

Frenchay Quaker Meeting House

[1 contribution](#)

Overview

Heritage Category:

Listed Building

Grade:

II

List Entry Number:

1128840

Date first listed:

03-Aug-1984

Date of most recent amendment:

01-Jun-2020

Statutory Address:

Beckspool Road, Frenchay, Bristol, BS16 1NT

Map

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Location

Statutory Address:

Beckspool Road, Frenchay, Bristol, BS16 1NT

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:

South Gloucestershire (Unitary Authority)

Parish:

Winterbourne

National Grid Reference:

ST 64118 77884

Summary

Quaker Meeting House, built in 1809, with associated early-C19 former coach house with women's business meeting room above, and former stable. The former travelling ministers' house to the rear is probably C17. There are C20 and C21 alterations.

Reasons for Designation

Frenchay Quaker Meeting House is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

* as a well-preserved example of an early C19 Quaker meeting house incorporating a former coach house with women's business room above, a former stable and former travelling ministers' house (the latter probably of C17 date); * for its retention of a suite of C19 fixtures and fittings, including features such as the shuttered openings between the meeting room, lobby and gallery, that reflect the congregation's historic mode of worship. Historic interest:

* as an example of a late C17 meeting house that was rebuilt in the early C19 in response to the growing affluence and gentrification of Frenchay, and the fashion for more 'polite' rather than 'vernacular' architecture; * for its C19

association with the Fry family, well-known as Quakers and as chocolate manufacturers.

Group value:

* it has group value with the nearby, Grade-II listed Frenchay Lodge East, Penn House, and Frenchay Lodge West, which may have C17 origins, and the early C19 Fromeshaw and Lake House.

History

The Quaker movement emerged out of a period of religious and political turmoil in the mid-C17. Its main protagonist, George Fox, openly rejected traditional religious doctrine, instead promoting the theory that all people could have a direct relationship with God, without dependence on sermonising ministers, nor the necessity of consecrated places of worship. Fox, originally from Leicestershire, claimed the Holy Spirit was within each person, and from 1647 travelled the country as an itinerant preacher. 1652 was pivotal in his campaign and after a vision on Pendle Hill, Lancashire, Fox was moved to visit Firbank Fell, Cumbria, where he delivered a rousing three-hour speech to an assembly of 1000 people and recruited numerous converts. The Quakers, formally named the Religious Society of Friends, was thus established.

Fox asserted that no one place was holier than another, and in their early days, the new congregations often met for silent worship at outdoor locations; the use of members' houses, barns, and other secular premises followed. Persecution of Nonconformists proliferated in the period, with Quakers suffering disproportionately. The Quaker Act of 1662 and the Conventicle Act of 1664 forbade their meetings, although they continued in defiance and a number of meeting houses date from this early period. Broad Campden, Gloucestershire, came into Quaker use in 1663 and is the earliest meeting house in Britain, although it was out of use from 1871 to 1961. The meeting house at Hertford, East Hertfordshire, constructed in 1670, is the oldest to be purpose built. The Act of Toleration of 1689 was one of several steps towards freedom of worship outside the established church, and thereafter meeting houses began to make their mark on the landscape.

In 1654 Quakers met for worship in an orchard in Winterborne (near to Frenchay) belonging to Richard Cole and subsequent meetings were held in a

building belonging to his son, Hezekiah, who was a friend of George Fox. In 1673 George Cole conveyed land on Frenchay Common to six trustees, and between 1673-6 a purpose-built meeting house was erected. In the C18 Frenchay grew as an affluent rural suburb of Bristol and wealthy merchants, many of them Nonconformists and Quakers, settled here. Following the arrival of Joseph Storrs Fry (1769 – 1835) and his wife Ann in 1801, it was agreed that the C17 meeting house did not fulfil his or other trustees' aspirations and in 1808 a decision was made to demolish the meeting house and rebuild on the same site. A small cottage attached to the rear of the present meeting house may have been a travelling ministers' house associated with the earlier building. The new meeting house, set back from the road behind the coach house and stable with a passageway to the south, was built by local builder Good of Hambrook at a cost of £925 5s 10d, and opened in 1809. In 1814 a women's business meeting room was built above the coach house and the passageway. The pennant stone, three-centred arched entrances to both the passageway, and the courtyard between the coach house and stable, are thought to have been added at this time. In the mid-C20, the stable and the C19 lean-to to the north side of the women's business meeting house were converted to form the warden's house. In the late C20 the rear of the coach house was partitioned-off to provide cloak rooms; the front section is used for storage.

A burial ground for the meeting was originally established in 1657 on land given to the Friends in the nearby parish of Downend and Bromley Heath. This was sold in the 1950s and although the site of the burial ground has been respected the surrounding land has been developed for housing. The plaque from the old burial ground survives at the present meeting house. The land for the burial ground to the rear of the meeting house in Frenchay was given by Hannah Rogers in 1791.

Details

Quaker Meeting House, built in 1809, with associated early-C19 former coach house with women's business meeting room above, and former stable. The former travelling ministers' house to the rear is probably C17. There are C20 and C21 alterations.

MATERIALS: built of local pennant rubble stone that has been limewashed, with hipped roofs that are covered in double Roman tiles and pantiles, and brick stacks. The windows are of painted timber and most are small-paned sashes.

The meeting room internal fixtures and fittings are of Russian pine.

