

Friends Meeting House, Basingstoke

14 Fairfields Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 3DR

National Grid Reference: SU 63802 51512



Statement of Significance

The meeting house has medium heritage significance as a Victorian semi-detached house of the 1880s or 1890s which was converted in 1989-91 for use as a meeting house.

Evidential value

The meeting house has low evidential value as a Victorian house built on a site with no known archaeological significance.

Historical value

Little is known about the early history of the house, its architect and occupiers. As a typical Victorian suburban house which was converted to meeting house use it has medium historical value.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house has a highly decorative street elevation with brick patterns and bargeboards. The interior retains some historic features but the medium aesthetic value resides chiefly in the main elevation.

Communal value

The building's main use is as a Quaker meeting house with the upstairs flat rented out. It is part of a highly visible series of semi-detached houses which represent a local landmark in the conservation area for local residents. Its use and prominence in a local streetscape lend it medium communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Hampshire & Islands*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0015870*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Basingstoke NPA*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *N/a*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Fairfields*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *c.1870s-1890s*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Not established*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *13 July 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Johanna Roethe*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Pam Slade*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *n/a*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information sources:

Basingstoke Local Meeting, plan of c.1989, original sales advertisement
Basingstoke and Deane Council, *Fairfields Conservation Area Appraisal*, 2004
Butler, D.M. *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 1, p. 229
Local Meeting survey by Sheila Peacock, June 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

In 1681, local Quakers unsuccessfully tried to acquire a meeting house. In 1696, they acquired a burial ground in Reading Road, and an adjoining cottage two years later (sold between 1868 and 1933). In 1800, a new meeting house was acquired in Wote Street, which was rebuilt in c.1828 and enlarged in 1849 (sold 1955, demolished). In 1867, a small burial plot was bought in the public cemetery (now known as Holy Ghost Cemetery), replacing a ground in Frog Street and North Brook Street (possibly identical with the seventeenth-century burial ground). In 1947, the meeting was discontinued. It was revived in 1966 and in 1979, a Victorian house (22 Cromwell Road) was bought. This was sold in 1989, when the

present meeting house was bought. The architect Mervyn Newin converted the house in Fairfields Road into a meeting house on the ground floor (with a children's room in the former kitchen and a new kitchen/toilet extension) and a self-contained first floor flat. This was completed in 1991. The house was built between c.1873 and c.1896 (according to map evidence).

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

Number 14 Fairfields Road is a two-storey, semi-detached house dating from the late nineteenth century. The original architect is not known. The street elevation which faces south has a decorative pattern and banding of white and red brick (laid in Flemish bond), while the side (west) and rear elevations are of red brick. The pitched roofs are of slate. The plan of the pair of houses is T-shaped, with the crossbar to the street and a full-height rear wing; 14 Fairfields Road also has an additional single-storey extension (clad in brick in stretcher bond). The front elevation of 14 Fairfields Road is of two bays: one window above the entrance door (recessed behind a brick arch) to the east, while the wider west bay under a cross roof with decorative bargeboard has two first-floor windows above a canted bay window. The west gable has a single attic window (inserted 1989-91) as well as two chimney stacks on either side of the roof ridge. The front elevation has plate glass sashes, while the rear elevation has two-over-two sashes.

The interior conforms to the standard or Summerson plan, with the staircase (with a fine turned newel post) against the party wall and originally two rooms ranged alongside. The meeting room occupies the two former rooms on the ground floor which had been combined into one before 1989. The southern chimneybreast has a plain, possibly original mantelpiece; the other fireplace is boarded up. In the rear wing, the former kitchen is now the children's room, with another plain chimneypiece beside built-in cupboards. Some of the internal (four-panelled) doors have fingerplates. The first-floor flat was not inspected.

2.3 Loose furnishings

There are no loose furnishings of particular note.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

Not applicable

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is part of seven identical semi-detached houses (nos. 1–18) on the north side of Fairfields Road, just outside the centre of Basingstoke. The conservation area appraisal describes them as 'a particular strong and uniform row', 'providing a strong impact of uniformity'. To the southwest is a small recreation ground with a bowling green and tennis courts; to the west is May's Bounty cricket ground. Overall, the area has a leafy residential character, other notable buildings include a nearby Board School of 1888 in Jubilee Road, and Temple Moore's All Saints church of 1915 (listed grade II).

There is a Quaker corner in the municipal Holy Ghost cemetery (NGR: SU 63647 52653). The cemetery closed in c.1912 and the Quaker plot is no longer in Quaker ownership.

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house is not listed and is not considered a candidate for listing. The group of seven semi-detached houses might be eligible for inclusion in Basingstoke's local list.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

According to the HER and the conservation area appraisal, there are no known major archaeological sites in the Fairfield's Road area. Prior to development, the site was in agricultural use. The site has low archaeological potential.