

ALL SAINTS', WANDSWORTH

parishioners walking in a window wonderland

By Simon Dyson, architect, of Russell Hanslip Associates; and James Haddock, PCC project manager

ANYONE familiar with the gyratory system in Wandsworth, south-west London, whether on foot or stranded in four lanes of traffic, may have noticed in addition to the recently repaved footpaths of York stone, that the restoration of All Saints' Church has been taking place over the last year. The church, a stone's throw from the town's famous Young's brewery, dates predominantly from the 18th century, with a pre-reformation tower last remodelled in 1950, and an apsidal east end and barrel vaulted ceiling added in 1900.

Like so many historic buildings repaired in the years after World War II, the work was often carried out with unsympathetic materials and in this instance the application of cement pointing and rendering of stone details was extensive. Even more visual damage had been done by the



East end of All Saints' Church

external metal secondary glazing fitted flush with the facing brickwork, resulting in the loss of modelling to the elevation and further damage to the masonry, which was made worse on the less accessible

north side by hideous surface-mounted galvanised steel window guards. The Quinquennial Inspection report had identified that the slate roof required replacement. It was soon realised that a temporary roof was highly desirable and other works were added so as to make the most cost-effective use of the scaffold which formed a significant part of the budget. In the end, besides the new Welsh slate roof, the works included: cleaning of the exterior; masonry repairs including replacement stone copings and string-courses; improvements to the roof insulation and ventilation; improvements to maintenance access arrangements; extension of the lightning conductor system; and extensive works to the windows. In this way the budget grew from £125,000 to £500,000 (nearly £700,000 once fees

and VAT were added). Work commenced in July 2002 and was practically complete by April 2003.

Now the church is watertight once again, the church is looking to the future and considering the refurbishment of the interior, whilst the local authority is executing a re-landscaping scheme for the churchyard that will provide a suitable setting for All Saints' and help reinstate it as the physical and spiritual focus for the centre of Wandsworth.

The window works

Since the work finished, one of the most talked about aspects of the project has been the effect of the glazing works. The interior is much brighter, warmer and less draughty, whilst the noise of the traffic is barely a murmur. Externally the change is equally dramatic, where once the brickwork was grimy and no modelling could be appreciated, now the deep brick reveals of the large arched windows of the north and south aisles allow light and shade to play once again on the much cleaner elevations.

There are nine large windows in the main church, each measuring approximately 1,900mm wide x 4,000mm high along with a smaller arched opening and two fanlights. There are also several smaller windows in the chancel including two five-light clerestories and three stained fanlights above the altar.

Six of the main windows were glazed with heavy obscure glass in relatively large (182mm by 370mm panes), one had straw tinted slab glass fitted after the destruction of a stained window by vandals in the 1960's and the remaining two were stained. Over the years damage had been repaired in non-matching glass and the

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The apsidal east end of the chancel showing the fanlights – can you spot the secondary glazing?

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The church from the south side



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