

## ***Friends Meeting House, Staines & Egham***

*9 Limes Road, Egham, TW20 9QT*

*National Grid Reference: TQ 00737 71179*



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

***An interwar suburban bungalow adapted for Quaker use in the 1970s, of overall low significance.***

#### ***Evidential value***

***The building was not designed as a meeting house, and is of low evidential value. However, the benches and headstones brought here from previous local meeting houses are of high evidential value.***

#### ***Historical value***

***This is the successor to three meeting houses in Staines, the earliest of which was built in 1714, but Quakers have only met for worship here since the 1970s. The building dates from the 1920s, and is of low historical value.***

#### ***Aesthetic value***

***The building is an attractive interwar design, which retains much of its original character, and while not of particular architectural significance, is of medium aesthetic value.***

#### ***Communal value***

***The meeting house is well used by local community groups, although its small size, limited parking and location in a residential street limits the scope for this. It is of medium communal value.***

## **Part 1: Core data**

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *London West*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0008680*
- 1.3 Owner: *Friends Trusts Ltd*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Runnymede Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Egham 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): *1920s; c1973*
- 1.13 Architect(s): *Original architect unknown; conversion by H. and H. M. Lidbetter*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *21 September 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Andrew Derrick*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Diana Wilson*
- 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. 418-9; Vol. 2, p. 587  
Lidbetter, H., *The Friends Meeting House*, 1979, pl. XLIV  
Local Meeting Survey, by Diana Wilson, June 2015  
Local Meeting, notes on QIR, 2011

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

### **2.1 Historical background**

The first Quaker Meeting in Staines was in 1685. The site of an old barn was bought in 1712, and a meeting house seating about 200 on the ground floor was built two years later. In 1765 land behind Church Street was given and a separate burial ground created.

In 1844 a new, larger meeting house with attached burial ground was built in a prominent location on the High Street, a fine neoclassical design by Samuel Dawkes (figure 1). Too large for twentieth century requirements, this was sold in 1935 and demolished about three years later. Part of the burial ground was retained, along with sufficient land at the back of the site for a new, smaller meeting house, a simple prefabricated timber hut built in 1937 (figure 2).

