

Friends Meeting House, Bradford

Russell Street, Little Horton Lane, Bradford, BD5 0JB

National Grid Reference: SE 15849 32436



Statement of Significance

The meeting house was created in 1995, in part of a building dating from the late 1960s. This was built for the Unitarians in the garden of an adjacent house used as a meeting house between 1951 and 1995. The meeting house building has low heritage significance, but contributes to Little Horton conservation area. It represents the latest in a series of Quaker meeting houses in Bradford.

Evidential value

As a relatively modern building, meeting house has low significance for evidential or archaeological value.

Historical value

The meeting house has low significance for historical value, as a modern building, but it does reflect the long history of Quakers in Bradford; the previous meeting house was on the adjacent site.

Aesthetic value

The 1969 structure is a modest building designed in a traditional form using local stone; it fits well into the conservation area.

Communal value

The meeting house is valued by the community and expresses the presence and work of Quakers in Bradford. It has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *Brighouse West Yorkshire*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0018700*

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Bradford Metropolitan District Council*

1.5 Historic England locality: *Yorkshire*

- 1.6 Civil parish: *Trident*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *Not applicable*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Little Horton Lane*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Dates: *1850s (Quaker use from 1969); 1995*
- 1.13 Architects: *Kitson and Partners of Leeds; James Able of Able Lynn Partnership*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *19 February 2016*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Marion Barter*
- 1.16 Name of contact made on site: *Kevin Holloway*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information sources:
- D.Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, Vol 2, 1999, pp781-786
- G. and J. Hague, *The Unitarian Heritage*, 1986
- Yorkshire Quaker Heritage Project, online records maintained by Hull University:
- http://www.eservices.hull.ac.uk/quaker/index.cfm?fuseaction=location.collection&collectionID=58&search_type=place&countyID=0&townID=27
- Little Horton Conservation Area Appraisal:
- <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E0E4F3BD-2FBA-433F-A9DB-D6E465597D60/o/LITTLEHORTONLANEAPPRAISAL.pdf>

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

2.1. Historical background

According to research for the Yorkshire Quaker Heritage Project (YQHM), ‘a Meeting was settled in Bradford around 1652 by Christopher Taylor (who had been convinced by the preaching of William Dewsbury)’. The first meeting house opened in 1698, on land at Goodman's End where the burial ground had been acquired in 1672. The YQHM notes that ‘In 1732 a new Meeting House was built on the same site; this was demolished and replaced by a new building in 1811. Despite successive improvements, the whole property was sold in 1876 and a new Meeting House opened in Fountain Street two years later’. In 1951 Friends sold the Fountain Street building to Busby's department store and acquired a large house in Melbourne Place as a meeting house; built in the 1850s, this is a listed building. In the large garden of this house the Unitarians built a chapel in 1969, and in the 1990s, Friends decided to vacate and sell 11 Melbourne Place and acquire part of the Unitarian Chapel, which was

adapted for their use by the Sykes Able Partnership. The meeting house was ready in 1995 and officially opened in May 1996. Bradford Quakers were historically involved in the wool trade, banking and insurance; the Friends Provident Institution was founded in Bradford in 1832, and prominent local Quakers included the Bartlett, Hustler, Seebohm, Peckover, Harris, Maud and Priestman families.



Fig.1: 11 Melbourne Place, Russell Street was the meeting house from 1951 to 1995

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The 1969 building was built for the Unitarians, to designs by Kitson and Partners of Leeds. The south wing was adapted for Friends in 1995 by the Able Lynn Partnership. The building is faced in coursed buff sandstone, with a Welsh slate roof and cast metal gutters carried on large square stone brackets. The meeting house forms the south wing of the larger building, with the entrance on the gable-end to the east, facing the forecourt. The building is of 3 storeys, with the upper storey partly in the roof. The front elevation has a part-glazed triangular porch with single casement windows of stained timber to ground, first and second floors. On the north return, there is a single window to the first floor, with a galvanised steel grille. There is a large dormer to the north pitch of the roof, with 3-light window and hopped slate roof. The left return to the south, and the rear elevation to the west have tall timber windows to the ground floor meeting room, and a part-glazed external door to the garden.

Inside, the meeting house is plainly decorated with plain painted plaster to walls and ceilings, with acoustic panels to the ceiling in the meeting room. Floors are finished in carpet. The ground floor has a spacious lobby with kitchen and toilet facilities to the east side and the meeting room to the west. The upper floors contain two small meeting rooms and a flat with three rooms.

2.3. Loose furnishings

Most of the meeting house furnishings are modern, but there is a set of six pine benches. These are sturdily constructed with turned legs and arm rests. They probably date from the late nineteenth century and may have been made for the Fountain Street meeting house.



Fig.2: one of a set of pine benches, probably dating from the 1870s

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

N/A

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is situated in Little Horton, an area on the south-west side of Bradford that developed as a residential suburb in the nineteenth century. The area retains its low density leafy character and Russell Street is still laid with stone setts and lined with large stone houses in spacious grounds. The meeting house has a large forecourt behind a stone boundary wall. This area is used for parking, and shared with the Unitarians. The area has been a conservation area since 1977, but its social status has declined and many of the houses are no longer in residential use, and are used for offices or community uses. The Meeting House and Unitarian church building is identified as a building of local interest on the conservation area appraisal dated January 2008. Bradford Council and Historic England consider the conservation area to be 'at risk'.



Fig.3: Russell Street frontage to the meeting house

There is a detached burial ground at Westfield Lane, Idle, near Shipley, at NGR SE 1750637919. There are also some Quaker burials at Undercliffe the large Bradford cemetery.

2.6. Listed status

Not listed. The building has local interest in the conservation area. The former Friends Meeting House (in use 1951-1991) to the north of the present meeting house is listed grade II; the name on the List entry needs to be amended to make it clear that 11 Melbourne Place is no longer a Quaker meeting house.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service was consulted and holds no records for this site. The site was part of the garden of a mid-nineteenth century house and the archaeological potential is probably low.