

Friends Meeting House, Woking

41 Park Road, Woking, Surrey, GU22 7DB

National Grid Reference: TQ 01537 58599



Statement of Significance

The meeting house is a detached inter-war house which was converted to Quaker use in 1965-66. It has low heritage value.

Evidential value

As a relatively recent building which was erected on a greenfield site, the meeting house has low evidential value.

Historical value

Little is known about the building's history before it was purchased by the Quakers in 1965. It has low historical value.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house is a large inter-war house which shares many features with other houses of the period. It retains a few features of interest, such as the stained glass panels, but small-scale alterations have somewhat eroded its architectural interest. It is of low aesthetic value.

Communal value

As a Quaker meeting house which is also in community use, the building has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Surrey & Hampshire Border*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0002350*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Woking Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Woking 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): *c.1930s*

1.13 Architect(s): *Not established*

1.14 Date of visit: *23 October 2015*

1.15 Name of report author: *Johanna Roethe*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Margaret Rawbone*

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. 2, p. 596

Harper, P., 'Woking Meeting House and early Woking Friends', typescript, November 2007

Rowntree, H., *Early Quakerism in Guildford and a Brief History of Past and Present Meeting Places of the Guildford 'Friends' 1673-1952, 1952,*
http://media.wix.com/ugd/1d26f3_accf291278711017b124f596e4e13bb6.pdf

Plans by Arthur Moon for the conversion of the building, 1965, local meeting archive

Local Meeting survey by Margaret Rawbone, October 2015

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

2.1 Historical background

By 1673, Quakers living in Horsell and Woking met in the house of William Constable at Horsell. In the 1930s, meetings were held at the house of Charles Robson in Horsell. After the Second World War, meetings were held in Woking, in the Red Cross hut and from 1959 at the YMCA in Bath Road. The purchase of a meeting house was first proposed in 1957-8, and the present building was bought in 1965 for about £8,000. The building probably dates from the 1930s. (It is first shown on the 1936 Ordnance Survey map.) It was altered for £2,000 to create a meeting room for 60, a classroom and an upstairs flat (architect: Arthur Moon). The meeting house opened in 1966. In 2000, the flat was refurbished. At the time of the visit (October 2015), works to reconfigure the toilets and kitchen were underway.

2.2 The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The entrance elevation faces southeast. The two-storey house has a short T-plan with two gable roofs. The materials are brick laid in stretcher bond, with a rendered first floor, and a tiled roof. Most windows and doors have been replaced in UPVC. The southwest elevation (photo top left, p. 1) has two two-storey canted bay windows with tile-hanging between the floors. The entrance (southeast) elevation has a brick chimneystack against the gable and a lean-to canopy over two entrances, which include the original timber door with a stained glass panel as well as a UPVC door. There are two first-floor windows above: one of UPVC, the other original and repeating the stained glass motif. The northwest elevation has another gable end with a chimneystack, beside a door under a bracketed hood, as well as three

ground floor windows and two first floor windows. The northeast elevation has another chimneystack, a door and an upstairs window.

The two ground-floor rooms with bay windows were combined into one meeting room in 1965-66 and the fireplaces blocked. The staircase is at the centre of the plan. The rear wing comprises a smaller meeting room (in the east corner) and kitchen and toilet facilities. The smaller meeting room may originally have been the kitchen, due to the size of its fireplace and the large kitchen dresser with glazed cupboards. The upstairs flat was not inspected.

2.3 Loose furnishings

There are four open-backed benches which reputedly came from the meeting house at Guildford (*qv*).

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 area of mostly inter-war and post-war houses. It is surrounded by a garden, with a gravelled drive and parking area to the front.

2.6 Listed status

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

2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

The house was built on a greenfield site which is considered to have low 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

Information not received

3.3 Sustainability

The meeting uses the Sustainability Toolkit. It has implemented measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include:

- Climate change & energy efficiency: double glazing, energy efficient boiler
- Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: planting of two apple trees, composting, water butt

The meeting does not have an Energy Performance Certificate.

3.4 Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs. These are all in the meeting house. There is no resident Warden.

The meeting is accessible by public transport. There is parking on site but no secure parking for bicycles.

3.5 Access

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities. There is level access into the building (with one small step) and a hearing loop. There are no facilities for partially-sighted people. An accessible toilet is currently being installed. No Disability Access Audit has been conducted.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for about 2 hours per week. The building is available for community lettings for a maximum number of 65.5 hours per week. It is used for an average of 8 hours per week. Community groups can book the meeting house in return for a donation. Users value the meeting house due to its quiet and private location and for being well-priced.

3.7 Vulnerability to crime

There are no signs of general crime or anti-social behaviour at the site. There has been no heritage crime, general crime or other incidents. The locality is generally well-cared for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence. There is currently no liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

3.8 Plans for change

Apart from the current works to the toilets and kitchen, there are no planned works.

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: Once the current works have been completed, the meeting house will have all the required facilities. It could easily be extended or altered.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: The meeting house already provides all the required facilities. Should this change, it could accommodate any required changes.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting: Should the building cease to be used as a meeting house, it could easily be re-converted to full residential use.

Part 5: Category: 4