
Church of St Mary, including the attached presbytery (32 High Street) and war memorial

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1488749**

Date first listed: **29-Apr-2024**

List Entry Name: **Church of St Mary, including the attached presbytery (32 High Street) and war memorial**

Statutory Address 1: **St Marys Church, 32 High Street, Gosport, PO12 1DF**

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

[Understanding list entries](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/) (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/>)

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Location

Statutory Address: **St Marys Church, 32 High Street, Gosport, PO12 1DF**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: **Hampshire**

District: **Gosport (District Authority)**

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference: **SZ6198899920**

Summary

Roman-Catholic church, on the site of an earlier chapel, the initial design by RE Philips was built between 1855 and 1857, modified in 1874 by HJ Hansom, extended between 1897 and 1898 including the construction of the adjacent presbytery, war memorial added in 1919.

Reasons for Designation

Church of St Mary, including the attached presbytery and war memorial, High Street, Gosport is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: Architectural interest:

- * a good example of a multi-phase C19 Roman Catholic church which includes well-carved stonework;
- * the attached late-C19 presbytery contributes well to the strong architectural presence of the ensemble on the High Street;
- * internally the church displays good detailing, including the delicate tracery found in the aisles and sanctuary.

Historic interest:

- * the attached war memorial serves as a poignant physical reminder of the impact of world events on the local community, and the sacrifice it made in the conflicts of the C20.

History

Baptismal records indicate that by 1759 there was a Roman Catholic chapel on South Cross Street in Gosport. The present church site was acquired by a member of the Earl of Shrewsbury's family in 1776 and a Catholic chapel was built behind cottages fronting Middle Street (later High Street), two years before the first Catholic Relief Act of 1778. The small chapel was enlarged in 1830, and again in 1834. The year the chapel was used for the burial of Maria Francesca D'Asis De Bourbon, wife of the exiled Carlos V of Spain. The Spanish royal was taken from the place of her death, Alverstoke Rectory, to the High Street chapel as part of a large funeral procession; her body remained on this site until it was transferred in 1885 to be with the remains of her family in Trieste Cathedral in Italy.

In the mid-1850s, Dr Angelo Baldaconi who was appointed parish priest in 1849, began the rebuilding of the chapel. The new church was designed by architect Robert Edward Philips. The church was mainly built between 1855 and 1857. Some remodelling occurred in 1874, under the supervision of the architect Henry John Hansom and carried out by Mr Lowe of Gosport; it included the replacement of sash windows with stone mullions windows along the side of the nave and aisle. Between 1897 and 1898 the alteration and extension of the liturgical west front included the rebuilding of the two adjacent houses to create an attached presbytery. The work was funded posthumously by Baldaconi's successor Canon Thomas Doyle who died in 1896. This phase of work has been attributed by one secondary source to A J C Scoles (Lloyd et al, 2018, 374); the construction was undertaken by Mr Barton of Ryde. In 1919 a large war memorial was erected in front of the church. In the late C20, a small single-storey addition was added to the liturgical east end thereby extending the rooms to the rear of the sanctuary. During the early C21, the presbytery was used in part as a friary for the Marian Franciscans; a timber-lined private chapel was created on the first floor (now a kitchen).

Details

Roman-Catholic church, on the site of an earlier chapel, the initial design by R E Philips was built between 1855 and 1857, modified in 1874 by H J Hansom, extended between 1897 and 1898 including the construction of the adjacent presbytery, possibly to the designs of A J C Scoles, war memorial added in 1919.

MATERIALS: the church is constructed of brick, largely laid in English bond, with ashlar dressing, under tiled roofs.

PLAN: the church runs back from the High Street with the nave's liturgical west end facing south, a liturgical south aisle to the east, and the sanctuary, the liturgical east end, to the north, flanked by side chapels. To the west is the attached presbytery which also faces south onto the High Street, with rear wings extending to the north. The following description of the church uses the liturgical directions.

EXTERIOR CHURCH: the 1897 liturgical, west end contains a pointed arched doorway with a trumeau between two doors with a corbelled shaft supporting a niche containing a statue of Our Lady in the tympanum with rich foliage decoration to either side. The door is flanked by lancets with cusped heads, and beyond are stepped buttresses. Above is a four-light window with Decorated tracery, and a trefoil circular vent. The gable end is topped by curving kneelers and a stone cross. The lower gable-end of the liturgical south aisle has a single doorway and a circular window above with four encircled quatrefoils. The liturgical north elevation includes tall triple-light windows, flat buttresses, and a small lean-to store. The liturgical south side includes smaller two-light windows, and a pair of lean-tos housing the confessional and a side chapel. The liturgical east end is rendered and includes a gabled projection that encloses the stonework of the east window. This is flanked by the brick side chapels lit by triangular and pointed-arched openings. Between the chapel is the C19 brick single storey end containing the vestry, with large triangular-head openings. There is also a mid-C20 single-storey brick addition.

