DOWNINGTOWN FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE
800 E. LAncaster Avenue
Downingtown
Chester
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6653

HABS
PA-6653

WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DOWNINGTOWN FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE
~~(Milltown)~~

HABS No. PA-6653

Location: Downingtown Friends Meeting House can be found at 800 East Lancaster Avenue, in Downingtown, Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: The Trustees for the Religious Society of Friends of Downingtown Preparative Meeting own and operate the meeting house property.

Present Occupant/Use: The Downingtown Friends continue to use their meeting house as a place of worship, of business, and of community outreach.

Significance: Downingtown Friends Meeting House is representative of the single-cell building type, a form developed by the Friends during the early settlement period. Initially conceived when they followed the English format for worship and business, the single-cell type was prevalent up until the era when the American Friends created their own religious program. Different from the English program, the American Friends needed for their meeting houses to accommodate separate, defined spaces for men and women. These spaces were generally equivalent in size. For Downingtown, however, there are two caveats. It is a nineteenth-century structure and it is larger than the one-room meeting houses erected during the settlement period. This meeting house, then, signals the re-emergence of that early building form in meeting house design. It also is likely that Downingtown was the first example of this revived, but revised, building type.

Although seen much earlier at Downingtown, the retrospective single-cell type characterized many of the meeting houses erected after the schism between Orthodox and Hicksite Friends in 1828. The single-cell or one-room plan was a viable solution because it readily accommodated the relatively small number of members in the new meetings created as a result of the separation, just as it had the small groups of immigrants a hundred years or so before.

The interior plan of Downingtown Friends Meeting House also is reflective of earlier habits. A partition divided the space into two apartments, but it extends from side to side – running the length of the building. By the time of Downingtown's construction, common practice among the Friends favored partitions that were oriented parallel to the gable ends, running the width rather than the length of the building. This made Downingtown's internal organization unusual in its day. Significantly for the American Friends' programmatic needs, the placement of the partition produced two almost equal sized rooms, one each for the men's and women's meetings at Downingtown. At the same time as it fulfilled the American Friends' spatial requirements for two equally-sized rooms, the partition's orientation produced an interior arrangement reminiscent of that developed for the English

program wherein men and women Friends met for worship together and then separated into gender-specific groups for business meetings. In the English format, generally a larger room was required for the inclusive meetings for worship and only a smaller room needed for the women to withdraw into for business; moreover, once split into business meetings, the women Friends did not have to see the facing benches and so were not hampered by the side to side placement of the partition. Early meeting houses in southeastern Pennsylvania, such as Merion Friends Meeting House and Sadsbury Friends Meeting House, were constructed in this manner. Similarities in membership size and in the rural location of these meetings to Downingtown likely contributed to the revival of the single-cell building form, as well as the orientation of the partition, in the nineteenth-century.

PART I. Historical Information

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: By February 1807.

The Friends' efforts in Downingtown were summarized in response to the second annual query regarding construction. The minutes note that

> *A Meeting House [was] built* in the Neighborhood of Downing-Town, and a Meeting for Worship settled there, held on the first and fourth days of the Week; known by the name of Downing-Town Meeting.[1] (Emphasis mine)

Although the meeting house was built in time to appear in the February 1807 queries, the Downingtown Friends still had to finance the project. The committee in charge of the construction account reported in November 1814 that $185.74 was outstanding from the building campaign. Most of this sum was due to the Treasurer, John Roberts, while the balance of $52.62 was owed to another for the "materials furnished." The committee received pledges to cover $86.26 of the debt, which left the meeting house account $99.48 in arrears.[2] Because the matter is not mentioned again, presumably the Friends honored their debts and finished paying for the construction of their meeting house.

2. Architect: No architect is known to have been contracted with for this project. Moreover, since the building campaign preceded the establishment of Downingtown as a Preparative Meeting, no building committee names -- not even entered retrospectively -- are listed in the preparative minutes, the source most likely to detail the process.

3. Original and subsequent owners: While it is not known who physically built the meeting house or who fitted out the interiors, the meeting minutes recorded who was left in charge of the property from a legal standpoint. In December 1808, for example, the Uwchlan

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[1] Caln Quarterly Meeting, 2 mo 12th 1807.

[2] Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 11 mo 30th 1814.

Monthly Meeting appointed "Jesse Kersey, Joseph R. Downing, John R. Thomas, and Richard Thomas, Jr., as Trustees [for Downingtown Preparative Meeting] to hold the lot of ground and the premises upon which their meeting house is built, for the use of the Friends composing said meeting [...] The above named Friends are directed to receive a Deed for the said lot of ground with the appurtenances, and hold the same for the uses aforesaid." The monthly meeting then requested that the deed and declaration of trust be lodged with its papers.[3] Four years later, another Friend's name was added to the list, with the Monthly Meeting's approval. Joshua B. Sharpless became a Trustee for the real estate and so joined those "appointed some time back to receive and hold title for [the] Downingtown meeting house."[4] In December of that year, the Preparative Meeting nominated Jesse Kersey and Nathan Sharpless to "receive a title for our meeting house lot."[5] It is unclear if the Preparative Meeting wanted these men to get the title from the Monthly Meeting, or if the meeting merely attempted to expand the group of Trustees who represented it.

The Trustees for the meeting's real estate remained in force until the mid-nineteenth century. At that time, the meeting recognized the need for electing new Trustees as all but one of the initial 1810s group were dead. In 1856 the Trustees appointed were Charles Downing, Jacob M. Zook, John J. Edge, and George Thomas.[6] This remained in effect until 1906 when the deeds to the meeting house property were transferred from those Trustees to a new group and the legal documents recorded at West Chester.[7]

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: It is not known who built the meeting house, who was contracted with, or who supplied the materials necessary for the project. It has been suggested, however, that "Peter Sheneholt, an East Caln mason, was [...] contracted with to construct a meetinghouse" and that the meeting house in question was that belonging to the Downingtown Friends.[8]

5. Original plans and construction: Although no architectural plans are known to have existed, the meeting house of today remains largely as it was constructed: a single-cell entity. Moreover, the Friends took advantage of the county's natural resources and so used the nearby limestone and trees (wood) when they built their houses, mills, schools, and ultimately, their meeting house at Downingtown.

6. Alterations and Additions: Little is said of the meeting house in the Preparative Meeting minutes, except for the appointment of a caretaker for the property. In March 1860, the caretaker also was charged with the responsibility of seeing to "all the necessary repairs" to the

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[3]Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 8th 1808, p. 241.

[4]Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 10 mo 8th 1812.

[5]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 2nd 1812.

[6]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 7 mo 2nd 1856; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 8 mo 27th 1856; Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 4th 1856.

[7]Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 1 mo 4th 1906.

