

Friends Meeting House, Winchmore Hill

59 Church Hill, Winchmore Hill, London, N21 1LE

National Grid Reference: TQ 31295 94657



Statement of Significance

A meeting house of 1790/91, probably designed by John Bevans and probably built on the site of an earlier meeting house. The meeting house is attached to an extensive burial ground established in 1682. The building has been enlarged and the main meeting room has been altered but still preserves something of its original character. The site as a whole is of high heritage significance.

Evidential value

The building stands on an earlier site and is of medium evidential value.

Historical value

A reasonably well-preserved example of a late eighteenth-century Quaker meeting house with a large burial ground established in the 1680s, all of high historical value.

Aesthetic value

The exterior of the original building is attractive, but its original character has been somewhat altered by later alterations and. The building is of medium aesthetic value.

Communal value

The present meeting house has been used by Quakers continuously since 1791, and more recently has been well-used by other local community groups. The building has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *North London*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0006120*

1.3 Owner: *Six Weeks Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *London Borough of Enfield*

1.5 Historic England locality: *London*

1.6 Civil parish: *Enfield LPA*

1.7 Listed status: *II*

1.8 NHLE: *1359012*

1.9 Conservation Area: *Winchmore Hill*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *1790*

1.13 Architect (s): *the builder is named as John Bevan. This was probably John Bevans, a Quaker builder and surveyor of Plaistow, who also designed the Devonshire House meeting houses in the City of London (1789-demolished), and the meeting houses at Guildford (1805-6) and Derby (1808).*

1.14 Date of visit: *22 October 2015*

1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Neil Macindoe*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *former warden's cottage adjacent to the meeting house, built in 1911(and now let to tenants); the brick boundary walls of the attached burial ground are listed grade II in their own right (see list description at section 6 below).*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*

1.19 Information Sources:

Beck, W. & Ball, T.F., *The London Friends' Meetings showing the rise of the Society of Friends in London*, 1869, pp. 299-301

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol.1, p. 433-4

Colvin, Howard, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840*, 4th edn. 2008, p.123

King, A., *An Account of the Winchmore Hill Meeting*, 1957

Olver, David, *A History of Quakerism at Winchmore Hill*, 2002

Stell, C, *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in Eastern England*, 2002, pp.81-82

Local Meeting survey by Neil Macindoe, November 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

A Meeting was in existence at Winchmore Hill by c1662. The present site was given by John Oakley in 1682 for use as a burial ground. On the site stood a thatched barn and a dwelling house occupied by Oakley and his wife. Oakley died in 1684 and on the death of his wife Elizabeth in 1687 whole property passed to Friends. The barn was adapted as a Meeting House in 1688 but was also used as a dwelling for a tenant. The house was let to provide income for the poor of the meeting. In 1787 it was recorded that both the meeting house and the wall enclosing the burial ground were ruinous. In 1790/91 a new meeting house was built on the site of the old one, with a doorkeeper's dwelling attached at the rear. In 1796 a schoolroom and lobby were added in a side wing and in 1809 a washroom, which was later used as a kitchen. In 1911 the caretaker was re-housed in a new cottage next to the meeting house and the accommodation at the rear of the original building was adapted and enlarged to provide cloakrooms. The architect for this work was L. Sutton Wood. The cottage was enlarged in 1980 and is now let to tenants. A conservatory forming a passageway to the cloakrooms was built in 1987 as part of a major renovation, for which the architect was John Marsh. In recent years the problem of building subsidence has been addressed and further refurbishment is ongoing.

