

Friends Meeting House, Scholes

Scholes Lane, Scholes, Cleckheaton, BD19 6LY

National Grid Reference: SE 16781 25066



Statement of Significance

The meeting house has high heritage value as a purpose-built nineteenth century building, designed by William Henry Thorp in an evangelical Gothic style, unlike the traditional simplicity of other meeting houses. The building was further extended in the twentieth century by the Quaker architect Michael Sykes. Internally, the building retains much of its plan form and historic fittings including a curved sounding board. The meeting house and burial ground make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Evidential value

The building and site have medium evidential values primarily associated with the potential to yield information about the building's construction and past Quaker activity.

Historical value

The site is closely associated with the Crossland family of Oakfieldnook near Scholes. It was James Crossland who conveyed the land for a burial ground and meeting house in 1880. The burial ground has been in continuous use since 1882, with James Crossland the first to be buried here. The plan-form and internal features illustrates how the interior was used for worship. The building was built in two phases and has strong associative value with the architects William Henry Thorp and Michael Sykes. The meeting house and burial ground has high historical value.

Aesthetic value

The building has not been designed following Quaker tradition instead it has an evangelical Gothic style, with a south porch and a series of lancet windows. Internally, the walls are exposed brick with tuck pointing, pine panelling to dado level, a fine exposed roof, and a curved sounding board. The meeting house is set within a burial ground lined with simple rounded headstones. Overall, the meeting house and the burial ground have high aesthetic value, making a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Communal value

The building's primary use is as a Quaker meeting house but is also used by a number of community groups. The meeting house has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Brighouse West Yorkshire*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0003660*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Kirklees Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *Yorkshire*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Cleckheaton*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *Not applicable*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Hartshead Moor Top*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1883; 1990s*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *William Henry Thorp; Michael Sykes*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *5 April 2016*

1.15 Name of report author: *Emma Neil*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *David Brooks, Deryck Hillas and Gill Mollit*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites:

Detached burial ground at Brighthouse: NGR SE 14736 22301

1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*

1.19 Information sources:

David Blamires, *A History of Quakerism in Liversedge and Scholes*, 1973

David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. II, pp. 826-827

Helen E. Roberts, *Researching Yorkshire Quaker History: A Guide to Sources*, University of Hull, 2003, pp. 66-67.

University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Special Collections, Carlton Hill Collection,
Documents relating to Scholes Friends Meeting House and Burial Ground
(MS/DEP/1979/1/SCH/1/21)

David Brooks, *Local Meeting Survey*, January 2016.

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

2.1. Historical background

The founder of the Society of Religious Friends, George Fox, travelled through the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire between the years 1651 -52. Fox passed through Liversedge, a short distance from Scholes in 1652, and following this visit a small group were converted to Quakerism. Friends from Liversedge and Brighthouse would meet in each other's homes, notably Thomas Taylor at Brighthouse and the Green family in Liversedge. It became apparent that Friends needed a meeting house, and by 1700 a meeting house and burial ground was located in neighbouring High Town. During the eighteenth century there was a decline in Quaker numbers. The few Friends that remained travelled to Brighthouse for worship. It would be some decades later when Quakerism would strengthen again in the area. The Crossland family were influential in this and lived in Oldfieldnook near Scholes. The Crossland family were aware that there was scope for religious work in the area. With membership numbers steadily increasing Friends in the area would no longer travel to Brighthouse but instead meet in the Victoria Institute at Hartshead Moor from the mid-eighteenth century. By 1878, proposals for a burial ground at a field called Higher Common opposite Scholes Lane were drawn up. In 1880, James Crossland conveyed this land to six trustees. Shortly after Maria Crossland and Robert Firth began a campaign of fundraising for funds for a new meeting house. The meeting house built in 1883 to the designs by William Henry Thorp, the builder was Edward Bentley and cost £925, 7s to build.

