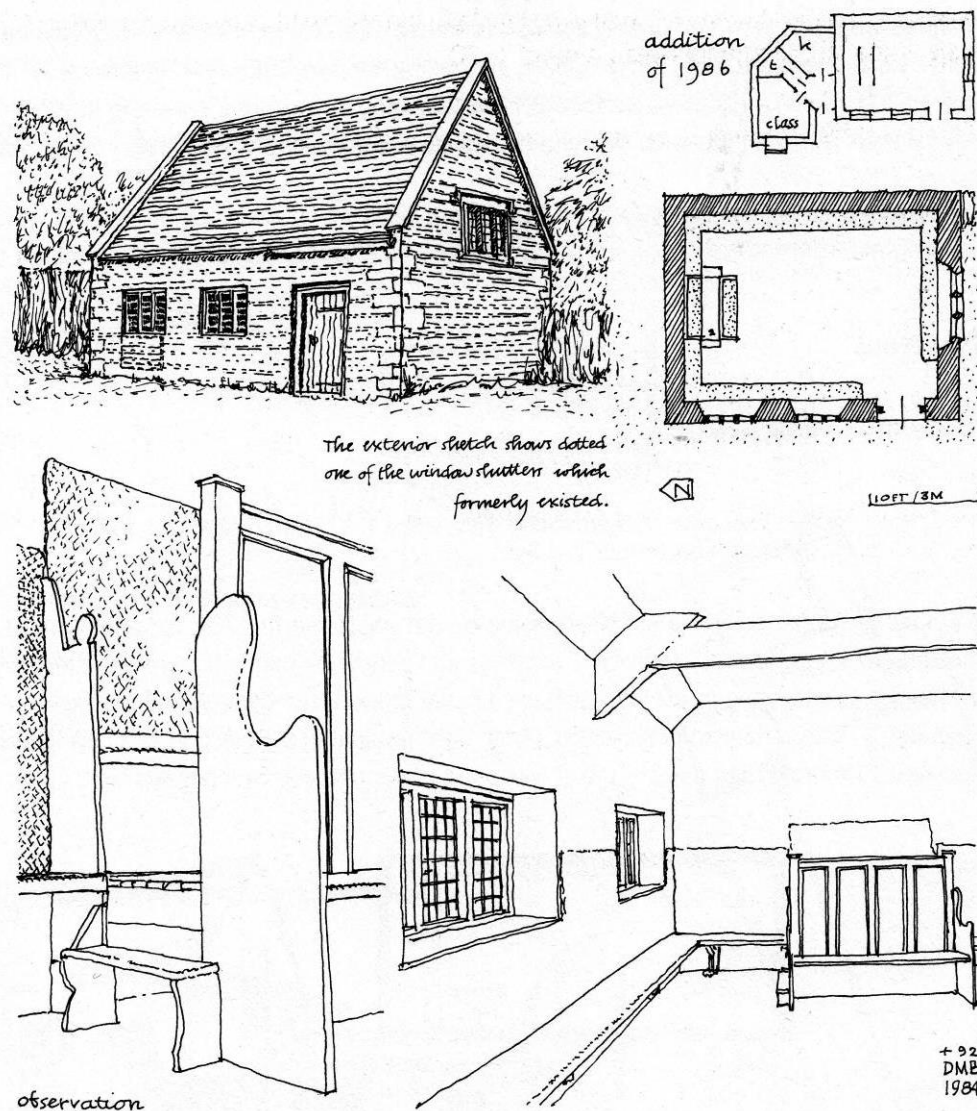


Figure 1: Perspective, plan (southwest is actually at the bottom; not to scale), detail and interior (Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 1, p. 639)

The meeting house was built in c.1684-89 and extended in 1986 by architect Peter White. The meeting house is of oblong plan and was built using coursed limestone rubble with flush ironstone quoins and ashlar dressings. The pitched roof is covered in slate, with coped gables. The entrance elevation of the meeting house faces southwest; this elevation has two three-light windows and the entrance, all under timber lintels. The entrance door in a heavy chamfered timber doorframe is a 1976 replica of the original, a boarded and nail-studded door with wrought-iron strap hinges. The windows have heavy pegged frames and leaded glazing (now protected externally by plastic sheets) with decorative wrought-iron fasteners to the centre lights. The southeast gable has a three-light window under a label mould. The northeast elevation has no windows and that to the northwest is obscured by the 1986 extension. Some of the rainwater goods are of uPVC. There are spreader plates at the southeast end, relating to structural works of c.2005. The interior has a flagstone floor and nineteenth-century fitted wall benches on all four sides. The raised two-tier stand at the northwest wall has shaped bench ends (photo bottom left on page 1). (It is similar to the later stand at Wallingford (1724, *qv*), Oxfordshire, which Lidbetter describes as a 'pulpit type')

stand.) The collars of the two roof trusses are visible below the ceiling; according to Stell, the trusses have ‘inserted double collars’.