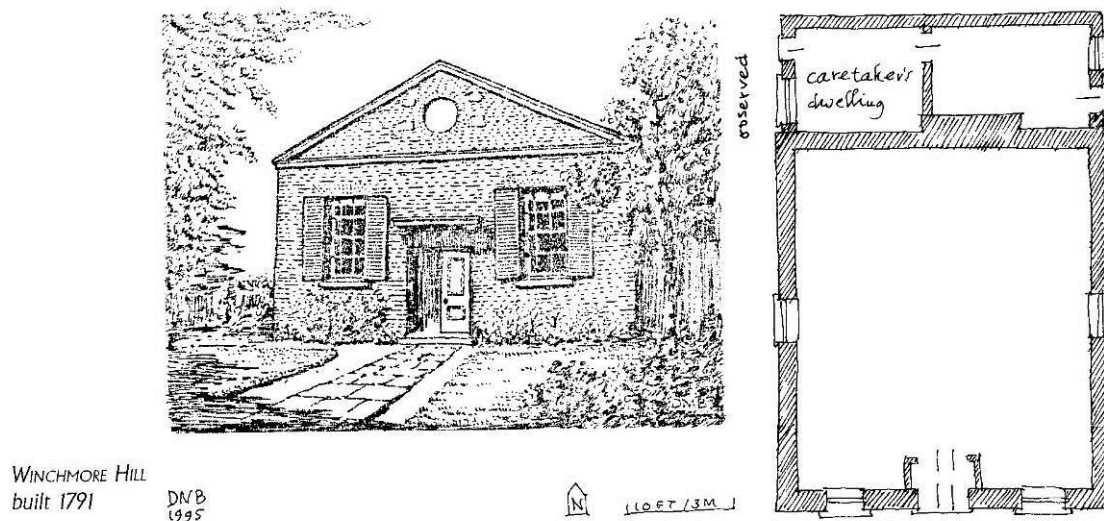


Fig.1 Main front and original ground plan of the building, *Butler* vol.1, p.434

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixture

The meeting house is rectangular on plan and has walls of stock brick, with a shallow-pitched roof covered in Welsh slate. The south-facing entrance front is of three bays with a central entrance under a stone hood on stone brackets, flanked by pair of straight-headed sash windows with external shutters. The roof ends in a simple pediment with a blind circular recess carrying a modern painted inscription. The plain side walls each have a single sash window. The rear (north) wall is gabled. Across the width of this front is a single-storey annexe under a lean-to roof, which was originally the caretaker's accommodation. Across the front of the annexe is a single-storey flat-roofed lavatory range with four small sash windows. The former school room makes a wing to the east. It is lower than the main meeting house but has an attic lit by a large dormer window on the main front.

The interior of the meeting room has been refitted. There may have been a gallery and also possibly a stand at the north end but there is now no trace of either. The room has a plain boarded floor and a plainly-panelled dado rising to the window-cills. The east, west and south side walls have old fixed benches. The original flat plaster ceiling apparently survives but has had acoustic tiling inserted beneath.

2.3 Loose furnishings

There are some loose benches, perhaps of early twentieth-century date.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

The burial ground was opened 1682. Originally, burials were confined to the southern part of the site adjoining the road and it is known that the ground was enclosed by a wall. Throughout the eighteenth century the burial ground was much in demand, as many of the London meeting houses were located on cramped sites and had no spare land for burials. In 1821 the burial ground was extended northwards over land that had previously been let for grazing and it may have been at this date that the present brick boundary walls were built.

The earliest burials were unmarked, but later burials have the characteristic Quaker headstones – small, round-topped and bearing only the most basic information. The rows of headstones are marked by letters set in the burial ground walls.

The older part of the burial ground includes headstones for the Hoare and Barclay families, both involved in banking. Samuel Hoare junior (1751-1825) was a leading supporter of the campaign for the abolition of the slave trade. In the older part there are stones commemorating Luke Howard (1772-1860; a pioneering meteorologist, responsible for the system for classifying clouds) and Alice Hum (founder of the Palmers Green Girls High School). A stone commemorating the prominent eighteenth-century Quaker physician, John Fothergill, has been removed to the Quaker School at Ackworth, which he founded.

Poor drainage forced the end of burials in 1980, but the site continues in use for the scattering and interment of ashes.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house has a pleasant suburban setting, in a street lined with mid-twentieth-century houses.

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house and boundary wall are both properly listed at grade II. The list description is very brief and should be revised to include the interior.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The large burial ground in continuous use since the 1680s and there were already buildings on the site by that date. 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): Generally satisfactory but with significant localised problems. Part of the listed brick boundary wall collapsed recently and another part is in dangerous condition; both parts will need to be rebuilt.

