Places of Worship in Dulwich

Emmanuel Church

Active
Church of England
Clive Road SE21 0BU

Emmanuel church exterior and original church

Historical summary

The parish had been part of St Luke, West Norwood which itself had been part of St. Mary at Lambeth before 1825. A temporary church was constructed in 1872. Francis Peek, a partner in a firm of tea and coffee importers (the largest in the world), lived at Roby on Crescent Wood Road, South Dulwich and became involved in the welfare of the working class of West Dulwich. He was the main subscriber for the permanent building in 1876. This occupied what is now described as the square. Subsequent to this being destroyed by fire, in association with a local authority housing development, a new complex comprising both church and youth club buildings was constructed in 1967 by Hutchinson Locke & Monk. The building is of reddish brown facing brickwork with flat roofs.

Historical background

In September 1872, a temporary iron church accommodating 430 people was opened under licence from the Bishop of Winchester to serve the growing community in the area. In 1876, John Westwood freely gave the land for a permanent church, and on July 8 of that year, the foundation stone was laid by Francis Peek. The architect was E. C. Robins, and the builders were T. H. Adamson and Sons.

The first part of the permanent church was consecrated on September 8, 1877, by the Bishop of Rochester. A District Chapelry was assigned in 1878, forming the parish of Emmanuel, West Dulwich, from parts of St Luke's, West Norwood, and St Stephen's, College Road.

The church was completed in 1893 when the baptistery and the two westernmost bays of the nave were added. It is a Gothic-style building faced with Kentish ragstone and Bath stone dressings. The structure includes a clerestoried nave with plate-traceried windows, flanked by lean-to aisles terminating in transepts. At the centre of the west end is a small baptistery with entrance lobbies on either side. The sanctuary has an apsidal end, and there is an incomplete buttressed tower at the north-east corner. Inside, the church is plain and faced with white gault bricks. Four bays of stone arcading with foliated capitals separate the nave and aisles, while the chancel and transept arches are tall and rest on engaged shafts supported by stone corbels.

Around 1923–24, the parish was transferred to the Diocese of Southwark. In 1966, Emmanuel joined with All Saints, Rosendale Road, becoming a Conventional District of that parish. Following the demolition of the old church, a new one was built in 1967.

Sources: London Archives. British History Online. Southwark Local Studies