The 1986 extension on a canted L-plan is of concrete blocks with a hipped gablet roof of artificial slate. The wide eaves project over an oriel window to the southwest and a recessed porch. The small extension contains a children’s room, a kitchen and a toilet.

2.3. Loose furnishings

There are four open-backed benches whose seats have been widened (Stell), as well as a small table (described as ‘travelling clerk’s table’ in an information leaflet). Stell and the list description (see Part 6) mention that the original door used to be stored loose inside the meeting house but this is no longer the case (present location unknown).

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

The burial ground may well have been in use from shortly after the acquisition of the site in 1681. A burial plan at the meeting house (figure 2) records 63 burials in 60 plots (plus seven whose location is not known), dating from the 1770s to 1935. The burial ground is no longer in use and there are no remaining gravestones. There is a plan for its regular maintenance.

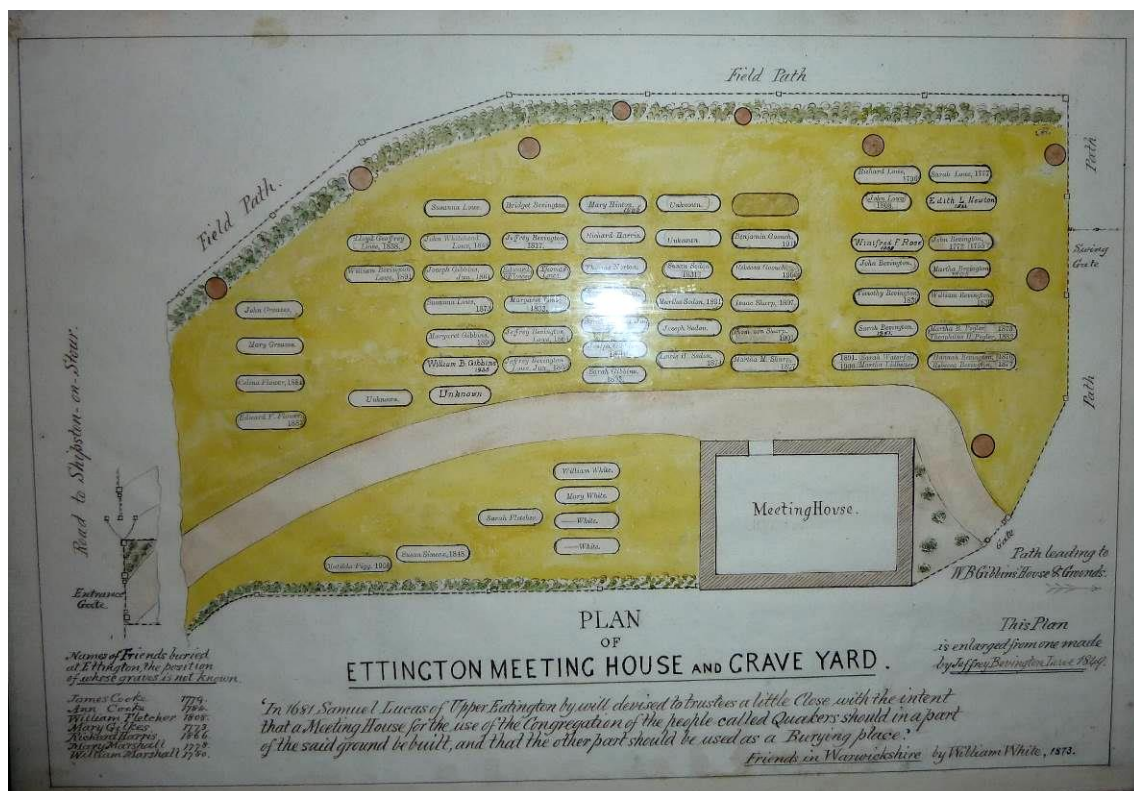


Figure 2: Burial plan for Ettington, redrawn from an 1849 plan by Jeffrey Bevington Lowe (Ettington Meeting House)

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is located at the edge of Ettington, surrounded to the north and west by the large grounds of Ettington Hall (Grade II), a Jacobean-style house of 1871 by William Bovington Gibbins. The meeting house is set back from Halford Road, along a curving path which, together with planting, prevents direct views of the meeting house from the road. The small scale of the extension and its location at the far end of the meeting house, diminish its negative impact on the setting of the listed building.

