Christ's Chapel of Alleyn's College of God's Gift

Active
Church of England
Gallery Road, London SE21 7AS

Christ's Chapel exterior and bomb damage

Christ's Chapel exterior north elevation and south elevation

Historical summary
Christ's Chapel of God's Gift was consecrated in 1616 and has remained in continuous use ever since as a place of worship for both the Dulwich Foundation schools and the local community. Founded by the actor and philanthropist Edward Alleyn, the Chapel was part of his charitable Foundation, which also included a schoolhouse and almshouses and was the origins of Dulwich College, Alleyn's School, and James Allen's Girls' School.

Designed by John Benson, possibly with input from Inigo Jones, the Chapel was enlarged in 1823 with the addition of a South Aisle and gallery to serve Dulwich's expanding congregation. When St Barnabas Church was built at the end of the nineteenth century, it became the parish church, but Christ's Chapel continued as the Foundation's chapel, working closely with St Barnabas. In 1957, the Vicar of St

Barnabas was also appointed Foundation Chaplain, formally linking the two institutions while preserving the Chapel's independent status.

Although part of the parish ministry, Christ's Chapel remains the property of the Dulwich Estate, which continues to maintain it rather than the Church of England or the parish. Over the centuries, it has undergone several alterations, including the installation of a large copy of Raphael's Transfiguration and the addition of a reredos behind the altar. Its historic organ, originally built in 1760, was restored in 2008–09. Today, the Chapel continues to serve its original charitable and spiritual purpose, upholding the legacy of Edward Alleyn's Foundation.

Sources: Brian Green's 'Christ's Chapel Dulwich A Guide', 2013. London Archives, Dulwich Society,