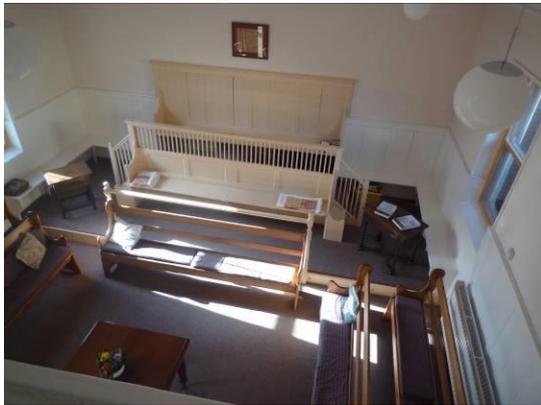


Friends Meeting House, Gainsborough

22 Market Street, Gainsborough, DN21 2BE

National Grid Reference: SK 81616 89907



Statement of Significance

The meeting house was built in 1704 and opened in 1705; the attached burial ground was opened at the same time. The building was slightly altered in 1810 and a schoolroom was added in 1876. The building still retains much of its original character and is of high heritage significance

Evidential value

The interior of the building still contains many elements of the original arrangements and overall the building is of medium evidential value.

Historical value

A well-preserved example of an early eighteenth century town-centre meeting house with a later nineteenth century addition; the building is the oldest nonconformist place of worship in Gainsborough and is of high historical value.

Aesthetic value

The red brick exterior of the building is attractive and contributes positively to the character of the Conservation Area. 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 been in continuous use for Quaker worship since 1705 and the buildings has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *Lincolnshire*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0005520*

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *West Lindsey District Council*

1.5 Historic England locality: *East Midlands*

1.6 Civil parish: *Gainsborough*

1.7 Listed status: *II*

1.8 NHLE: *1168215*

1.9 Conservation Area: *No*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *1704*

1.13 Architect (s): *Not established*

1.14 Date of visit: *11 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: *Detached burial ground at Sturton by Stow*

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

Stell Christopher, *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting houses in Eastern England*, English Heritage, 2002. pp.205-6

Lincolnshire HER number 55135-ML18226

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

The building was erected in 1704 and has a stone with this date on the south (rear) wall fronting the small burial ground, which presumably also dates from 1704. Alterations were made to the building in 1809 and most of the existing fixtures appear to date from this time. The burial ground was closed in 1855. A single-storey schoolroom was added on the north side of the meeting house in 1876; kitchen and toilets were added in the twentieth century. The building suffered minor damage in the Second World War and was repaired in 1951. The roof was re-covered in 1982. During the last three years (to April 2015) the building has been fully refurbished and a new ceiling installed immediately below the original ceiling

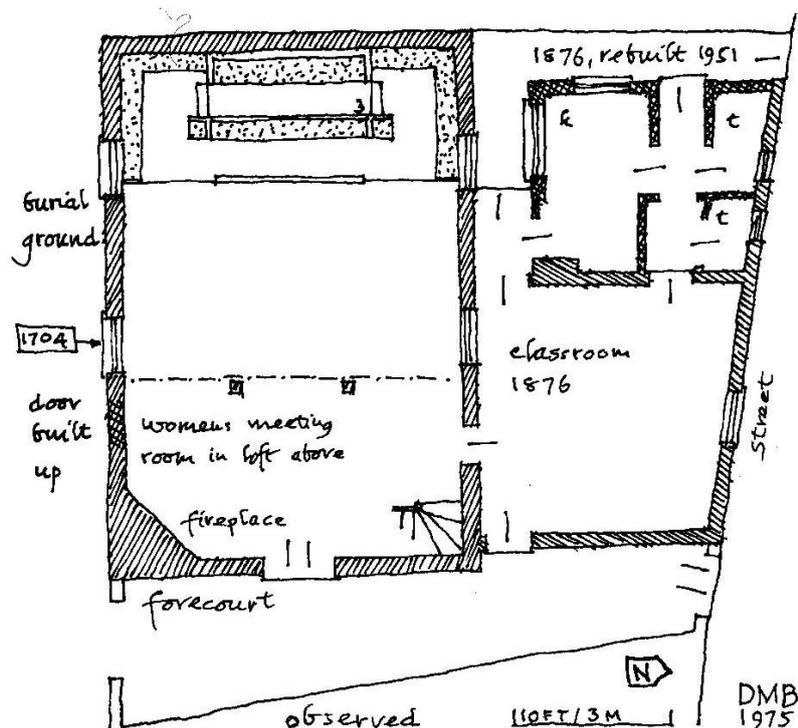


Fig.1 A plan of the meeting house in 1975, *Butler 1999 vol.1 p.365.*

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The original small meeting house building (35ft by 24ft externally) is rectangular on plan, with walls of red brick laid in a garden wall bond and a pitched roof covered in pantiles with a brick chimney stack at the south east corner. The south front facing the burial ground has rectangular sash windows to the ground floor centre and left. The centre window has been narrowed and has a small datestone over. Further to the right is an upper floor window with a small-paned sliding sash and a blocked window below. The east end wall has a central doorway with an early nineteenth century timber surround and a timber casement window over. The west end abuts other buildings. The north side towards the street is now largely obscured by the single-storey schoolroom building of the 1870s and the flat-roofed toilet extension behind it. The schoolroom range has red brick walls, a pitched slated roof and a small-paned sash window in the gable end towards the street.

