

## ***Friends Meeting House, Keighley***

*Strawberry Street, Keighley, BD21 3BA*

*National Grid Reference: SE 06074 41726*



### ***Statement of Significance***

***Keighley Quaker Meeting House is an attractive compact stone building constructed in 1936. It is significant as the latest building associated with the Quakers who have been present in the Keighley area since the 1650s. The building is a modest example of inter-war architecture designed in domestic style.***

#### ***Evidential value***

***The building has low evidential value, as a 1930s building built on a former Victorian garden.***

#### ***Historical value***

***It is significant as the latest building associated with local Quakers who first met in Keighley in the 1650s. Previous meeting houses in the town have been demolished.***

#### ***Aesthetic value***

***The building has medium significance as a modest example of inter-war architecture designed in domestic style by local architect Joseph Wood. The well-tended garden and stone walls enhance its aesthetic value.***

#### ***Communal value***

***The building is significant as the place used for Quaker meetings in Keighley since 1936, and is also now well-used by local community groups.***

### **Part 1: Core data**

1.1 Area Meeting: *Craven & Keighley*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0015620*

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Bradford Metropolitan District Council*

- 1.5 Historic England locality: *Yorkshire*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Keighley*
- 1.7 Listed status: *No listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *Not applicable*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date: *1936; c1990*
- 1.13 Architect: *Joseph J Wood; Anthony Dalby*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *13 June 2016*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Marion Barter*
- 1.16 Name of contact made on site: *Richard Vesey*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information sources:

D.Butler, *The Quakers Meeting Houses of Britain*, Vol 2, 1999, p807

A Short History of Keighley Meeting (undated notes in the meeting house)

Yorkshire Quaker Heritage Project: <http://www.eservices.hull.ac.uk/quaker/index.cfm>

Volunteer survey by Richard Vesey, January 2016

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

### 2.1. Historical background

A Quaker meeting was established in Keighley from about 1653, after William Dewsbury and Thomas Stubbs from Ives Delves in Warley visited that year. Early meetings were held in the homes of local Friends, including Calversike Hill, home of Thomas Brigg. In c1659, he gave a plot of land for a burial ground near his home, off what is now North Dean Street (extant). In 1700, the growing number of Friends led to the purchase of a property for use as a meeting house on Mill Street in Keighley, for £41. The first meeting there was held in 1709; there were about 80 members in the first half of the eighteenth century. A small burial ground was associated with the meeting house. The meeting house was either rebuilt in 1797, or a new building acquired on the same street. The meeting was in decline and the building was let for a school from 1807; by 1855 it had been discontinued. The meeting revived in 1872 and the Mill Street (Upper Green) building was repaired and re-opened in 1877. An adult school opened in 1882. The building was demolished in 1938 as part of the Westgate redevelopment. In 1936 plans were drawn for a new meeting house by J.J.Wood; a larger building shown on plans in the archive was rejected in favour of the current smaller meeting house which cost about £1100. The plot was a former garden on the east side of Skipton Road, alongside Strawberry Street. The first meeting was held on 27 September 1936. In c1990, the building was refurbished to provide a new kitchen and children's room in the

former library, with improved access facilities; the architect was Anthony Dalby. The Briggs were notable early Quakers in the Keighley area; from the early nineteenth century John Brigg & Co ran worsted mills in Calversike and Brow End.

## 2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house built in 1936 is constructed of coursed rock-faced sandstone, with ashlar details, a concrete tiled roof and cast-iron rainwater goods. The site slopes to the east, so that the building is single-storey to the west with a basement to the east end. The building is arranged on a T-plan with ancillary spaces and the entrance in the short arm facing Skipton Road, and the meeting house in the long arm to the east, with basement below. The front elevation facing Skipton Road is symmetrical with a central gabled entrance porch; the lintel is inscribed FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE 1936 and the inner double doors are panelled with transom light. Either side are 2-light timber casements. The rear and side elevations have similar 2 or 3-light timber casements, and a projecting chimney stack to the south—east serving the boiler. The basement entrance to the south side is down steps with iron railings.

Inside, the meeting house is simply arranged with a new central lobby and facilities to either side created in c1990. The meeting room to the east end of the building has windows on three sides with a pine panelled screen to the fourth (west) side. This unpainted screen is evocative of timber screens in early meeting houses and contains two blocked doors that previously connected to the library. The central double doors were inserted in matching style in c1990. The walls and ceiling are plainly plastered with a simple coving, and the floor is carpeted. The ceiling grille relates to the former ridge ventilator (removed).

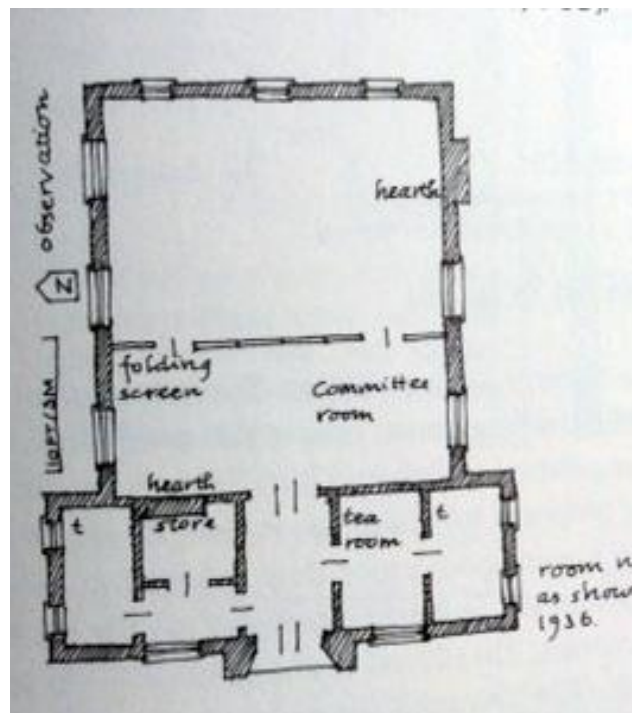


Fig.1: reconstructed plan from David Butler, 1991, page 807

## 2.3. Loose furnishings

The meeting house has three pine benches with turned legs and plain back rail, probably made in the nineteenth century.



Fig.2: one of three pine benches

#### 2.4. Attached burial ground

None

#### 2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is on the north side of Keighley town centre, set on a plot below the east side of the busy Skipton Road, at the junction with Strawberry Street which slopes steeply to the east. The area is residential with large nineteenth century villas and terraces set in leafy gardens on Skipton Road, and late twentieth century housing to the east of the meeting house. The high retaining wall along the east side Skipton Road is stone with weathered copings, with a small pedestrian entrance on the street corner. The meeting house stands in an attractive garden with trees and shrubs; Open Garden days are regularly held.



Fig.3: meeting house and garden viewed from the south-west

There is a detached Quaker burial ground, marked on historic maps as Briggs Sepulchre, towards the east end of North Dean Street on the west edge of Keighley (NGR SE 054 412). Further into the Dales to the south-west of Keighley there is a burial ground at Horton Croft in Stanbury (SE008 370). Stanbury was historically part of the same monthly meeting.

#### 2.6. Listed status

The meeting house is not listed and as a plain 1930s building is not considered to be listable. It has some local interest and could be eligible for a local list.

#### 2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

West Yorkshire AAS consulted no HER record. Prior to the meeting house being built, the plot was in use as a garden; the archaeological potential is low.