

St Wilfrid, Hull

The Boulevard, Hull, East Yorkshire



Part 1: Core data

1.1 Listed grade: *Not listed*

1.2 Conservation area: *Boulevard Conservation Area*

1.3 Architect: *George I. Williams of Williams, Sleight & Company of Hull*

1.4 Date(s): *1956*

1.5 Date of visit: *11 October 2007*

1.6 Name of report author: *Nicholas Antram*

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

1.8 Associated buildings: *Presbytery*

1.9 Bibliographic references:

Middlesbrough Diocesan Yearbook 2007

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

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

Broadly traditional in its planning and architectural expression, St Wilfrid's and the attached presbytery are well-designed, and the church is complete with contemporary furnishing, all strongly redolent of the Festival of Britain era.

2.2 Historical background

St Wilfrid's was the third Catholic parish in Hull, established in 1896 west of the city centre. The original church by Brodrick & Lowther was destroyed by a German landmine in 1941, after which a temporary chapel had to suffice until the present church was built in 1956.

2.3 Setting

Boulevard is a broad tree-lined street running north from the Hessle Road to the Anlaby Road, an area of west Hull developed in the last decades of the 19th century with red brick terraced housing. St Wilfrid's and its presbytery occupy a large plot on the west side of the road, the two buildings forming an L-plan with the presbytery set back behind a garden. The church gable end faces towards the street and the group make a positive contribution to the character of the Boulevard Conservation Area.

2.4 Description of the building and its principal fittings and furnishings

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

Built of brick, the church has a tall, buttressed, nave and low passage aisles and an apsed sanctuary. The main body of the church has a pitched roof with parapets whilst the aisle have parapets and flat roofs, reduced their visual significance. Rounded southwest stair projection, similar to one at Sacred Heart, Hornsea (q.v.), by the same architect. Strong bold and elemental forms. Projecting porch with a shallow pitched roof. Round-arched entrance with stepped surround. Stepped triplet of round-headed windows above. The nave has tall round-headed windows, mostly set in pairs between each buttress. Simple rectangular windows, set vertically, to lower level. The brickwork is detailed with a chamfered plinth, soldier course to the aisle parapets but is otherwise very plainly treated so as not to distract from the strong forms. The tops of the buttresses have gables and sloping side pieces.

The interior seems generously proportioned with bold transverse round-headed arches and a strong stepped profile to the roof of timber boxing with saw tooth detailing and a decorative grid to the centre section. The transverse arches diminish to the sanctuary and apse, enhancing the sense of diminishing perspective. The low passage aisles have flat ceilings and are open to the nave apart from the main support elements of the transverse arches. Built-in west gallery over a narthex. Fittings and furnishings mostly contemporary with the church and of strongly 1950s character. Open-backed pews with solid ends; stone high altar (later marble nave altar) with unusual half-round canopy above. Communion rails of strongly horizontal form with three bands with upright blocks placed in alternate positions in each band forming a cruciform arrangement. Pulpit of similar design. Ambo also contemporary, as are the doors to the confessionals with cruciform glazed panels. Side chapel with marble altar and communion rails with inset metal panels. Cylindrical font with fluted bowl and

contemporary metalwork to the baptistery. Nicely detailed Arts & Crafts style presbytery.