

department for
culture, media
and sport



ENGLISH HERITAGE

SCHEDULE

The following entry has been added to the list:-

508925

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BLACKFRIARS ROAD

Christ Church

II

Church, 1958-59, by R Paxton Watson containing contemporary stained glass by Kenneth Gordon Bunton and others. Listed principally for its stained glass.

EXTERIOR: Christ Church is a stripped neo-Georgian church with a concrete frame, clad in brown brick with stone dressings, and has a barrel-vaulted, copper-clad roof. The building takes the form of a rectangular box with a tower at its eastern end, low flat-roofed side aisle and ancillary rooms to north and south, and a church hall placed at a transverse angle to the west end, this with a single-storey kitchen block behind it. The tower is in three stages with a brick lower stage containing the main entrance, a slit window and a clock, a bell loft with louvers above. It has a copper-clad pyramidal roof. The main entrance is at the east end, facing the major thoroughfare that is Blackfriars Road, and is a semi-circular-headed opening with gauged brickwork and a stone keystone and varnished, hardwood door. The nave windows are segmental-headed; those to the aisles and ancillary rooms have two-, three- or four-light mullions. All the windows are leaded lights with metal glazing bars set in stone surrounds. The church hall is approximately the same size as the nave and is similarly styled, with a shallow barrel-vaulted roof. It is entered at its southern end, which features a stone statue of Christ in a niche, set in a brick relieving arch. Four stone medallions bearing the insignia of the evangelists are placed to either side of the statue, beneath which is the entrance with a stone canopy and varnished, hardwood doors.

INTERIOR: Nave has five bays and the sanctuary one. Four shallow steps running the full width of the nave begin half way along it and lead to the sanctuary. The second step is deeper than the others and forms a quire, furnished with timber choir stalls. There is a northern aisle, via which the

church is entered, with dado panelling and in-built cupboards for hymn books. A small former chapel to the north of this aisle has now been enclosed and its fittings removed. At its west end, the nave is divided from the church hall by a glazed screen (a replacement of the original sliding doors) above which is the organ. The interior fittings and finishes of the church and hall are largely contemporary with the original build. They include two timber pulpits, a lectern, and an elegant, slender font, this with brass detailing. The altar furnishings and communion rail were a memorial gift to the parish in 1959. The pews are original and bear coats of arms on their ends. The floor is parquet.

The church also includes a number of fittings of more recent date including: the altar frontal made by local unemployed people in 1984; a mural behind the altar depicting Wall Street in New York, originally made for a National Theatre production; 'New Regime' of 1989 by Ian Walters (1930-2006), a sculpture commemorating the dispute between News International and print workers during the move of printing presses from Fleet Street to the Docklands in 1986-7, the latter located in the church hall. Walters' newspaper obituaries tell us he was a figurative sculptor whose portraits celebrated the heroes of the left, including Nelson Mandela (now on London's South Bank), Harold Wilson (in Huddersfield) and Sylvia Pankhurst, all listed.

STAINED GLASS: The most distinctive feature of the interior is the series of ten stained glass windows by KG Bunton. Installed shortly after the church opened in 1959, they depict the lives of local people, both contemporary and historical, at home and at work. Each comprises two panels, the larger at the top portrait-orientated above a smaller panel in a landscape orientation, between which is a cartouche bearing emblems associated with each theme. The attention to detail is remarkable. In the window featuring the Routemaster, for example, the bus stop lists the numbers 4, 45 and 63 buses as stopping there; the latter two buses still stop outside the church. There is interest in the depiction of some of London's most famous historic places, including St Paul's Cathedral, Bankside Power Station (now Tate Modern) and the River Thames. Also significant is the depiction of locally industry, of particular poignancy given that few such processes now take place in this area, which was once the principal place for factories and industrial works in the capital.

The subjects are as follows, with a) indicating the larger, upper panel and b) the lower panel.

North Side (west-east).

1. a) two charwomen in 1950s dress with mop and bucket, one looking out of a window towards St Paul's dome.
b) other women in 1950s dress in a London Transport bus stop queue and a Routemaster bus. The bus stop displays numbers 4, 45 and 63. KG Bunton's signature features as lettering in the fascia of a shop, located to the left of the bus driver's cabin. The bus advertises Rice Crispies.

