

Friends Meeting House, Osmotherley

36 West End, Osmotherley, DL6 3AA

National Grid Reference: SE 45453 97313



Statement of Significance

The meeting house built in 1732 has high heritage significance as a good example of a local vernacular building used for Quaker meetings, intermittently. The building is part of the distinctive character of Osmotherley built in local materials. Most of the original fittings have been removed, but the handsome frontage contributes to the character of the conservation area, and the attractive burial ground has high significance.

Evidential value

The building has been altered on a number of occasions and the fabric has the potential to yield further evidence about its past use and development, as well as the people associated with it. Both the meeting house and the burial ground have high evidential value.

Historical value

The building has historic value for its historic use as a meeting house and its association with a local Quaker family, the Tyremans, who gave the land to the local meeting. The burial ground contains headstones of local Quaker families and the boundary wall contains fragments of seventeenth century headstones.

Aesthetic value

The building is a good example of North Yorkshire vernacular architecture and with its burial ground it makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. The 1947 extension is sympathetic to the vernacular tradition and simple form of the meeting house. Overall, the meeting house and the setting have high aesthetic value.

Communal value

The meeting house and site have high communal value as a building and burial ground developed for the Quakers. The building and neighbouring dormitory block are a familiar venue for local people and visitors, formerly providing overnight accommodation from the 1940s until 2015. Today the meeting house is used for both worship and local community groups and the communal allotments to the rear of the site are appreciated by both the Friends and local people.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Teesdale & Cleveland*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0110710*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Hambleton District Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *North East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Osmotherley*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II*
- 1.8 NHLE: *1150828*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Osmotherley*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1732; 1947*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Not established*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *7 June 2016*

1.15 Name of report author: *Emma Neil*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Richard Waldmeyer*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Dormitory block and allotment gardens*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*

1.19 Information sources:

David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. II, pp. 753

Helen E. Roberts, *Researching Yorkshire Quaker History: A Guide to Sources*, University of Hull, 2003, pp. 58-59

Richard Waldmeyer, *A Brief History of Osmotherley Meeting*, 2016

Richard Waldmeyer, *Local Meeting Survey*, January 2016.

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

2.1. Historical background

During George Fox's travels through the North and the East Ridings of Yorkshire in the mid-seventeenth century, he visited Borrowby in 1651, to the south of Osmotherley. John Whitehead, a soldier at Scarborough Castle, was convinced of Fox's preachings and a meeting was settled in Borrowby soon after. In 1652 a meeting was settled in Osmotherley, after Whitehead converted local villagers to the Quaker faith including Thomas Foster, Cuthbert Tyreman and James Hildreth. In the early years, Friends met in each other's homes but many Friends in the area were subject to persecution. By 1723, the Tyreman family gave Osmotherley Meeting a plot of land for use as a burial ground. A meeting house was registered in 1728, the house and garth of Thomas Tyreman. In 1732, Thomas Tyreman's house and land was given to Friends for one Guinea for a period of 1000 years for sole use by the Quakers. By 1733 it was reported to the Yearly Meeting in London that a meeting house had been built in 1732; it has not been established whether Thomas Tyreman's house was demolished or whether the meeting house was remodelled from it but the form of the building suggests it was probably purpose-built.

According to Butler (1999), the meeting room historically included moveable shutters, an Elders' stand to the west of the room and a gallery to the eastern end, which was introduced at a later date.

