

Quaker Meeting House, Worthing

34 Mill Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 5DR

National Grid Reference: TQ 13084 02872



Statement of Significance

The meeting house is a converted garage and boathouse of the inter-war period built behind a late Victorian detached house. It has low heritage value.

Evidential value

The meeting house may yield further evidence on its date of construction and original use. It has low evidential value.

Historical value

The building appears to have been built as an unusually large garage and boat house with a first-floor library. It has low historical value.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house shares several features with inter-war suburban houses, including the half-timbered gable and the rough cast. Its appearance has been altered by two extensions. It has low aesthetic value.

Communal value

The building has been in community use for nearly 60 years, including as a school and since 1957 as Quaker meeting house with additional community use. It has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Sussex West*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0005420*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Worthing Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Worthing NPA*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *N/a*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Mill Road*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1930s*
- 1.13 Architect(s): *Not established*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *18 August 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Johanna Roethe*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Mike Brayshaw*
- 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. 613
Historical notes of 2015 based on a paper by Maggie M. Goodrich, November 1987
Local Meeting survey by Derek Bond, June 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

By 1843, there was a Quaker burial ground in Worthing (location unknown). A meeting existed by 1925, using rented rooms. In 1946, a house at 47 Downview Road was acquired. It was sold when the present meeting house was bought for £7,000 in 1957. This is a large outbuilding built behind a house called 'Pendle' (1899). It first appears on the Ordnance Survey map of 1953-4 and probably dates from the 1930s.

In 1909, the house was owned by Major E.W. Margesson who presumably erected what is now the meeting house. He is thought to have used it as a garage and boathouse with a library on the floor above. On his death in 1946, the house and the outbuilding were used as a school run by Miss L. Hudson. In 1957, 'Pendle' was transferred to Worthing Friends (Quakers) Housing Society and was converted into flats (including a warden's flat). At the

time of the visit (August 2015), it was about to be transferred to Pearson's and St Elizabeth's Cottage Homes, a subsidiary charity of Worthing Homes.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The building is aligned roughly north-south with the main elevation facing south. The plan of the original building was roughly oblong. The entrance is in a large single-storey extension to the east; another single-storey extension with windows projects to the south. (The latter replaced a glazed canopy shown on the 1950s OS map, as well as large garage doors.) The meeting house is of two full storeys with an attic. The ground floor has external brick walls in stretcher bond, while the upper floor has rough cast render. The L-plan pitched roof has a half-timbered gable to the south and a half-hipped roof to the east with a dormer. The roof is tiled. The windows are small-paned casements of both timber and metal. On the north elevation the windows have segmental brick arches; there is also a bricked-up former door opening.

The large downstairs room, which would have been the garage and boathouse, has prominent ceiling beams (photo bottom right). To the north is the kitchen and toilets; further toilets and a small meeting room are in the east extension. A stair just to the east of the main ground-floor room leads to the upper floors. On the first floor there is a landing (which also serves as the library) with woodblock floor and the attic stair. The meeting room occupies the large room on the first floor (photo bottom left). This also has a woodblock floor as well as a plain skirting board and picture rail. The upper parts of the doors between lobby and meeting room have leaded small-paned glass panels. The attic has walls of Fletton brick, timber posts between the floor and the purlins, and large beams on top of the boarded floor which are strengthened by iron plates on either side.

2.3 Loose furnishings

The meeting room has six open-backed benches which are very similar to some at the meeting house at Brighton (*qv*). They have curved armrests on turned supports and sturdy iron straps between the legs which can be screwed to the floor.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

Not applicable

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

Mill Road (A259), a conservation area, has predominantly large detached or semi-detached late Victorian and early Edwardian houses. The house known as 'Pendle' is located towards the road, while the meeting house is set further back. To the rear of the meeting house is a garden. To the east of the east extension is a shed used as buggy store.

2.6. Listed status

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

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

Mill Road was laid out in the late nineteenth century and before that the area was agricultural fields. There has been no previous building on the site of the meeting house. The site has 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

The last quinquennial inspection was undertaken in 2012 by David Loosley MRICS of Holland & Alexander. Most of the recommendations have been carried out, apart from brushing off the moss on the tiled roof, the revision of one downpipe, and works to the front windows and doors. The meeting has enough money to maintain and repair the building. The QIR is used as a five-year maintenance and repair plan.

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit. It has implemented measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include:

- Climate change & energy efficiency: double-glazing where practical, time switches for lighting and heating, low energy lighting, renewable energy (Green Energy), no gas
- Resource use, recycling & waste management: recycling bins provided, kitchen and garden waste composted and used in garden, eco-friendly cleaning materials used
- Building maintenance & refurbishment: eco-friendly paint and materials used where possible
- Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: garden management with due regard to nature conservation, including small pond, bird box, bird feeder and bird baths
- Transport: cycle racks provided

The meeting does not have an Energy Performance Certificate. It may consider getting one but considers that all feasible measures have already been implemented.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs. These are all in the meeting house. The present warden lives in a flat in 'Pendle'.

The meeting is accessible by public transport. There is no parking on site but free parking is available in nearby roads. There are cycle racks on site.

3.5. Access

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities. There is level access, an accessible toilet, a hearing loop and facilities for partially-sighted people (where considered necessary). The meeting room on the first floor is accessible by a stair lift. There has been no formal Disability Access Audit but disabled access is kept under review.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for 10 hours per week. The building is available for community lettings for a maximum number of 230 hours per week. It is used for an average of 80 hours per week. The meeting has a lettings policy. Bookings are refused from persons or groups whose words or actions diminish the dignity or equality of others. Charges are moderate so free or discounted use is rarely agreed. Users value the building because of its friendly atmosphere, the reasonable price, the nearby bus route and the availability of nearby parking.

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. Reported incidents include one case of unforced entry through a door which was left open (August 2013). No unreported crimes have taken place. 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 as this is not considered necessary.

3.8. Plans for change

Plans for alterations to the meeting house include the upgrading of the building to meet current fire regulation requirements.

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 meeting has currently all the facilities it needs. The building could be altered or extended if required.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: The meeting house is a large building offering sufficient space and ancillary facilities for all of its users. No major changes should be required in the near future.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting: Should the meeting house cease to be used, the building could be converted to an alternative use. This may be a community or residential use, possibly in conjunction with the housing association which is about to take over Pendle. Given its location in a conservation area, the demolition of the meeting house is unlikely to be an option.

Part 5: Category: 4