

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

LISTED BUILDING	Church of St. Mary, High Street, Clydach, Swansea
Grade:-	II
Date of Notification:-	15.12.2003
National Grid Reference:-	SN 6898001295
O.S. 1:10000 Sheet No:-	SN 60 SE
CADW Reference No:-	82322
C & C of S Reference No:-	LB:496

Notes:-

Location:-

At the W end of the High Street some 75m E of the bridge over the Lower Clydach River.

History:-

Anglican parish church of 1904-5 built because the previous church of St John was too small. St John's became the Welsh church. Designed by E M Bruce Vaughan of Cardiff, it cost £12,000 largely, given by the Player family of The Quarry. Foundation stone laid 24/11/1904.

Exterior:-

Anglican parish church, rock-faced squared Pennant sandstone with Bath stone dressings, slate roofs coped gables and red terracotta ridges. Nave, lean-to aisles, tall SW porch tower, S transept organ chamber and N transept vestry. Early Decorated Gothic style. Four-stage tower has flat buttresses clasping angles except at NW which has polygonal stair tower. Sill course under third stage windows, double string course between third and fourth stages with clock faces between. Tall top stage has long 2-light bell-openings with traceried pointed heads to narrow lights with louvres, joined hoodmoulds, and flat buttresses each side, buttresses are narrower here with gabled caps. String course above under embattled parapet. Ground floor has S moulded pointed door with column shafting, keeled moulding and nailhead ornament, and W 2-light window into porch, second stage has a triplet of lancets each face with Y-tracery to broader centre light and blind side lights. High double plinth to tower and W end. Nave W has big pointed window of 1-3-1 lights between two stepped buttresses with gabled caps above the line of gable coping, short centre buttress below window. Window has sexfoil to main light. String courses across gable which has apex roundel, and under main window. W end of lean-to N aisle has 2-light window. Nave S has tower to left of 3-bay aisle with high plinth, three 2-light pointed windows with hoodmoulds separated by 2 buttresses. Aisle is lean-to with 3-bay clerestory above, 3 small lancets to each bay with linked

hoodmoulds, and bays divided by gable-topped ashlar strips. Hoodmoulds link to string course at impost level that is carried over the strips.

Chancel has S transept (organ-chamber) attached, stonework continued flush with S aisle. High plinth, E lancet with hoodmould. Chancel S has high sill-course under narrow traceried lancet. Two-step buttress at extreme right. E end has double plinth, gabled buttress each side and large 5-light pointed window set high, with sill-course stepped-up beneath. Apex string course and roundel. Chancel N has similar lancet to S, the gabled vestry, lower than organ chamber opposite, with E door and window and N 3-light window. N aisle of 4 bays similar to S, door in left bay.

Interior:-

Broad high nave with 4-bay arcades of alternate round and quatrefoil piers of ashlar banded in red sandstone carrying pointed arches with hoods and head stops at each end. Four-bay N arcade, 3-bay to S with blind plain pointed arch in W bay, filled by tower. Clerestory triple lights have column shafts and moulded arches. Nave has open roof with trusses carried on column shafts on carved corbels below clerestory string course. Shafts carry deep arched braces of collar trusses which have short king posts with arched braces on all four sides, two to upper collars and two to a long axial beam that carried collar rafters. Five main trusses, sixth at W without column shafts, and four intermediate trusses. Moulded wallplate. Aisles have lean-to roofs. S aisle has big pointed W arch to porch and double oak doors with leaded glazing, and pointed ashlar E arch infilled with oak-panelling and door to underside of organ. Porch has exposed stone walls, N wall foundation stone laid by Mrs John Player 1904, high beamed ceiling, NW door to tower stair and segmental-pointed arch to S door. N aisle has W end enclosed in C20. Exterior door in right end bay and E end moulded pointed door with hood to vestry in N transept.

Chancel:

Broad pointed chancel arch with chamfered outer arch carried right down, inner arch with hollow moulding on column shafts with portrait heads of Bishop Llandaff and King Edward VII. Two-bay roof is panelled and boarded, the second bay enriched with gilded bosses and a gilded carved wallplate cornice. Moulded arch between bays carried on oak wall-posts on column shafts carried down to sill course with corbels below. Triple sedilia on S wall with column shafts carrying angels, cusped pointed heads relief carving and cornice over. Big moulded pointed arch to S transept organ-chamber. Pointed cusped door to N vestry with hoodmould, three tiny pointed open vents on N wall, through to vestry. N and S walls have windows set high each side of sanctuary, each a single light in pointed 3-bay arcade with column shafts and hoodmoulds, the outer lights blind. Fine 5-light E window has column shafts and hoodmould. Stepped floor with black and white marble paving, two steps at chancel arch, one before vestry door, one to sanctuary and 3 to altar. Vestry and organ chamber have boarded panelled roofs.

Fittings:

Reredos of 1921 to John Player, extraordinary elaborate and very large alabaster piece with long relief carving of Last Supper under canopy with ogee-heads and much cusping and crocketing, of 3-1-3 bays. Outer bays have cresting over, centre is taller with big projecting nodding ogee canopy and cornice. Beneath Last Supper panel is band of rosettes with IHS centre shield, over lavishly carved shield, over

lavishly carved shelf. Flanking are piers each with statues under ogee arches and top cornice. Outer wall panels Ten Commandment and Lord's Prayer panels with ogee crocketed heads, angel and shield relief over, all in square-headed panel with fine vine-trail border. Ornate ashlar octagonal pulpit of 1905 on massive round red sandstone shaft, the pulpit with highly carved panels with red marble then angle shafts and pairs of small pointed arches with green marble shafts, and coloured marble flush inserts in panels. Marble top to cornice. Curving ashlar steps with wrought iron balustrade and brass handrail. Font of 1905, ashlar with quatrefoil bowl on centre shaft ringed by four marble shafts. Altar rails on brass Gothic supports of c1905. Oak eagle lectern. Oak stalls and 2 reading-desks with traceried open top panels. Pine pews with open traceried panels to front kneelers. Organ of 1905 by W Hill & Son in oak Gothic case.

Memorials:

W wall tablet to Dr John Jones died 1922.

Stained Glass. E window probably of 1921 by T F Curtis of Curtis, Ward & Hughes, Ascension with finely etched faces and predominantly blue colouring. Exceptional W window of c1920 to Lt John Y P Jones killed 1918, Arts and Crafts style with deep colours, a battlefield burial service in main 3 lights, angel in each side light. S aisle has first War Memorial window of c1920 by Curtis, Ward & Hughes, Valour and Sacrifice, second and third windows c1935 by Powell of Whitefriars, Nativity and S S John & Peter.

Listed:-

Included as a particularly elaborate early C20 Gothic church with rich fittings and stained glass.

Reference:-

J Newman, The Buildings of Wales Glamorgan 1995, p 323
Kelly's Director of S Wales, 1926, p 406