

# ENGLISH HERITAGE REVIEW OF DIOCESAN CHURCHES 2005 (EXTRACT)

## St Mary Star of the Sea Hastings

1 High Street, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 3EY



### HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH

ARCHITECT(S) & DATE(S): Basil Champneys 1882

LISTED STATUS: Grade 2

IN CONSERVATION AREA: Yes

#### LIST DESCRIPTION:

1882. Architect Basil Champneys. Gothic style. Faced with flint cobbles with stone dressings. C15 Style. High nave with clerestory, low aisles. West end facing road with large Perpendicular window with niched turret over gable. Intersecting traceried clerestory windows with buttresses between. Long nave and chancel in one with high semi-hexagonal east end. North transept with circular turret in angle with octagonal sand stone domed bell stage. Pantile roof. Interior: rib-vaulted.

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

The foundation stone was laid in 1882 and the formal opening of the church was on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1883. The cost, excluding fittings, was £15,000. The church was built at the instigation of Coventry Patmore, the Victorian poet, who gave a donation of £5,000 in memory of his wife. Owing to the sloping site the church is built over a full crypt. Nave and chancel are in one and impressive owing to the combination of the 140ft length and the 37ft height to the top of the quadripartite stone rib vaulting. The sense of height is also increased by the lack of an intermediate layer between nave arcade and the tall clerestory windows. The sanctuary is dominated by the richly carved reredos of Derbyshire alabaster, with a multitude of saints in tracery and under canopied niches. The reredos and altar cost £1,500 and was dedicated in 1891. Original canopied choir stalls and the former organ loft on the north side. The aisles are lined with side chapels, variously with carved stone and marble altars and Flemish style carved door surrounds.

## HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CHURCH IF NOT LISTED:

### SOURCES

D Robert Elleray *Sussex Places of Worship* 1904  
Brief guide available at the church

## **STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE**

St Mary Star of the Sea is a distinguished work by an architect of national renown. Many architects specialised in building for the Catholic church e.g. J S Hansom, F A Walters etc. but Champneys had a large and varied practice and he is best known for his collegiate work and for the John Rylands Library in Manchester. He was a friend of Coventry Patmore, hence the commission in Hastings, though he did design other ecclesiastical buildings. St Mary Star of the Sea is a well crafted building of high quality, probably correctly graded at grade II in the statutory list.