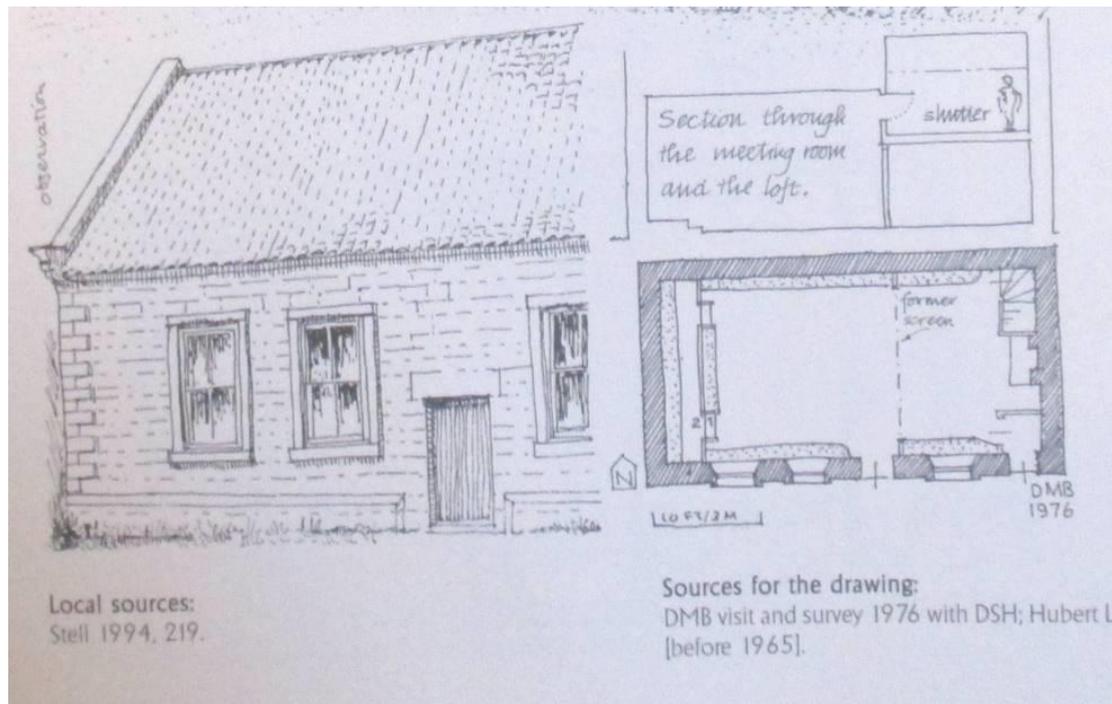


Figure 1: Figure 1: Ground floor plan of the meeting house, as reconstructed by Butler (north is at the top: not to scale) (Butler (1999), vol. II, p.753)

By the late eighteenth century the number of Friends living in the area was in decline, and by the 1760s the meeting ceased. In his will, George Miles (died 1811), left the land to the north of the meeting house to the Richardson family, so that the rent from this could be used to maintain the meeting house. The land ownership was transferred to the Friends in 1822. The building was in use as a village school and in the 1820s as a library, organised by the Friends. By 1835, the meeting numbers of Borrowby Meeting had declined and meetings then took place alternatively at Borrowby and Osmotherley. In 1838 Borrowby Meeting ceased but Osmotherley continued. Osmotherley Meeting was laid down in 1856 as a result of declining numbers and the meeting house was used by the Independent Methodists until 1890. Following the departure of the Methodists, Friends in the area began to meet once again, and by the early twentieth century were registered as a Preparative Meeting.

A copy of a watercolour held at the meeting house dated to the beginning of the twentieth century reveals the room with timber panelling to the west, an Elder's stand, and seating laid out in rows. The welcome banner is believed to have been made for the Monthly Meeting held in 1904.



Figure 2: Interior of the meeting room c.1904 (Osmotherley MH, Archives)

A photograph taken in 1935 shows the meeting house, with its original two door openings, and white fencing to the south of the building.



Figure 3: Meeting House, 1935 (Osmotherley MH Archive)

The original oil lamps were replaced by electricity in 1940 when the building was in use by the Women's Voluntary Service, the benches were removed in the 1940s and the Elder's stand in c.1950. During the 1940s the meeting house was used by the Young Friends for overnight accommodation. A hostel was established in 1944 and subsequently an extension to the east was built in 1947 for kitchen and toilet facilities. In 1954, part of the gallery was damaged during a fire. A timber hut was purchased in 1950 by the Middlesbrough Friends to provide dormitory accommodation, replaced in the 1970s by the present concrete block. From the 1950s the meeting house discontinued as a place of worship until 1993 when a meeting was once again established; the building is still in use for meetings. Following the infill of one of the entrances to the south elevation, a new floor was installed in the main meeting room. During the 1990s further work included a new roof, and remodelling of the kitchen facilities.