2. a) a baker in historical dress removing bread from a bread oven.
b) 1950s bakers at work with industrial-sized ovens, in a factory setting.
3. a) carpenters at work assembling a doorframe with a large seven-storey building under scaffolding in the background; the workers wear C20 clothes.
b) a 1950s building site showing labourers mixing cement and shovelling sand.
4. a) a women in historical dress carrying a basket accompanied by a boy (with ball) and a girl (with doll), against a background showing the tower of Christ Church as it appeared in the C18 and the weather-boarded, tiled-roofed vernacular houses of old Southwark. The scene is taken from a print of c1800.
b) a nine-storey housing block with a car and pedestrians in silhouette in the foreground; this is the north façade of the public housing block on the north side of nearby Nelson Square, built in 1958.
5. a) a suited utilities worker, with a panel of dials and three telephones against a background scene of electricity pylons leadings across hills and woodland.
b) Bankside power station (now the Tate Modern) viewed from the south with St Paul's Cathedral beyond.

South Side (west-east).

6. a) a man and a women in 1950s dress in an office, with other clerical staff, a filing cabinet, a desk calendar, and a typewriter in the background.
b) an office scene, with clerical workers at desks with typewriters or telephones.
7. a) a waterman on the Thames with cranes and wharfs behind.
b) a panoramic view of the river Thames, showing St Paul's Cathedral and Blackfriars Bridge.
8. a) a printer in historical dress with his apprentice in front of a traditional printing press.
b) workers in a 1950s printing factory.
9. a) goods for brewing being weighed in scales.
b) brewers loading ingredients into a mash tub and a copper.
10. a) a supervisor holding and plan and callipers oversees a worker at a milling machine, representing engineering.
b) two men manufacturing a crankshaft on a lathe.

The two sanctuary windows are signed and dated 'Frederick Cole 1960', and depict the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist.

The windows in the north side aisle and the foyer are by John Lawson and depict the local companies and organisations that sponsored their creation in 1984.

HALL: The church hall has a parquet floor, dado-panelling, its original doors, and a modern suspended ceiling. A gallery at the southern end has been enclosed but its raked flooring and the gallery stair, with a solid timber balustrade, survive. There was originally a stage at its north end but this has been removed and a floor inserted into the space to create two floors of offices.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: Christ Church is set back from the road in a large churchyard, now a public garden, which contains mature trees and a Grade II-listed Victorian fountain. Two Portland stone rusticated piers facing Blackfriars Road may be remains of an earlier churchyard boundary.

HISTORY: Christ Church, Blackfriars Road replaced a Georgian church of the same name, dating to 1738-41, which had been damaged by a fire caused by bomb damage in 1941. This building had itself replaced the first church on this site, built in 1671 with a bequest in the will of one John Marshall (d.1631) on land donated by a William Angel. Both earlier churches were approached principally from the north, via Bennett Street (now Rennie Street), and entered via a western tower. When the church was rebuilt, a tower was placed to the east end, presumably to form a landmark on Blackfriars Road, the major thoroughfare. Fragments of the older church were salvaged for the new building, namely a stone niche with a statue of Christ and four carved stone medallions symbolizing the Evangelists. These now feature on the church hall's southern façade, but are described in the Survey of London volume for the area (published in 1950, at which time the church was a bomb-damaged shell) as forming part of a Romanesque square-ended chancel added to the Georgian church by CR Baker King in 1890.

The Dedication Stone in the front porch records the church's history and the opening of the building as an Industrial Mission Centre by The Duke of Edinburgh in 1960. Industrial Missions were established in the mid-C20 to provide ministry to workplaces. This association between the church and the world of work has left a unique mark on the built fabric of Christ Church in the form of a series of stained glass windows, ten designed in 1959 depicting workers in the local area, and four designed in 1984 representing local businesses and organisations.

The stained glass artist was Kenneth Gordon Bunton, an Associate of the British Society of Master Glass Painters. Bunton trained at Nicholson's Studios, St John's Wood, and in 1950 won First Scholarship from the Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass. From c1952-60 he was staff artist at J Wippell & Co, before establishing his own studio in Sevenoaks. The British Society of Master Glass Painters journal for 1968-9 mentions Bunton completing a prestigious commission (opened in the presence of the Queen Mother) for St Peter's Church, Tile Cross,

Birmingham. In the Directory of Master Glass Painters of 1972 he has a substantial entry which includes windows in Devon, Kent, Lancashire, Yorkshire, New Zealand and South Africa.

The last churchyard burial at Christ Church was in 1856 and the churchyard was cleared in 1895 when the interments were removed to Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey. In 1900, the churchyard opened as a public garden and in 2000 it was restored; both events are commemorated in stone plaques on the churchyard walls.

SOURCES: 'Christ Church', Survey of London: volume 22: Bankside (the parishes of St. Saviour and Christ Church Southwark) (1950) 101-107 (Online Edition accessed 9 August 2010)

Christ Church parish website (accessed 9 August 2010)

B Cherry and N Pevsner, Buildings of England series 'London: South' 575

Obituaries of Ian Walters in the Times (8 August 2006), Independent (15 August 2006) and Guardian (18 August 2006)

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION: Christ Church, Blackfriars Road is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

* decoration and craftsmanship: the church contains a series of unique stained glass windows which display craftsmanship of the highest order and remarkable attention to detail.

