

St Alban, Redcar

Yew Tree Avenue, Redcar TS10



Part 1: Core data

1.1 Listed grade: *Not listed*

1.2 Conservation area: *No*

1.3 Architect: *Swainston, Wilson & Collie of Middlesbrough*

1.4 Date(s): *1972*

1.5 Date of visit: *5 November 2007*

1.6 Name of report author: *Geoff Brandwood*

1.7 Name of parish priest and/or contact(s) made on site: *Unaccompanied visit but discussions held with two volunteers who were undertaking painting work.*

1.8 Associated buildings: *Presbytery on the same site but detached.*

1.9 Bibliographic references:

Middlesbrough Diocesan Yearbook 2007
Diocesan archives

Part 2: Analysis

2.1 Statement of Importance

St Alban's was built at a time of rapid expansion of social housing in the area and the building reflects a need for economy. The design is a routine one of its time, and lacks refinement or inspiration.

2.2 Historical background

The church was built to cater for the worship needs of Catholics from the surrounding area of new housing.

2.3 Setting

In an area of low density social housing dating from about 1970

2.4 Description of the building and its principal fittings and furnishings

The church is oriented south and directions given here are liturgical.

The church has a square, undivided space for the nave and sanctuary with a small Lady Chapel projecting from the northwest side. This space is covered by a flat, felted roof behind a low, plain parapet. Vestry on the south side. The framework of the church is of reinforced concrete with steel girders for the horizontal spans. Parts of the lower facing are brown brick and the upper parts are mostly rendered and painted white. There is a tower at the southwest corner with a monopitch roof: it is also rendered and painted white. The west façade has a small projecting porch and on the upper part of the wall three windows with zigzag and low gabled heads and grid-like infill all of which were popular in 1950s and 1960s architecture. On the side elevations there are strips of clerestory windows which provide the main illumination inside: they are filled with large sheets of pale green, light blue and yellow glass. The east wall is blind.

The interior is brightly lit and has a flat roof. The focus at the east end is a massively bulky 'canopy' over the high altar formed on a plain, inverted truncated pyramid. Behind this is a shallow rectangular alcove for the tabernacle, illuminated by tall strips of coloured glass. Either side of the alcove are two wide strips of exposed raised bricks set soldier-wise and painted a pale pink. At the west end there is an entrance area with toilets which sits half in and half outside the west wall. The seating is formed of chunky benches with strongly horizontal lines.