[8]I did not find Sheneholt's name or contract in the Preparative Meeting minutes, but this information came from Jane L.S. Davidson, A History of Downingtown (Downingtown, PA: Borough of Downingtown, 1982), p. 31.

structure. Unfortunately, no mention was made of what those "necessary repairs" were and so probably the notation merely referred to general maintenance issues.[9] Similarly, in February 1861 the Friends named a committee to attend to the "improvements on the east side of the house"; these were changes they "thought necessary" but no additional information was recorded.[10] It is possible that the Friends' improvements to the east side included the construction of the shed found at the east corner of the building today.

Two changes to the meeting house and grounds, however, were noted specifically. The first occurred in September 1868. At that time, the Friends "believ[ed] a brick walk connecting the side doors of the meeting house [was] desirable as regards health and comfort [and so they appointed a committee] to estimate the cost & if they can collect a sufficient amount by voluntary continuation to defray the expense to have it attended to if possible before cold weather."[11] The second alteration took place inside the building. Because the librarian moved away from town, the Friends faced a storage problem: what to do with the books. The library committee had shelves prepared for the volumes and in February 1871 the books were relocated in the meeting house proper.[12] It is possible that these shelves are the ones located in the sides of the northwest interior entry vestibule.

The southwest vestibule and the wood ramp attached to it that wraps around the southeast elevation and up to the south corner are modern additions to the meeting house.

B. Historical Context

Downingtown

William Penn, the "Proprietary and Governor of the Province of Pennsylvania," renamed the village of Upland "Chester" and then established Chester as the seat of the county. There the colonists constructed the courthouse buildings and a jail as well as the stored the records generated by the local government agencies.[13] Chester County, in which the former village of Upland was located, was one of three counties created by Penn in 1682 and was a haven for immigrants from the British Isles, many of whom came to the new world because of the promise of religious toleration. Although emigres from Sweden lived nearby, it was the members of the Society of Friends sometimes called "Quakers" who dominated the new colony. Many of the

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[9]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 28th 1860.

[10]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 2 mo 27th 1861.

[11]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 9 mo 2nd 1868.

[12]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 2 mo 1st 1871; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 1st 1871. At various times, the Committee for Sufferings would give the meeting books for its members to use. See, for example, Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 1 mo 28th 1824.

[13]Cited in J. Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope, History of Chester County, Pennsylvania, with Genealogical and Biographical Sketches (Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881), p. 116-117.

newly arrived Friends settled outside Philadelphia and earned a living through agricultural pursuits.[14]

The county seat of Chester was located at the edge of county and so traveling to town for court days and markets was cumbersome to most residents. By 1766 the county's constituents clamored for a change; they hoped to shift the seat of government to the geographic center of the county. Nothing was done until 1780. At that time the assembly acquiesced and representatives for the county bought property on which to build the new government buildings in East Caln township. No further progress was made and the government remained in Chester. By 1784, the issue again assumed precedence on the assembly's agenda and another site was chosen. In 1786 the seat was moved from Chester to West Chester.[15]

In East Caln township, the village of Downingtown was thriving by the 1780s debate over removal of the county seat. Traditionally, it is said that the people living in Downingtown rejected their town as a possible location for the government. The Downingtown-ites, led by Richard Downing and Colonel John Hannum, wanted to preserve their village and protect themselves from the worldly influences that would come with the county representatives and businesses.[16]

Originally part of Caln township (1702) and then East Caln (1730s), Downingtown attracted the enterprising as well as those who held dear the beliefs and religious practices outside of the Anglican Church. Leading residents, such as Richard Downing and his son, owned mills as did Roger Hunt, Robert Valentine, and Rachel White in the eighteenth century. The preponderance of the mills lent the town its first name, Milltown. Soon after, the community was known as Downings' Town and it is the latter appellation that stuck. Outside of Downingtown, however, the East Caln township retained an agricultural character.[17]

Strategically located halfway between Lancaster and Philadelphia, growth in present-day Downingtown was encouraged by geography and movement between the two cities. Early establishments reflected the travelers' needs, such as the George Washington Inn, stage coach stops, and various shops; these businesses popped up along the stage lines between the two major cities. After the stage was replaced, the commercial center shifted closer to the new road, the Philadelphia - Lancaster Turnpike built in the 1790s, and to the railroad. The 1806-07 Friends' meeting house, for example, was built near the tollbooth at the 29 ½ milepost of the turnpike at one end of town.[18]

Downingtown Friends

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[14]Margaret Berwind Schiffer, Survey of Chester County, Pennsylvania, Architecture (Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 1976), p. 3-4; C.W. Heathcote, Sr., and Lucile Shenk, eds., A History of Chester County (Harrisburg, PA: National Historical Association, Inc., 1932), p. 184-186, p. 338-340; see also **HABS No. PA-6225**.

[15]Futhey and Cope, p. 116-117.

[16]Futhey and Cope, p. 116; Davidson, p. 22.

[17]Heathcote and Shenk, p. 184-186; Davidson, p. 11-12.

[18]Davidson, p. 24-31.

The Friends in present-day Downingtown received permission from the Uwchlan Monthly Meeting to gather as an Indulged Meeting in 1784. Although they petitioned the Monthly Meeting for a change in meeting status, from Indulged to Preparative, around 1800, their request was denied.[19] By February 1805, their desire to be established as a meeting was made known to the Quarterly Meeting held at Caln. The Quarterly Meeting appointed a committee to investigate the matter.[20] The committee reported in May 1806 that

> We the Committee appointed to take into consideration the proposal from Uwchlan Monthly Meeting for the establishment of the Meeting for Public Worship in the Neighborhood of Downing-Town, have attended to our appointment, and most of our number visited that Meeting; and solidly weighing the Subject are united in Judgement that it will be best to grant their request, which we nevertheless submit to the Quarterly Meeting.[21]

It was not until February 1811, however, that the Downingtown Friends received their coveted Preparative Meeting status. The Monthly Meeting at Uwchlan finally conceded and Downingtown Preparative Meeting came into being.[22] This meeting endured for almost a century. The last gathering of the Preparative Meeting was in March 1907.[23]

Between 1811 and 1907, the Downingtown Friends met regularly, fulfilled their portion of the quota assessed by the monthly and yearly meetings, and looked after their property. The Downingtown Friends' property encompassed the meeting house lot, which included the building, sheds, and graveyard, as well as an adjoining agricultural lot that they rented out annually. In order to keep up the grounds, they raised money through subscriptions of the membership and devoted the interest earned on any legacies bequeathed to them toward the needs of the property committee. They also tapped their meeting's membership for funds for the treasury to cover any contingent expenses that may crop up during the year. Each Friend contributed according to his or her ability and the fund-raising was done by committee, according to the traditional way of handling the group's collective responsibilities.[24]

Additionally, the spiritual needs of the membership were addressed by the Friends. To assist them in their efforts to lead disciplined lives, the Committee for Sufferings periodically offered them books pertaining to the faith or to the history of the Society of Friends. Examples of the titles sent to the Downingtown Friends are as follows: Church Government by Robert Barclay, Rise and Progress of the People Called Quaker by William Penn, The Works of Isaac Pennington, Dissertation on the Nation and the Effect of Christian Baptism by Joseph Phipps, Silent Waiting by Mary Brook, Short Account of the Religious Society of Friends by Anthony Benezet, and Serious Call to Love by Benjamin Holme.[25] Other treatises sent to them were copies

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[19] "Downingtown Friends Meeting House," in "Friends Meeting Houses in Chester County, Pennsylvania," book 2, T.C. Matlack Collection, Quaker Collection, Magill Library, Haverford College, Pennsylvania, p. 14-16; published as T. Chalkley Matlack, comp., Brief Historical Sketches concerning Friends' Meetings of the Past and Present with Special Reference to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Moorestown, NJ: 1938), p. 234.

