

Sacred Heart, Redcar

Lobster Road, Redcar



Part 1: Core data

1.1 Listed grade: *Not listed*

1.2 Conservation area: *No*

1.3 Architect: *Not established*

1.4 Date(s): *1913-14*

1.5 Date of visit: *6 November 2007*

1.6 Name of report author: *Geoff Brandwood*

1.7 Name of parish priest and/or contact(s) made on site: *Fr Dermot Nunan*

1.8 Associated buildings: *Presbytery*

1.9 Bibliographic references:

Middlesbrough Diocesan Yearbook 2007

Mary J. Devlin, Parish of Sacred Heart, Redcar (1974)

Part 2: Analysis

2.1 Statement of Importance

Built on the eve of the First World War, the church is a late and relatively modest example of the use of fully-developed Gothic Revival architecture for a Catholic church. It has some architectural distinction, especially internally. An unusual feature is the use of terracotta for most of the dressings.

2.2 Historical background

In 1874 four furnaces were erected at Warrenby, attracting an influx of workers, many of them Irish and Catholic. To provide them with a place of worship Canon Riddell purchased a site on the outskirts of Redcar for £500, a brick church in lancet-style Gothic was built for £1,000 and a parish was formed. This church later became a Methodist chapel and was still in existence in 1974 when Mary Devlin's history was written. In 1905 the presbytery was built to designs by Brodrick, Lowther & Walker of Hull and Bridlington. The present church was built in 1913-14 (foundation stone laid 18 June 1913 [inscription]; opened 17 June 1914 [Devlin]). It was not consecrated until 4 June 1948. Reordering took place in 1970.

2.3 Setting

The area is mostly one of Victorian terraces plus a number of shops in the vicinity.

2.4 Description of the building and its principal fittings and furnishings

The church is oriented north-east so the directions here are liturgical.

The Sacred Heart church is faced with buff, rock-faced sandstone and consists of a nave and sanctuary in one, aisles, a chapel either side of the sanctuary, all under grey slated roofs. Most of the dressings are made of buff terracotta. The style is a free adaptation of Decorated Gothic. The sanctuary has a three-sided east end with a vesica-shaped window in each face, filled with cusped tracery. There are square-headed clerestory windows to the nave, the form of which is replicated in the aisles. The west façade to the street has a single-light bellcote on its apex, two lancet windows with a vesica above them, doorway with a niche either side.

The interior has arcades of four bays with pointed arches, foliage capitals and cruciform piers. As with the outside dressings the piers, capitals, arches and window dressings are made of buff terracotta. The chapels flanking the sanctuary are approached from the aisles through arches with large-scale pierced cusping. The roof is steeply pitched, has three tiers and is of the hammerbeam type: there are tall wall-posts. Unusually arched braces are thrown across between the ends of the hammerbeams forming a brace between them and the lowest purlin. The lean-to roofs of the aisles have arch braces: there is pierced tracery in the spandrels abutting the arcades. At the west end is a gallery with a divided organ.

The most prominent fitting is the mosaic on the east wall. This is in memory of the first bishop of Middlesbrough, John Gerard McClean and Mgr Michael O'Sullivan, the Provost, both of whom died in 1978. It depicts the Last Supper but is of limited artistic value. The Lady Chapel is embellished with a mosaic floor, revetted marble dado, and a rich reredos made of green and white marble and a tiled Byzantine-style depiction of the Virgin and Child. The north chapel also has a mosaic floor.