Scholes Meeting closed following a decline in membership numbers between 1961 and 1966. During this time the building was used by the 3rd Spen Valley (Scholes) Boy Scouts. Following the reestablishment of the Meeting in 1966 a scheme of general repairs and maintenance took place at a cost of £500. By 1991, a new extension to the east of the building designed by Michael Sykes to accommodate kitchen facilities was built. At the same time, the cloakroom was altered to include toilet facilities and the three steps into the meeting house were removed to allow for improved access into the building.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

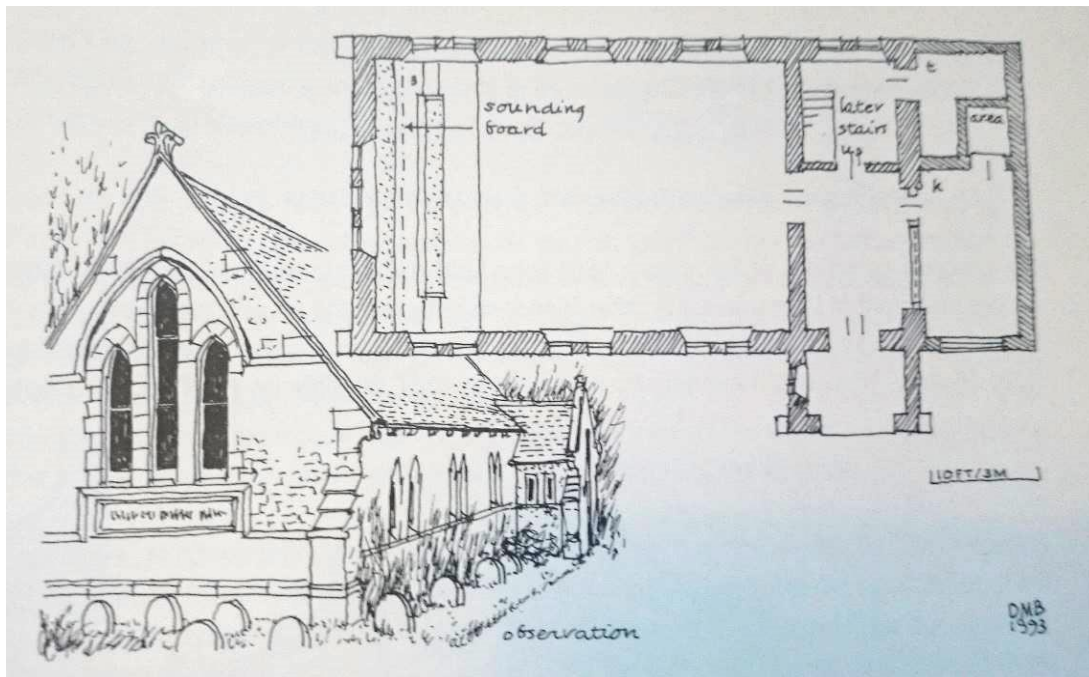


Figure 1: Ground floor plan (not to scale) and perspective
(Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 2, p. 827)

The meeting house was built in 1883 to the designs of William Henry Thorp and extended in c1991 by Michael Sykes. The meeting house has an L-plan and was built using coursed stone with ashlar dressings. The pitched roof is covered in red clay tiles with terracotta ridge tiles and coped gables. The meeting house is designed in an evangelical gothic style. The principal elevation of the meeting house faces south; the building is entered via a gabled porch with date stone “1883” and stone finial above. The entrance door is a mock Gothic arched door with decorative iron strap hinges and drop handle. The fenestration to the south and north side consists of three pairs of lancet windows. The side elevations contain a moulded plinth and sill string course, along with carved stone corbels. The west gable end faces Scholes Lane, has three lancet windows, and below the windows is a carved stone “FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE.”, the elevation also has a continuous hood mould, stone corner buttresses, moulded plinth and sill string course and a stone finial at the apex. The east gable has three narrow lancet windows set high in the gable apex, a stone finial above and to the north of this elevation a stone chimney stack. Abutting the lower section of the east gable is the former boiler house with hipped roof and the c.1991 extension designed by Michael Sykes with a shallow lean to roof. All windows are currently covered in polycarbonate protected sheeting.

