

Friends Meeting House, Wooldale

Pell Lane, Wooldale, Holmfirth, HD9 1QL

National Grid Reference: SE 15319 09084



Statement of Significance

The Meeting House was rebuilt in 1783, incorporating material from the earlier meeting house on the site, and extended in the twentieth century. The buildings and burial ground make a positive contribution to the Wooldale Conservation Area, and the meeting house is of overall high evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.

Evidential value

The site has been in Quaker use since at least c1664 when the first known burial is recorded. A meeting house is first recorded in 1689, rebuilt in 1713,

1783, altered and extended in 1985. The building has the potential to yield further evidence about its past use and development; there is also a hearse house, modern extensions and an outbuilding. Both the meeting house and the burial ground have high evidential value.

Historical value

The meeting house and burial ground have high historic value. The meeting room retains its historic internal layout, as well as high quality joinery dating from the eighteenth century including the folding shutters of the gallery and division of the Elders bench.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house, the adjoining hearse house, outbuilding and stone boundary wall, collectively make a positive contribution to the townscape of the Conservation Area. The interior of the meeting house has been altered, but the meeting room retains nineteenth century fittings including the gallery shutters. The extension of 1985 is sympathetic to the simple form of the meeting house. The burial ground is lined with simple flat gravestones which adds to the aesthetic value of the site. Overall, the meeting house and the burial ground have high aesthetic value.

Communal value

The Meeting house has high communal value as a building in use by Quakers since 1783. The building now provides a local community focus and its facilities are used by different groups.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Central Yorkshire*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0003990*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Kirklees Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *Yorkshire*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Holme Valley*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II*
- 1.8 NHLE: *1134802*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Wooldale*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1783; 1985*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Not established; E. Austen Johnson of Huddersfield*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *11 July 2016*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Emma Neil*

1.16 Name of contact made on site: *David Bower*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Outbuilding in use as a children's room.*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*

1.19 Information sources:

Bower, D. and Knight, J., *Plain Country Friends: Quakers of Wooldale, High Flatts and Midhope*, 1987.

Bower, D., *Wooldale Friends Meeting House Some Historical Notes*, 1994

Bower, D., *Local Meeting Survey*, March 2016

Butler, M.D., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. II, pp. 842-843.

Roberts, H.E., *Researching Yorkshire Quaker History: A Guide to Sources*, University of Hull, 2003, pp. 75 <http://hullhistorycentre.org.uk/quaker/quakerguide.pdf>

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

2.1. Historical background

Quakers in Wooldale in the seventeenth century included Thomas Ellis, who is believed to be the first person to have been converted to Quakerism in the area, the Broadhead family and Henry Jackson who was one of the First Publishers of Truth and known to William Dewsbury. Local Friends were part of a Meeting known as Denby and Hoyland from 1665, however, meetings were held at Henry Jackson's home, Totties Hall, from 1682-1684 until at least 1714. The present burial ground was conveyed to Friends by Robert Broadhead in 1673 but burial records indicate that burials were taking place from at least 1664.

Bower and Knight (1987) have undertaken research to identify the origins of Wooldale and it appears that meetings were either taking place in a building located on the present site or in properties in the surrounding area including a cottage in Lower Townend Road or Pell Croft. According to the Yorkshire Quaker Heritage project, there was a meeting house in Pell Lane from 1689. A new meeting house is noted in the records for Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting in 1713, probably a rebuilding of an earlier structure; Henry Jackson conveyed the building to trustees in 1715. Against the north of the building a hearse house was built at a cost of £9 15s 9d. In 1783, the meeting house was subject to extensive change; the building was raised in height by five courses and walls were rebuilt (south and west walls), but the meeting house retained late seventeenth century fabric. By 1900, the interior of the meeting house was remodelled with the insertion of a screen separating the entrance hall from the main room and the entrance was relocated from the centre window to its present location. At this date a boiler house was constructed to the north (this was demolished in 1976).