The meeting room has plain plastered walls, a tall timber dado with some perimeter seating and a modern flat ceiling (recently inserted immediately below the original ceiling, which still survives above). Across the west end is an elder's bench, almost certainly of early nineteenth century date, made of painted timber, with a tall panelled back, a moulded handrail with stick balusters and a lower front rail with heavy turned end-newels; at either end of the stand are small single seats, an unusual feature. Across the east end of the room is a loft or gallery on two timber piers with moulded capitals. The panelled gallery front has moveable shutters to the upper space. The stair to the gallery is partly nineteenth century and partly eighteenth century. The upper space has a corner chimney with a Victorian cast-iron chimneypiece.

2.3. Loose furnishings

There are several timber benches, both painted and unpainted, of similar pattern with solid shaped ends. Christopher Stell ascribes them an early nineteenth century date.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

South of the meeting house on the side away from the road is a small rectangular burial ground, enclosed by old red brick walls and reached by a passage across the east end of the meeting house. There are several small nineteenth century grave markers, now mostly laid flat.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house stands near the east end of Market Street in the centre of Gainsborough. This part of the street is lined with modest two and three-storey domestic and commercial buildings but immediately to the east of the meeting house is the former County Court Buildings, a handsome three-storey red brick house of 1759, listed Grade II* (List entry Number: 1063525)

There is a detached burial ground at Sturton by Stow (National Grid reference SK 890807), given by Joseph Burt in 1862, together with a meeting house (now closed and rebuilt as a house). The burial ground is still owned by the Area Meeting and is fenced and well-maintained, with an information board. There are several gravestones, mostly to members of the Spencer family. The right of way to the burial ground from the meeting house site on the main road has been exchanged for an additional plot of land adjacent to the burial ground, which may be suitable for residential development.

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house is properly listed at Grade II. The list description should be amended to include the internal arrangement and the description 'caretaker's house' should be changed to 'schoolroom'.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The meeting house occupies a town centre site and is of medium archaeological significance.

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 abandoned Quinquennial Inspections in 2002 in favour of annual inspections by the Area Meeting Property Adviser who is a qualified architect. An inspection report made in 2010 recommended various works of improvement, including the replacement of a modern suspended ceiling with a new ceiling immediately beneath the original, which allows the loft shutters to be opened. All the recommended works were carried out over three years and were finished in April 2015. The cost of the works was funded by the Area Meeting. Income from lettings is sufficient to cover routine maintenance. There is no 5 year maintenance plan, but an annual reviews of needs.

3.3. Sustainability

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

- new insulation has been installed in the roofs of the main meeting room and social room and in the ceiling and walls of the kitchen and toilets.
- The windows of the main meeting room and social room have been given secondary glazing. The glazed doors have double glazing

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 in the meeting house - including meeting rooms of different sizes, a well-equipped kitchen and toilets. There is no warden or resident Friend.

The meeting house is in central Gainsborough. There is no on-site parking but there is a large public car park a short distance away. There is no secure parking for bicycles.

3.5. Access

There is level access to the meeting house and throughout the ground floor, but not to the gallery/loft. There is an accessible WC and a hearing loop, but 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 at least 3 hours per week. The meeting rooms in the building are available for community lettings and are used for approximately 2 hours per week. The meeting does not have a lettings policy; lettings are regulated by the Local Meeting at its Business Meeting. Users value the central location, comfortable surroundings and modest charges.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There has been no sign of general crime or heritage crime at the site. Although the meeting house occupies a town centre location, the site is secured by a locked gate and is relatively easy to keep safe. The area is generally well cared-for but Gainsborough suffers from some deprivation and has low community confidence.

3.8. Plans for change

A full refurbishment was completed in 2015 and there are no current plans for further 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 meeting house is a small building with an interior which is relatively intact and offers little scope for change. There may be some scope for minor change to the later parts, subject to listed building constraints.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: as above, there may be scope for minor alterations, subject to listed building constraints.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: the building might find another use if the meeting were laid down, but occupies a small town-centre site with many constraints.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List description

Name: **FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE**

List entry Number: 1168215

FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, MARKET STREET

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

County	District	District Type	Parish
Lincolnshire	West Lindsey District Authority		Gainsborough

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 12-May-1977

List entry Description

MARKET STREET 1. 5315 (South Side) Friends' Meeting House SK 8189 1/106 II GV

2. Dated 1704 to rear. 2 storeys in brick with steep pantile roof. Rear elevation has 1 sliding sash window in reeded wood case, glazing bars, above 2 windows with brick voussoirs, hung sashes without glazing bars, 1 blocked. Side elevation has reeded wood doorway with half-glazed doors below 1 window of 2 lights in reeded case. Said to contain original furnishings with dais for elders and women's gallery. Includes small caretaker's house to road of circa 1876. 1 storey in brick. 1 window, hung sashes with glazing bars. Door of 4 panels.

Friends' Meeting House and County Court Buildings form a group.

Listing NGR: SK8161589910

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SK 81615 89910