

St John of Beverley, Beverley

North Bar Without, Beverley, East Yorkshire



Part 1: Core data

1.1 Listed grade: *II*

1.2 Conservation area: *Beverley Conservation Area*

1.3 Architect: *Smith, Brodrick & Lowther*

1.4 Date(s): *1897-8*

1.5 Date of visit: *10 October 2007*

1.6 Name of report author: *Nicholas Antram*

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

1.8 Associated buildings: *Attached presbytery and hall*

1.9 Bibliographic references:

Middlesbrough Diocesan Yearbook 2007

Carson, Robert: *The First 100 Years – A History of the Diocese of Middlesbrough 1878-1978*

Markham, J.: *The Church of St John of Beverley*, Highgate Publications 1997

Pevsner, N. & Neave, D.: *The Buildings of England, Yorkshire: York and the East Riding*, Penguin Books 1995

Part 2: Analysis

2.1 Statement of Importance

Quite an unusual design for an early 20th century Catholic church, perhaps more in the style of Nonconformist churches of the time by architects such as George Baines. A good example of the work of Smith, Brodrick & Lowther, the primary importance of the building lies in its frontage and contribution to the conservation area.

2.2 Historical background

A private Catholic place of worship in Beverley is recorded in 1791 and the first church was built in 1846, with a school and presbytery alongside. This served until the present church was built on North Bar Without in 1897-8 by the Hull architects, Smith, Brodrick & Lowther, who designed several Catholic and other churches in East Yorkshire. The church cost £1,560 and was paid for by Lady Sykes of Sledmere.

2.3 Setting

The church is located just outside the North Bar, the sole survivor of Beverley's medieval gates. It is slightly set back on the west side of North Bar Without, an unusually wide street (where horse and sheep fairs were held in the 17th century) of Georgian and later character. The narthex of the church follows the prevailing built frontage line but the body of the church is set back, reducing its impact when viewed from the northwest. It is curiously juxtaposed with a picturesque group of Victorian half-timbering, set further back on the corner of York Road.

2.4 Description of the building and its principal fittings and furnishings

The church faces southwest but all references here follow conventional liturgical orientation.

The church was listed in 1987 and the list description (see below) is broadly accurate but is brief and pre-dates some significant changes carried out in 1999.

The dressings are of terracotta, not ashlar as stated in the list entry. Although low and set back, the church has a busy frontage to the street of playful irregularity with its pinched-up gables, crocketed hoodmoulds and castellated tower of polygonal form, all presented in orange brick lavishly intermingled with cream terracotta. After the panache of the frontage the largely hidden side elevations are very much more subdued, in yellow brick (intermingling with the orange bricks in the lower part of the tower), with bald window tracery, like cardboard cut outs. The oculus east window is a 1999 alteration of a previously tripartite window. To the rear are parish rooms etc, of 1999 by Andy Sangwin of Building Design (Beverley), linked to the former Catholic chapel behind.

After the flourish of the frontage the interior is disappointingly plain. Plastered walls and boarded roof on simple A-trusses, the purlins with modest embellishment. West gallery with a glazed screen (1999) set back beneath. Pretty organ case (circa 1995 by Kenneth Tickell Ltd of Northampton) cantilevered from the centre of the gallery. Lady Chapel enlarged and rebuilt in 1999, at a right angle to the sanctuary. The roof of the old chapel is hung as a kind of tester or baldacchino. Altar and elaborate Gothic reredos, eighteenth century Austrian, set within a side-lit projecting bay. Regrettably it is taller than the segmental arch into the bay. Heavy stone and marble main altar,

brought forward from the tabernacle which stands on a stone plinth against the east wall. Standing on a corbel on the north wall is a statue of St John of Beverley, possibly medieval though in very good condition and more likely to have come from the Minster in the late 19th century when new statues were placed in vacant niches on the west front. Two 1920s stained glass windows, one on the north and one on the south side, in 15th century style, possibly the work of Geoffrey Webb (who trained with Kempe and Comper). The altar rails were removed in 1970 as part of the alterations following Vatican II. The Stations of the Cross, painted on metal, were originally in oak frames but were cut down in 1948 and fixed to the walls.

2.5 List description:

Building Name: ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST JOHN OF BEVERLEY

Parish: BEVERLEY

District: EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE

County: THE EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE

Postcode: HU17 7AG

LBS Number: 167358

Grade: II

Date Listed: 30/06/1987

Date of Last Amendment: 30/06/1987

NGR: TA0294539899

Listing Text:

TA 0239 BEVERLEY NORTH BAR WITHOUT
(west side)

7/240 RC Church of St John of
Beverley
GV II

Church. 1897-8 by Smith, Brodrick and Lowther. Red and brown brick with ashlar dressings and banding. Welsh slate roof. Gothic Revival style. Unaisled continuous 5-bay nave and chancel with canted east end and south chapel. Single-storey porch forms passage across west end. Tudor-arched entrance with statue of St John in niche above. Flat-arched traceried windows. Above, a pair of 3-light basket-arched windows with decorated tracery under crocketed ogee gables. Statue of Virgin and Child in niche to gable. Bell tower to left. Nave and chancel: 2-light Tudor-arched windows with flush tracery in Decorated style. Oculus to east end.

Interior: gallery and organ loft to west end. Timber purlin roof.

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