

# ENGLISH HERITAGE REVIEW OF CHURCHES IN DIOCESE 2005 (EXTRACT)

## The Holy Ghost, Chilworth

Franciscan Friary, Sample Oak Lane, Chilworth, Guildford, Surrey GU4 8QR.



### HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH

ARCHITECT(S): Frederick A Walters

DATE(S): 1892

LISTED STATUS: Grade 2

IN CONSERVATION AREA:

LIST DESCRIPTION: [Extracted from list description of entire monastery] Monastery. 1895 by F A Walters in sober Late Gothic style. Snecked sandstone with ashlar dressings and plain tiled roofs, some flint chequerwork in gables. Four ranges round central courtyard, three dormitory ranges and church tom north....North Range – Church of cruciform plan with gabled tower to east at crossing. Pentice aisle to north and north chancel Chapel with battlemented parapet. Tall gabled shallow transepts to tower. Perpendicular

style fenestration with five 3-light clerestory windows under continuous moulding alternating with buttresses on north side. Three 2-light Y tracery arched windows in aisle chapels below alternating with buttresses. Two windows on north side, one window on east and west sides of chancel chapel over tall basement under string course. Gabled porch to west with ashlar door surround. Impost strings to either side and chamfered surround. Panelled door approached by flight of steps. Interior – Church – wood block floor. Three small chapels to north with moulded surrounds. Gallery across west end. Tall chancel arch with canopied figures to either side in triptych form – St Francis on one side flanked by Angels Madonna and Child on other side, crocketed canopies above. Rood screen and organ between in arch. Flat chancel roof with “sunburst” bosses to panels. Large canopied and crocketed reredos. Alabaster and marble altar.

#### POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO LIST DESCRIPTION & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The monastery and its church were completed in June 1892 (not 1895). The organ over the rood, baptistery, confessionals, reredos and both side altars were added later, though before 1911. The materials are: Ewhurst stone for the walls, Chilmark stone dressings, and Broseley tiles.

Frederick Arthur Walters (1848-1931) was the son of Frederick Page Walters, architect and surveyor of Walbrook, London. Though articulated to his father, when qualified, Walters joined the firm of Goldie and Child and, in 1878, set up his own practice. He was an important ecclesiastical architect, though not perhaps of the very first rank. He was also very prolific, building more than fifty Roman Catholic churches during the course of his life. Buckfast Abbey in Devon is probably the building for which he is best known.

The main view of the church at Chilworth is from the north. From here you can see the importance of the division between nave and chancel, marked by the narrow saddle-back tower over the crossing, and given further emphasis by the gabled stair turret. The separation is just as clear when you enter the church. The great organ gallery inserted within the space of the crossing is the most striking feature of the interior. The painted and gilded rood, silhouetted against the pipes of the organ and framed by the arch of the crossing, is enormously impressive, an integral part of the architect's design, and crucial to the historic character of the building.

The opening into the sanctuary, when compared with that of other churches, seems exceptionally narrow (though its great height also helps to create this impression). It is said to have been designed in this way to give privacy to the Friars reciting Divine Office. The nave now has a forward altar.

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CHURCH IF NOT LISTED: N/A  
SOURCES: RIBA Biography File; Obituaries in *The Builder* (CXLII, 1932, 6 7 98) and *RIBA JNL* (1932, 6, 2); Stephen Welsh files on RC churches, RIBA, WeS/3/9.

## STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

The Franciscan monastery at Chilworth has a fine setting; it stands in an open meadow-like clearing fringed with woods. The church of the Holy Ghost lies to the north of the complex and is not immediately seen as you approach the buildings. Its somewhat austere external appearance is offset by its rich interior. Many of the features with which the church was embellished – the organ, baptistery, confessionals, reredos and side altars – were added in the two decades after the fabric of the building was completed in 1911 but since then the interior has changed little. The organ gallery with its painted rood, besides being of exceptionally high quality, is crucial to the design of the building as a whole.