[20] Caln Quarterly Meeting, Minutes 2 mo 13th 1805, p. 52.

[21] Caln Quarterly Meeting, 5 mo 15th 1806, p. 94.

[22] Caln Quarterly Meeting, 2 mo 14th 1811.

[23] Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 27th 1907.

[24] See, for example, Downingtown Preparative Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 1st 1819, wherein the Downingtown Friends had to raise money to pay their share of the expense of repairing a wall at Uwchlan, the site of the Monthly Meeting.

[25] Downingtown Preparative Meeting, Minutes 1 mo 28th 1824.

of Journal of George Fox and Barclay's Apology.[26] The Committee on Sufferings wanted the individual meetings to lend the books out to their members, or possibly to others who could benefit from their teachings, such as children and non-members who attended the meetings for worship but did not belong or were not initiated.

The Downingtown Friends' Meeting House

The Downingtown Friends built their meeting house before their group's establishment as a Preparative Meeting. From this it can be inferred that they had no other, formally recognized place of meeting prior to 1806 on the current meeting house property. It is likely, however, that they met for worship in another building in town, such as in the 1774 schoolhouse they oversaw, between 1784 and 1806 when they had Indulged Meeting status.[27] Regardless of gatherings in the schoolhouse, located near the George Washington Inn and on property donated by John Downing, officially the Friends in Downingtown belonged to Uwchlan and Caln Meetings.[28]

In addition to no purpose-built structure prior to 1806, little written evidence has surfaced regarding the construction of the present building, with only a note in the annual queries that it was erected. From this, it can be inferred that the Downingtown Friends drew upon the earliest of meeting house forms as a model to follow. Within their traditionally understood ways, the Downingtown Friends designed a meeting house to represent and to serve their needs based on what they knew worked for their religious program. They drew on the familiar. In so doing, they would find little need to record the design process or the people's names who were involved directly.

Most meeting houses erected in the early settlement period were one cell structures in which the Friends - men and women - met for worship. After worship, the women Friends withdrew so that single sex business meetings could be held. Initially, the women Friends' business meetings occurred in galleries or lofts, but not in specific spaces designed for them as an integral part of the meeting house. One way the Friends sought to accommodate the architectural requirements of the women's meeting is evidenced through Radnor (1717) to which the Friends added a smaller room; the telescoping form represented at Radnor consisted of the meeting house and its smaller addition, with the latter serving as an extension of the main block but one that was clearly less significant. Through use of the telescoping form, however, independent business meetings for men and women could be supported. As the American Friends adopted a new program, wherein both meetings for worship and business were held as concurrent, single-sex events, it became necessary for the women Friends to have an articulated, designed place within the meeting house. By the 1760s, the format was perfected in the doubled plan of Buckingham Friends Meeting House, giving equal architectural expression to both genders.

Although the doubled, two cell plan of Buckingham served as a model to many meetings who were building their meeting houses in the second half of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, the Downingtown Friends did not follow suit. Instead they selected the single cell

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[26]Downingtown Preparative Meeting, Minutes 5 mo 1st 1850.
[27]Davidson, p. 18, 31. The Friends officially accepted responsibility of running the school in 1793, although many of them were behind its construction two decades earlier. It was three bays across, with a central doorway, and was heated by an end chimney. (See photo, Davidson, p. 18) See also, Inventory of Church Archives, Society of Friends in Pennsylvania, (Philadelphia, PA: Friends Historical Association, 1941), entry 133.
[28]Davidson, p. 18.

model and provided for separate meeting space with an interior partition; the partition also was influenced by the earliest American meeting houses as it ran on an axis parallel to the front door. It produced two rooms on the inside, suggestive of the Downingtown Friends' planning for gender-specific meetings according to the religious format determined by the American Friends in the previous century. Significantly, though, the placement of the partition meant that if the partition sections were closed then one group would be denied access to the facing benches and so to the people and messages attached to them. This made the partition's location more like that seen in meeting houses of the early settlement period floor plans and reflective of the English Friends' way. So for Downingtown, perhaps theirs was a conscious choice made to highlight architecturally an era they perceived as a better, or a stronger and more pure, time in their movement's own history. Or perhaps theirs was a choice influenced by the pragmatic issues of membership size, money available, and siting outside Philadelphia city. A definitive answer remains elusive as no expression of intent -- or documentation at all -- outlines the process in the preparative minutes.

PART II. Architectural Information

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: In both its materials and form, Downingtown Friends Meeting House resembles many of the buildings seen in the Delaware River valley; the meeting house is made of locally quarried stone as are those throughout the valley. Its small size also corresponds in scale to many of the structures erected early in the settlement period, and its emulation of a domestic model means that the makers of the meeting house drew on their surroundings when they erected a permanent place to worship. In doing so, they created a timeless edifice. Within the Friends' own history, the building type they chose imitates the single cell meeting house form that was so prolific throughout the county a hundred years beforehand. Inside this familiarly-sized building, the Downingtown Friends employed the side-to-side oriented partition that runs the length of the building, an arrangement of interior space reflective of the English and early American way of accommodating the Friends' meetings formal needs. It appears, then, that even though the Friends neglected to write down any guidelines for the construction of meeting houses, they selected what worked for them traditionally.

Aesthetically the meeting house reflects the theological principles of the Society of Friends. Following a domestic model in scale and form, it is an example of the "plain style" of building. The absence of worldly ornament in the meeting house, or its "plainness," speaks to the Quaker community's rejection of iconography and the culture it represented. Like the Friends themselves, the structure is dressed well but simply. Through ordinary architecture executed in quality materials, that is to say, a building without pattern book finery or ecclesiastical symbols, the Friends reiterated their belief in the sanctity of everyday acts and in each Friend's ability to communicate directly with God.

2. Condition of fabric: The Downingtown Friends have lovingly maintained their buildings and grounds. It is painted and evidence of on-going repairs is apparent. They, for example, are replacing the requisite parts of the wood vestibule at the south corner of the building.