The porch leads into a lobby area with a ceiling covered in tongue and groove panelling and the exposed bricks walls have been painted white. The lobby provides access to the ancillary facilities with coat hooks to the northeast corner. The toilets to the north contain a hatch within the ceiling which leads into the attic space. The kitchen and small room with access to the basement are located to the east. The main meeting room is well lit from the north, east and south walls and has a fine exposed roof structure with two arch-braced collar trusses on stone corbels and two tiers of purlins. The walls are exposed buff brick with tuck pointing and tongue and groove panelling to dado level. The flooring is covered with east-west aligned pine floorboards and carpet covers the central section of the floor. The east wall has a curved sounding board with dentilled detailing and tongue and groove panelling laid horizontal with panels below and fixed seating. The Elder’s bench has turned front legs and arm rests with baluster details running along the top of the back rest.

2.3. Loose furnishings

The meeting house once included two black oak dining chairs which were given to Swarthmore Hall during the 1950s. Today, in the main meeting room, the seating consists of modern chairs and varnished open-backed pine benches with turned front legs and arm rests.



Figure 2: Open-backed bench with turned front legs and arm rests.

2.4. Attached burial ground

The Brotherton Library at the University of Leeds holds papers relating to queries from the Medical Inspector for a proposed new burial ground at Scholes dated 28th December 1878 and a plan of the burial ground dated 1879. James Crossland conveyed this land to six trustees in 1880, one being his son Robert Crossland.

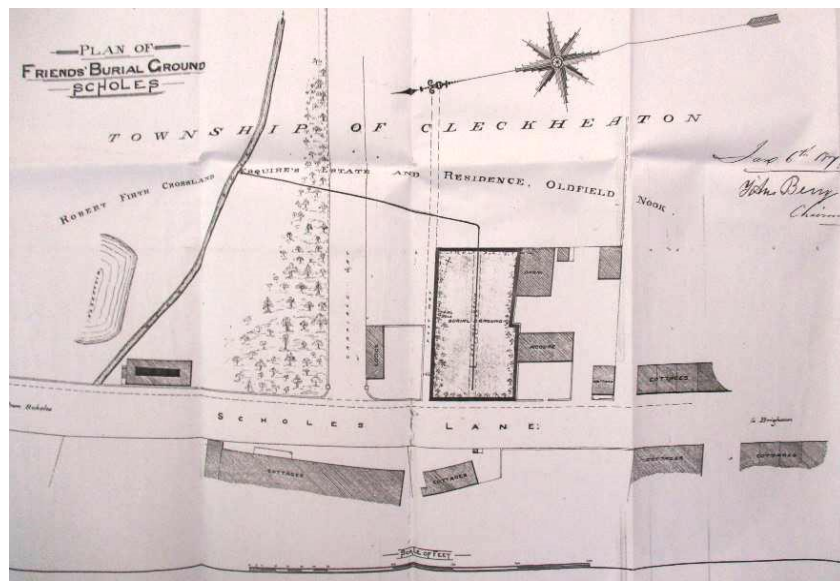


Figure 3: Plan of Scholes burial ground, 1879
(Brotherton Library, Special Collections, MS/DEP/1979/1/SCH/1/21)

An undated plan of the burial ground indicates the burial ground has 123 plots. The first person to be buried was James Crossland (1807-1882) in plot 113, he donated the land for the meeting house and burial ground. The burial ground is still open for burials and the scattering of ashes, the latest burial took place in 1998. All the gravestones have a uniform character, with rows of small round headed headstones with basic information inscribed including name, date of death and age only. The burial records covering the period from 1882 are located with an overseer (Jill Mollit).