At the beginning of the twentieth century the meeting house was in use as an Adult School up until 1921. The next phase of change to the building was the 1970s; the roof was replaced in 1976-77, and the kitchen modernised. During the 1980s the outbuilding to the south west of the site was converted for use as a children's room and a new linear extension was built to accommodate toilet facilities, constructed in 1985 designed by E. Austen Johnson of Huddersfield. During this phase of work, it was discovered that the west gable wall had been rebuilt during the eighteenth century; the wall comprises over sailing courses and pieces of former gravestones had been used as window lintels.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

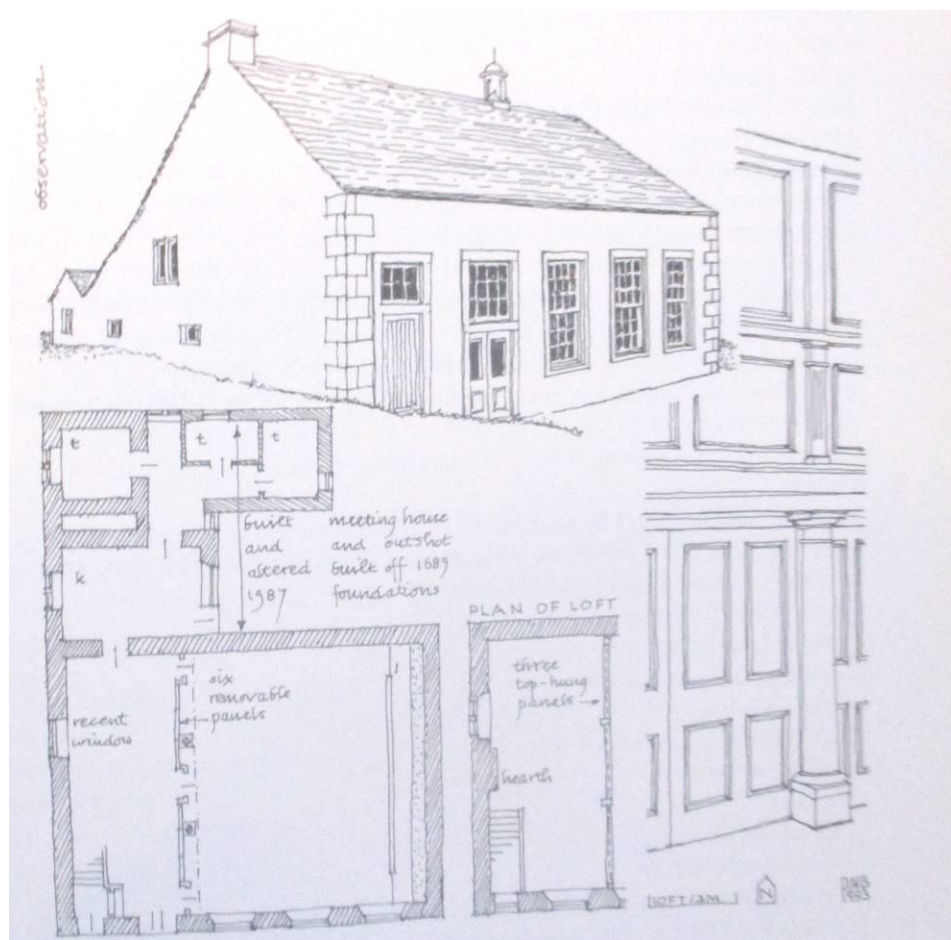


Figure 1: Ground floor plan (not to scale) and perspective
(Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 2, p. 843)

The meeting house is primarily a building of 1783 but incorporates fabric from an earlier meeting house built in the late seventeenth century and rebuilt c.1713. The meeting house is L-plan and built using hammer dressed sandstone with quoins. The pitched roof covered in slate, has a stone chimney stack to the west and just off centre is a ventilation tower. The main entrance faces south and the 5-bay elevation has three bays of 24-paned windows to the eastern side and two entrances to the west with transom lights. The east gable end is blind and the west gable has a two light mullioned window lighting the gallery, and an inserted window of c1900 lighting the space below. To the rear, the north wall is reportedly of seventeenth century date and has a now infilled window opening; to the western end of this elevation is a lean-to formerly in use as a hearse house. The east elevation of this structure has a door opening and 16-pane window with stone lintel across the length and to the west a small 2-light window. Adjoining the north elevation is the linear range constructed in 1985 to accommodate toilet facilities built in stone, designed by E. Austen Johnson of Huddersfield.

Internally, the entrance leads into a large foyer area which provides access to the gallery above, the main meeting room and the ancillary facilities. The foyer contains an early seventeenth century headstone and a series of hat pegs. The meeting room is arranged with the Elders' stand at the east end and gallery to the west; this is supported on two stone Tuscan columns, with folding shutters at gallery level and sliding shutters at lower level

dating from 1783. The walls are lined with vertical tongue and groove panelling to dado level, the upper walls are largely plastered and the pine floors are covered in carpet. The gallery has a sloping pine floor and rows of fixed plain benches. Walls are plain plastered except for the east wall which has folding shutters. The gallery can be accessed externally by the entrance within the first bay or internally from a doorway within the foyer area. Stone steps lead to the gallery space and the room is lined with horizontal tongue and groove panelling; the shutters to the east have been overpainted. To the north the former hearse house and the range constructed in 1985 accommodate toilet and kitchen facilities with modern fittings and fixtures.