Ivy, growing on the northeast and southwest walls, poses the largest threat to the continued well being of the meeting house, horse sheds, and school. It also obscures the two basement windows cut into the southeast exterior wall of the meeting house. The other source of damage to the meeting house is water. Dampness has encouraged the moss growing at the

foundations and beneath the northeast porch. It, too, has rotted the wood shutters and sills in places as well as the weatherboards and lattice on the southwest elevation. Similarly, water has rusted some of the metallic elements on the exterior of the building, such as the sash holding the basement windows in situ and the strap hinges on the shutters. There also is some mold-like substance growing on top of a foam-adhesive found beneath the window sills in the southeast elevation; the adhesive probably was inserted to keep the opening weather-tight. One of the window shutters is missing. The stone sill of the southwest doorway is cracked.

B. Description of Exterior[29]

1. Overall dimensions: Downingtown Friends Meeting House is a one-story building, measuring almost 29' to the ridge of the roof. It is divided visually into three bays by three bays. Although the fenestration remains balanced by maintaining the three by three rhythm on the first floor, the position of the door varies. In the northwest (front) facade, the door is centrally located; on the side elevations, the entry is pushed to the end. The building measures approximately 35' by 40', not including the front porch (9'9 ½ " x 7'9"), northeast porch (12'0" x 22' 9 ½ "), shed (11'2 ½ " x 11'7"), and vestibule (8'11" x 11'5").

2. Foundations and walls: The foundations and walls of the meeting house consist of un-coursed, stone masonry. Some of the stones used in the foundations have an orange color; this is particularly noticeable in the west end of the northwest (front) elevation and in the northeast elevation. Although the stonework is not laid up in regular courses, it was done carefully. In the northwest elevation, for example, there are references to lintels above the windows and to corner quoins. Above the basement window in the northeast elevation, moreover, the stone is placed to allude to a keystone. The shed and vestibule additions are made of wood. The walls of painted weatherboards rest on stone foundations; the foundations of the vestibule are hidden by lattice-work.

3. Structural system, framing: The meeting house was constructed of load-bearing stone masonry walls.

4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: Defining the center bay of the northwest (front) elevation is a small porch supported by two wood posts. The posts are chamfered and stand on marble blocks (about 1'0" high), akin to a plinth used to elevate the base of a column. The floor of the porch is made of bricks laid in a herringbone pattern. The brick paving is confined to a squarish-area by marble borders set on end (but less than 1'0" high) so that you step up to come onto the porch itself. A hip roof covers the porch. The presence of the gutters over the cornice gives the roof a slightly flared appearance; downspouts are against the stone wall. The porch's wood cornice is painted white and features a cyma recta or double curve. The cymatium (the cyma recta portion) connects the simple crown molding and fascia boards of the cornice. Both are vertically positioned boards unadorned by beading or carving. The fascia projects downward, covering the soffit and brackets. Set in from, and beneath, the cornice is the ceiling of the porch. It too is wood, made of boards laid northeast to southwest that rest on a nicely finished wall plate, and painted.

Similar to the front porch, the northeast porch is supported by chamfered wood posts and the flooring consists of bricks laid in a herringbone pattern. It, however, is covered by a shed

[29]For more precise measurements, please see the measured drawings for HABS No. PA-6653 and the accompanying field notes.

roof. The northwest siding is wood; the boards are flush and so different from the weatherboarding seen in the shed and vestibule walls.

The steps leading into the meeting house from both porches are marble. The steps leading up to the vestibule and down into the basement are stone.

5. Chimneys: There are two interior gable end chimneys heating the meeting house. These chimneys each contain a flue for the stoves only; there are no fireboxes in the meeting house. To accommodate the position of the stoves in the apartments, the flues corbel out from the stack. The stacks are brick and have been stuccoed over where they protrude above the roof. The cap is covered. There are vents, two per northeast and southwest elevations and one each on the short side (northwest and southeast), that allow the smoke to escape in spite of the chimney cover.[30] There is also a venting pipe near the northeast gable.

6. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The entries in the northwest, southwest, and northeast elevation consist of double or folding doors. Each section, or half of the double door, is ornamented by three raised panels and is painted brown. The inside of these doors, however, is made up of tongue and groove, vertically oriented boards reminiscent of board and batten assembly. These doors are hung from large strap hinges, located at the top and bottom of the doors on the interior face; they are operated by thumb latches. The double doors sit inside a simple wood surround dressed by a bead and connected by butt joints. The door surrounds closely resemble those found around the window openings.

The door leading into the storage area (shed at the east corner) from the northeast porch consists of five random-width boards aligned side by side on a vertical axis. The sill is made of wood as well; it is raised slightly so that you must step up to get into the space. Poking beneath the door are the random-width floor boards. There is no true surround or facing applied to define the parameters of the entry in a finished manner. This door is painted brown like the three double doors.

The northwest door leading into the vestibule is glazed with nine lights. Below the lights are two vertically oriented panels. There is another door opening into the vestibule from the southeast that gives access into the building from the handicap ramp. This portal also is glazed with nine lights. Both doors have doorknobs rather than thumb latches. The interior of these doors has a surround with mitered corners, appropriate to the modern construction date of the vestibule.

The door into the basement is an example of a board and batten door; it is five vertically oriented boards wide. These are held in place by two horizontally placed boards, or battens, positioned near the top and bottom of the door and nailed to the interior face of said door. The center of this door has been reinforced with another, wider batten strategically located to act as a lock rail. There is no doorknob or latch attached to this member, however. A rim lock, made of wood, is attached between the top two battens. On the exterior, a modern metal padlock holds the door closed albeit not tightly. Access to the basement doorway is by way of a single run of

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[30]There is a photograph of this in the field notes attached to the formal HABS documentation kept in the HABS/HAER Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. The corbeled flue is also shown in the measured drawings (the section); please see HABS No. PA-6653, drawing no. 2 of 4.

stone steps; the entry itself is under the vestibule and crossing the threshold requires one more step down.

b. Windows and shutters: Set in the wall up several feet from ground level are the first floor windows. There nine in all. These windows consist of double hung sash glazed with twelve-over-twelve lights. The sash is painted white as is the wood sill and surround. The surround has butt joints and a bead running along its inside edge. Flanking the first floor windows are shutters with raised panels. There are three paneled sections (a-b-b rhythm) in each shutter. Upon closer inspection, however, the shutters are only paneled on one side; the other consists of tongue and groove vertical boards. The paneled side is visible if the shutters are open, but when closed only those inside see the paneled face. With their unequally ornamented fronts and backs, it appears, then, that the shutters and the double doors were governed by the same aesthetic principal.

In each gable, the double hung sash windows are glazed with six-over-six lights. There are two windows in each gable. None have shutters. Each window opening has a plain wood surround, defined by a bead at the inner edge, and held in place by butt joints. The surround and the sash itself are painted white. Underneath the gable windows is a wood sill, also painted white.

Lighting the basement are four windows, one each in the southwest and northeast elevations that are placed toward the front of the building and two in the southeast (rear) elevation. The southeast windows have screens; two horizontal metal bars that are bolted into the frames also secure them. The windows are hinged at the bottom so that they open inward from the top, and because of this mechanism they are called hopper windows. In each hopper window, there are two lights held in place by metal (iron probably) muntins and frame. The windows are set into small wells, so that only about 1'0" of each window shows above ground level. The window wells are lined with bricks. Defining the outer edge of the well are two marble oblong blocks that correspond to the marble sill, as if they were parallel elements and not sitting in separate planes (the sill is lower). Approximate measurements for the basement windows are 3' x 2' a piece.

