

## ***Friends Meeting House, Kirkby Stephen***

*High Street, Kirkby Stephen, CA17 4SH*

*National Grid Reference: NY 77412 08322*



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

***The building has medium heritage significance as a meeting house created in 1929 in a former stable and coach house wing at a nineteenth century house. The building has an attractive exterior and setting off the High Street in Kirkby Stephen. The interior has been recently refurbished to improve energy efficiency and contains no historic features.***

### ***Evidential value***

***The meeting house exterior has some evidential value as the building's features reveal the former stable and coach house use, but the interior retains no historic fabric.***

### ***Historical value***

***The present building was built as the stable and coach house wing to a large house, at an unknown date in the early nineteenth century. The site has been associated with Friends since the late 1920s, when the meeting was established. The building and site has high historical value, for its Quaker connection and also as the location of the first YHA in the Lake District, but the interior has low historical significance as there are no remaining historic features.***

### **Aesthetic value**

***The frontage facing the High Street has high significance as an example of early Victorian domestic architecture, set behind an attractive garden enclosed by stone walls and iron railings. The rear wing, now the meeting house has some vernacular architectural features relating to the former stable and coach house. The interior has been attractively refurbished but has no heritage features on view. The aesthetic value of the building exterior is high, and it contributes to the conservation area.***

### **Communal value**

***The building was adapted for Quaker worship and business in 1929, and has been a community resource ever since. The spiritual and social use gives the building high communal value.***

### **Part 1: Core data**

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Kendal & Sedbergh*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0033600*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Eden District Council*
- 1.5 Civil parish: *Kirkby Stephen*
- 1.6 Historic England locality: *North West*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *N/A*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Kirkby Stephen*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1929*
- 1.13 Architect (s):
- 1.14 Date of visit: *10 June 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Marion Barter*
- 1.16 Name of contact made on site: *David Petrie*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *flat in same building*
- Detached burial ground: Devon Gill (NGR: 730996)*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Bibliographic references:

David M. Butler, *Quaker Meeting Houses of the Lakeland Counties* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1978).

Cuttings scrapbook belonging to the meeting, including extracts from *The Friend*, 23 August, 1929 and 7 March 1930

Plans of the building held by the meeting.

David Solloway, *Local Meeting Survey*, March 2015

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

### 2.1. Historical background

In 1652, Kirkby Stephen was the place of a confrontation between James Naylor, a well-known early Friend, and the vicar, which led to Naylor's imprisonment in Appleby gaol. The modern history of Quakers in Kirkby Stephen dates from 1927 when two families moved to the town from Yorkshire. The building now used as the current meeting house was bought by Friends for £425 in 1929 from Edith and Alice Thompson, owners of the Manor House in Kirkby Stephen, an early nineteenth century building. The Thompsons sold the former stable and coach house wing to Joseph Clampitt, a Friend in Kirkby Stephen. The old stables became the meeting room, the harness room a kitchen and the coach house was used as a garage. Benches were brought here from other meeting houses, including from Kendal, and the meeting house was formally opened on 27 February in 1930. Some stones from Ravenstonedale meeting house were incorporated into the doorway. The first floor over the stable was used by other groups including from 1930, the first YHA in the Lake District. In 1981 the meeting house was refurbished and the upper floor was adapted as a flat with a separate entrance from the front facing the road. The whole was refurbished in 2007, to designs by Space Designed Solutions.

### 2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house occupies the ground floor of a 2-storey wing to the north end of a large house, probably built in the first half of the nineteenth century. The building is constructed from limestone, neatly coursed and dressed to the west side and roughly coursed to the other elevations, with sandstone rock-faced quoins. The roof is hipped to the west and has barge boards to the east, laid with Cumbrian slate to the north and concrete tiles to the south pitch. The rainwater goods are aluminium and there are photovoltaic panels on the south pitch. The 2-storey rectangular wing is aligned east-west and the main meeting house entrance is on the north side. The modern door is to the left, with a small window to the left and three tall windows to the right on the ground floor. There is one window to the first floor; all windows are uPVC in historic openings. The right return faces the High Street and has a glazed modern door to the centre, modern uPVC windows to ground floor kitchen and three windows to the first floor flat. The left return is the east gable end with a modern sash to the ground floor and a large window to the first floor, a former taking-in door. The rear elevation facing south has a large blocked cart shed door with segmental stone head, now infilled with a window, and a modern door to the left that formerly served the stable; the first floor flat has two modern windows.

The plain, simple interior was recently refurbished. The main meeting room has plain plaster walls, a suspended ceiling, all new joinery and building services and a carpeted floor. Leading off the meeting room, there is a modern kitchen, lavatories and a small meeting room.

### 2.3 Loose furnishings

The meeting house contains one pine bench and a small oak table, but the meeting uses loose chairs arranged in a circle for meetings.

#### 2.4. Attached burial ground

None

#### 2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

Kirkby Stephen is a market town in east side of Cumbria, with a hinterland of farmland and scattered villages. This part of the long High Street is lined with eighteenth and nineteenth century houses, some set behind gardens, and other directly onto the street. The general historic character of the area is Georgian although the town has medieval origins. The meeting house is part of a large house situated towards the south end of the Kirkby Stephen's High Street; the meeting house is to the rear and is accessed by a narrow drive leading to a small yard. At the front of the building there is a large garden containing a mature beech tree, bounded along the north side by stone walls, with attractive iron railings and a gate. There is a detached burial ground at Doven Gill, at NGR730996.

#### 2.6. Listed status

The building is not listed, and is unlikely to meet national criteria, although it may be eligible for a local list as part of an attractive group of early nineteenth century buildings.

#### 2.7. Archaeological potential

The site may have some archaeological potential as it is within the outskirts of medieval Kirkby Stephen, subject to the levels of past ground disturbance.