2.3. Loose furnishings

The foyer contains a table with inkwells associated with the building's use as an Adult School at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the meeting room is a centre table by Alan Grainger c.1970s. The seating consists of open-backed pine benches with turned front legs and arm supports, simple benches with shaped bench ends.



Figure 2: Open-backed pine benches in main meeting room

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

The burial ground is no longer in use for burials but is still used for scattering ashes. The burial ground is located to the north and west of the meeting house and is enclosed by a stone wall and is well planted with mature trees and planting. The burial ground records can no longer be located, however Bower and Knight (1987) record that there was once a list of burials covering the period between 1820 and 1887 and their positions. It is noted that there were a total of 140 burials with the average age of death at 51 years of age. The site contains two gravestones to Hanna and Tabitha the daughters of Henry Jackson, who died of small pox in 1682. The gravestones were discovered in the 1900s, laid upside down in use as paving slabs, they have now been relocated to the entrance hall of the meeting house. Further pieces of gravestones were found during the restoration work undertaken in the 1980s, which at the time were in use as lintels. The burial ground has a uniform character with small rectangular gravestones laid flat, unlike the traditional round headed headstones found at other Quaker burial grounds.

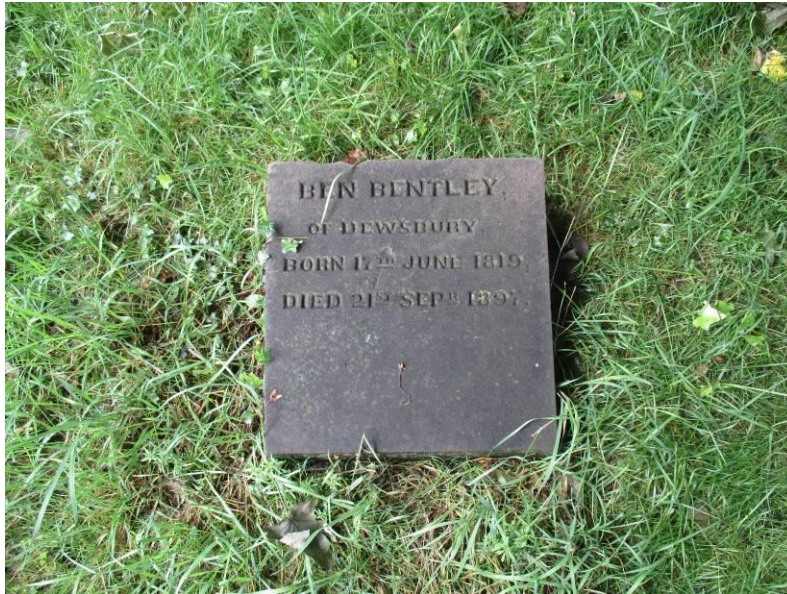


Figure 3: Example of flat gravestone

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The village of Wooldale in the Holme Valley is located approximately 6 miles south of Huddersfield. The meeting house and burial ground are within Wooldale Conservation Area, along Pell Lane. The general area is predominately characterised by two-storey stone properties often in a series of small terraces dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Other Grade II listed buildings in the area include 112-110 Lower Town End Road, Pell Croft a former farm terrace of late eighteenth century date, and 41 Wooldale Road an eighteenth century detached property. The meeting house can be accessed from Pell Lane via a gated entrance, and a path leads to the meeting house. To the southwest corner of the site is an outbuilding noted within the list description which was used as a children's room. The meeting house and burial ground is bounded by a dry stone wall, surrounded by landscaping and mature trees. To the front of the meeting house is the Grade II listed sundial.

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house, outbuilding and boundary wall are collectively correctly listed at Grade II. The grounds also contain a grade II listed sundial. It is considered that the Grade II listings are appropriate, but the description for the meeting house is very brief and a more detailed entry is recommended.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The West Yorkshire HER was consulted and holds a record for the site, which notes that a former building dating from the seventeenth century is located on the footprint of the present meeting house and was substantially rebuilt in 1783 (PRN 13365). Overall, with the presence of a burial ground, the archaeological potential is considered to be high.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

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

3.2. Maintenance

A recent quinquennial survey has not taken place, but the Wooldale Premises Committee have a system of annual reporting, review and, planning that is brought to the attention of the Area Meeting Finance and Property Committee/ Trustees. The meeting house was recently visited (2015) by the insurers (Methodist Insurance) and actions recommended have now been completed. Friends ensure regular inspections are also undertaken for electrical, gas and fire extinguishers. The meeting currently has enough money to maintain and repair the meeting house at present.