There are two windows illuminating the shed. The southeast window is glazed with six lights and is painted shut. It has no decorative casing, leaving the wood frame and unornamented, butt-joined surround exposed. The southwest window is glazed with three-over-six lights in an altered sash. Originally the sash was double hung, but the top section has been reduced to fit the opening. This window has a similar surround with butt joints to that seen in the southeast elevation of the shed.

One window, in the southwest elevation, lights the vestibule.

7. Roof

a. Shape, covering: The meeting house proper and the shed addition both have gable roofs covered by asphalt-based shingles. The northeast porch has a shed roof and the front porch a hip roof. Similar shingles cover the porch roofs as well. There are metal gutters along the northwest (front) elevation and the southeast in addition to that running around the perimeter of the front porch roof (above the cornice). There also are metal downspouts to drain the gutters.

b. Cornice, eaves: Painted wood raking cornices and box cornices protect the joint where the walls and roof of the meeting house and of its porch extensions meet. The front porch and

meeting house cornices both have cyma moldings over unadorned coronas. The shed roof over the northeast porch, however, has a more pronounced fascia than that on the meeting house proper.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Throughout man's creation of sacred places, certain arrangements recur regardless of religious affiliation. The Downingtown Friends Meeting House is no exception. In plan, the meeting house is oriented along a center aisle, which runs from the northwest vestibule entrance to a focal point on the opposite wall. In the Downingtown structure, the focal point is the raised stand consisting of two tiers and centrally-located window above it. An altar and a pulpit could easily be substituted, if the building were used by Catholics or mainstream Protestants such as the practicing Anglicans and Presbyterians. The position of the cross aisle, extending from the northeast door to the southwest door, reinforces this commonality. Placed directly in front of the stand, where it intersects the main aisle, it could be mistaken for the crossing in early Christian basilicas. Because the northeast porch and southwest vestibule are the terminal points to the interior cross aisle, they act as transepts – if, of course, Downingtown was designed for Catholic or Protestant congregational religions. The arrangement of the benches looks same as pews in other church structures.

While the basic plan of Downingtown can be found in many other religious structures past and present, the Friends adapted the model to suit their particular needs and to express their faith. They also looked within their own faith for the architectural ideals or inspiration required to build their own meeting house. The form and symbolism of the meeting house was well established by the early nineteenth century. The Downingtown Friends drew on the Society of Friends' architectural vocabulary and planned a building in which their needs would be met and in which they would be comfortable using. They, for example, oriented the partition to divide the room cross-wise, by the length of the building; this side to side placement of the partition wall is seen in Merion Friends Meeting House and in Sadsbury Friends Meeting House.

Inside the meeting house, there are two rooms or apartments on the main floor. Three exterior doors give access into the building from the northeast, northwest, and southwest. Along the southeast wall there are three rows of facing benches elevated on a two tiered stand; steps to facing benches are located to the sides and in the center of the stand. The clerk's desk is to the southwest of the center aisle on the second row. Flanking the center aisle are rows of benches all facing forward to the southeast wall and stand. Almost at the halfway point is a partition oriented from the northeast to the southwest. In the front or northwest apartment are two windows, one each in the northeast and southwest walls; there is also a vestibule area created between the room and the northwest (front) door. Built into the walls of the vestibule are bookcases. The bookcases are enclosed with doors that open into the meeting room by swinging toward the northwest. Double doors, that open into the vestibule, mark the transition from the center aisle into the liminal space of the vestibule area. Similarly, the exterior double doors swing open into the vestibule rather than out onto the porch. The benches near the northwest wall are elevated, similar to the facing benches, stepping up twice. In the back or southeast room, there are two entrances at either end of the cross aisle and five windows. Three of the five are located in the southeast elevation. The northeast door leads out onto a porch; the southwest to a vestibule. Access to this vestibule is by the meeting house door, an exterior door and stone steps, and by a ramp built around the southeast elevation. A small shed opens off of the northeast porch.

As does the main floor of the meeting house, the basement has two apartments. A stone wall acts as the interior divider; it is located under the partition wall of the main floor and its position produced two areas roughly the same size.

The attic remains one large open space unfettered by interior partitions and the like. The framing members of the roof are exposed as well as the mechanism for raising and lowering the partition.

2. Stairways: There is no interior stair connecting the main floor to the basement below or to the attic area above it. A small trap door has been cut into the ceiling; with a ladder, access to the attic is through this portal.

3. Flooring: Random-width, wood floor boards run northeast to southwest in the meeting house proper and in the attic space above. In the southwest vestibule, wall to wall carpeting covers the floor. There is no finished floor in the basement. In the shed, the flooring runs southeast to northwest; these random-width floor boards are all rough sawn.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls of the meeting rooms are plaster over the chair rail and wainscoted below it. The wainscoting is made from random width, wide boards and is painted. The wainscoting steps up to accommodate the seating in the stands, at the southeast and northwest ends of the building. Because of the length of the meeting room windows, the wainscoting also hugs the bottom of each window and so gives the impression that the window bases were cut out of the paneling. The chair rail is a rounded piece of wood attached to the wainscoting and it projects away from the wall surface slightly. The chair rail is supported by a strip of curving molding that is distinguished by a reverse bead and generally appears to function as bed molding does in a cornice.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Because of the addition of the vestibule, the southwest double doors act as interior doors. More changes, however, are evident in the interior face of the northeast double doors. The double doors sit in a recessed opening, leaving a deep reveal which has been painted white. The hinges on one side were replaced; presently there are strap hinges on one side and butt hinges on the other. Some time later, a sliding bolt lock was added for it covers the strap hinge; there are also two other sliding bolt locks, that are anchored in the door head and sill, securing this entry. The interior surround also has butt joints and is painted.

The interior entrance vestibule marking the transition from the front porch into the meeting house proper is really a tongue and groove board box with a flat roof and crown molding at the edge. Above the doors leading into the meeting house from this vestibule is a single light transom. The transom is similar to a picture window because of the large pane of glass. There is no ornamental molding applied around the transom. The doors beneath the transom are double doors, a form reflecting the three original doors opening into the meeting house. The vestibule doors each are glazed with one-over-one lights; beneath the glazing is a molded panel. Use of a three-panel format, even with the top two glazed, also echoes the original doors by evoking a three paneled interior appearance.

b. Windows: None of the windows in the meeting rooms have ornamental surrounds or decorative casing applied to the frame. The sash sits in a wood frame, secured by butt joints, and positioned toward the outside edge of the stone wall. This placement leaves a deep reveal, which is plastered and painted, as well as produces a deep sill. The sill is made of wood. Covering the

joint between the window frame and the sill is a strip of molding, much like shoe molding of a baseboard. Attached to the window head is a (green) Venetian blind; every window opening has a Venetian blind installed in it.