Figure 4: Meeting house extension, c.1948 (Osmotherley MH, Archive)

Since July 2015, the dormitory block and the gallery of the meeting house have no longer been used for overnight accommodation.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house was built in 1732; the date on the lintel of 1723 may relate to the year Tyreman gave the land to the Quakers. The building is of oblong plan, built in ashlar with raised quoins and roofed in clay pantiles with stone coped verges on shaped kneelers to the gable ends and a short stone chimney stack to the eastern end. The building is aligned east to west and faces south, with a small outbuilding to the west and a single-storey lean-to extension dated 1947 to the east accommodating the ancillary facilities. The main entrance faces south, this asymmetric elevation has three 4-pane sliding sash windows with plain stone surrounds, projecting sills and lintels. Narrow doorways are located either side of the first window to the east; the eastern doorway has a date of 1723 inscribed on the lintel (possibly recording the date the land was given to Quakers rather than the build date) and the eastern doorway is infilled. The rear elevation to the north is blind. A lean to extension adjoins the eastern gable end, with 3-light casement window to the south, three single light windows to the north and to the east a 3-light casement window with an infilled former doorway to the northern end. The east gable end of the meeting house has a small 4-paned window and the west gable end is blind, with a small outbuilding attached.

Inside, the main meeting room is to the west and the ancillary facilities to the east (in the lean-to). The meeting room is accessed by a small stepped lobby to the south-east, part enclosed by tongue and groove panelling with a four-panelled door. The meeting room is well lit by sash windows to the south, has a timber floor and the walls are plainly plastered and painted. On the east wall is a modern stone fireplace, below the gallery. . The ceiling below the gallery has floor joists aligned north-south. The stairs to the gallery rise behind the fireplace; the gallery previously had wooden shutters which were damaged by a fire in 1954. The room formerly had a sliding sash window to the east wall, partly obscured by the 1947 extension and only the top section of the window to the south is visible due to the gallery flooring. Access to the loft space is available via the gallery. The 1947 east extension contains a modern kitchen and toilet facilities.

2.3. Loose furnishings

The main meeting room contains open backed pine benches, with shaped arms, from the former Middlesbrough meeting house of 1873.



Figure 5: Open-backed benches from Middlesbrough MH.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

Waldmeyer (2016) notes that there have been Quaker burials in Osmotherley since 1660, the earliest known burial is for Sarah Scarth. The exact location of this burial ground is unknown but believed to be close to the present meeting house. In 1717, headstones were removed from the burial ground after being considered 'vain' by the Yearly Meeting. Some of the headstones were reused in the present burial ground boundary wall constructed in 1724. Four headstones remain visible to the western wall of the boundary.



Figure 6: Example of re-used headstones in boundary wall

Research undertaken by the Friends has revealed three phases of burials; 1660-1723, 1723-1800 and 1835-1949. From 1850 headstones were permitted and those present in the burial ground follow a uniform character. The last burial was in 1949 and since then the burial ground has been used for the scattering of ashes.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

Osmotherley is a village located on the western end of the North York Moors National Park and is popular with walkers and tourists. The meeting house is within Osmotherley conservation area. The village is characterised by two-storey seventeenth and eighteenth century stone cottages and terraces, with clay pantile pitched roofs. A number of village buildings are Grade II listed including many nineteenth and eighteenth century cottages along West End (Nos 58, 52-56, 44-50, 30, 34, 28 and 20).

Access to the meeting house is via a driveway to the west side of the Grade II listed 34 West End. The driveway leads northwards up a steep incline past a workshop to the west side. The driveway leads to a grassy area to the east side of the meeting house, providing space for a limited number of cars. To the north of the meeting house is a 20th century light-weight block formerly used as a dormitory block and to the rear of this is an area used for allotments.

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house is correctly listed at Grade II. The list description is very short and would benefit from expanding. The date on the lintel is 1723 but this is thought to not record the date of the building, which is more likely to be 1732.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The site is known to have been site of Thomas Tyreman's house, and it has not been determined whether this was demolished or whether the meeting house was remodelled from it. The exact location of burials which took place between 1600 and 1723 has not been determined but it is probable that the burial ground was close to the meeting house. Overall, the archaeological potential of the site, including the burial ground, is considered to be high.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

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

3.2. Maintenance

The last quinquennial inspection took place in 2014. The Local Meeting has enough money to fund day to day repairs and maintenance. A Health and Safety assessment was commissioned in July 2015, following this the dormitory block and the gallery within the meeting house have no longer been used for overnight accommodation. The meeting are undergoing a consultation process regarding future work to the meeting house and surrounding site, including improved access to the meeting house, installation of solar panels, investigating whether to demolish or refurbish the dormitory block, and repairs to the trackway, all of which will require large expenditure.

