

Friends Meeting House, Pardshaw

Pardshaw, Cockermouth, CA13 0SP

National Grid Reference: NY 10378 25463



Statement of Significance

The Pardshaw meeting house complex includes the meeting house of 1729, stables of 1731 and school room of 1745. With the burial ground, the place has high heritage significance as a fine example of a meeting house developed in the first half of the eighteenth century, and associated with early Quakerism in rural West Cumbria. The buildings retain some original fittings although the large meeting room has been slightly altered. The quiet beauty of the rural setting enhances the significance of this place. The site's heritage significance is under threat from under-use, lack of funds and the deteriorating condition of the ancillary structures.

Evidential value

The phases of the site's growth and historic Quaker use are evident in the layout, structure and features of the buildings. The meeting house interiors are relatively unaltered, retaining the plan-form and moveable shutters. On site is an eighteenth century stable and school room, also with original features. The buildings and the burial ground have high evidential value.

Historical value

The building complex illustrates the growing confidence and resources of Quakers in this remote part of Cumbria and was built close to Pardshaw Crag where Quakers first met in the mid-seventeenth century. The meeting house retains its historic internal layout, as well as a number of original features, including historic panelled shutters and loose benches. The rows of simple headstones in the burial ground remain in situ. John Dalton the scientist went to school here in the 1770s. The site has exceptional historical value.

Aesthetic value

Aesthetic significance lies in the simplicity of the vernacular buildings, the tranquillity of the walled burial ground and the unspoilt setting on the edge of the Lake District. Inside, the large meeting house has been affected by twentieth century alterations, but eighteenth fittings including the panelled movable shutters are in situ. The character, detailing and layout of the buildings, the burial ground and the setting have exceptional aesthetic value.

Communal value

The meeting house was built for an active Quaker community but this has declined and the remote rural location, poor access and limited facilities means that the buildings are infrequently used by the wider community. The group makes a distinctive contribution to the local area, and is appreciated by visitors who may not be users of the building. The building and site has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Cumberland*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0109050*
- 1.3 Owner: *Friends Trust Ltd*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Allerdale Borough Council*
- 1.5 Civil parish: *Dean*
- 1.6 Historic England locality: *North West*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II*
- 1.8 NHLE: *1326883*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1729, 1731, 1745, 1774*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Not known*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *16 June 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Marion Barter*

1.16 Name of contact made on site: *Christopher Thomas*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *stable 1731, schoolrooms of 1745 and 1774, carriage shed 1879, detached burial ground at Eaglesfield, 1670.*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*

1.19 Information sources:

J. Bernard Bradbury, *Pardshaw, Quakers and Others*, 1998

David Butler, *Quaker Meeting Houses of the Lake Counties*, 1978, pp 40-46

Arthur Kincaid, *The Cradle of Quakerism: Exploring Quaker Roots in North West England*, 2011, pp 75-76

Christopher Thomas, *Local Meeting Survey*, February 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

Quakers met for worship in the open air on Pardshaw Crag (NY102256) from the 1650s until 1672. George Fox attended meetings here in 1657 and 1663. In winter, Friends also met in houses at Pardshaw, Lamplugh, Whinfell and Eaglesfield. In 1672, the meeting moved to a purpose-built meeting house close by; this has gone but Butler suggests it was in a field just west of the present meeting house complex. This first meeting house was extended in 1705, but replaced by the present L-plan building in 1729, built on a plot bought from Cuthbert Pierson for £18 in 1726. Friends re-used some of the building materials including the mullioned windows in the small meeting room. A burial ground was laid out around the same time. In 1731 a stable block was built between the meeting house and the lane; the door lintel dated 1672 is said to come from the first meeting house. In 1740, a porch was added to the small meeting room, when this was being used as a school. In 1745 a new school room was built next to the lane, with a covered passage separating it from the stable. John Dalton, the scientist (born in Eaglesfield, 1766), went to this school. A second detached school room was built next to the lane, north-east of the burial ground in 1774, later demolished. An open-fronted shed was built to shelter ten carriages, in 1879, across the lane opposite the stables.



