

Friends Meeting House, Spalding

53 Westlode Street, Spalding, PE11 2AE

National Grid Reference: TF 25047 22893



Statement of Significance

The meeting house was built in 1805 on part of a burial ground dating from 1698. The building was re-fronted and altered internally in 1965 and a new building added alongside in 1966, all under the direction of Quaker architect Hubert Lidbetter. The building still retains something of its original character and is of high heritage significance.

Evidential value

The late seventeenth century burial ground is still in use, the building still contains elements of the original early nineteenth century structures and overall the site is of high evidential value.

Historical value

Though the early nineteenth century meeting house was much altered in the 1960s with a new building of that date attached, the site has been used by Quakers since the late seventeenth century and is of high historical value.

Aesthetic value

The red brick rear elevation of the building to Westlode Street is attractive and contributes positively to the character of the Conservation Area. The re-fronted south elevation to the burial ground also has some quality. The interior has lost most of its original character. Overall, the building is of medium aesthetic value.

Communal value

The site has been in continuous occupation by Quakers since 1698 and the present building has been in use since 1805 and has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Lincolnshire*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0032070*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *South Holland District Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *East Midlands*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Spalding*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II*
- 1.8 NHLE: *1063972*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Spalding*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1805; 1965*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Not established; Hubert Lidbetter*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *12 February 2016*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Andrew James*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*

1.18 Attached burial ground: Yes

1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol.1 pp.368-9.

Stell Christopher, *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting houses in Eastern England*, English Heritage, 2002. pp.223.

Lincolnshire HER number 25121-ML194262.

Local Meeting Survey by Andrew James, January 2016

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

2.1. Historical background

In 1698 Friends bought two cottages in Double Street and altered the buildings to make a meeting house, using the gardens as a burial ground. The old buildings were demolished c1805 and a new meeting house was built at the far end of the burial ground next to Westlode Street over some existing graves. In 1965 the meeting house was completely overhauled (fig.2). The south side was re-fronted, the windows all renewed and the interior refurbished. The work was done at the cost of Henry and Christine Burt and under the direction of the Quaker architect Hubert Lidbetter (possibly his last job). At the same time a new building was erected next to the meeting house to contain a social room for the meeting with a flat for a warden above. Lidbetter usually preserved early fittings but the internal works seem to have been very destructive. It is possible that there was another phase of internal alteration to the meeting house subsequent to 1965. Butler shows panelling and shutters to the south side of the meeting room (fig.1) which no longer exist. This suggests that the shutters and perhaps other original fittings may have been preserved by Lidbetter but later removed, although no records have been found for any such work.

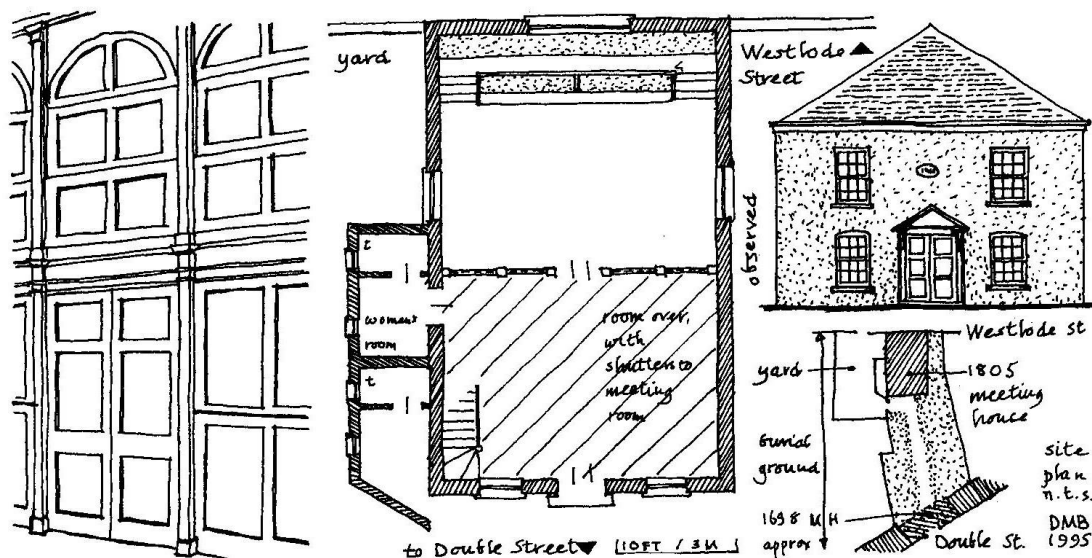


Fig.1 The original plan (centre) and elevation (top right), with the site plan (bottom right). The timber screen shown left is no longer extant. North is to the top of the plan. Butler 1999 vol.1 p.369.



