

Church of St Andrew the Apostle, Holt, Norfolk

Proposed Development

Statement of Significance

There was almost certainly a church in Holt by 1086, the year of the Domesday Book, when the town already had a market. Nothing of this building survives. In the Middle Ages Holt never shared the prosperity of other North Norfolk coastal ports such as Blakeney and Cley and so the church was not rebuilt on the same scale as its neighbours. In the c14 the chancel was rebuilt by Sir William Nerford and Petronilla, the owners of one of the neighbouring manors. The chancel, aisled nave and tower were all built about the same time and there was originally a spire. In the c15 the clerestory above the nave was added and also a number of windows. On Saturday 1st May 1708 a disastrous fire swept through the town of Holt and the church was totally gutted destroying any medieval interior. The church was restored in 1727 and the new town was built to the west. William Butterfield further restored the building between 1862 and 1874.

The interior of the church is lit well by natural light which floods in through the windows. Its brightness and simplicity add to its beauty. Yet there are a number of interesting features within its walls. The oldest of these is the c12 font situated near the west door. There are also three c14 piscinas and c14 sedilia. A number of c17 and c18 monuments to local people including one to Edmund Hobart, a promoter of the Royalist uprising in 1650 adorn the chancel walls. Memorials to those who died during the 1st and 2nd World Wars are placed in the north aisle. More recently in August 2000 a memorial to seven airmen who were killed in a mid air collision over Holt in 1968 was added and dedicated. Much of the stained glass is Victorian, however in 1933 a window designed by Francis Spear based on Chaucer's Canterbury Tales was placed at the west end of the north aisle in memory of a Dr Robert Hales.

The Bryceson pipe organ (now removed) built during the 1880s was housed in an extension to the south aisle, the space now filled with a c21 Sacrament chapel. Twenty years ago choir stalls were removed from the chancel to create an open space and a nave altar now stands near the chancel steps. A three manual electronic Makin organ was installed in 1996 and is situated in a new gallery at the west end of the nave, accessible through the tower ringing chamber. The tower houses eight bells and a clock made in 1732 by Nickalls of Wells-next-the-Sea. The clock has only one hand on its exterior face.

The fabric of the church bears witness to the fact that each generation has shaped the interior of the building from the c11 to the present day.

The churchyard, extended in 1861, is managed as a wildlife conservation area that protects rare wild flowers, animals and insects. The church and its churchyard are surrounded on three sides by open space and yet are situated at the heart of the town of Holt.

Appendixed herewith is a copy of the St Andrew's brochure which describes with photographs, all the features of the church. Further information is available by visiting the St Andrew's website: www.holtchurch.org