

Friends Meeting House, East Garston

Back Street, East Garston, Hungerford, Berkshire, RG17 7EX

National Grid Reference: SU 36395 76800



Statement of Significance

The meeting house was built in 1979 to replace an earlier building constructed using war-time packing cases. It has low heritage significance.

Evidential value

The meeting house is a relatively recent building. It has low evidential value.

Historical value

As a building of 1979 it has low historical value.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house is a small functional building in a vernacular idiom. It has low aesthetic value.

Communal value

The meeting house has high communal value as a Quaker place of worship which is also used by the local community.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Mid-Thames*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0013140*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *West Berkshire Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *East Garston*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *N/a*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *East Garston*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *1979*

1.13 Architect(s): *John Bangma*

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: *Phoebe and Robert Fennel*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *2 cottages (Yew Tree and Little Yew Tree) owned by the Area Meeting*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*

1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 9-10

Milligan, E.H. 'News from darkest Berkshire', *The Friend*, 21 July 1978, pp. 889-890

Milligan, E.H., 'Esgar's children', *The Friend*, 23 May 1986, p. 664

Photo album, historical accounts and plan in local meeting archive

Local Meeting survey by Phoebe and Robert Fennel, September 2015

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

2.1 Historical background

In 1710, it was reported that a meeting house had been founded in East Garston. Nothing further is known about this early meeting and its location. The meeting was re-established in 1939. From 1958 or 1959 it met in a temporary building constructed out of war-time packing cases. By 1978, this was deteriorating and demolished. It was replaced by a new meeting house designed by John Bangma, a local Friend. The new meeting house opened in 1979 and the total cost was £13,000. The site (part of the garden of the house known as Yew Tree) was donated by Cecil Barker. In 1986, a detached timber classroom was added (cost: £12,000).

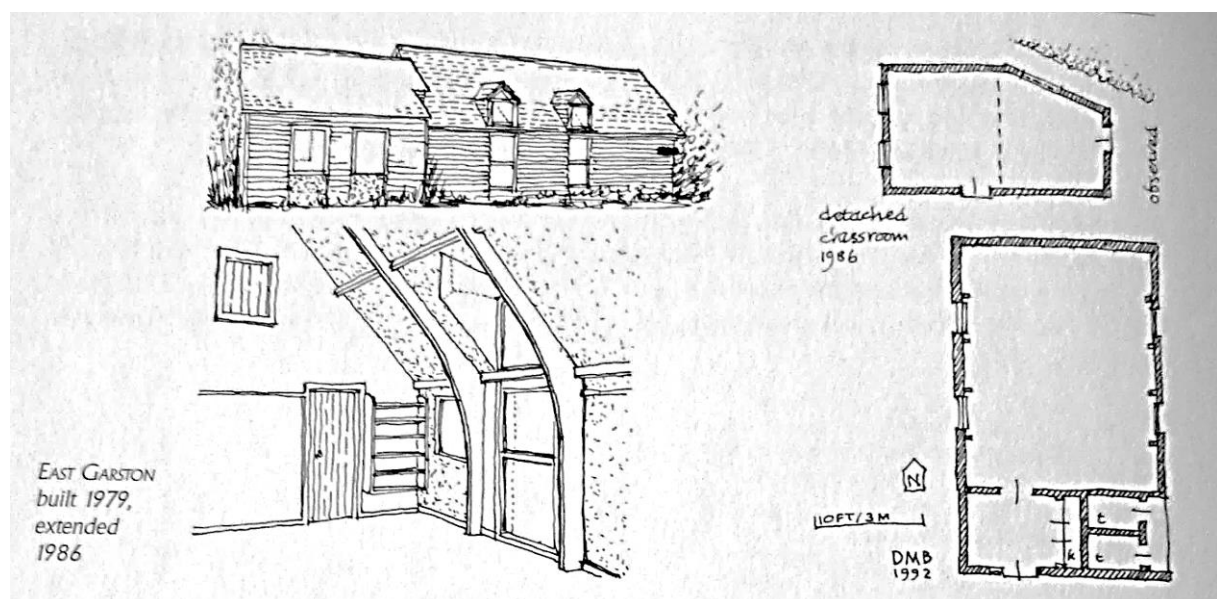


Figure 1: Perspective, detail and plan (north is to the right; not to scale)
(Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 1, p. 10)

2.2 The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The street elevation faces roughly south. The plan of the meeting house is oblong with a lobby, kitchenette and toilets (accessed from outside) at the east and the meeting room at the west. The building is weatherboarded with a pantiled roof. The pitched roof has an overhang over the entrance at the east. Each long side has a tall window and a French door with dormers above. The meeting room is divided into five bays by four pairs of cruck frames of laminated timber. The floor is of cork.

The detached children's room was built in matching materials on a brick base. Photographs of its construction show that it was built using concrete blocks and brick. It has two windows to the south and one small window in the west gable.

2.3 Loose furnishings

The meeting room has a mixture of chairs, from new upholstered ones to older ladder-back chairs. The children's room has four historic open-backed benches whose provenance is unknown.

2.4 Attached burial ground (if any)

Not applicable

2.5 The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is located in the centre of the village, opposite the village hall. The building is set back from the road behind a garden. The detached children's room is just to the west. The meeting house shares a drive with two cottages to the rear (Yew Tree and Little Yew Tree), both owned by the Area Meeting. The meeting house is located in a conservation area, while the children's room is just outside its boundary.

By 1682, there was a detached Quaker burial ground at Lambourn Woodlands (still in use by 1738). Its exact location is unknown. However, this is no longer in Quaker ownership.

2.6 Listed status

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

2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

The previous meeting house on the site was built from wartime packing cases and it is unlikely that it left any below-ground archaeological evidence. The site has low archaeological potential.