In the attic, un-painted wood frames hold the six-over-six light double hung sash windows of the attic space. Similar to the first floor windows, the sash is placed toward the outside edge of wall and so leaves a deep reveal. The stone reveals and sills are part of the exterior stone masonry walls.

The metal frames of the basement windows appear to be set into concrete. Above each is an un-painted lentil made of wood.

6. Partition: The partition that divides the main floor of the meeting house into two apartments is the most distinguishing feature inside. It runs northeast to southwest. The bottom and top sections are fixed in place and the central portion slides upward. On either side of the central doorway cut into the partition wall, the center and top sections each consist of eight recessed panels. The panels are aligned vertically.[31]

7. Decorative features and trim: The other interior decorative aspect of the meeting house is also a functional one; like the partition, the bookcases built into the northwest vestibule walls serve a need. Doors hide the bookshelves from view when closed; when necessary, they swing open and allow access to the books kept inside.

Outside, there is a bat box, or bat habitat, on the south end of the southeast elevation. This bat habitat was put there to attract bats because they eat bugs and other undesirables.

8. Hardware: Most of the hardware in the meeting house is located on the doors; there are strap hinges and butt hinges, sliding bolt locks, rim locks, padlocks, thumb latches, and doorknobs in place. Almost all of the strap hinges have been painted over, including those on the window shutters. The shutters, moreover, host a plethora of locking mechanisms: sliding bolt locks, ring pulls, strap hinges, and ornamental iron shutter dogs. Inside, there are handles used to raise the central section of the partition.

9. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Initially the meeting house was warmed by stoves with stove pipes feeding into the chimney flues, although it is unclear at this writing if the stoves were wood burning or coal burning. Today there is one pipe in situ; it is disguised by paint and so blends with the plaster and wainscoting wall sections behind it.

b. Lighting: There is electric lighting inside the meeting house as well as illuminating the exterior doorways. The interior has box lighting positioned above the windows and flanking the partition door.

c. Plumbing: There is no bathroom or privy evident in the floor plan. Presumably these

[31]Please see HABS No. PA-6653, drawing number 3 of 3.

facilities are located inside the school building.[32]

D. Site

1. Historic landscape design: The site of Downingtown Meeting House is defined by Lancaster Avenue on the northwest and by a stone wall skirting the northeast and southeast edges of the property.[33] In March 1819, the Friends received a bequest for $50 to put towards the construction of a wall along the line of their burial ground; later the membership sent in subscriptions to put toward financing the wall.[34] There is a creek in the south corner of the property. Inside the boundaries demarcated by the wall and creek, the burial ground dominates the landscape behind the meeting house complex, taking up about half of the Friends' real estate.[35] Closer to the meeting house, there is a large parking lot off the south corner of the building and a school northeast of the meeting house. Additional parking is available northwest of school and behind the southwest horse shed. Two horse sheds flank the meeting house; they are positioned in front of and perpendicular to the northeast-southwest axis of the meeting house and so frame the entry into the property from Lancaster Avenue.[36]

For the first twenty years or so, Friends nominated from within the meeting fulfilled the role as caretaker. In July 1816, for example, they appointed a committee to "engage a suitable person to take care of the meeting house."[37] Three years later, the caretaker or "curator" requested to be released from his duties relating to the meeting house; Charles Downing replaced him, but the former curator continued to open graves as needed.[38] By December 1820, Downing wearied of his charge and the job fell to Jesse Meredith. Meredith also rented the adjacent lot for $20 a year; this marks the beginning of the duality of the caretaker and the lessee agent for the meeting, a relationship lasting until 1867 when the lot was rented independently of the charge of

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[32]I did not go into the school building, nor were any field notes taken of structure during Summer 1999 as it was not drawn in detail for the HABS Quaker Meeting House survey. This accounts for the "presumably" statement in reference to a bathroom facility.

[33]This stone wall replaced the fencing decided upon and "the improvements made agreeably thereto" in April 1812. See Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 4 mo 1st 1812, p. 4; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 4 mo 29th 1812. The stone wall probably is the wall constructed along the south and east boundaries of the cemetery by May 1832; this project cost the Friends around $251.55. See Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 31st 1831, Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 4 mo 27th 1831, Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 6 mo 1st 1831; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 6 mo 29th 1831; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 38th 1832, and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 5 mo 30th 1832.

[34]List of Subscribers, n.d., Papers re: Downingtown, Quaker Collection, Haverford College; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 31st 1919.

[35]In September 1913, the Friends decided to organize the burial plots into rows. The southern section was to be divided into two parts by a passageway. The southwestern division was designated for "colored" decedents and the southeastern division set aside for "strangers." Downingtown Friends Preparative Minutes, 9 mo 1st 1913, Quaker Collection, Haverford College.

Matlock observed that the graves were "all marked with stones, though very many old ones are unlettered with either date, name, or initials." Matlack, p. 235.

[36]In December 1815, the Friends appointed a committee to draft a plan for the shelter of saddle horses and produce; the committee produced a plan for the shelter and estimated expenses in August 1816 and their proposal finally was approved in October. Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 27th 1815, Quaker Collection, Haverford College; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 8 mo 28th 1816; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 10 mo 2nd 1816.

[37]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 7 mo 31st 1816; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 10 mo 2nd 1816.

[38]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 7 mo 28th 1819; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 9 mo 29th 1819.

overseeing the meeting house.[39] In March 1825, Joseph Maule assumed Meredith's role, as well as continuing to care for the graveyard – a responsibility he picked up the year before.[40] Although Maule asked to be relieved of duty in March 1826, only by moving away from town was he released from service. The caretaker position returned to Meredith. He hoped to pass the job onto someone else by January 1829, however, no mention of a successor is made until April.[41]

Beginning in April 1829, and renewed periodically, the Friends contracted out the position of caretaker for the meeting house and adjoining lot. Those bound to act as caretakers or curators of property include: Elijah Davis (1829-31), William Nelson (1831), Joshua Springer (1831), Shepard Aynes (1832-44), Thomas Shoemaker (1844-55), Milton Hoopes (1855-1864), Robert Skeen (1864-66), and Emmer Patterson (1866-1873). After Patterson's contract was renewed for the upcoming year in 1872, no mention of fulfilling the custodial role is made in the meeting minutes. The Friends maintained a committee on property, adding to it in 1874, and two years later, proposed establishing a fund to maintain the meeting house and graveyard in perpetuity.[42] Briefly, in 1845, they considered building a caretaker's house, but the project was postponed indefinitely due to a lack of enthusiasm for the requisite fund-raising such a job would take.[43]

In addition to caring for the meeting house, the graveyard behind the house needed the routine attention of the Friends. In 1813 the Friends determined how to lay out the burial ground, arranging the individual lots in rows. The rows were divided into two sections by a passage. The southern half of the graveyard was then subdivided to accommodate people of color on one side and strangers on the other.[44] By mid-century, the Monthly and Yearly Meetings discussed the "introduction of monuments in wood and stone into our graveyards"and those meetings cautioned the Preparative Meetings to conform to the discipline.[45] In response to the Monthly Meeting's request, the Downingtown Friends limited the grave markers allowed in

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[39]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 27th 1820; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 1 mo 31st 1821;Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 2 mo 28th 1821; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 28th 1821; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 5 mo 2nd 1821; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 27th 1867.

