

Friends Meeting House, Reigate

47 Reigate Road, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 0QT

National Grid Reference: TQ 26184 50219



Statement of Significance

Built in 1984, the meeting house is the third meeting house on a site acquired in 1668 as a burial ground. The building has low heritage significance.

Evidential value

As a modern building with some surviving basements of 1889, the meeting house has low evidential value.

Historical value

The meeting house has medium historical value, mainly due to its associations with the predecessor buildings and the generations of Quakers buried here.

Aesthetic value

The building was constructed in a style typical for the period. It has low aesthetic value.

Communal value

The meeting house continues over three hundred years of Quaker presence on the site. More recently, the meeting house has also been used by the local community and the residents of the attached flats. It has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *West Weald*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0004260*
- 1.3 Owner: *Friends Trusts*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Reigate and Banstead Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Reigate NPA*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *N/a*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Chart Lane, Reigate*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1983-4*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Barber, Bundy & Partners*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *11 September 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Johanna Roethe*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Unaccompanied*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Thomas Moore House*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*
- 1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 2, pp. 593-5

Stell, C., *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-houses in Eastern England*, 2002, p. 327

Historical account on local meeting website, <http://www.reigatequakers.org.uk/history-of-reigate-quakers.php>

Local Meeting survey by Sarah Freeman, Richard Jennings and Raymond Dill, October 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

In 1668, the present site was given by Thomas Moore, a local Quaker who had been 'convinced' by George Fox, for use as a burial ground. Twenty years later, a first meeting house was built on the site (figure 1). From c.1694 this also included a dwelling. The first meeting house was demolished or burnt down in 1857. That year, a new meeting house was built by the Quaker architect William Beck at a cost of £2,600 (which included the purchase of extra land to the east) (figure 2). In 1872, this was extended, and again in 1889 when two classrooms over a basement were built. By 1983, the building was too small and was demolished. The current meeting house, the third on the site, was opened in 1984 (figure 3).

It was built to a design by the architects Barber, Bundy & Partners who also built 20 sheltered flats for the elderly on the site (known as Thomas Moore House, built for the Reigate Quaker Housing Association). Part of the new building was erected over the basement of the 1889 classrooms.



Figure 1: Undated painting of the first meeting house built in 1688 (Local Meeting archive)



Figure 2: Undated photo of the second meeting house built in 1857 (Local Meeting archive)

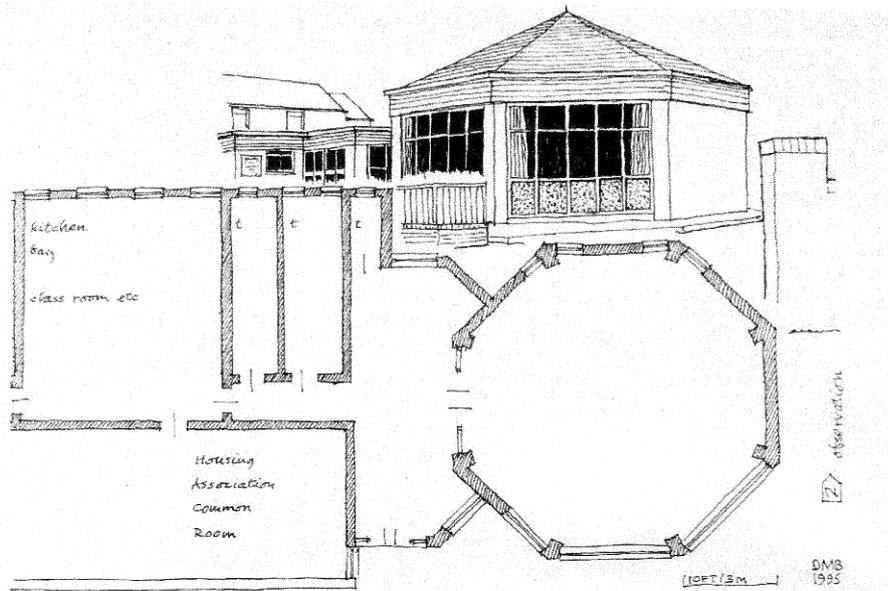


Figure 3: Plan of the current meeting house (north is at the top; not to scale) (Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 2, p. 595)

