

## ***Friends Meeting House, Slough & Windsor***

*74 Ragstone Road, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2PX*

*National Grid Reference: SU 97155 79145*



### ***Statement of Significance***

***An economical, nicely-detailed design of 1966 by Paul Mauger, somewhat altered. The building is of medium heritage significance.***

### ***Evidential value***

***The high-level windows might suggest a meeting house, but otherwise there is little to denote its function. The building is of low evidential value.***

### ***Historical value***

***The Meeting was established here in 1966, on land once belonging to Eton College. The building is therefore of relatively recent date and has low historical value.***

### ***Aesthetic value***

***This is in some respects a pleasing design, with good brickwork detail and an unusual roof form. It is of medium aesthetic value.***

### ***Communal value***

***The building is well used by local groups and as such has high communal value.***

### **Part 1: Core data**

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Chilterns*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0008510*
- 1.3 Owner: *Chilterns Area Quaker Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Slough Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Slough NPA*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *N/a*

- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1966*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Paul V. Mauger*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *4 November 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Andrew Derrick*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Janet and David May-Bowles*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information Sources:
- Butler, D. M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, Vol. 1, pp. 28-9
- May-Bowles, J and D., *Come Friendly: A History of Slough Preparative Meeting, 1938-2007*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2010
- Local Meeting Survey, by Janet May-Bowles, July 2015

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

### 2.1. Historical background

A Meeting was established in Slough in the 1920s, in hired premises. The present site (land formerly belonging to Eton College) was acquired for £3,000 in 1964, and the meeting house and warden's flat built from designs by Paul V. Mauger of Mauger Gavin & Associates. A glazed link on shallow foundations between the buildings was necessitated by a sewer passing through the site.

### 2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house (figure 1) was built in 1966 from designs by Paul V. Mauger. It consists of a meeting room, square on plan, with a lobby and glazed link to a classroom block with warden's accommodation upstairs. The buildings are constructed of multi-coloured red brick laid in Flemish bond with raised concrete surrounds to the triangular headed windows, each of which has four lights. Pedimented gables of the same pitch as the window heads rise up to overhanging eaves on each side, the resulting roof a very shallow version of a helm spire. The windows have been renewed in uPVC. A flat-roofed, mainly glazed link connects to the classrooms and flat, and is faced in the same materials.

Inside, the meeting house is a simple, square, double-height space, well-lit at the higher level by windows on all four sides and with a radial pattern to the ceiling. The walls and ceilings have been lined with acoustic panelling to reduce disturbance from aircraft and motorway noise. The floor is of woodblock.

