

ENGLISH HERITAGE REVIEW OF DIOCESAN CHURCHES

2005 (EXTRACT)

St Thomas More, Seaford

54 Sutton Road, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 1SS

HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH

ARCHITECT(S) & DATE(S): J O'Hanlon Hughes & Geoffrey Welch 1935
Enlarged Henry Bingham Towner 1969

LISTED STATUS: Not listed

IN CONSERVATION AREA: No

LIST DESCRIPTION: N/A

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

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CHURCH IF NOT LISTED:

The 1935 church can clearly be seen as the simple rectangle that forms the nave and sanctuary, together with part of the south aisle. This is rendered externally (apart from some flint work at the west end) and has plain round-arched windows.

The architects were James O'Hanlon Hughes (1894-1967) and Geoffrey Welch. Hughes was born in Glasgow and was in private practice in London from 1918-1940 and was with the Office of Public Works in Dublin from 1940-1956. As well as working as an architect he published two volumes of his poetry.

This simple church was aggrandised by Towner in 1969 with the addition of a gabled north aisle and northwest tower with pyramid roof and an extension to the south aisle. Towner's work is executed in irregularly coursed re-constituted stone and has flat-headed domestic style windows with stone mullions. Inside, Towner removed the nave walls, opening up as far as possible into a single space.

The north aisle east window is an indifferent work by Morris & Co, brought from Christ Church Newhaven (demolished in 1965). A south window 1971 by Murphy Devitt of Dublin. Other windows from Christ Church, Newhaven and two (1935 and 1946) signed GW. The east window is of two dates, the lower part having been inserted following re-ordering and the removal of the high altar.

The stations of the cross are oil paintings on canvas.

Church hall attached to the southeast, 1984 by Anthony Whitty.

Henry Bingham Towner (1909-1997) was born and lived his life at Uckfield. He wanted to become a priest but, deciding that he was not suited to the church, he trained as an architect and set up on his own in Uckfield in 1938. He specialised in church architecture and designed more than 25 new churches including St Wilfrids, Hailsham 1954, St Thomas of Canterbury, Mayfield 1957, Our Lady of Lourdes, Rottingdean 1957, St John Vianney Bexley Heath, St Teresa of Avila, Chiddingfold 1959, St Gabriel Billingshurst 1961, St Charles Borromeo, Worthing 1962, St Thomas More, Patcham 1963, St Thomas More, Seaford additions 1969 to church of 1935, St Francis of Assisi, Moulsecomb, additions 1969 to church of 1939, Holy Rood Pevensey Bay 1964, St Joseph's Milford 1969, Christ the King, Langney 1970, Holy Family, Lancing 1970.

SOURCES:

D Robert Elleray - *Sussex Places of Worship* 2004

RIBA - *Biog files*

STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

An attractive but unremarkable building architecturally, of some townscape merit.