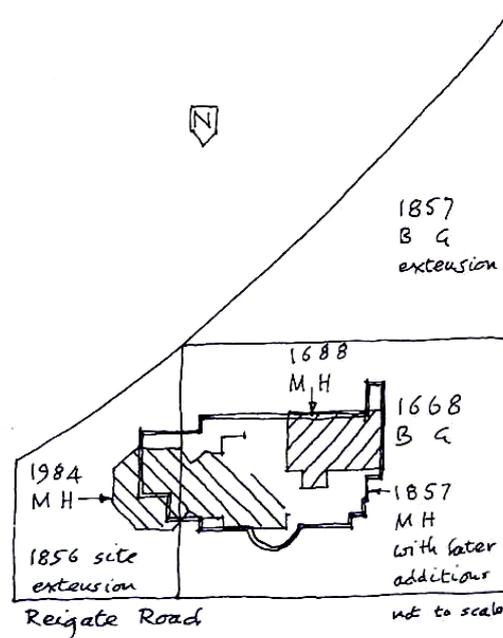


Figure 4: Site plan showing the three burial grounds and the location of the three meeting houses on the site (north is at the bottom; not to scale) (Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 2, p. 594)

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house is attached to the east end of Thomas Moore House. The meeting room is an octagonal room at the east; ancillary rooms are to the west. The external walls are faced in brown bricks in stretcher bond with panelled fascias. The pyramidal roof of the meeting room has artificial slates. The ancillary rooms are part of the two-storey Thomas Moore House whose upper floor is tile-hung on the north and east elevations.

The interior of the meeting room has brick walls and brick piers between each bay, and a carpeted floor. The coved ceiling has a central panel of acoustic tiles. There are three large windows to the south and four smaller vertical windows to the north.

2.3 Loose furnishings

There are two open-backed benches in the meeting room.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

The original burial ground was acquired in 1668 (figure 4). It was extended to the east in 1856 and to the southwest in 1857. On the oldest plot is a row of about 14 headstones which are leaning against the west wall in the northwest corner. Most are illegible; the legible ones date to the nineteenth century. The east burial ground (photo bottom right on p. 1) has 40 headstones in three rows, dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most graves are in the largest burial ground at the south west, which is still in use (photo bottom left on p. 1). It has about 90 headstones in seven rows, dating from the late nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries. It also has plaques for ashes buried here. It is laid out as a garden with perimeter planting and a bench under a tree. Notable Quakers buried on the site include Thomas Dann (died 1882), the first mayor of Reigate; and Francis May (died 1885), co-founder of the match manufacturers Bryant and May.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house and Thomas Moore House overlook Reigate Road to the north. To the east and west are buildings of the Reigate Grammar School. The near-triangular plot of the meeting house is bordered to the southeast by Church Walk which leads to the medieval church of St Mary Magdalene (grade II*) and its large cemetery.

2.6. Listed status

The building is not listed and is not considered to be a candidate for listing.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The site has high archaeological potential due to the presence of burials and the sites of the previous two meeting houses.

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 most recent quinquennial inspection took place in March 2015 (no copy seen). Its recommendations are currently under consideration. The meeting has sufficient money for the maintenance and repair of the building, largely from rental income. It has a five-year maintenance and repair plan.

3.3. Sustainability

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

- Climate change & energy efficiency: renewable energy provider (Good Energy)
- Resource use, recycling & waste management: 'Cisterniser' fitted in urinal; more efficient heating system currently under consideration
- Building maintenance & refurbishment: installation of double-glazed windows

The meeting does not have an Energy Performance Certificate but would consider obtaining one.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs. These are all in the meeting house. There is no resident Warden.

The meeting is accessible by public transport. There is parking on site as well as secure parking for bicycles.

3.5. Access

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities. There is level access, an accessible toilet and a hearing loop. The improvement of facilities for partially-sighted people is in progress. A Disability Access Audit was conducted in 2006 and its recommendations have been implemented. Subsequently, the basement room was excluded from the rooms available for lettings as it was inaccessible for wheelchair users.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for 3 hours per week. The building is theoretically available for community lettings for a maximum number of 96 hours (48 hours for 2 rooms) per week. It is used for an average of 35 hours per week. The meeting has a lettings policy. Users not in accord with Quaker values are not permitted. Smoking and intoxicants are not permitted on the premises. Free use is reserved for Quaker groups. Users value the meeting house for its competitive pricing and its convenient location for the surrounding residential areas.

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. 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 as there is no obvious need.

3.8. Plans for change

There are no changes planned.

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 could be altered if required. Alterations to the external appearance might require conservation area consent.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: The meeting house is currently well used by community groups. Should demand on the current facilities change, the building could be altered if necessary.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting: Should the meeting house close, the future of the building would need to be considered in conjunction with that of Thomas Moore House. Redevelopment of the site would require conservation area consent.

Part 5: Category: 4