

St Leonard & St Mary, Malton

Church Hill, Malton, North Yorkshire



Part 1: Core data

1.1 Listed grade: *II*

1.2 Conservation area: *Malton Conservation Area*

1.3 Architect: *Anon*

1.4 Date(s): *12th century onwards*

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: *Rev Timothy Bywater*

1.8 Associated buildings: *Churchyard wall attached to southwest corner of church (GII), modern presbytery in churchyard.*

1.9 Bibliographic references:

Middlesbrough Diocesan Yearbook 2007

Stewart, K: *St Leonard's and St Mary's Malton: A Coming of Age*, 1992

Part 2: Analysis

2.1 Statement of Importance

Much restored church of 12th century origin, occupying a prominent position in the townscape on the east side of Malton. Built as a chapel of ease for the nearby Gilbertine monastery, this is possibly the first parish church in England to revert to Catholic use. The most notable feature of the interior is the Romanesque arcading on the north side of the nave and chancel.

2.2 Historical background

The church of St Leonard was built in the late 12th century as a chapel of ease for the Gilbertine monastery at Old Malton. It passed out of Catholic hands at the Reformation and became an Anglican parish church for four centuries, during which time it was rebuilt and adapted at various times.

Legal Catholic public worship returned to Malton with the building of St Mary's chapel in Wells Lane in 1841. This building (which survives today in secular use) has a Nonconformist character externally but had a richly decorated sanctuary with Ionic columns and pilasters (photo middle left).

In the 1960s St Leonards became surplus to the requirements of the Anglicans of Malton and was offered to the diocese of Middlesbrough, a conveyance that was completed in 1971. A new presbytery with attached meeting room was built on the eastern side of the churchyard, and opened in 1973. St Mary's was retained as a parish hall, with the adjacent presbytery (purchased in 1879), until both were sold off in 1991.

In 1984 the spire of St Leonard's church was struck by lightning and had to be completely rebuilt.

Works of repair and refacing of the tower took place in 1988-9, and at the same time the interior was reordered to facilitate modern Catholic worship.

2.3 Setting

The church is on the eastern side of the market town of Malton. A narrow medieval street wraps around its north and west sides, with a tight urban fabric of alleyways and two and three storey properties of various ages (photo top left). To the north and east there is a large open churchyard, with monuments of predominantly 18th and 19th century date. Part of the churchyard is given over to car parking, and a new presbytery with parish room has been built on the east side. Here the churchyard boundary meets the large and well wooded grounds of the Lodge, an early 17th century gatehouse to Malton Castle, now a hotel.

2.4 Description of the building and its principal fittings and furnishings

See list description below. This describes the structure and sets out the broad chronology of development. As will be clear from this, the building was considerably altered and added to in the 19th century, when it was de-Georgianised (flat plaster ceiling in the nave removed), the tower raised by one stage and the previous short stumpy spire rebuilt and the nave roof rebuilt. A major restoration campaign in 1907 involved the refenestration of the north elevation and the rebuilding of the south side of the nave and chancel. The principle surviving ancient features are the lower stages of the tower (with heavily eroded stonework) and the Romanesque arcade on the north side of the nave and chancel. The font (not currently used) is also of possible 12th century date and there is a 15th century piscina reset in the south wall of the chancel.

Within the tower is a peal of eight 18th century bells, cast by Lester and Pack (now the Whitechapel Bell Foundry). The clock was installed in 1897 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The church history also mentions a Romanesque carving of a seated ecclesiastic in the tower (not seen). The tower arch is of 15th century date; this has been enclosed by a 19th century timber and glass screen within which is set a round arched stained glass window depicting Our Lady within a mandorla, brought from St Mary's (see photos middle left and bottom right).

The 1988-9 reordering has involved the introduction of a dais and altar in the middle of the nave on the south side, with the seating (pine pews) arranged around it. The old chancel has been retained as a Blessed Sacrament chapel, with an open screen to offer a degree of demarcation. This radical reordering has been achieved without loss of important fabric or structure, and achieves an intimacy of worship (as well as allowing for full participation in the liturgy by those using wheelchairs).

2.5 List description:

Building Name: CHURCH OF ST LEONARD

Parish: MALTON

District: RYEDALE

County: NORTH YORKSHIRE

LBS Number: 389411

Grade: II

Date Listed: 29/09/1951

Date of Last Amendment: 29/09/1951:

NGR: SE7885371677

SE780715 CHURCH HILL

801-1/8/33 (South side)

29/09/51 Church of St Leonard

(Formerly Listed as:

CHURCH STREET

(South side)

Church of St Leonard with St Mary

with wall adjoining)

GV II

Parish church, now Roman Catholic church. Late C12 arcades; C15 tower, with third stage and spire added in C19; north side refenestrated, and south side of chancel and nave rebuilt, in 1907. Tooled stone and ashlar; tiled roofs to chancel and nave, lead roof to north aisle; timber and slate spire. 3-bay chancel and north chapel; 4-bay nave continuous, with north aisle; west tower. East end has diagonal buttresses, and 5-light uncusped panel-traceried C19 window under 2-centred head and hoodmould on head stops. Gable cross. Chancel on chamfered plinth. North side has windows of 2- and 3-lights beneath square hoodmoulds. South side windows are of 3 lights with 2-centred heads, between offset buttresses. North aisle has C20 door at east end; windows repeat those of chancel. 3-light south windows to nave, with uncusped traceried heads in 2-centred arches under stopped hoodmoulds. On south side all windows are hollow chamfered, and have sloped sills and chamfered sillband. 3-stage, embattled tower with offset diagonal buttresses. West entrance in shallow gabled porch with chamfered opening and C19 door on wrought-iron hinges. Inserted window of 3 stepped lancets beneath stopped hoodmould over porch. Defaced carving inset above window. Bell-openings on all faces of 2 trefoil-headed lights, with mouchette tracery, under 2-centred heads and stopped hoodmoulds. Clock faces on north, south and west sides, above bell-openings. Moulded strings to plinth, first and belfry stages. Recessed octagonal spire with wrought iron cross.

INTERIOR: chancel north arcade of double chamfered round arches on cylindrical columns with circular abaci, moulded caps and bases. C19 chancel arch of 2 orders with 2-centred arch on shafts with moulded caps and bases, beneath leaf-stopped hoodmould. Nave arcade of chamfered round arches on cylindrical columns with square abaci and bases. Corbel table of carved heads, probably reset, above north arcade. Tower arch of 3 hollow chamfered orders, the inner springing from carved corbels. Arch closed by C19 screen of linen-fold panelling and square lattice glazing. Plain tub font, probably C12. Indecipherable hatchment on south wall. Opposite north door, iron and brass wall monument to Arthur Gibson, Whitesmith, d.1837: consists of rectangular panel enclosed by Tuscan columns and entablature, surmounted by a lamp supported by dolphins and shells. Panel inscribed:
"Here lies one when living
Had his virtues and his vices
Copy his virtues and shun his vices.
Arthur Gibson, Whitesmith
Brass and Iron-Founder Obt. 20 August 1837 at Malton Aged 74"

Church was founded as Chapel of Ease of the Gilbertine Priory of St Mary (Scheduled Ancient Monument). It is believed to be the first parish church in England to be returned to the Roman Catholic Church.

Listing NGR: SE7885371677