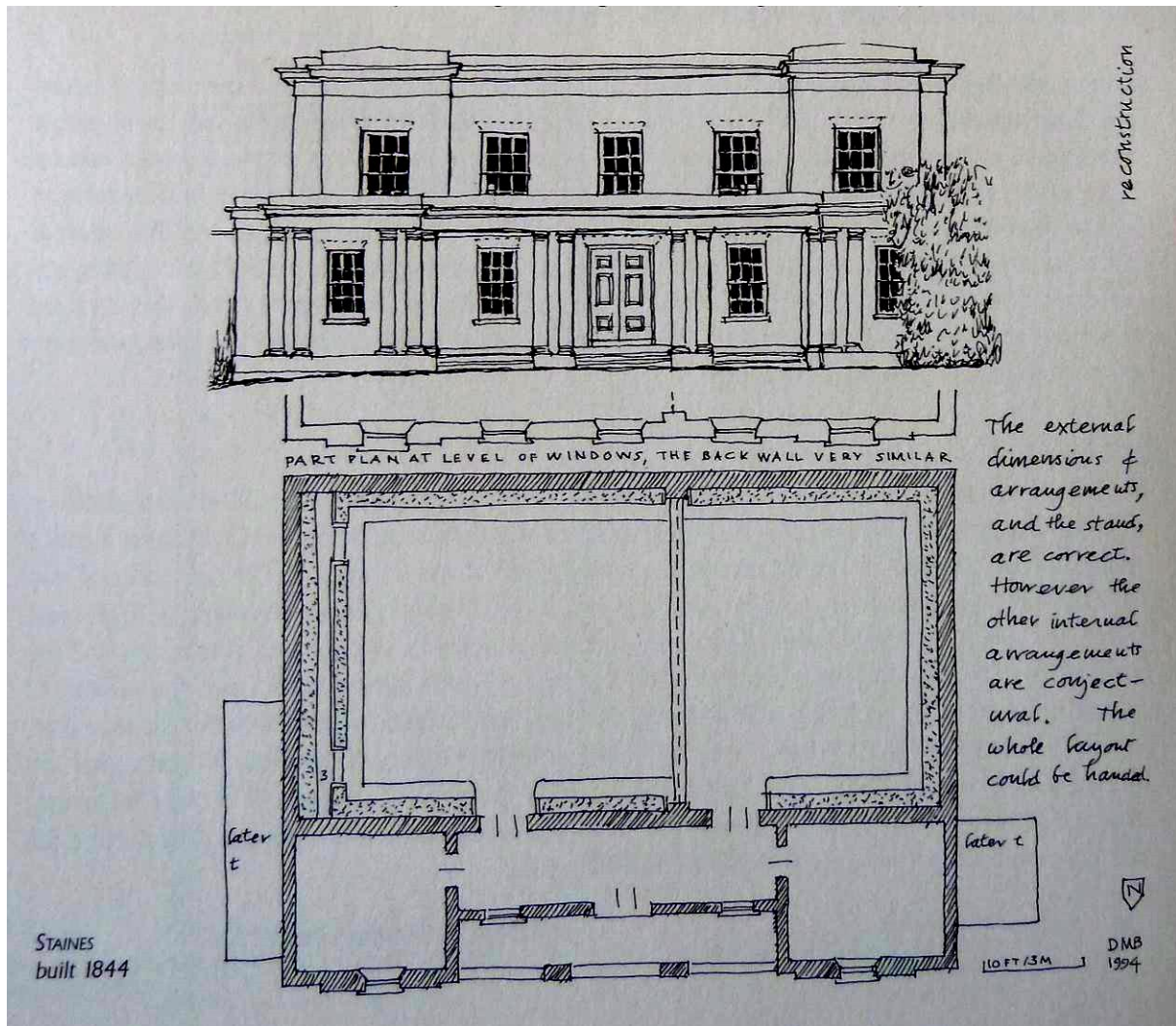


Figure 1: Plan and elevation of the 1844 Staines Meeting House (from Butler Vol. 1, p. 418)

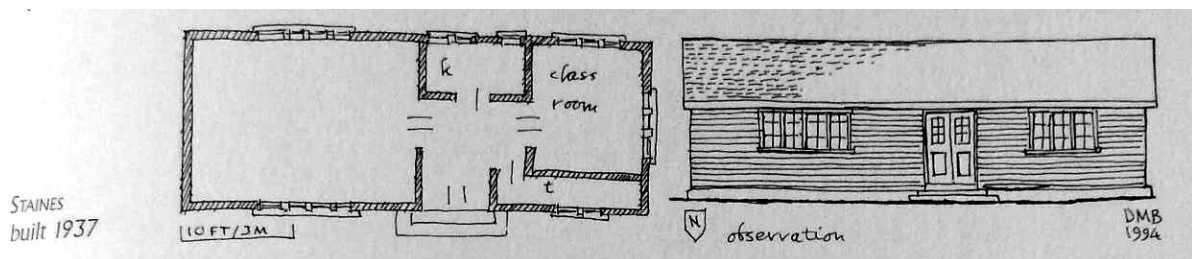


Figure 2: Plan and elevation of the 1937 Staines Meeting House (from Butler Vol. 1, p. 419)

In 1973 the whole of the High Street site was redeveloped, requiring the re-interment of eighty-three burials at Jordans. Some of the headstones were re-set alongside the flank wall of the replacement meeting house, an interwar bungalow across the Thames at Egham which was acquired for £12,700. It was adapted by Hubert Lidbetter's son Martin Lidbetter who continued the firm of H. & H. M. Lidbetter.

## 2.2 The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The building is a bungalow of the interwar period (probably 1920s), adapted for Quaker use in c1973. It is built of red brick, with a prominent pyramidal tile roof, brick stacks and multi-pane timber casement windows. The front entrance is at the side, and there is a further door

onto the garden at the rear. A large room at the back of the house serves as the main meeting room.

### 2.3 Loose furnishings

There are several benches from the 1844 meeting house (examples in photo lower right at top of report). There is also a wall inscription recording the names of forty-one Friends (the Ashby family figuring prominently) whose remains were re-interred at Jordans in 1973, as well as framed photographs of the 1844 and 1937 meeting houses, and a pastel drawing of a meeting in the 1937 building.

### 2.4 Attached burial ground (if any)

There is no attached burial ground, but six headstones from the Staines burial ground (in use from 1849 to 1944) are reset against the flank wall of the bungalow (see example in photo lower left).

### 2.5 The meeting house in its wider setting

The building lies within a street of suburban housing, leading off Egham High Street. It has a small front garden, a drive at the side and a larger L-shaped back garden incorporating a parking area.

### 2.6 Listed status

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

### 2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

Low.

## **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 building is well maintained. Following a QIR in 2011, the tile roof has been renewed and the building externally redecorated.

### 3.3 Sustainability

The Meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit. Electricity supplier is Ovo. Recent energy efficiency measures have included improved roof insulation and draught exclusion, and the use of heavy curtains. Local authority recycling arrangements are followed. There is a wildlife reserve at the end of the garden. The meeting house is close to public transport, but most attenders drive. There is no secure parking for bicycles.

### 3.4 Amenities

The Meeting considers that it has the amenities it needs, including two meeting rooms, a modern kitchen and WCs.

### 3.5 Access

The meeting house is accessible for people with disabilities. There is a ramp with handrail at the main entrance, and level internal circulation. An accessible WC and hearing loop are provided. Proposals for improved signs are in hand.

### 3.6 Community Use

The building is used by Friends for about three hours each week. Other groups use it for 130 out of a potential 250 hours. There is a lettings policy, and users have to be well behaved and have compatible values. Users cite the good location with off-street parking, and the warm, quiet and well-priced accommodation.

### 3.7 Vulnerability to crime

The meeting has not experienced crime. This is an area of low crime and deprivation. Any incidents would be reported to police.

### 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 said to meet the current needs of the local Meeting. There may be scope for extension at the rear if required (subject to planning). The furnishings and items relating to the former meeting houses are a point of continuity which should be respected in any future changes.

*ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use:* The building is already well used by the wider community, and similar considerations would apply.

*iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House:* The building could very readily revert to its original residential use.

## **Part 5: Category: 4**