Fig.1: 1745 school room to right and 1731 stables to left, from the east



Fig.2: stables (right) and school room from the lane

The meeting declined in the twentieth century and closed in 1923, but was retained by Trustees and adapted as an early youth hostel in 1932. This was run by the YHA until 1938, and then Young Friends used it during the war. From the 1950s, Pardshaw buildings were used as a simple Quaker holiday centre and then as the Young Friends National Pardshaw Centre, run by Young Friends Central Committee and its successor Young Friends General Meeting. Electricity was not installed until 1978; improvements made in the late twentieth century also included a new timber floor over the sloping stone floor in the large meeting room, installing a kitchen and building a larger platform over the former stand to form a sleeping area. In the stables, the stalls were adapted for showers and WCs.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

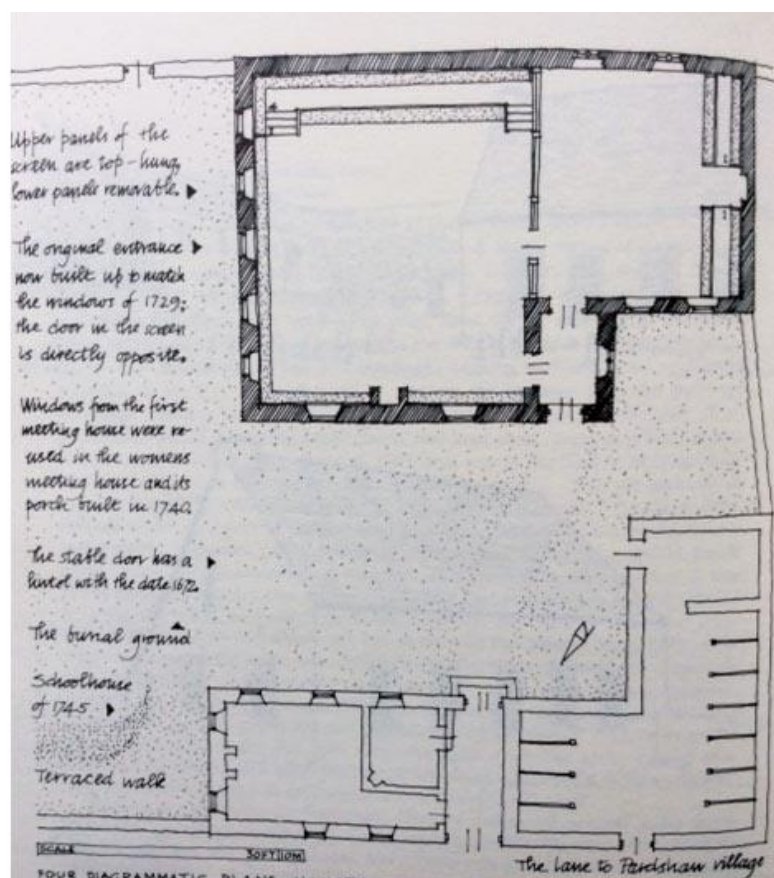


Fig.3: plan of meeting house, schoolroom (below left) and stables (below right), as reconstructed by Butler (1978, p42). Not to scale.

The meeting house was built in 1729. It is constructed with walls and chimney stacks of calciferous sandstone rubble with dressed stone details, finished in lime-wash. The roof is laid with graduated Cumbrian slates with plain verges and cast-iron rainwater goods. The L-shaped plan consists of large meeting house to the north and small meeting room to the south, with a porch in the west angle between the ranges; the whole building is aligned roughly south-west to north-east. The lean-to porch has a stone surround to the outer boarded door, and inner chamfered doorway and stone floor. To the left, the north-west gable wall of the large meeting room has two modern fixed windows to the ground floor, and a small gable window in chamfered surround. The left return facing north-east has five 8-pane sash windows (renewed), the central window is a blocked front door. The south gable end is blind. The small

meeting room is integral to the building and on the south-west side of the larger room. To the right of the porch this has two windows each with 18 panes, the left hand sash appears to be original with thick glazing bars, but the right hand window is a modern replacement. The rear wall facing south-east is finished in a cement render and has two 2-light mullioned windows (according to Butler, these incorporate stone re-used from the 1672 meeting house). The south-west gable is blind.

Inside, the small meeting room (used once a month for worship) retains a historic layout with the stand (renewed joinery) against the south-west wall and a movable partition on the opposite wall. There is a stone fireplace in the centre of the stand. The hinged shutters have fielded panels, probably mid-eighteenth century, arranged in two sets - the upper hinge from the top and are secured by wrought iron hooks on the ceiling, and the lower set are hinged along their bottom edge. The joinery is painted. The floor is laid with pine boards and there is tongue and grooved dado panelling, the rest of the walls and flat ceiling are plain plastered, painted white. The large meeting room, now accessed from the porch but originally by a central door on the north-east wall, was slightly altered in the late twentieth century when the current pine floor was laid and the timber platform built over the stand at the south-east end. The stone fireplace in the centre of the north-west wall is fitted with a multi-fuel stove. Walls and ceiling are plain plastered.

