St Joseph, Pickering

Potter Hill, Pickering, North Yorkshire

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Listed grade: *II*

1.2 Conservation area: *Pickering Town Centre Conservation Area*

1.3 Architect: *Leonard Stokes*

1.4 Date(s): *1911*

1.5 Date of visit: *15 November 2007*

1.6 Name of report author: *Andrew Derrick*

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

1.8 Associated buildings: *Presbytery (GII); Church Hall (GII)*

1.9 Bibliographic references:

Middlesbrough Diocesan Yearbook 2007
Carson, Robert: *The First 100 Years – A History of the Diocese of Middlesbrough 1878-1978*
Martin, C.: *A Glimpse of Heaven: Catholic Churches of England and Wales*, 2006
Parish website: www.stjopickering.org

Part 2: Analysis

2.1 Statement of Importance

Prominent and attractively grouped church and hall designed by Leonard Stokes, with the careful massing and fine attention to detail for which that architect is known. The church contains a beautiful carved font by Eric Gill. Notable for its associations with the 17th century Catholic martyr Blessed Nicholas Postgate.

2.2 Historical background

Pickering was one of the Mass centres served by Blessed Nicholas Postgate, 'priest of the Moors', who died at York in 1679. The parish possesses many of the martyr's relics.

From 1896 Mass was said at the Salvation Army Hall in Pickering by a priest from Malton. These services lapsed in 1900, but in the following year the colourful and energetic Fr Bryan, an Anglican convert priest from Tasmania, took up residence in the town. He acquired two cottages and improvised a chapel, which served for seven years while funds were raised for a more worthy and permanent church and presbytery. He also established a school.

Fr Bryan was in tune with architectural and artistic developments of the time, and commissioned Leonard Stokes to design the church and hall, and Eric Gill to design the font. The church and hall were completed by 1911 and the font (carved at the same time as Gill's Stations of the Cross at Westminster Cathedral) arrived in 1916.

2.3 Setting

The church is approached through a steep terraced garden and steps. It is raised on a high bank set back from the road. The buildings giving onto the pavement are mainly stone 18ᵗʰ and 19ᵗʰ century houses, but include the stuccoed grade II listed presbytery.

2.4 Description of the building and its principal fittings and furnishings

See list description, below.

The interior of the church is fairly plain, and made more so by the present bare modern furnishing of the sanctuary. A portable altar stone, said to have been used by Nicholas Postgate and placed in front of the wooden altar, is a noteworthy relic. There is an early or original Lady altar, probably designed by Stokes, at the east end of the north aisle, with a painted stone or plaster statue of Our Lady under a stone canopy. According to Martin, Eric Gill carved a simple cross on this altar. Martin also states that there is a statue of St Joseph said to be by Peter Paul Pugin on the outside south wall.

The chief item of interest in the church is Eric Gill's font, in a lowered baptistery area with a parquet floor at the west end of the church, screened off by contemporary iron railings. Octagonal in form, this is carved on four sides with a foliage design and on the other four with scenes of the Crucifixion, St Joseph with the Christ child (photo bottom right), the Baptism of Christ and St Nicholas.

At the west end of the nave is a carved holy water stoup in memory of various members of the Carbery family.

The church interior is light, with clear glass (some pale green, red and yellow in the tracery lights). The benches are plain and of oak.

2.5 List description:

Building Name: ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH HALL
Parish: PICKERING
District: RYEDALE
County: NORTH YORKSHIRE
Postcode: YO18 8AA

LBS Number: 440858
Grade: II
Date Listed: 27/11/1975
Date of Last Amendment: 12/06/2007
NGR: SE7947584134

POTTER HILL
1.
5340
(North Side)
Roman Catholic Church of
St Joseph.
SE 7984 1/50 St Joseph's Church Hall

II GV

2.

1911. Architect, Leonard Stokes. Perpendicular Gothic style. Built of stone with a tile roof. The church is approached through a forecourt on the left of which is the church hall. This has a stone porch with a gambrel roof, a large Perpendicular window to the South and hipped dormers in the roof. The church is entered under a squat tower at the North-West corner of the forecourt. Nave and North aisle. 4-light nave windows. Octagonal stone font by Eric Gill.

Nos 35 to 37 (consec), Mount Royd. 38 to 40 (consec), St Joseph's Presbytery, Roman Catholic Church of St Joseph, Church Hall, and Nos 44 to 47 (consec) form a group, of which Nos 35, 37 and Mount Royd are buildings of local interest.

Listing NGR: SE7947184133

Building Name: ST JOSEPH'S PRESBYTERY
Parish: PICKERING
District: RYEDALE
County: NORTH YORKSHIRE
Postcode: YO18 8AA

LBS Number: 440856
Grade: II
Date Listed: 27/11/1975
Date of Last Amendment: 27/11/1975
NGR: SE7948784118

Listing Text:

POTTER HILL
1.
5340
(North Side)
St Joseph's Presbytery
SE 7984 1/8
II GV
2.
Early C19. Large building of 2 storeys, ashlar face now rendered. Welsh slate roof with flat stone verges and 2 stone chimneys to gable ends. 4 semi-circular-headed windows to 1st floor, hung sashes with glazing bars. Ground floor windows originally similar, now with blocked semi-circular heads and modern glazing. 2 doors with steps up, of 4 panels and with semi-circular stone arch over with glazed fanlight. Rendered plinth. Flat stone string at lst floor level and flat stone eaves course.

Nos 35 to 37 (consec), Mount Royd. 38 to 40 (consec), St Joseph's Presbytery, Roman Catholic Church of St Joseph, Church Hall, and Nos 44 to 47 (consec) form a group, of which Nos 35, 37 and Mount Royd are buildings of local interest.

Listing NGR: SE7948784118