

Friends Meeting House, Southampton

1A Ordnance Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO15 2AZ

National Grid Reference: SU 42111 12766



Statement of Significance

As a purpose-built and little altered urban Victorian meeting house, the building has medium heritage significance.

Evidential value

The meeting house was built in 1884 on the site of an eighteenth-century garden outside the historic city centre. It has low evidential value.

Historical value

The building was constructed by a local builder who developed the street with houses. It forms part of the Victorian expansion of Southampton to the north of the historic centre. The meeting house has medium historical value.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house was built in the style of nonconformist chapels and retains its original double-height meeting room. It has medium aesthetic value.

Communal value

The meeting house is well used by both the local Quaker meeting and the local community. It has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Hampshire & Islands*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0002990*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Southampton City Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *City of Southampton NPA*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Locally 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): *1884*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Edward Sandon*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *15 July 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Johanna Roethe*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Marilyn Cox*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *cottage to rear, detached burial ground in The Avenue*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 237-240
Sibley, L. (ed.), *A history of Quakers in Southampton 1660-1900*, 2015
Southampton HER, Monument Record MSH3131 for Burial Ground
Southampton HER, Monument Record MSH3506 for Meeting House
Local Meeting survey by Marilyn Cox, June 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

From 1660, Quakers in Southampton met in private houses or rented accommodation. The first purpose-built meeting house was erected in 1705 on a site in Castle Lane (now the site of the former County Court built in the 1850s). This was altered in 1729 to provide living accommodation for a Friend. It was let in 1785 and sold in 1795. Following the sale, Quakers met again in a rented room. In 1811, the second purpose-built meeting house opened at either St Michael's Square or in nearby Simnel Street and Pepper Alley. This was sold in c.1822, when a new meeting house opened in Castle Square (builder: Henry Roe).

In 1884, this was replaced by the current meeting house in Ordnance Road, which was built by Edward Sandon, a builder and developer who also built houses in the same street. The cost of the building was £830. In 1892, the cottage to the rear of the site was built for £170. In 1984, alterations were made, including enlarging the lobby and providing additional toilets. Recent work includes the provision of a kitchen unit in the lobby.

In 1662, a burial ground was bought in Winchester Road (now The Avenue). In 1671, the first recorded burial took place. In 1841, the burial ground was enlarged by adding a plot of equal size to the rear. A burial plan of 1854 (original in the Hampshire Record Office) shows the layout, largely as now. Part of the boundary walls and gate piers have recently been rebuilt following damage by tree roots, retaining the carved stones with the date 'AD 1662' and 'Society of Friends Burial Ground'.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house was built in 1884 by the local builder and developer Edward Sandon. In 1984, a two-storey toilet block was added at the northeast. The materials are yellow brick for the front (north) and return elevations, and red brick (with bands of yellow brick) for the side elevations. The original slate roof has been replaced with concrete tiles, while retaining decorative ridge tiles. The meeting house is a T-plan, with the entrance lobby, stairwell and former gallery in the two-storey crossbar and the full-height meeting house to the rear. The main roof is pitched, while the rooms behind the street elevation have a hipped roof. The north elevation has a gabled centre bay flanked by slightly recessed outer bays. The wall strips between the different bays are rusticated at ground floor level and the two centre ones have capitals at eaves level. At the centre is the main entrance in a double-recessed arch with hoodmould and brick voussoirs, flanked by tall oblong windows also with brick voussoirs and similar windows in the outer bays. Above the ground floor is a flush stone band. Below the three arched first floor windows in the centre bay is a panel with the lettering 'FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE.' The outer bays have pairs of segmental-arched windows. The gable has a moulded capping and a quatrefoil window in a brick circular opening under a hoodmould. The apex of the gable has a short finial or pedestal. Little is visible of the side and rear elevations. The east elevation of the meeting room has a band of yellow bricks following the shape of the pairs of segmental-arched windows.

A lobby gives access to a room with a kitchen unit and the disabled toilet to the west, and the stairwell, further toilets and the side entrance to the east. The meeting room is a tall space with a timber dado and a timber floor. The roof is ceiled above the collar beams which are connected to the rafters by curved knee-braces. The south wall has a blocked rose window which reputedly at some point held coloured glass (later replaced by clear glass) and which was blocked when the adjoining cottage was constructed. Above the entrance is a cantilevered former gallery with its original shutters permanently down and no longer in use. There is a fire exit in the west wall. The staircase in the northeast corner has been replaced, probably in 1984 when the toilet extension was added. The former gallery on the first floor has a Victorian mantelpiece (blocked). On the landing there are further toilets.