2.3 Loose furnishings

The meeting contains a set of historic pine benches; these have turned upper elements to the front legs and match benches in Cockermouth meeting house. There are also a few plainer benches with solid pine bench ends.



Fig.4: benches and rebuilt stand in the small meeting room

2.4. Attached burial ground

Pardshaw has an attractive burial ground on the north-east and north-west side of the meeting house, which it is still in use. The roughly rectangular area is enclosed by stone walls on three sides, the wall along the lane is higher and has flat stone copings. The burial ground slopes gently down to the south east, giving fine long views towards the Cumbrian fells. There is a raised terrace along the upper side of the area next to the lane; this was probably used as a path between the 1745 and 1774 school rooms. A mixture of mature trees grow along the perimeter.



Fig.5: burial ground from the south-west

The burial ground has probably been in use since the 1730s, but the date of the earliest burial is not known. Headstones were not used here before c1850, according to Bradbury (p41). Plain headstones are arranged in rows, aligned north-east to south-west, with several patterns of headstone: plain semi-circular or segmental headed and some with moulded semi-circular heads. Bradbury published a sketch plan of the burial ground and a list of burials, compiled by Dave Moll, a Cockermouth Friend in 1997 (Bradbury, 1998, pp112-117).

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house complex is located in rural west Cumbria, in a linear hamlet known as Pardshaw Hall, about four miles south-west of Cockermouth. It is just outside the boundary of the Lake District National Park; Mosser Fell is visible across fields to the east. Pardshaw Crag, a hill a few hundred metres to the west is an important early open air meeting place for Quakers. The meeting house is hidden in view from the narrow public lane by the burial ground walls and the north-west elevations and roofs of the school room and stable block. The south-west elevations of the meeting house and stables can only be reached from the garden of a neighbouring house which wraps around the south-east side of the meeting house.

2.6. Listed status

The Meeting House (list entry 1326883), the schoolroom (list entry 1138334) and walls enclosing the burial ground (list entry 1138335) are separately listed at Grade II. The stable building is not specifically listed but is within the curtilage of the meeting house and therefore protected by the listing; it may also meet criteria for listing in its own right despite some minor alterations and repairs. The listing covers the interior structure and fittings, as well as the external structure of each building. The carriage house is a much-altered late nineteenth century building and would not meet criteria for designation although it has historic interest as part of the group.

2.7. Archaeological potential

The site is not recorded on the Historic Environment Record for Cumbria, but there is likely to be some archaeological potential relating to the burial ground, to the phasing and construction of the existing buildings, and to the site of the demolished

late eighteenth century school room just outside the north-east corner of the burial ground.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

i) Meeting House: Fair. The last QI report is dated April 2013, completed by Day Cummins, and works have been carried out to the roofs, walls and windows since then. The former school room is in poor condition with damage inside from water ingress following lead theft, and probable dry rot. The stable block was re-roofed in about 2006.

ii) Attached burial ground: Optimal/ generally satisfactory. Works were carried out to repair the walls in 2012, and trees were pruned in 2014. The grass is regularly mown, but the regime is not specifically designed to encourage biodiversity.

3.2. Maintenance

The meeting house is maintained with difficulty and there are no funds or revenue to cover routine repairs and maintenance. All major work has to be funded by grant-assistance or from the trust in the area meeting. There is no maintenance plan as such;

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit, and has not been able to undertake works to reduce environmental impact. However, the building has a small carbon footprint as it is infrequently used.

3.4. Amenities

There is a basic kitchen and space for informal gatherings in the large meeting room, and basic shower and toilet facilities in the stables, the latter installed to support occasional holiday camps run by Young Friends General Meeting, held here for about 35 years in the late twentieth century.

3.5. Access

Access is not easy, as the meeting house is down a slope from the lane, with steps through doorways and down the path to the main entrance. There are no facilities for people with disabilities, although when works have taken place the scope to make appropriate improvements has been considered by the area meeting. There is room for a few cars to park in the lane.

