

Friends Meeting House, Leigh-on-Sea

18 Dundonald Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 1NB

National Grid Reference: TQ 84994 86173



Statement of Significance

Apparently erected as a modest local school in the early twentieth century, the building has been used as a meeting house since the 1930s. Overall it is of medium significance.

Evidential value

The building was erected on a greenfield site and is a very simple structure with low evidential value.

Historical value

Presumably the building was first erected to serve the developing community of Leigh and is of medium historical value.

Aesthetic value

Although the meeting house is a pleasingly unassuming small building with a vaguely vernacular character, it is of no particular 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: *North East Thames*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0032930*
- 1.3 Owner: *Six Weeks Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Southend-on-Sea Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *East of England*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Leigh on Sea*
- 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): *c1923, additions 1953 and 2007*

1.13 Architect (s): *original architect not known; 1950s additions by Hubert Lidbetter (local meeting says John Fairbanks); 2007 enlargement by Bernard Gooding Associates*

1.14 Date of visit: *14 August 2015*

1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*

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

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*

1.19 Information sources:

David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. 1, p. 199

Gawne, Eleanor, 'Buildings of endearing simplicity; the Friends Meeting Houses of Hubert Lidbetter', *The Twentieth Century Church (Twentieth Century Architecture 3, the journal of the Twentieth Century Society)*, pp.85-92 &117

Local meeting survey by Audrey Regan, August 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

The meeting was settled as the Southend Meeting in 1912. In 1936 Friends bought a small early-twentieth century hall, formerly a school, in Leigh on Sea which they used as a meeting house without alteration. A children's room was added at right angles to the original hall in the mid 1950s and elongated in 2007.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The building is 'L'-shaped on plan, with a taller range containing the meeting room parallel to the street and a slightly lower rear wing at right angles to the main range. The external walls are divided into bays by red brick piers and the spaces between have plain plaster finish and timber casement windows with leaded lights. The hipped pitched roofs are covered in tiles. The main front has a projecting porch to the left with a pitched roof and vertical studding in the gable.

The interior was not properly inspected but the meeting room appears to be a rectangular space with plain plastered walls and a plastered ceiling rising into the roof-space.

2.3 Loose furnishings

Twenty-five wooden chairs were given to the meeting house at Leigh-on-Sea in 1973 from the meeting house in Eastbourne (*qv*).

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

None

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house stands in a residential street lined with 1920s houses, near the centre of Leigh on Sea, an old village which greatly expanded in the early twentieth century.

2.6. Listed status

The building is not a candidate for the statutory list or the local list.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The site has low archaeological potential.