

Friends Meeting House, Portsmouth

25 Northwood Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 9QT

National Grid Reference: SU 65406 03997



Statement of Significance

The building has low heritage value as a suburban inter-war house which has been converted to a meeting house.

Evidential value

As a relatively modern house the meeting house has low evidential value.

Historical value

The meeting house is typical of the interwar suburban development of this part of Portsmouth. It has low historical value.

Aesthetic value

The building is similar to many other inter-war suburban houses. It has low aesthetic value.

Communal value

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

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Hampshire & Islands*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0004020*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Portsmouth City Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *City of Portsmouth 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): *1920s*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Not established*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *15 July 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Johanna Roethe*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Sue Taylor*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *25A Northwood Road*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 236-7
Portsmouth Local Meeting, 'Portsmouth Quaker Meeting. A brief history of Quaker Meetings in Portsmouth from 1794', undated typescript
Portsmouth Local Meeting, drawings for 1995 alterations and extensions
Local Meeting survey by Sue Taylor, June 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

A meeting house existed in Portsmouth by 1694. This was sold after a new, possibly purpose-built, meeting house opened in 1711 (location unknown). This in turn was sold in 1794. The meeting then lapsed and was only re-established in 1905, using rented accommodation. The meeting was again suspended between 1914 and 1916. After 1916, several private houses were used until 1923 when the Railway Mission Hall in Fratton was donated by Emily Hurrell. This was sold in 1955 when the current house, 25 Northwood Road was acquired for £3,250 and converted for £1,000. The latter involved the creation of an upstairs warden's flat. It opened the following year. The house is a detached inter-war suburban house which was built, according to map evidence between 1910 and 1931. Reputedly, this was the house

which the local developer or builder built for himself, which would account for its larger size (being a detached house instead of a semi-detached one) and its different elevational treatment. The small annex (25A Northwood Road) was reputedly originally a garage and workshop which were later converted to a small two-storey maisonette. In 1995, a new kitchen extension and three toilets were added (project manager: R.G. Warwick & Partners Ltd, Wickham). In 2000, the conservatory was demolished and rebuilt.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house is a two-storey detached suburban house of the 1920s built by an unidentified architect or builder. The plan is roughly oblong, with the main street elevation facing northwest. To the rear is a small conservatory beside a lean-to toilet extension of 1995; a further lean-to extension containing a kitchen was added in 1995 in the northeast angle of the house. To the south is the lean-to annex (no. 25A). The materials are brick laid in stretcher bond (red for the front and side elevations, stock brick with red brick dressings to the rear). The tiled roof is half-hipped to the south, while the northern arm has a gable roof. There is a short chimney stack on the south gable, and a taller stack on the gable roof. The front bay window and the first floor level of the rear elevation of the annex are tile hung. The windows are modern aluminium and UPVC units; the lintels are of concrete. The front elevation of three bays has the entrance under a canopy on carved brackets in the centre, beside an oblong full-height bay window under a gabled cross roof to the south.

The entrance hall has the original open string staircase with a large square newel post with recessed panels and a moulded top. The two rooms to the south have been combined to form the present meeting room (photo bottom left). This contains two chimney breasts, one of which still retains its plain pilaster surround and its original tiled insert (blocked). The meeting room also has a clock donated in June 1947 by the Portsmouth Workpeoples [sic] Committee of the NSPCC in gratitude for help 'over many years' and in memory of Arthur G. Pease, the committee's honorary secretary for 19 years and presumably a member of the prominent Quaker family. The smaller room on the ground floor room (labelled 'assembly room' on the 1995 plans) has an original fire surround. The room directly above is now the archive room, holding the area meeting archive. It has a built-in cupboard beside a tall mantelpiece with two shelves. The tiled inset has been painted. The remainder of the first floor is a flat (not inspected).

2.3 Loose furnishings

There are no loose furnishings of particular historic or aesthetic note.

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. Northwood Road was developed probably in the 1920s and the houses are largely identical semi-detached houses with oblong bay windows which in the southern part of the road have gabled cross roofs, while those in the north half have flat roofs. The meeting house shares many of these features but is noticeable larger and of a different plan and roof form. There are playing fields to the rear.

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house is not listed and is not considered to be eligible for listing.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

Prior to the laying out of the road and its development with houses, the area was fields, with only ribbon development along the London Road (now A2047). The site has low archaeological potential.