

ENGLISH HERITAGE REVIEW OF CHURCHES IN DIOCESE 2005 (EXTRACT)

St Joseph, Brighton

Elm Grove, Brighton, East Sussex



HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH

ARCHITECT(S) W Kedo Broder 1879-80 (sanctuary & 2-bays of nave)
and DATE(S): J S Hansom 1881-85 (nave)
 F A Walters 1901 (west front)

LISTED STATUS: Grade 2*

IN CONSERVATION AREA: No

LIST DESCRIPTION:

Roman Catholic church 1880-1906. The original design, by W Kedo Broder was for a church with a polygonal chancel flanked by outer apsidal chapels, nave, transepts, and a tall west tower and spire. The nave and channel were

completed by 1880 to this design; the south transept and chapel were opened in 1885 to the design of J S Hansom; the west front, designed by F A Walters, was completed by 1901, and the north transept and north chapel by 1906.

Kentish rag with Bath stone dressings, roof of slate

PLAN: chancel, side chapel, shallow transepts, nave.

EXTERIOR: the east end has an apse of 5 sides with windows of 2 lights with trefoiled tracery, and gabled buttresses between; south-east and north-east chapels are 5 sides of an octagon with similar windows under hoodmoulds, buttresses with one offset. Shallow transepts with 2 windows of 2 lights with sexfoil above under hoodmoulds, and gabled buttresses with one offset to either side, 3 stepped lancets in the gable. Single storey vestry to north-east side. 2-bay nave with low unwindowed aisles under a lean-to roof; clerestory has 3-light windows with trefoiled tracery and 2 gabled buttresses with one offset. The west end has a gabled porch, the flat-arched entrance set under a pointed arch with the mouldings of the archivolt dying into splayed reveals; the double doors have elaborate hinges and there is a statue of St Joseph in the tympanum; 2 pointed-arched windows above, each of 2 lights with a cinquefoil above and under a single hoodmould with a vesica-shaped window in the spandrel; 3 stepped lancets to gable, also under a single hoodmould; stair tower to left of porch, square in plan; buttress to right. Steps up to west porch in 2~flights, with flanking walls crowned by a spiked rail.

INTERIOR: apsidal chancel of 7 bays with vault-shafts of Bath stone, vaulting of white Beere brick; multi-shafted chancel arch combined with 2-bay arcade to transepts, the columns to the south with foliage caps, those to the north uncarved; slim columns to transepts with foliage capitals and sexpartite vault to crossing; nave of 2 major bays relating to the vaulting of the roof, of stone and brick as in the chancel, and 4 subsidiary bays relating to the arcade to passage aisles which consists of circular columns carrying abaci only. Organ gallery to west end.

POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS/ADDITIONS TO LIST DESCRIPTION AND/OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION :

Prior to the building of the present church there was a St Joseph's mission chapel erected in 1869. Following an accident and the death of a Mr Matthew Haddock, his widow, Catherine, gave £10,000 worth of Egyptian bonds to build a church, in accordance with her husband's wishes. She insisted that the church be "of large size, erected of stone and elaborately finished." The original design included a western tower and spire, never built. Kedo Broder's designs were illustrated in *The Builder* 13th March 1880, pp314-315. His was a dramatic design, very tall and attenuated. The church was finished in 1906 the costs had risen to £15,000. The altar was removed and the sanctuary rearranged in the 1970s. At this time the Lady Chapel was redesigned as a copy of the grotto at Lourdes.

According to notes at the RIBA Library (Hansom Biography file) the church was built in four stages. The original design for the whole building was by W Kedo Broder. His sanctuary and 2 bays of the nave were opened on 8th May 1879. In 1880 the apse was added and the enlarged sanctuary brought into use. Broder died on 8th January 1881 following a railway accident. *The*

Builder for 22nd January 1881, p111 reported 'It is our melancholy duty to record the death of a promising and talented young architect, Mr William Kedo Broder, who fell a victim to that unfortunate practice, so common amongst men of business, of getting into a train while it is motion. Mr Broder fell between the platform and the carriage, and received injuries from which he died in a few hours. The deceased was a member of a Roman Catholic family, was chiefly engaged with buildings connected with that community. His two most important executed works are - the priests house and schools at Sunbury, a picturesque group of half-timber buildings, and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Brighton, a bold single-span church vaulted in stone....Mr Broder died Saturday January 8th.' Broder also designed convent buildings at St Dominic's, Southampton Road, St Pancras in London (1867-68).

A more modest scheme for completion was drawn up by J S Hansom and work resumed in 1881 until 1883. The south transept and chapel (although not built to the height proposed by Hansom) were opened on 11th February 1885. F A Walters produced a design for the west front in harmony with Hansom's plans, adding an organ loft, and the church was re-opened on 14th March 1901. Finally the north transept and chapel were added and the equivalent on the south side were raised to the height intended by Hansom and the church was again re-opened on 6th May 1906.

The Builder 13th March 1880, p312 states that the roof was covered in 'hard green slates of good colour, imported from America.' The builders were the big London firm of Dove Bros.

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CHURCH IF NOT LISTED:

SOURCES

Robert D Elleray *Sussex Places of Worship* 2004

Parish website www.stjosephsbrighton.co.uk

The Builder 13th March 1880 pp312, 314-315

The Builder 22nd January 1881 p111

Building News 3rd August 1883 pp160 & 190

Building News 5th April 1901 p492

Building News 1st June 1906 p770

Original Kedo Broder drawings at RIBA Drawings Collection SB91/7, also drawings in the Dove Bros. Collection

STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

A spectacular church of immense proportions at the wishes of its benefactor. One of the grandest churches in the Diocese and correctly listed at grade II*. What might the mysterious William Kedo Broder have achieved had he lived?