PRESBYTERY: attached to the west side of the nave is the presbytery, part of the 1897 rebuilding. The ground and top-floors to front elevation have rectangular windows, while the first-floor windows are within pointed arches; most windows include cusped lancets, mullions and transoms and all with corresponding hood moulds. The entrance bay is recessed and includes a pointed-arched entranceway and a ground-floor two-light window, a further two-light first-floor window, and a C20 dormer in the roof pitch above. To the east a slightly projecting gabled bay, with a large five-light ground floor window, a pair of two-light first-floor windows and a central two-light top floor window. Below the first floor is a drip-mould band. The window units behind the stone frames have all recently been replaced with uPVC. There are metal rains good with decorative hoppers. The rear of the presbytery is an irregular arrangement of late-C19 or early-C20 single, two and three-storey lean-tos and gable-end wings. There is a stone multi-lancet window where the presbytery is joined to the church. Most of the other windows have uPVC units and sit under cambered-brick arches. One large and one small dormer have been added to the roof. Most of the rear doors have been modified. The long single storey wing has been widened at one end.

INTERIOR CHURCH: beyond the west porch is the narthex which includes a side porch, an enclosed spiral staircase which leads up to the organ gallery, and a door leading through to the presbytery. There is a timber glazed screen in front of the small pointed-arched colonnade which divides the narthex from the nave. Above is the organ gallery with a moulded-plaster gallery front with trefoil detailing and a large four-centred arch. The nave has six bays and is flanked by a row of four-centred arches with moulded surrounds; there are also foiled circles in the spandrels. Beyond the arches, on the liturgical north wall, are blank recesses. Above the arches is a moulded band and three-light clerestory windows, all with pointed cusped heads. Those windows to the liturgical north are taller than those to the south. The timber nave roof consists of four-centred arch trusses, sitting on stone corbels, with foiled circles in the spandrels. To the liturgical south is an aisle; which terminates at

an arch leading to an octagonal baptismal font with quatrefoil detailing. The rest of the aisle is lined with four-centred arch recesses, one of which includes the entrance to the confessional; above are two-light clerestory windows interspersed with single lancet recesses, all with cusped heads. The canted ceiling is decorated with ribs and foliate bosses. At the liturgical east end is a wall with a large pointed arch leading through to the sanctuary. The wall above is pierced by four open circles, the lower pair opening through to the sanctuary, the upper pair part blocked and part glazed to the exterior. Within the sanctuary, the surrounding arches include green-marble colonettes. The sanctuary has a high altar decorated by cusped heads with green-marble colonettes and a central quatrefoil, and an arcaded reredos containing painted panels. Behind is the liturgical east wall with a large stained-glass window above; this work has been attributed to either Geoffrey Semper or Geoffrey Webb. On either side of the sanctuary are elongated chapels with canted ends and ceilings with foiled and ribbed tracery. There is further tracery to the chapel altars with polygonal ends decorated by tracery. The side wall of the south chapel includes the monument commemorating Maria Francesca D'Asis De Bourbon. There are also statue niches, and most of the openings at the far ends of the chapel have triangular heads. Behind the sanctuary are further rooms including the vestry and flower room. The church's side walls include painted panels showing the Stations of the Cross, they are reported to have been cut down and painted by a member of the congregation. Within the nave are open-back pine pews. Within the south aisle is a Pieta statue, designed after Michelangelo's Pieta in St Peter's Basilica in Rome; it was presented to the church by the Woolfrey family between 1910 and 1930. There is a brass eagle lectern which has come from an Anglican church. The timber altar rail is a later addition. The wooden floor is a recent recovering.

PRESBYTERY: the three-storey presbytery has a small entrance hall. The rooms are arranged in an L-shape around a two-storey panelled main staircase which includes a timber banister with chamfered-square newel posts topped by decorative finials, and turned balustrading. There is also an adjacent winder secondary staircase leading up to the top floor, with a timber banister with turned newel posts and balustrading. Parts of the presbytery, including several internal doors have been modernised and replaced; the ground floor has been partially converted to office use and on upper floors there has been some subdivision of spaces to create additional bathrooms and bedrooms. There are two original stone fire surrounds in the principal ground-floor rooms. There are two further marble stone fireplaces on the first floor and a metal fireplace on the top floor.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURE: against the liturgical west end is a war memorial. It has a square plinth. Above is a panelled base with an ogee frame; the upper panels contain the Roll of Honour. In the middle is a tall crucifix under an open-pediment cover.

Sources

Books and journals

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Pevsner, Nikolaus, O'Brien, Charles, Bailey, Bruce, Lloyd, David W, The Buildings of England: Hampshire (South), (2018), 374

The Gosport Society, , 'The Face of Gosport' in Gosport Record, (November 1988), 10-12

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The Old Rectory – Maria Francisca of Portugal, accessed 23 November 2023 from

<https://www.gosportheritage.co.uk/old-rectory-maria-francisca-portugal/>

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Other

10 February, 1857, To the Editor of the Tablet. Gosport Tablet

15 October 1898, Gosport Tablet

26 September 1874, Gosport Tablet

Monday 22 March 1897, Portsmouth Evening News, 3

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



Map

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