

Full Report for Listed Buildings



Summary Description of a Listed Buildings

Reference Number	Building Number	Grade	Status	Date of Designation	Date of Amendment
11506		II	Designated	22/08/1975	29/07/2003
Name of Property		Address			
Church of St John the Baptist					

Location

Unitary Authority	Community	Town	Locality	Easting	Northing
Merthyr Tydfil	Troed-y-Rhiw		Troed-y-rhiw	306820	202107
Street Side	Location				
	Situated on the W side of the Afon Taf in a prominent position on the N side of the Cwmdu Road.				

Description

Broad Class	Period
Religious, Ritual and Funerary	

History

Anglican parish church built 1852-3 by John Prichard for Anthony Hill of the Plymouth Ironworks, who insisted that

only he should be buried within, and is buried under chancel in three coffins of yew, oak and lead. The church was a chapel of ease to Merthyr Tydfil, but became a parish church by 1860, the parish then known as Pentrebach parish but the church called Pontrhun church, Pentrebach and Troedyrhiw being strictly the other side of the river. The intention was to build a cruciform church, but only a short projection was built on the site of the N transept. There was a painted frieze around chancel.

Exterior

Church, coursed Pennant stone with ashlar dressings, steep slate roofs and coped gables. Nave and long chancel under single roof, large S transept, gable of unbuilt N transept, S porch, NE vestry and W bellcote. Severe early Gothic style with flush simply cusped lancets and emphasis on form over decoration. Ashlar chamfered plinth, coved eaves, chancel sill course, bellcote and openings. W end has large 6-light window grouped as a 2-light with roundel and hoodmould to centre, with stone voussoirs above, and 2 lights each side the heads stepped down. Deep moulded ashlar sill, stepped down each side, the walling below slightly forward of main wall-plane, with trefoil-cusped chamfered doorway with arched hoodmould. Broad ashlar angle buttresses with 2-step plinths and one set-off below gable shoulders. Each side of centre 2-light is a tall thin ring-shafted column carried right up from sill to carry pointed-arched base of ashlar bellcote, the arch framing a vesica gable opening. Bellcote has raised side piers, 2 pointed openings with miniature clasping buttresses, and small cusped lancet in steep gable. Nave has paired cusped lancets, one to left and 2 to right of gabled S porch with pointed chamfered entry, hoodmould, stone voussoirs and coped gable with cross finial. Small cusped lancet to each side wall of porch, and inner pointed S doorway with double boarded doors. Large S transept has quoins to chamfered angles, windowless sides, long 2-light window with roundel, hoodmould with carved stops and trefoil in gable apex. Chancel S has 3 well spaced lancets and heavy sill band carried around ashlar angle buttresses to E end where it steps up under E window. Ashlar-faced buttresses have chamfered plinths, set-off above sill band level and gabled caps. Very large E window of 5 stepped lancets under single pointed hoodmould with carved stops and stone voussoirs. Trefoil in gable apex. Chancel N has lean-to vestry to left, with E end cusped lancet and W shouldered-arched door, and to right a single lancet like those on S. N transept has stubs of wall for extension, 2-light long window with roundel as on S transept and trefoil in apex. Nave N has C20 lean-to and 2 pairs of lancets as on S.

Interior

Tall spacious interior with S transept and N transept gable (intended to be removed for full transept if funds allowed), plastered walls and dominant open truss roofs with high collars and deep arched braces, 5 main trusses to nave, 4 to chancel, 2 to S transept and one to N transept. Nave has corbels to main trusses and intermediate trusses without the bracing, chancel roof is slightly higher and narrower, more ornate with windbracing and trusses on ashlar corbelled column shafts with moulded capitals and carved corbels. Crossing trusses rest on similar corbelled columns, paired in W angles and single columns on E walls of transepts, the chancel being narrower.

Plastered walls with ashlar dressings to segmental pointed surrounds to windows. Transepts have 2-light long window with roundel in big pointed shafted surround with keeled arch moulding. Chancel has stone flagged floor, pointed N vestry door, and two steps, one before vestry, the other at sanctuary with timber rails with column shafts and pointed cusped arches. Patterned tiles to sanctuary floor. Very large E window in moulded pointed surround with angle shafts and splayed sill.

Nave W end has late C20 lightweight inserted meeting room with low ceiling.

Fittings: Large and ornate later C19 Gothic pine organ case in S transept with painted pipes said to have come in

1880 from Exeter via St Andrew's Church, Cardiff, but it seems improbable that such a large piece would have moved twice so soon. Three fine hanging brass coroneae on twisted iron rods, each with 5 gas lamps now electric. Four small brass wall-lamps in chancel. Severe ashlar octagonal font with chamfered top and bottom to deep bowl on quatrefoil squat column. Hexagonal timber pulpit with cusped traceried blind panels and angle buttressing, matching reading desk with poppyhead finials attached to stalls with pierced frieze of square quatrefoils. Pitch pine nave pews. Timber reredos with painted texts of Lords Prayer, Ten Commandments and Creed. Fine E window stained glass of 1863-4 with 15 scenes in bright colours on blue grounds, each in oval frame, probably by Wailes, and given in memory of Anthony Hill, the founder of the church. Marble scroll plaque on S wall to Hill 'for many years joint and of late sole proprietor of the Plymouth Iron Works', died 1862, and buried under chancel, the memorial by H. Cade of Bristol. Shafted memorial to Rev. W. Green died 1891 by C. Price of Troedyrhiw, and matching plaque opposite to Rev P. Williams, died 1926. Also on N wall marble plaque to S.B.Edwardes of Rhydygors, Carmarthen, and Plas Brynteg, 1824-79, by W. Davies of Carmarthen; and brass plaques, one with design of 2 mourning soldiers, to Pte J. Ball died at Pretoria 1900, another to William Lewis of Fernbank, died 1906, 'erected by the surface workers of Messrs Nixon collieries Merthyr Vale and other friends'.

Reason for designation

Included as an accomplished early work of John Prichard already with a High Victorian severity of line.