PLAN: the double-height meeting room is orientated on a roughly north to south alignment, with the main meeting room to the north end and the lobby and former galleried loft to the south end. To the roadside (east) elevation is the coach house, with the former women's business meeting room above, and to the right, the two-storey warden's house. To the south end of the building is a passageway leading to the burial ground. Attached to the north-west corner of the meeting room is the former travelling ministers' house, a one-up, one-down building, and to the corner of this is a mid-to late C19 single-storey outbuilding.

EXTERIOR: the roadside (east) elevation comprises a two-storey, two-bay range and a two-storey, one-bay range, linked by a three-centred arch of pennant stone voussoirs and keystone, supported on coursed stone piers with moulded stone impost, and a parapet wall above. The range to the left comprises a further pennant stone archway and a pair of plank doors to the ground floor, and, above, two round-arched, multi-pane windows with louvred shutters. The range to the right forms the warden's house and has an inserted mid-to late C20 eight-light window at ground floor, and an altered first-floor window that replaces an eight-over-eight sash window. The eaves cornice is a mid-to late C20 addition.

The former coach house and stable face each other across the courtyard and are defined by central segmental headed doorways and flanking windows, now altered. The hinged plank and batten door to the coach house has C18 ironmongery and historic graffiti. The plank door to the former stable is C20 and blocked internally.

The rear (west) elevation of the meeting house faces towards the burial ground and has two large round-arched windows with glazing bars. There is a segmental-headed sash window to the right, placed above the entrance to the ground-floor passageway that is denoted by a gabled timber porch. A covered walkway, with a flagstone floor and a lean-to roof supported on cast iron columns and covered in pantiles, leads from the porch to the C19 plank door giving access to the former travelling ministers' house, with a sash window to each floor. The corner stack does not relate to an internal fireplace. The north elevation of the meeting house has a central round-arched window; the south elevation is blind.

INTERIOR: the meeting room is simple and has plain, plastered walls, a concave ceiling with plaster cornice and a pine-boarded floor. Across the full width of the

north end is the original raised stand with ramped dado panelling and fixed seating that continues to the sides. At the south end is a full-height partition of fielded panelling with vertically sliding shutters to ground and first-floor level with, at its centre, a pair of three-panel doors with a wooden latch. The ground-floor lobby has fixed hat hooks, a fitted high-level cupboard and a simple staircase with closed string, stick balusters, a turned newel post and a moulded handrail. The first-floor gallery originally had raked seating but this has since been levelled to allow for a kitchen to be inserted. The fireplace to the south wall has been removed. The doorway to the east replaces a segmental-headed window and gives access to the first-floor former women's business meeting room. This room is plain with fixed bench perimeter seating (there is an inserted section of seating in the position of the former fireplace), and hooks to the ceiling for oil lamps. A six-panel door with the remains of a wooden latch leads to the staircase between the main meeting room and former coach house. The window at the top of the staircase has been altered to form an additional doorway to the warden's house. The warden's house is plain with some C19 joinery.

The former travelling ministers' house is plainly detailed with the remains of a small cupboard to the ground floor, a re-used four-panel door to the staircase and a window seat at first floor.

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:

35065

Legacy System:

LBS

Sources

Books and journals

Butler, D, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain, Volume 2*, (1999), 215-6

Lidbetter, H (Author), *The Friends Meeting House*, (1961 (second edition, 1979)), 28

Vintner, D , The Friends Meeting House, Frenchay, (1983)

Websites

'Friends Meeting House, Frenchay', Architectural History Practice Ltd (2016), accessed 29 November 2019 from <http://heritage.quaker.org.uk>

Other

Strong, R, Watts, H, 'Local Meeting Survey' (2016)

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.
End of official listing

FRENCHAY LODGE EAST FRENCHAY LODGE WEST PENN HOUSE

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Overview

Heritage Category:

Listed Building

Grade:

II

List Entry Number:

1321121

Date first listed:

17-Sep-1952

Statutory Address:

FRENCHAY LODGE EAST, BECKSPOOL ROAD

Statutory Address:

FRENCHAY LODGE WEST, BECKSPOOL ROAD

Statutory Address:

PENN HOUSE, BECKSPOOL ROAD

Map

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FRENCHAY LODGE EAST, BECKSPOOL ROAD

Statutory Address:

FRENCHAY LODGE WEST, BECKSPOOL ROAD

Statutory Address:

PENN HOUSE, BECKSPOOL ROAD

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:

South Gloucestershire (Unitary Authority)

Parish:

Winterbourne

National Grid Reference:

ST 64126 77952

Details

ST 67 NW WINTERBOURNE BECKSPOOL ROAD (west side) Frenchay 3/7 17.9.52
Frenchay Lodge East, Penn House and Frenchay Lodge West G.V. II

House, now 3 houses. Perhaps of C17 origins, externally mid C18 and later. Roughcast, slate roofs. Main block, 2½ storeys, 9 windows, all glazing bar sashes, at the left are 3 gabled dormers with decorative bargeboards, at the right 2 hipped dormers behind parapet with heavily moulded cornice; the door, originally central, now at the centre of the 5 bays to the right, has a heavy Gibbsian surround with voussoirs, keystone and pediment, a similar, smaller door is inserted off-centre left. At the left (south) is a large projecting hipped 2 storey canted bay with 3 windows, all glazing bar sashes with pelmets, quoins, string course and a light cornice gutter. Finally, beyond this is a single storey blank gabled wing with ornate ball finial, this returns with long glazing bar sashes flanking later inserted french doors.

Listing NGR: ST6412677952

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Legacy System number:

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Legacy System:

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Legal

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End of official listing