

# ENGLISH HERITAGE REVIEW OF DIOCESAN CHURCHES 2005 (EXTRACT)

## St Gabriel, Billingshurst

18 East Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 9QH



### HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH

ARCHITECT (S) & DATE (S): Henry Bingham Towner 1962

LISTED STATUS: Not listed

IN CONSERVATION AREA: Yes

LIST DESCRIPTION: N/A

POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS/ADDITIONS TO LIST DESCRIPTION AND/OR  
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CHURCH IF NOT LISTED:

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.

The land for a Roman Catholic church in Billingshurst was given before the outbreak of World War II but the church was not built until 1961-62. It is an interesting and satisfying composition on a sloping site (cf Rottingdean), nave and sanctuary in one, aisles and north sacristy attachments, with a large raised tower-like section over the nave. This space contains a bell but is unuseable for any purpose and has very poor access. It is a much larger space than is required for its function. The design is let down by the use of reconstituted stone and a disappointingly plain interior. Towner also designed the adjoining presbytery at the same time.

#### SOURCES

Douglas d'Enno *The Church in a Garden* 2001  
Parish priest

#### **STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE**

St Gabriel's church is representative of Henry Bingham Towner's work, not without architectural merit but not special beyond local interest.