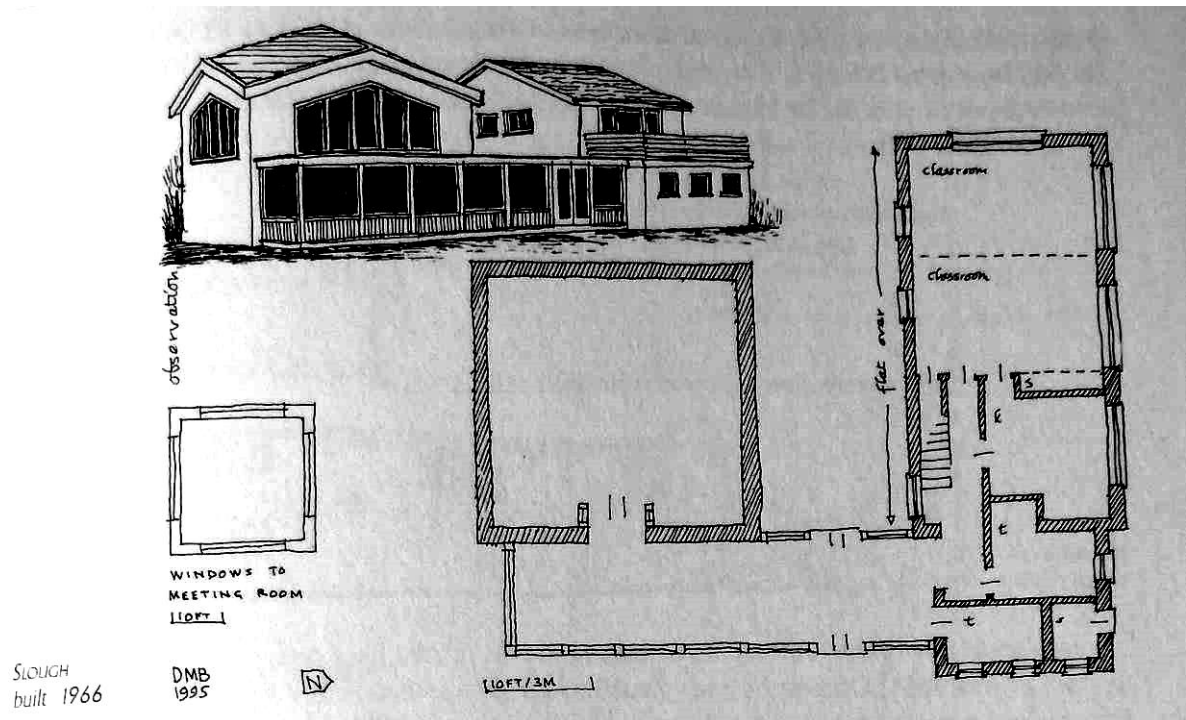


Figure 1: Elevation and plan, from Butler, 1990, p. 29

### 2.3 Loose furnishings

None requiring special mention.

### 2.4. Attached burial ground

None.

### 2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is in an area of twentieth-century development, mainly suburban housing. Immediate neighbours include a Muslim centre and a Freemasons' Hall. There is a small garden at the rear. The raised M4 forms a backdrop to the south.

### 2.6. Listed status

The building is not listed and is not considered to be listable. It is more altered than, and lacks some of the good internal detailing of Mauger's earlier meeting house at Bromley (*qv*).

### 2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

No information is available, but this is likely to be low. The site was previously farmland, although a sewer is known to run through it.

## **Part 3: Current use and management**

*See completed volunteer survey*

### **3.1. Condition**

- i) Meeting House: Good
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): N/a

### **3.2. Maintenance**

A QIR carried out in 2012 found the meeting house generally to be in sound/good condition, although it might be added that the appearance of the meeting room is now a little shabby. Following the QIR's recommendations, works have included a new kitchen, an accessible WC, new flooring in the hallway and public lobby area and redecoration of the warden's flat. Works remaining outstanding include repairs to the porch and redecoration of the meeting room.

### **3.3. Sustainability**

The Meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit. Measures to reduce environmental impact include the provision of solar panels in 2014. The meeting room has double-glazed windows and secondary glazing. Rubbish is recycled as far as possible. There is no secure parking for bicycles. The meeting is accessible by public transport (bus and train) and the Meeting has the use of a car parking area at the back (but does not own it).

### **3.4. Amenities**

The Meeting considers that it has the facilities it needs. These include meeting spaces, a kitchen and WCs. There is a resident warden in the first floor flat.

### **3.5. Access**

An access audit was carried out in 2002. There is step-free access into and circulation around the meeting house, a WC suitable for disabled people and a hearing loop. No special provision has been made for partially-sighted people.

### **3.6 Community Use**

Average attendance at Meetings for Worship is 15, and Friends use the meeting house and its facilities for about three hours each week. The meeting house is let to third parties for about 40 out of a possible 70 hours each week. A lettings policy is in preparation. Users cite the good location, reasonable price, availability of parking and the good condition of the rooms.

### **3.7. Vulnerability to crime**

There are no reported incidents of crime or antisocial behaviour. The meeting house is stated to be in an area with low levels of crime and social deprivation.

### **3.8. Plans for change**

None.

## **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 adaptable to change as required, subject to the normal planning and building controls. There are no heritage constraints.

*ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use:* The building is already put to community use, and there would be no heritage constraints if further works were required to increase this.

*iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House:* The classroom/warden's flat would lend itself easily to residential use. Conversion of the meeting house may be less straightforward, and redevelopment of this part of the site is perhaps more likely (subject to planning).

**Part 5: Category: 4**