2.3 Loose furnishings

There are several identical timber benches in the meeting room and the former gallery, of unknown date. (The original ministers' and elders' stand was removed in the 1970s.)

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

Not applicable

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is located in a residential street close to the offices and shops in London Road. The south side of Ordnance Road has yellow brick Victorian terrace houses contemporary with the meeting house; the north side has red brick semi-detached and detached Victorian houses. The street is named after the former offices of the Ordnance Survey, parts of which remain to the west of Ordnance Road. Attached to the south of the meeting house is the cottage of 1892, a two-storey structure in red brick under a hipped roof. This is accessed by a gated alley to the east of the meeting house, leading to the cottage and a small garden (photo top right). It was built for a caretaker or warden but is now let to students (under management by Progressive Lettings).

The burial ground of 1662 is located about 500m further north on the corner of the Avenue with Brighton Road (NGR: SU 41996 13282). It is still in use for burials.

2.6. Listed status

The meeting is not listed but is appropriately included on the council's Local List. It is not considered to be a candidate for statutory listing.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

Ordnance Road was laid out in the 1880s on part of the former gardens of Bellevue House (built 1768, demolished 1886). The site is located to the north of the Saxon and later medieval walled town of Southampton. It is located in a Local Area of Archaeological Potential (no. 8: City Centre and Itchen). The site has high archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

- i) Meeting House: Good.
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): *Not applicable*

3.2. Maintenance

The meeting has sufficient funds to maintain and repair the building. It has a 5-year maintenance and repair plan. The most recent quinquennial inspection took place in June 2014 (Cranes of Chichester, chartered surveyors). It found only minor defects requiring repair and monitoring. The external passage to the cottage to the rear requires redecoration and tidying of storage spaces. Some of the recommendations of the QI report have been acted on, others are being discussed, especially the proposed double- or secondary glazing.

3.3. Sustainability

It is not known if there is an EPC for the cottage as the letting is managed by Progressive Lettings (who may have a copy). The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit but has implemented measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include:

- **Climate change & energy efficiency:** In 2012, the firm Parity prepared a Home Energy Masterplan for the meeting house. Its recommendations are being considered and gradually implemented. The boiler has been changed.
- **Resource use, recycling & waste management:** this is being regularly updated and improved.
- **Building maintenance & refurbishment:** various options for double or secondary glazing are being considered, while preserving the historic character of the building and its timber sashes.

- Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: ecological considerations play a role in the maintenance of the burial ground.
- Transport: some time ago, a survey was undertaken among Friends to establish their use of transport to the meeting house. This may be repeated in the near future.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has access to all the required amenities, including meeting space, toilets and kitchens. These are all in the meeting house. There is no resident warden.

The meeting house is accessible by public transport. There is no on-site parking but on Sundays, on-street parking is available (metered at other times) as well as a nearby car park.

3.5. Access

In general the meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities. There is a ramp to the front entrance (but not to the side entrance), a hearing loop and an accessible toilet. There is no lift to the upper floor and facilities for partially-sighted people are under consideration. The meeting has not conducted a Disability Access Audit.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for about 9 hours per week. The meeting house is available for lettings on weekday evenings (about 15 hours per week), which is fully taken up. The meeting has a lettings policy. It uses a lettings firm and all applications are vetted by the Premises Committee. Each application is assessed individually. People use the meeting house due to its central and quiet location, the competitive fee, and its atmosphere.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There is no sign of general crime or anti-social activity at the site. Recent heritage crime includes the theft of copper piping (which was replaced in UPVC). Among reported incidents was the petty theft from the cloakroom during a meeting. The locality is generally well-cared for, has low crime levels, some deprivation and high community confidence. The meeting has developed a liaison with the local neighbourhood policing team.

3.8. Plans for change

Among future plans for the meeting house is the installation of double or secondary glazing. The various options are explored at the moment, which would retain the timber sash windows and the historic character of the building, while reducing draughts and improving energy efficiency.

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 or extended in a sympathetic way. The meeting room should be retained unaltered, as should historic features such as the shutters to the former gallery. The options for double or secondary glazing need to be carefully considered to reduce the impact on the historic fabric and the special character of the building.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: The meeting house has all the facilities it currently needs for community use, most of them on the ground floor which is accessible to all. This should obviate any alterations in future.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting: Should the use by the local meeting cease, the building could continue in community use which would preserve the full-height meeting room intact. Residential conversion would probably require extensive subdivision and internal alterations which should be the last resort.

Part 5: Category: 3