

St Martin at Palace, Norwich

Address : St Martin at Palace Church, St Martin at Palace Plain, Norwich, NR3 1RW

Further details : The church is now in the ownership of the Norwich Historic Churches Trust. For further information visit: <http://www.norwich-churches.org/index.asp>

General Information

The church of St Martin at Palace is one of the oldest in Norwich. The church is referred to in Domesday Book (1086) and excavations made in the 1980s revealed foundations of a Norman church as well as evidence of one, if not two, earlier Anglo-Saxon timber churches. The building we see today dates in general from the 15th century, though it is much overlaid by Victorian work. In 1851 the North Chancel Aisle and most of the chancel collapsed. They were rebuilt in 1853-4, when a thorough 'restoration' of the whole building was undertaken.

In the late 1980s the church was converted for use as a day centre by the Probation Service at this time modern structures were sympathetically inserted in the building. Inevitably the conversion has changed the character of the building yet the old can still be appreciated whilst the new has an architectural integrity of its own.

Many of the windows contain good quality Victorian stained glass by the William Morris workshop and by Heaton, Butler and Bayne. Unfortunately their ornate decorative backgrounds have been removed. Although this adds much lightness to the interior come of the figures 'float' in large areas of clear glass.

East Window

Designed c1952 by the William Morris workshop the window contains three figures. The central figure of Christ the King is flanked by the Virgin Mary and a Roman soldier. The original ornate decorative background has been removed and replaced by clear glass.

The current figures are believed to have replaced a window designed c 1862 by Heaton Butler & Bayne containing large figures of St Martin (now in South Aisle South window 2), St George (now in south aisle west window) and St Andrew.

South Aisle East Window

This window was erected c1861 in memory of Thomas Beckwith (church minister from 1781 – 1807) and his wife by their children. The central light depicts Christ whilst the tracery lights contain representations of prophets. The original ornate decorative background has been removed and replaced by clear glass.

South Aisle South Window 1

All that remains of the original late 19th century window, designed by Heaton Butler and Bayne, are three small medallions depicting angels carrying scrolls.

South Aisle South Window 2

The current window is made up of 19th century panels from two separate windows.

The tracery lights, designed by J H Gathercole, were part of the original design. The outer lights depict the evangelists' symbols namely: St Matthew's divine man, St John's eagle, St Luke's winged ox and St Mark's winged lion. In the centre are the Agnus dei and a vulving pelican.

It is believed that the main lights originally contained a 'Good Samaritan' scene also designed by Gathercole. Today we see a large figure of St Martin made by Heaton Butler & Bayne c1862 which was originally installed in the east window together with images of St George (now in south aisle west window) and St Andrew.

South Aisle South Window 3

Three small 19th century panels set in clear glass.

South Aisle West Window

The central light contains a large figure of St George made by Heaton Butler & Bayne c1862 which was originally installed in the east window together with images of St Martin (now in south aisle south window 2) and St Andrew.

North Aisle East Window

The tracery lights were originally set here in the 1860s. The main lights now contain four roundels depicting coats of arms including that of Elizabeth Calthorp(e) whose rather splendid tomb is still displayed in the church.

North Aisle North Window 1

Contains two small 19th century panels set in clear glass.

North Aisle North Window 2

The window contains two small 19th century figures depicting St Luke and St John set in clear glass.

Clerestory

The clerestory lights contain small quatrefoils dating from the 1860s.