* historic interest: the windows are an early example of stained glass which responds imaginatively to a very specific place, depicting some of London's most famous buildings and conveying a particular iconographical message about celebrating ordinary lives.

* architecture: the simple Neo-Georgian building provides an appropriate, contemporary setting for the stained glass.

* intactness: the church is very well preserved, with its leaded windows unaltered and all its internal fixtures and fittings intact.

Dated:-

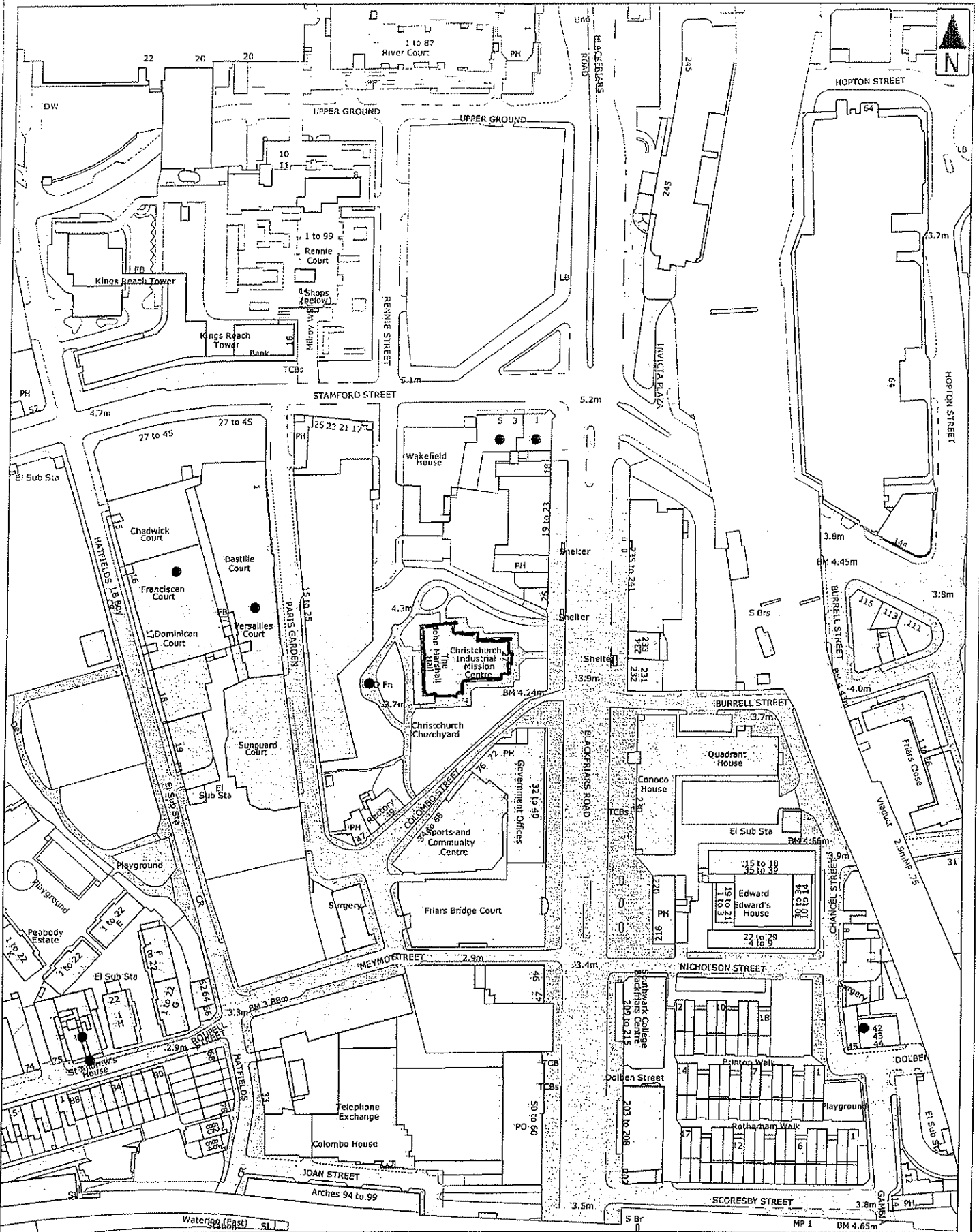
26th October 2010

Signed by authority of
the Secretary of State for
Culture, Media and Sport



Emily Gee
English Heritage

Christchurch, Blackfriars Road, Southwark



Map Scale: 1:2000
 Print Date: 8 July 2010
 NGR: TQ3159980290


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