

Friends Meeting House, Maidenhead

14 West Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RL

National Grid Reference: SU 88782 81276



Statement of Significance

The meeting house has low heritage significance as a small inter-war building which was extended in the 1990s. There is a historic burial ground to the rear and a detached classroom of the 1950s. The site is currently under threat of redevelopment.

Evidential value

The building has low evidential value. The site has high archaeological potential due to the presence of burials and, possibly, below-ground evidence of the 1803 meeting house on the site.

Historical value

The meeting house is an interwar building with a later extension. It has low historical value.

Aesthetic value

The building work of the 1990s has removed most of the inter-war character of the building. It has low aesthetic value.

Communal value

As a Quaker place of worship which is also well-used by the local community, the meeting house has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *Mid-Thames*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0030610*

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead*

1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*

1.6 Civil parish: *Maidenhead 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): *1935, extension: 1998-9*

1.13 Architect(s): *Leonard L. Jackson, extension: Malcolm Barnett*

1.14 Date of visit: *22 September 2015*

1.15 Name of report author: *Johanna Roethe*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Alastair Donaldson*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Garden room to rear*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*

1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 11-13

Jones, S.F., *Maidenhead Quakers. Three centuries in the life of a small community*, 2009

Historic England Archive, photo of 1970, <http://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/archive-collections/englands-places/card/14461>

Local Meeting survey by Alastair Donaldson, June 2015

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

2.1 Historical background

In the early eighteenth century, Friends met in each other's homes. In 1734, a meeting house was built on land leased from William Wickens. In 1803, a replacement building was privately built by Hannah Wilson and Rachel Newbery on the present site. In 1805 or 1809 they donated it to the Monthly Meeting. In 1871-96, Quaker use briefly lapsed and the building was used as a club for the poor and as a chapel for the Plymouth Brethren. In 1927, the building was deemed unsafe and it was demolished in 1934-5. In May 1935 the construction of the current meeting house started which opened in July 1935 (architect: Leonard L. Jackson, a member of Reading meeting). The cost was £350. In 1951, a kitchen was added and a large detached classroom (now known as the Garden Room) was built at the

back of the burial ground, at a total cost of £1,050. In 1998-9, the meeting house was extended to the front (architect: Malcolm Barnett of Henley). The local council has identified West Street as a 'key development area' and is currently discussing a number of options, some of which propose the demolition of the meeting house.

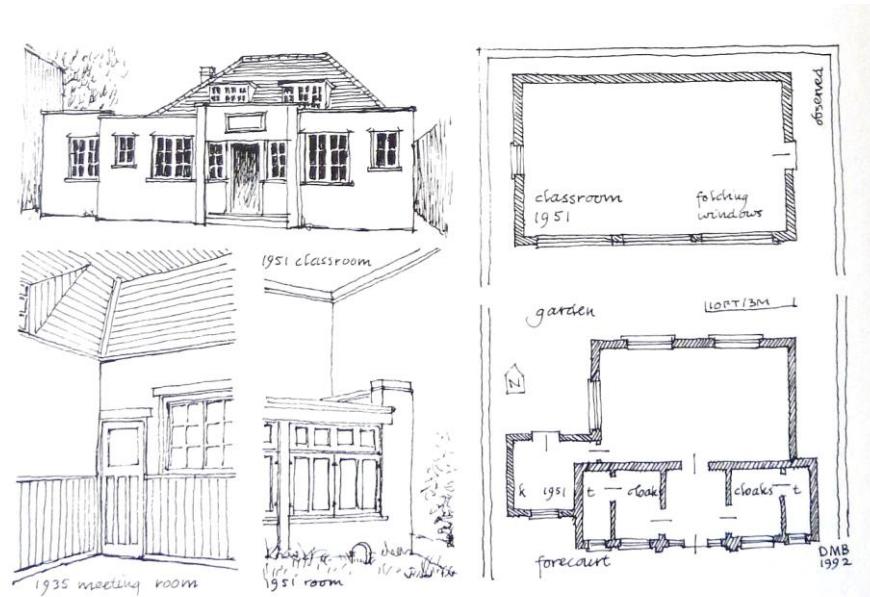


Figure 1: Elevation, plans and details of the meeting house (before the 1998-99 extension) and the classroom (north is roughly at the top of the plans; not to scale) (Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 1, p. 12)

2.2 The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The street elevation faces roughly south. The meeting house has an approximately oblong plan with the 1935 meeting room under a tiled hipped roof to the rear and the flat-roofed extension of 1998-99 with a cross gable over the central bay to the front. The walls are rendered and the windows were replaced in timber in the 1990s. The original window openings to the rear have tile lintels and sills. The front elevation has a projecting lobby under the cross-roof with a six-light south window. The entrance is in the west wall of the lobby. On either side of the lobby are toilets and a kitchen, lit by a small south window and a larger three-light south window, respectively. The meeting room is a small oblong space with dado panelling. It is lit by a window to the west, two French doors to the garden, and two skylights (which replaced two original dormers).

2.3 Loose furnishings

None of particular note

2.4 Attached burial ground (if any)

The burial ground is to the rear of the building. In 1959, the gravestones were relocated to the perimeter walls (not seen) and in 1963 the plot was paved with a central rose garden. Only five burials were recorded between 1839 and 1869.

2.5 The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is located near the centre of Maidenhead, in a street of back exits of shops, parking plots, office buildings and a pub. The meeting house is slightly set back from West Street. The boundary walls were replaced in 1998-99 by a new dwarf brick wall. Behind

the meeting house is the burial ground and garden with the Garden Room of 1951 at the rear (photo bottom left). The Garden Room has foldable windows.

2.6 Listed status

The meeting house and the schoolroom are not listed. They are modest buildings from the inter-war and immediate post-war period and are not considered to be eligible for inclusion on the statutory or local list.

2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

The meeting house is the second on the site, replacing a building of 1803. This, together with the presence of burials, gives the site high archaeological potential.