Downing was not off the hook; he continued to serve the meeting in other capacities. He, for example, was nominated as the person to open graves (as needed) in October 1821. See Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 10 mo 31st 1821.

[40]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 9 mo 1st 1824; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 10 mo 27th 1824; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 2 mo 2nd 1825; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 2nd 1825; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 30th 1825.

[41]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 1st 1826; Minutes 3 mo 29th 1826; Minutes 5 mo 31st 1826; Minutes 9mo 28th 1826; Minutes 1 mo 28th 1829; Minutes 2 mo 25th 1829; Minutes 4 mo 1st 1829.

[42]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 20th 1876. In the Monthly Meeting minutes it was noted that "an arrangement for raising and instating a permanent fund to be kept invested at interest, the income [...] to be used only for the maintaining keeping in order the burial ground or graveyard, the walls, fences, paths, and enclosures thereof on the meeting house property belonging to the Downingtown Preparative Meeting. [...] if the sum be in excess of that needed for the graveyard it may be used for repairs or enlargement of the sheds and repairs to the said meeting house." Initially set up in January 1876, current funds reached $5200.00. See Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 2 mo 10th 1909.

[43]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 4 mo 2nd 1845; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 4 mo 30th 1845; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 7 mo 30th 1845.

[44]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 9 mo 1st 1813.

[45]Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 5 mo 11th 1855.

their burial ground. The size of the stone was confined to 4" wide, 16" long, and only 8" off of the ground. The only inscription permitted was the person's name and date(s).[46]

Although the lay-out of the burial plots did not change and the appearance of grave markers was regulated, members of the committee placed in charge of the graveyard rotated on and off the governing body and occasionally altered the requirements for burial. In February 1841, for example, nominations were sought for the committee and obtaining permission for burial became more bureaucratic. At this time, graves could not be opened without an application signed off on by two committee members; three signatures were necessary if the deceased was not a Friend.[47] Again in December 1868 the Friends reviewed their policy governing the graveyard. Those eligible for interment included (deceased) members of the Society of Friends, those non-members who attended the meetings for worship and their families, the parents of members as long as they had no other religious affiliation, strangers, and extraordinary cases. As before, applications from Friends to open a grave only required two committee members' signatures and those from non-members had to have three. In 1897, the Friends restricted the right of burial to the elder members of families.[48]

Between 1821 and 1882, the Preparative Meeting minutes mention a lot "next door" that the Friends owned. They rented it on a yearly basis, charging around $8 plus maintenance of the grounds and fences. Renters planted grass seeds, clover, and winter grain.[49] Generally those who agreed to take charge of the lot were members of the meeting or connected to it in some way. In 1882, for example, Hannah Martin rented the property; she specifically was asked to keep the fences in good repair and to "destroy the noxious weeds." Martin in turn left the meeting a monetary legacy in her will. The Friends then planned to put the interest earned by the bequest toward stewardship of the graveyard and fences.[50]

2. Outbuildings: There are three outbuildings on-site: the school and the two horse sheds.

a. The school is a one-story building that rests on a high basement and is covered by a gable roof. Similar to the meeting house, the school was made of un-coursed stone masonry. The front elevation is three bays across with an entry vestibule. The entrance is defined by double doors with a four light transom above. Typical windows are glazed with six-over-six lights in double hung sash; smaller windows are glazed with four-over-four lights in double hung sash. The basement is lit by windows glazed with six lights. In the northeast gable there is an elliptical half-round light with voussoirs. Also in this gable end there is a pent roof. The southwest gable end is blind, but it too has a pent roof. Here on the southwest elevation is the access to the basement as well as the date stone, the gable end chimney, and a porch fronting the wood frame addition. Like the main block, the addition is one-story in height and covered by a gable roof.[51]

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[46]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 30th 1868.
[47]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 2 mo 24th 1841; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 4 mo 28th 1841.
[48]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 30th 1868; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 7 mo 28th 1897.
[49]See for example, Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 8 mo 1st 1832; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 30th 1842; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 5 mo 1st 1844.
[50]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 29th 1882; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 4 mo 1st 1903.
[51]The school has a date stone suggesting a 1919 construction date. See Matlock, p. 235.

In 1810, the Uwchlan Monthly Meeting noted a lot in the "neighborhood of Downingtown" had been designated for use as a school, but by March 1819, no school building had been built by the meeting. At that time, the Friends discussed the possibility of accepting a bequest by John Roberts, deceased, for $100. Roberts stipulated the Friends could have the money if they built a school facility within six years of his death; they decided they were "not prepared" to accept the gift.[52] But by June 1819, the meeting was able to take charge of a school located in the neighborhood. This school met in a building recently raised; a deed of trust for property was given to the Friends by Joseph Downing.[53] Various committees nominated from the Downingtown Preparative Meeting oversaw the school kept in the Octagon School House until 1884-85 when the Friends returned the property to Downing's heirs.[54]

In June 1918 the subject of a school, run under the care of the Friends, was brought up to the Monthly Meeting and the following month a committee began to explore the possibilities. By March 1919 the committee found strong support for a school and wanted it to open in the fall; they requested permission to erect a school building and plans were underway by the next month. By the second year of operation, in February 1921, work on the school building was finished; also by this time, the grounds were graded and grass, trees, and shrubs planted. The total cost came to about $8500.00.[55] At this time, the school employed two professional teachers who taught twenty-three students. The following year, in September 1922, the responsibilities were divided so that one teacher taught first and second grade and the other taught third and fourth.[56] The number of students rose to twenty-eight by January 1923; to accommodate them, a kindergarten class and a fifth grade class were added to the curriculum as well as art and French lessons. The art teacher and French instructor came to the school every other week.[57] The school continued to prosper and in December 1926 the school committee noted it oversaw the expansion project. The south porch was enclosed to create more space for the school; this cost $1200 to do.[58]

b. The horse sheds are made of stone; the front of the sheds is left open for access. There is no floor per se, just dirt. Each shed contains seven bays. The southern most bay in the shed to the southwest of the meeting house has been enclosed with clapboards on the northeast elevation and random-width, vertically oriented boards to the southeast. A door, also fashioned of wood, has been cut into the southeast wall of this shed; a padlock secures this entry. Ivy covers the southern half of the southwest elevation and is growing along the cornice-line of the southeast. The clapboards are rotting in spite of their protective cover of white paint. Behind this shed is a parking lot. Leading around the southeast side of the shed to the parking area is a series of stepping-stones. The other shed is located northeast of the meeting house; all seven bays remain

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[52]Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 7 mo 5th 1810; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 31st 1819.
[53]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 6 mo 2nd 1819.
[54]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 31st 1828; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 11 mo 1st 1843; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 11 mo 29th 1843; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 29th 1871; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 4 mo 26th 1871; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 10 mo 29th 1884; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 11 mo 26th 1884; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 9 mo 2nd 1885.
[55]Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 6 mo 6th 1918; Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 7 mo 4th 1918; Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 3 mo 6th 1919; Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 4 mo 10th 1919; Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 2 mo 10th 1921.
[56]Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 9 mo 20th 1922.
[57]Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 1 mo 10th 1923.
[58]Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 26th 1926.

open. This shed buffers the front yard of the school from that of the meeting house. A small rail fence running from the rear of the shed to the west (front) corner school building further emphasizes this role.