3.3. Sustainability

The Meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit. The following measures have been implemented to reduce its environmental impact. These include:

- Climate change and energy efficiency: The meeting are considering the installation of solar panels to the dormitory roof.
- Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: A wildlife trust survey was undertaken in 2009, to inform suggestions for ecology improvement and species diversification. The grounds are well planted with trees and shrubs which provide wildlife habitats and to the rear of the meeting house are allotment gardens owned by the Friends.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting house currently does not have all the amenities it needs. The meeting house has kitchen, toilet and shower facilities and the dormitory block has toilet and shower facilities, but these are dated and in need of improvement to meet the requirements of the Equality Act. The site lacks facilities for people with disabilities, and Friends are currently pursuing options for improved access to the meeting house. Osmotherley is served by local bus services from Northallerton, these run on a 2-hourly basis in the week but no services are available on a Sunday. Off road car parking is available and there is currently no secure parking for bicycles.

3.5. Access

Access for people with disabilities is inevitably limited by the remote location, the need to walk up a steep incline to reach the building, and a small step to the front entrance and a further step into the meeting room. There is currently no accessible toilet or hearing loop installed but facilities for the partially-sighted are available. A Disability Access Audit has not been undertaken, however, discussions with the District Council Accessibility Officer have taken place. The meeting are currently considering future proposals for improved access into the building, one option under consideration is the introduction of a new opening to the west of the meeting house.

3.6. Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for 6 hours per week. Prior to July 2015, the meeting house gallery and dormitory block were available for groups of 1 to 25 people day and night. At present the meeting house is available for community lettings for a maximum of 6 hours per week and is used for 6 hours each week. The lettings policy is currently under review following the closure of the use of the buildings for overnight accommodation.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

The meeting house has not been subject to incidents of anti-social behaviour or heritage crime. The locality is generally well-cared for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence. Friends have not developed a liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

3.8. Plans for change

A Health & Safety assessment was undertaken in July 2015; since the report the dormitory block and the meeting house gallery are no longer used for overnight accommodation. Friends are assessing the future direction of the premises and whether to demolish or refurbish the dormitory block, and looking into future proposals for improved access into the meeting house.

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 provides the meeting with some of the facilities it needs, and has been altered previously. Further internal changes could be made without affecting the significance of the building, but it would be desirable to retain the front elevation as it is.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: The building has the capacity to accommodate wider uses. However, there is little demand at present for local community use but the site used to be a popular destination for overnight accommodation. Consultation is currently taking place regarding the options for providing overnight accommodation in both the meeting house and dormitory block.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: The meeting house has been laid down previously. The area is a popular location for walkers and visitors. The meeting house has already been altered to allow for overnight accommodation in the gallery area and the adjacent dormitory block has the potential to be updated to allow for overnight accommodation to continue in the future.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List description

Name: **QUAKER MEETING HOUSE**

List entry Number: 1150828

Location

QUAKER MEETING HOUSE, WEST END

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

County: North Yorkshire

District: Hambleton

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Osmotherley

National Park: NORTH YORK MOORS

Grade: II

Date first listed: 31-Mar-1970

Date of most recent amendment: 11-Dec-1987

List entry Description

OSMOTHERLEY WEST END SE 4497-4597 (north side, off) 6/49 Quaker Meeting House (formerly listed as 31.3.70 Quaker Meeting House, Main Street) - II Quaker meeting house. Dated 1723. Ashlar with pantile roof. One storey, 3 bays. Deep plinth with chamfered coping. Raised quoins. Right-hand bay is flanked by door openings, that to left is blind, that to right has a 6- panel door with inscription '1723' to lintel. Windows are all 4-pane sashes in plain stone surrounds with projecting sills and lintels. Eaves band. Shaped kneelers, stone coping. End stack to right with plinth and moulded cornice. Later outshut to right-hand return.

Listing NGR: SE4545297313