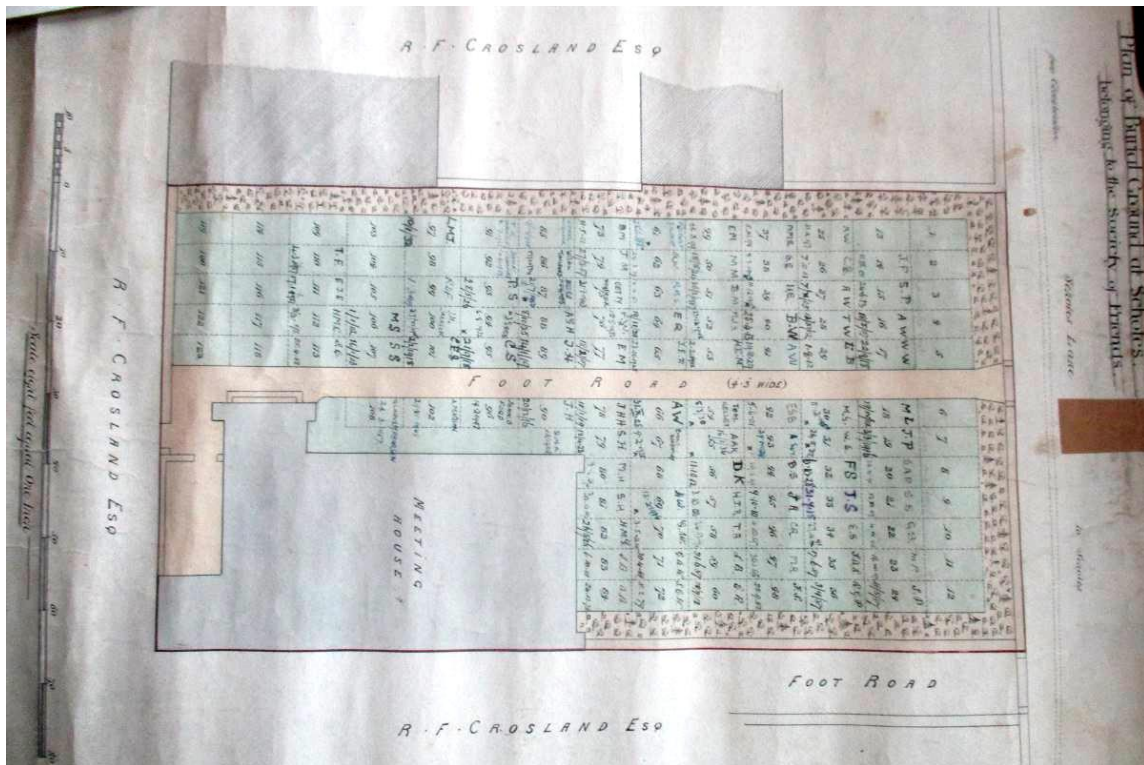


Figure 4: Plan of Scholes burial ground (Scholes MH Archive)

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

Scholes is located approximately seven miles northeast of Huddersfield. The meeting house and burial ground fall within the boundaries of Hartshead Moor Top conservation area. The site is bounded by a dry stone wall with half rounded coping stones entered from the east via an iron gate. The area is predominately residential, with Scholes Lane lined with a number of stone terraces, to the south of the meeting house is a detached nineteenth century house and to the north is a public footpath and small lodge. There is a detached burial ground located at Broughouse (NGR SE 14736 22301).

2.6. Listed status

Not listed. This building represents an unusual example of a Quaker meeting house designed in an evangelical Gothic style. Internally, a number of original features are retained; including fitted benches, a curved sounding board, and a decorative exposed roof. The architect William Henry Thorp, born in Leeds commenced his own practice in 1876 and merged the practice with George Francis Danby; a number of his buildings are listed including; the Grade II* listed School of Medicine at the University of Leeds (1894), the Grade II listed City Art Gallery and Henry Moore Centre in Leeds (1886 -88), the Grade II listed Chapel Allerton Library and Police Station in Leeds (1904) and Thorp was also responsible for the unlisted Friends meeting house and institute in York (1886). The building would be a suitable candidate for listing, and early discussion with Historic England is recommended should changes be proposed.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The West Yorkshire Archaeological Advisory Service was consulted and no Historic Environment Records are associated with the site. The site of the meeting house and burial ground was formerly a field known as Higher Common Field. Due to the presence of burials, the site has high archaeological potential.