

St Thomas More, Beechwood

Kirkham Row, Beechwood, Middlesbrough TS4



Part 1: Core data

1.1 Listed grade: *Not listed*

1.2 Conservation area: *No*

1.3 Architect: *Not established*

1.4 Date(s): *1962*

1.5 Date of visit: *7 November 2008*

1.6 Name of report author: *Geoff Brandwood*

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

1.8 Associated buildings: *Presbytery, parish hall and convent of the Daughters of Mary & Joseph*

1.9 Bibliographic references:

Middlesbrough Diocesan Yearbook 2007

Part 2: Analysis

2.1 Statement of Importance

This is one of a number of cheaply-built churches put up in suburban districts in the early 1960s to serve growing populations. It abandons the traditional, longitudinal plan in favour of a hexagonal one.

2.2 Historical background

Founded from St Joseph's in the early 1960s, to meet the needs of Catholics in this expanding area of suburban Middlesbrough.

2.3 Setting

The church lies within a 1960s council house estate and forms a visual closure to the road on which it is located.

2.4 Description of the building and its principal fittings and furnishings

The church is oriented south so all directions given are liturgical.

The church is built of brick with large timber windows under a concrete tile roof. The plan is hexagonal with a projecting western narthex and a projecting eastern sanctuary. There is a south-eastern vestry and link to the presbytery. The dominant external feature are the large triangular windows which stretch up to create prominent gables on each of the faces of the hexagon (the east face, however, is blind). The windows have a grid-like infill which contains clear and green panes of patterned glass (the west gable also has light yellow panels).

The interior is a large, uninterrupted hexagon formed by laminated trusses rising to a central small red-glazed hexagon, and also spanning the side walls to create the gables. There are small projecting shrines at the northeast (Our Lady) and southeast (Catholic Martyrs)