3.2. Maintenance

The last quinquennial inspection was made in 2009. Many of the works recommended in the report have been carried out, including strengthening of brick walls, roof gutter repairs, increased insulation and lighting upgrades. Some works remain outstanding including an overhaul of windows and doors, refurbishment of toilets, and external painting. There are adequate funds to maintain and repair the building providing the work is phased. The meeting has a rolling programme of maintenance and repairs.

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting has used the 'Climate Impact Calculator for Quaker Meetings' and the '3 Acorns Carbon Calculator' (arranged by Six Weeks meeting) and has implemented measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include the following:

- Energy efficient boilers have been installed
- Low energy lighting has been installed
- Ceiling insulation has been increased
- Imminent window overhaul will provide for draught-stripping and replacement of single glazing with low-e secondary glazing where possible.
- Waste has been reduced and recycling supported
- Building maintenance and refurbishment contracts include clauses regarding sustainability
- Similar measures have been and will be taken for the cottage.
- Burial ground is managed sustainably, with chemical free gardening and reserved areas for wildlife habitats

The meeting house does not have an Energy Performance Certificate but the adjoining cottage does (Energy Efficiency Level 41/34; Energy Impact Level E/F).

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs, with large and small meeting rooms, one other small room, a small but adequate kitchen and adequate toilets. There is no resident warden.

Public transport is good, with Winchmore Hill railway station nearby and local buses. There is limited on-site parking, controlled street parking and secure storage for bicycles.

3.5. Access

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities. There is level access into and inside the building, an accessible WC and a hearing loop. There are facilities for partially-sighted people inside the building. A Disability Access Audit has not been carried out.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the building for approximately 2-3 hours per week. The building is notionally available for community lettings for a maximum number of 280 hours per week and is used for approximately 150 hours per week (i.e. 54%). The meeting has a lettings policy. Extreme groups and political meetings are excluded. No alcohol or gambling is allowed. Users value the convenient location, the tranquil quality of the large attached burial ground and competitive pricing.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There are some signs of general crime at the site and there has been some heritage crime. Lead was stolen from the roof four times in one year. There has been some unruly behaviour, in the street outside which was dealt with by the police. The locality is generally well cared-for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence. Friends have developed a liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

3.8. Plans for change

There are no plans for major change but refurbishment is ongoing

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: there is limited scope for significant change within the old meeting house building, which is governed by the constraint of listed building legislation, and limited scope for additions for the same reason.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: the meeting house is already very well used by the wider community, but scope for further expansion or major alteration is limited.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: the meeting house building could doubtless find an alternative community use.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List description (s)

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE

List entry Number: 1359012

Location

FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, CHURCH HILL N21

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

County District District Type Parish
Greater London Authority Enfield London Borough

Grade: II

Date first listed: 31-Jan-1974

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 200579

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Details

1. 4411 CHURCH HILL N21 (North-east Side) WINCHMORE HILL Friends' Meeting House
TQ 3194 11/84

II

2. 1790. One-storey yellow brick building with stucco dressings. Pediment over road front has tablet inscribed: "Friends Meeting House. Built 1688. Rebuilt 1790. Central double door, under bracketed cornice hood, flanked by large sash windows, with delicate glazing bars, under gauged brick arches. One similar window on each return. Domestic addition at back right.

Listing NGR: TQ3130194638

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: WALLS AROUND GRAVEYARD OF FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE

List entry Number: 1078911

Location

WALLS AROUND GRAVEYARD OF FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, CHURCH HILL
N21

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

County: Greater London Authority

District: Enfield

District Type: London Borough

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 20-Nov-1973

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 200580

Details

1. 4411 CHURCH HILL (North-east Side) WINCHMORE HILL Walls around Graveyard of Friends' Meeting House TQ 3194 11/85 20.11.73.

II

2. Plain brown brick walls, late C18 or early C19, breached and repaired in places.

Listing NGR: TQ3128194728

Selected Sources

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

National Grid Reference: TQ 31281 94728