

St Anthony of Padua, Brotton

High Street, Brotton



Part 1: Core data

1.1 Listed grade: *Not listed*

1.2 Conservation area: *Yes*

1.3 Architect: *R. R. Kitching of Middlesbrough*

1.4 Date(s): *1905*

1.5 Date of visit: *5 October*

1.6 Name of report author: *Geoff Brandwood*

1.7 Name of parish priest and/or contact(s) made on site: *Very Rev. Canon W. Madden*

1.8 Associated buildings: *None*

1.9 Bibliographic references:

Middlesbrough Diocesan Yearbook 2007

Minskip, D.: *Brief History*, 1993

Centenary photograph album in the church

Part 2: Analysis

2.1 Statement of Importance

The church is a modest structure built at the start of the 20th century. The exterior is plain and simple and has not been enhanced by the rebuilding and enlargement of the western porch. The chief interest lies inside in what is a very elaborate decorative scheme for a small wayside church.

2.2 Historical background

The church was built in 1905 (foundation stone 16 August) to serve the local Catholic community. It was officially opened in 1907 and is said to have originally been served from Loftus (now from Saltburn). The decoration of the ceiling panels was carried out by a Belgian painter Felix Beryngier and his workmen, probably brought across by the first parish priest, Fr Gryspeert, one of many French and Belgian priests who sought sanctuary in England in the wake of early 20th century anti-clerical legislation. According to Minskip, the paintings in the sanctuary and on the chancel arch were added later, possibly during the time of Fr Patrick Macken (1916-27).

The church was enlarged slightly in 1979 with the rebuilding of the western porch.

2.3 Setting

On the south side of the main road leading west through Brotton and in an area with Victorian terrace housing.

2.4 Description of the building and its principal fittings and furnishings

Kitching's original designs are retained on the file in the diocesan archives.

The church is a small structure, built of red brick in stretcher bond with stone dressings and consists of an aisleless nave, lower sanctuary and a rebuilt western porch which is now as wide as the nave. The roofs of the nave and sanctuary are slated. At the west end is a single-light bellcote, the top of which has been removed. The detailing mainly comprises single-light lancet windows. In the east wall there is a sexfoil circular window. The rectangular windows in the porch are reused from the original structure.

The interior has plastered walls. It is notable for the amount of embellishment. In the nave the five-sided roof is panelled and has bare boards decorated with crosses, fleurs-de-lys and SA (for St Anthony). The chancel is much richer and has grey figures set against a gold background. In the centre of the side walls are angels bearing scrolls with the Beatitudes with figures of the Apostles and saints on either side of them. On the east wall, surrounding the east window are angels playing musical instruments and round the frame of the window a text of the Sanctus. The panelled, boarded ceiling is painted with the IHS monogram and floriated cross motifs in roundels.

The altar is wooden and its frontal has four columns and has a carved panel of the Agnus Dei. In the wooden reredos are depictions of the Adoration (left) and Last Supper (right) with a canopy in the centre over a Crucifixion scene. The bench seating has somewhat ungainly ends with fleur-de-lys terminals.