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house is correctly listed at Grade II*.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The site for the meeting house and the burial ground were acquired in 1681. Due to the presence of burials, the site has high archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

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

3.2. Maintenance

The last quinquennial inspection took place in September 2010 (Philip J. Cooper, chartered surveyor). It found the building to be in generally satisfactory condition and adequately maintained. Since then, the roof and gutters have been repaired, as has the electric heating circuit. Remaining works include the redecoration of the interior. As the roof was repaired in 2015, the next quinquennial was deferred to 2016.

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit. It has implemented some measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include:

- Climate change and energy efficiency: overhead Quartz radiant heaters fitted in 2014
- Resource use, recycling and waste management: cess pit for waste and storm water; the meeting is considering the installation and use of water butts/soakaways
- Building maintenance and refurbishment: all maintenance is up to date

The meeting does not have an Energy Performance Certificate and does not think it would be appropriate for this historic building.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting does not have all the amenities it needs. There is no accessible toilet. Existing amenities (kitchen, toilet and children's room) are all in the meeting house extension with external access. There is no resident warden. Local public transport to the meeting house is limited. There is no parking on site (but adequate parking in the road); and there is no secure parking for bicycles.

3.5. Access

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities. There is level access to the meeting house (but with restricted door access), and a hearing loop. There is no accessible toilet and no facilities for partially-sighted people. There is a step into the extension. No Disability Access Audit has been conducted.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for 2 hours per week. The building is not available for community lettings and the meeting does not have a lettings policy.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There are no signs of general crime or anti-social behaviour at the site. There has been no heritage crime, general crime or other incidents, apart from an incident of lost keys (all locks were changed subsequently). The locality is generally well-cared for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence. There is currently no liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

3.8. Plans for change

There are currently no plans for change.

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 rightly celebrated as a little-altered early meeting house. Any alterations to the 1680s building should be well-considered and kept to a minimum. The 1980s extension has wider scope for alterations and could be altered to provide an accessible toilet, for example, should this become necessary.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: At present, there is no additional community use at the meeting house. Should this change, any changes to the historic building should be sympathetically designed.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: It would be highly regrettable should Quaker use cease, after over 300 years. A new sympathetic use would need to be found for the building, which would ideally permit the retention of the stand and furnishings in situ. The small size of the building and the limited facilities might hamper efforts in finding a new appropriate use.

Part 5: Category: 1

Part 6: List description

Name: FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE

List entry Number: 1382580

FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, HALFORD ROAD

County Warwickshire

District Stratford-on-Avon District Authority

Parish Ettington

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 06-Feb-1952

Date of most recent amendment: 27-Apr-2000

Description

ETTINGTON

SP24NE HALFORD ROAD 1912-1/7/70 (West side) 06/02/52 Friends' Meeting House
(Formerly Listed as: ROAD TO MORETON-IN-MARSH Friend's Meeting House)

II*

Quaker meeting house. 1684-9 with minor alterations of 1894 and c1980 addition. Coursed limestone rubble with flush ironstone quoins and ashlar dressings; steeply pitched graduated slate roof with coped gables. Small rectangular structure. EXTERIOR: south-west front has 2 windows and entrance under continuous timber lintel; entrance to right end has 1976 plank door, replacing original now preserved inside, and heavy door-frame; 3-light windows with heavy pegged frames and leaded glazing; opening lights with wrought-iron window fasteners. 3-light recessed-chamfered-mullioned window to right return, which has alternate narrow rubble courses. INTERIOR: flag floors and C19 wall benches and earlier side benches; 2 original high-backed benches to one end, the higher with enriched bench ends; lower parts of 2 trusses with low collars visible below plaster ceiling. Left return has projecting late C20 breeze-block addition with hipped slate roof with gablet and wide eaves over oriel and recessed porch to right. A good example of a very early meeting house. (Buildings of England: Pevsner N: Warwickshire: Harmondsworth: 1966-: 291; An Inventory of Non-con Chapels and Mtg Houses in Cent England: Herefs, Warks and Worcs (extracted from above): 1986-: 233-4).

Listing NGR: SP2676948702