

ENGLISH HERITAGE REVIEW OF DIOCESAN CHURCHES 2005 (EXTRACT)

St Charles Borromeo, Worthing

St Charles' Presbytery, Chesswood Road, Worthing, West Sussex



HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH

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

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:

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 the church was acquired in the early 1950s and outline planning permission for a church granted in 1958. The Bishop of Southwark approved Bingham Towner's plans in 1959 and in May 1962 the first service was held. St Charles Borromeo is of compact plan, accentuating the height of the cruciform building. Nave and transepts are of equal length and height. Recessed west porch beneath a round arch. Windows mostly of three arched lights beneath a flat arch. Tall north and south transept windows and tall clerestory windows. Squat central tower with pyramid roof. The effect internally is to create the sense of a centralised space, with four big round arches to the crossing. The nave has a gallery running its full length and the gallery front interrupts the nave arch which is carried on corbels as a result. Curiously this gives the effect that the nave is the least important axis. The total cost of the church was £35,329. As with most of Towner's churches, the building material is reconstituted stone. Towner also designed the presbytery.

SOURCES

D R Elleray *Sussex Places of Worship* 2004

STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

One of the many churches designed by H Bingham Towner in the diocese. Externally a satisfying composition that stands well on its corner site but internally the excessive height in relation to breadth is unsettling. As so often, let down by the use of reconstituted stone which has not improved with age.