Fig.2 The meeting house during the 1966 refurbishment (Meeting House collection)

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house built in 1805 is rectangular on plan. The north (rear) wall to Westlode Street and the longer east and west side walls are of red brick laid in a garden wall bond. The main south front to the burial ground was originally rendered but was re-faced in Stamford green bricks in 1965. The original hipped slated roof was replaced in 1965 by a roof with swept eaves and a covering of tiles. The south front is two storeys high and three bays wide and has a central doorway with an open pedimented hood flanked by segment-headed windows with modern small-paned sashes. Above the door is the original datestone of 1805 with a second stone inscribed 'RESTORED 1965' with similar windows to those below. The side walls each have a single window opening with a modern segment head. The north wall has a single semi-circular window at the wall-head. Inside the meeting house the original room divisions survive but all the finishes and fittings are modern. The meeting room has varnished vertical boarding to the side and end walls and the stand which stretched across the north end wall has been removed. The space under the gallery is divided from the main meeting room by modern varnished timber shutters and the stair to the gallery is modern. The gallery space itself is divided from the main meeting by a plastered partition. There is no sign of the panelled partition with opening shutters shown in David Butler's drawing (fig.1).

Linked to the south west corner of the meeting house is two-storey neo-Georgian addition of 1966, built to contain a community room on the ground floor with a warden's flat above. The building has recently been converted into two self-contained flats.

2.3. Loose furnishings

The fittings include some timber benches both painted and unpainted, with open backs and turned uprights, dated by Stell to the early nineteenth century. There is also a handsome oak table, probably of seventeenth century date.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

The burial ground to the south of the meeting house was acquired in 1698. In the meeting house is a plan of the burial ground dated 1805, showing the location of burials and the outline of the new meeting house building. The burial ground is now laid to grass, the boundaries marked by modern walls and hedges and with the grave markers ranged along the boundaries. The iron railings and gates to Double Street may be early nineteenth century, but are set on modern dwarf walls of brick.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting.

The rear of the meeting house fronts directly onto Westlode Street, a wide thoroughfare west of the High Street and the river, lined with a mixture of modest two-storey eighteenth century houses and more modern commercial properties. Immediately opposite is the Police station. In Double Street, the burial ground forms a break in a continuous terrace of small dwellings.

2.6. Listed status

The Meeting House is properly listed at Grade II. The short list description could be enlarged and enhanced.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The site lies on the edge of the centre of Spalding and should be considered as being of medium archaeological potential. The site is on Lincolnshire HER, number 25121-ML194262.

Part 3: Current use and management

3.1. Condition

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

3.2. Maintenance

The Meeting abandoned Quinquennial Inspections in 2010 in favour of annual inspections by the Area Meeting Property Adviser who is a qualified architect. Since 2012 the meeting house has been refurbished and the former community room and warden's flat in the 1966 annexe have been converted into two self-contained flats for rent. Total expenditure on the building since 2012 has been approximately £50,000, from Area Meeting. There is enough money to repair and maintain the meeting house. The meeting does not have a 5-year maintenance plan, but an annual review of needs.

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit, but has implemented measures to reduce its environmental impact, though these have been restricted by listed building controls.

- new insulation has been installed in the roofs of the main meeting room and social room and in the ceiling and walls of the kitchen and toilets.

The meeting house does not have an EPC and the meeting would not consider obtaining one.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs in the meeting house - including meeting rooms of different sizes, a well-equipped kitchen and toilets. There is no warden or resident Friend.

The meeting house is in central Spalding. There is no on-site parking but there some on-street parking nearby. Public transport is infrequent and not used by members of the meeting. There is no secure parking for bicycles.

3.5. Access

There is level access to the meeting house and throughout the ground floor, but access to the upper floor is by stairs. There is an accessible WC and a hearing loop is soon to be installed, but there are no specific facilities for partially-sighted people. A Disability Access Audit has not been carried out.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the building for about 2 hours per week. The two meeting rooms in the building are available for community lettings for a total of about 80 hours per week and are used for approximately two hour per week. The meeting does not have a lettings policy but favours activities consistent with Friends' testimonies. There is low demand for such space in Spalding, although the premises are now more attractive and use may pick up.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There has been no sign of general crime or heritage crime at the site. This part of Spalding is not particularly well cared-for and community confidence is not high but the residential presence on site probably helps to deter anti-social activity.

3.8. Plans for change

There are no plans for change to the building in the immediate future.

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 interior of the building has been changed considerably from the 1960s and has been refurbished recently. There may be scope for some further limited change if required, subject to listed building constraints.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: as above, there may be scope for minor alterations, subject to listed building constraints.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: the building might find another use if the meeting were laid down, but there is little demand for such places in Spalding, especially with the constraints imposed by listed building control.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List description

Name: **FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE**

List entry Number: 1063972

FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, DOUBLE STREET

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

County/District	District Type	Parish
Lincolnshire	South Holland District Authority	

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 29-Dec-1950

List entry Description

DOUBLE STREET 1. 5313 (West Side) Friends' Meeting House TF 2421 1/70 29.12.50. II GV

2. Originally 1805, completely restored 1965. 2 storeys in brick with hipped modern roof. 2 windows, slightly segmental arches, modern glazing bars. Central double doors with simple moulded open pediment. Small burial ground in front and contemporary railings to street.

Nos 34, 35 Friends' Meeting House form a group.

Listing NGR: TF2505222902

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: TF 25052 22902