Wood framing partitions the interior of each shed into the seven bays. A series of posts support the modified gable roof by underpinning the ridge pole and by carrying three sets of tie beams found at the cornice level, at the juncture of roof and rear wall, and at a closer-to-ground level to define the stall walls. The first set of tie beams runs through notches cut out of the posts and are joined to common rafters by way of a raising plate on the outside (or shorter) side of the roof and by nails at the other. The common rafters are notched to fit over the ridge plate. At the rear, a wall plate rests on top of the stone wall; it receives the middle set of tie beams as well as provides a base for the feet of the common rafters and the raising plate in-between the rafters and beams. Forming the walls of each stall are the lower two sets of tie beams, with the lowest extending from a hole in the rear stone wall to the post. Supporting the two tie beams of the stall walls is a diagonal member, acting much like a reinforcing strut. The sheds are used as storage facilities today, housing chopped wood, plywood, and miscellaneous tools.

In May 1811, the Friends appointed a committee to "draft a plan and [...] produce an estimate of the expense of erecting suitable buildings on the meeting house lot for the shelter of horses and carriages." Several weeks later, a plan for the sheds was approved and the Friends agreed to "obtain subscriptions for the purpose." By July they had enough money to hire workmen and the construction began. The committee charged with "the superintendence of building sheds produced a written report" in April 1812; presumably the job was complete at this time.[59]

In December 1815, however, another committee was elected to "devise a plan of shelter for saddle horses"and by August accomplished their mission. The committee also submitted an estimate for the costs to be incurred while building the new shelter for saddle horses. The plan was approved in October but the "time for carrying it into execution [was] left for the direction of a future meeting."[60] Not until 1828 were records of changes to the sheds made. In April, improvements to the meeting house lot included having "the ground under the sheds filled in and leveled." By October 1828, the work was done and the committee owed the meeting an expense report for the job.[61] The sheds are mentioned again in January 1849; at this time, the Friends took out an insurance policy for the "meeting house and adjoining sheds" valuing the buildings at $600.00 altogether.[62] Between December 1863 and February 1865, the sheds were rebuilt. Details of that construction project went unrecorded by the preparative meeting.[63]

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[59]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 5 mo 1st 1811; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 5 mo 29th 1811; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 6 mo 26th 1811; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 7 mo 31st 1811; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 2 mo 26th 1812; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 4 mo 1st 1812.
[60]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 27th 1815; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 7 mo 31st 1816; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 8 mo 28th 1816; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 10 mo 2nd 1816.
[61]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 4 mo 2nd 1828; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 5 mo 28th 1828; Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 10 mo 1st 1828.
[62]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 1 mo 31st 1849; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 2 mo 28th 1849.
[63]Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 12 mo 2nd 1863; and Downingtown Friends Preparative Meeting, Minutes 2 mo 1st 1865.

PART III. Sources of Information

A. Early Views

*Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA

The photograph collection of the Chester County Historical Society contains over 70,000 images dating from the 1840s to the present. Subjects include the people, architecture, landscape, and events in Chester County, PA. Within this photographic archive is the Gilbert Cope Collection. Cope was a historian and genealogist. On his travels between 1887 and 1918, he took about 2500 views that record the Quaker community and landscape in and around Chester County.

*Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Philadelphia, PA

Since 1871, the Friends Historical Library has amassed books, serials, manuscripts, pictures, audio-visual materials, and memorabilia documenting Quaker history and matters "exclusively [. . .] pertaining to Friends."

*The Quaker Collection, Special Collections, Magill Library, Haverford College, Philadelphia, PA.

The Quaker Collection consists of 35,000 printed volumes and 300,000 manuscripts including books (some fiction) and the Jenks Collection of seventeenth-century tracts, manuscripts, family papers, meeting records, journals, and diaries. In addition, Special Collections has several photographs of many meeting houses, such as Downingtown. Some of the images of Downingtown were taken by Gilbert Cope in the 1890s; others by James Shaw in 1948.

B. Maps

Hindman, James. "Map of Chester County (/) Constructed by Virtue of an Act of the Legislature of Pennsylvania (/) passed 19th March 1816." Map, 1820. Geography and Map Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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Any continuing study of the Downingtown Friends Meeting House must begin at the Chester County Historical Society and then move from the regional repository onto the county courthouse and the local sources, such as the public library and municipal government center. This would broaden the understanding of the social, political, economic, and religious context in which the building was raised and would show how its use changed over time. Moreover, the courthouse would provide copies of primary sources, such as deeds (if recorded) for the land and tax records for property.

More attention needs to be paid to the meeting minutes as well, particularly looking into the Uwchlan Monthly Meeting and Caln Quarterly Meeting records available at Swarthmore College.

PART IV. Project Information

The documentation project was sponsored through a Congressional appropriation made to the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) to study Southeastern Pennsylvania specifically. With the Southeastern Pennsylvania funding, the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic America Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) division of the National Park Service surveyed all extant Quaker meeting houses that are tied to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. HABS Historians Catherine C. Lavoie and Aaron V. Wunsch initiated the study with support from the regional office of the National Park Service and then conducted the field survey over a three year period; Lavoie and Wunsch also served as the Project Historians for the Meeting House project. The multi-year Friends Meeting House Study included the Downingtown Friends Meeting House; and the principals involved in the documentation of Downingtown were E. Blaine Cliver, Chief, HABS/HAER, Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief, HABS,

Robert R. Arzola, HABS Architect, and Catherine C. Lavoie, HABS Senior Historian. The field recording for the measured drawings was completed in Summer 1999. The 1999 Project Supervisor was John P. White (Texas Tech University), who was assisted by architectural technicians Kelly Leigh Willard, James McGrath, Jr., Elaine Schweitzer (School of the Art Institute of Chicago), Cleary Larkin (University of Arkansas, Fayetteville), and Irina Madalina Ienulescu (US/ICOMOS-Romania). The historical report was written by Virginia B. Price, HABS, Washington, D.C. Large format photography was done by Jack E. Boucher, HABS Photographer, and James Rosenthal, HABS Photographic Assistant.