3.6. Community use

The location, access issues and lack of facilities mean that the buildings are not in demand for community use. The meeting house is used for worship on the third Sunday of each month, and on Christmas Day. In the past there have been occasional events such as musical recitals and art and crafts fairs.

3.7. Heritage crime

The meeting house is vulnerable due to its remote location and intermittent use. In about 2009, roadside windows on the former carriage house were broken, and lead

flashings were taken from the road-side former school room, the latter only discovered during the 2013 QI. The roof has repaired using non-lead material since then, but the interior was damaged by water ingress. Police have not been involved. The meeting reports that the area is generally well-cared for, has low levels of crime and is not an area of deprivation.

3.8. Plans for change

Within the next ten years, the area meeting will take a decision on the future of the meeting house, and will probably be forced to sell it. It is not sustainable as a meeting house and the funds to maintain it do not exist. The future of this is remarkable place will rest with a future buyer and the local planning authority, using listed building controls.

Part 4: Impact of Change

4.1. To what extent is the building amenable or vulnerable to change?

i) As a Meeting House only: the meeting house and its ancillary buildings are in need of major investment which is outside the capacity of the area meeting. The heritage significance of the place is a constraint on change.

ii) For wider community use, additional to local Meeting use: the demand and scope for wider community use is very limited due to the location, poor access and condition of the buildings. The heritage significance of the buildings and site is also a constraint to change.

iii) As a consequence of being laid down as a Meeting House and passing into secular use: It seems likely that this meeting house will have to close and pass into a new use; this is very regrettable but seems hard to avoid, without a generous donor and a long-term source of funds. The heritage significance of the buildings and site will be a constraint to change, and any alterations for a new use will require a very sensitive approach. Access to the burial ground will still be required.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List descriptions

FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE

List entry Number: 1326883

County/District	District Type	Parish
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Cumbria	Allerdale District Authority	Dean
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Grade: II

Date first listed: 03-Mar-1967

Details

DEAN PARDSHAW NY 12 NW 9/119 Friends' Meeting House G.V. II 3-3-67

Friends' Meeting House now used as Youth Holiday Centre. 1729 on earlier site. Whitewashed calciferous sandstone rubble walls, under graduated greenslate roof

with whitewashed rubble chimney stack. Single storey, 5 bays with rear extension forming overall T-shape. Front has sash and casement windows with glazing bars in painted stone architraves. Right return wall has plank door and casement windows, under small loft doorway, all in painted stone surrounds. Rear Women's meeting-room extension has one original sash window with broad glazing bars in stone architrave. Interior retains some of its movable benches.

Listing NGR: NY1037825463

FRIENDS' SCHOOLROOM

List entry Number: 1138334

CountyDistrict	District Type	Parish
Cumbria	Allerdale District Authority	Dean

Grade: II

Date first listed: 03-Mar-1967. Date of most recent amendment: 05-Sep-1986

Details

DEAN PARDSHAW NY 12 NW 9/120 Friends' Schoolroom (previously listed as Stables, Library and Schoolroom on roadside) G.V. II 3-3-67

School and stables now part of Youth Holiday Centre. 1745 incorporating outbuilding dated 1672 and part of 1731 stables. Whitewashed rubble walls, under graduated greenslate roof with rebuilt brick chimney stacks. Single storey, 3 bays, with left right-angled stables, forming overall L-shape. Plank door in plain opening. Old sash and casement windows with glazing bars in plain reveals. Former stables have plank door in chamfered surround with lintel dated 1672. Blocked 2-light stone-mullioned window. Rear wall facing road has plank door in alternate-block surround and double old plank door in plain opening. Old casement windows with glazing bars in painted stone surrounds and external plank shutters. Right lavatory extension is not of interest. Listed for group value with Pardshaw Friends' Meeting House.

Listing NGR: NY1035825468

WALL OF BURIAL GROUND IN FRONT OF FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE

List entry Number: 1145173

CountyDistrict	District Type	Parish
Cumbria	Allerdale District Authority	Dean

Grade: II

Date first listed: 05-Sep-1986

Details

DEAN PARDSHAW NY 12 NW 9/121 Wall of Burial Ground in front of Friends'
Meeting House G.V. II

Friends' Burial Ground wall. Early C18. Low sandstone rubble wall of irregular height enclosing burial ground on 3 sides. Listed for group value with Pardshaw Friends' Meeting House.

Listing NGR: NY1039825506