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit, but the meeting has a Sustainability Group and has implemented measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include:

- Climate change and energy efficiency: A Green Audit was undertaken in 2007 and the actions carried out included: energy saving light bulbs, monitoring of energy use, increased loft insulation, use of environmentally-friendly cleaning chemicals and green energy tariff water-saving devices.
- Resource use, recycling and waste management: Little waste is generated at the meeting house and any produced is taken home by Friends for recycling.
- Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: the grounds are well planted with trees and shrubs which provide wildlife habitats. More recently two flower gardens have been introduced to encourage bees into the garden.
- Transport: Friends are considering the future possibility of installing bicycle racks.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs, these include a main meeting room, gallery room, kitchen, hall, and toilets within the meeting house and a children's meeting room in a separate building. There is no resident warden. There is no on-site car park; car parking is available along the nearby roads. There is no specific provision for securing bicycles but they can be locked away if required. The meeting house is served by a local bus service, on a limited basis.

3.5. Access

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities. There is level access into and throughout ground floor of the building with restricted access to the gallery above. The meeting house has an accessible toilet and a hearing loop has been installed. There are currently no facilities for partially-sighted people. A Disability Access Audit was conducted in 2002 by the Kirklees Disability Officer. Recommendations included the installation of handrails and alterations to the disabled toilets, undertaken in 2002.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for about 8 hours each week. The meeting house is used for an average of 10 hours each week for community lettings. The building is available at times when there are no Quaker activities and only one group at a time can use the building. The meeting has an informal lettings policy. Each group wishing to use the building is judged on its individual merits to determine inclusion and exclusion criteria. Quaker groups are able to use the meeting house for free.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

The meeting house has been subject to heritage crime in the past; stone slates were stolen from the roof and the incident was reported to the police. There have been no incidents of anti-social behaviour at the site. The locality is generally well-cared for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence. Friends have not developed a liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team but would consider making contact in the future. The Friends have been in contact with the Crime Prevention Officers.

3.8. Plans for change

No future plans for change.

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 local Meeting considers that it has all the facilities it needs. The building was extended in the 1980s for improved toilet and kitchen facilities. Any future alterations would need to be well-considered and be sympathetic to the listed building and its setting.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: The building has the facilities it needs at present to accommodate wider uses.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: Should the meeting be laid down, a new and sympathetic use would need to be found which would protect the listed building's character and distinctive fittings such as the panelling and shutters, in situ. Appropriate provision would be required for the future management of the attached burial ground, and the setting.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List description (s)

Name: **FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, SMALL ADJOINING OUTBUILDING AND BOUNDARY WALL**

List entry Number: 1134802

Location

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, SMALL ADJOINING OUTBUILDING AND BOUNDARY WALL, PELL LANE

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

County:

District: Kirklees

District Type: Metropolitan Authority

Parish: Holme Valley

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 04-Aug-1983

List entry Description

SE 10 NE PELL LANE 5/257 (Wooldale)

16.1.67 Friends Meeting House, small adjoining outbuilding and boundary wall

II

Detached Quaker meeting house. 1783 with minor alterations. Hammer dressed stone. Quoins. Stone slate roof (turned). Ashlar stackwith moulded cap. Domed metal flue. Five bays, 2 being entrances to left. Windows, including fanlights have glazing bars. Interior: gallery to west on Doric columns. Balustrade with fielded panels. Extension to rear of later date. Small outbuilding also to rear of similar date to main building.

Listing NGR: SE1531909084

Name: **SUNDIAL AT FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE**

List entry Number: 1313613

Location

SUNDIAL AT FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, PELL LANE

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

County:

District: Kirklees

District Type: Metropolitan Authority

Parish: Holme Valley

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 04-Aug-1983

List entry Description

SE 10 NE PELL LANE 5/258 (Wooldale)

16.1.67 Sundial at Friends Meeting House GV II

Stone sundial on stone pedestal. Dated 1802. Square sundial is inscribed on all 4 faces and on top, though badly weathered. No gnomons. Sundial is stapled to pedestal.

Listing NGR: SE1532109068