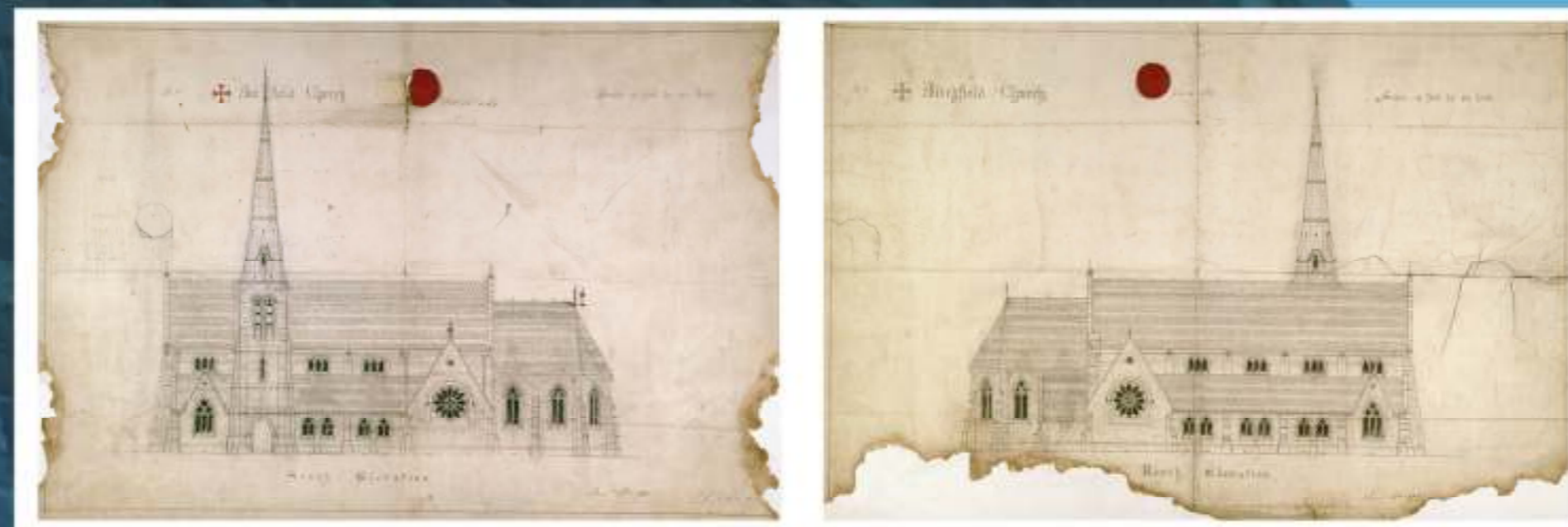


THE CHURCH IS US

A History of Holy Trinity Church, Birchfield 1864 - present



Original architectural drawings of Holy Trinity Birchfield, dated 1863. Drawings can be viewed at Birmingham Archives and Collections, in the Library of Birmingham, EP 45 collection

Holy Trinity Church Birchfield, built in 1864, stands at the crossroads of Birchfield Road and Trinity Road. Part of the parish of Handsworth, Birchfield was part of the county of Staffordshire until 1911, when it became by incorporation a suburb of Birmingham, and part of Warwickshire.



Modern day views of Holy Trinity Birchfield, courtesy of Anthony Pitts

As the population increased in Birchfield a church was needed to serve the spiritual needs of its residents. The parish leaders organised a fundraising committee, and subscribers contributed funds to meet the costs of designing and building of the church. The site of the church was provided by the family of the late William Horton, one of Birchfield's prominent families. Subscribers included the Lichfield Diocesan Society, Reverend. H. R. Peel, Rector of Handsworth, the Dean of Worcester and the Earl of Dartmouth. Most subscribers were from Birmingham and its suburbs, creating a church that was financed by the community. The cost of building the church was £5013.00, a present-day costing of nearly six hundred thousand pounds.

Holy Trinity was designed by Julius Alfred Chatwin, who was renowned for his church designs in Birmingham during the second half of the 19th century. Also responsible for the designing of the Bingley Exhibition Hall, the Joint Stock Bank and Temple Row West, Chatwin had designed Holy Trinity in 1859, and the church gave him a reputation for solid Gothic work at a reasonable price. Its style is particularly striking, and its features, such as aisled nave and spire can be found in many of his subsequent church buildings.

Gifts were also made for the building of the pulpit, font, communion plate, velvet cloth and lectern. The costs of several of the stained-glass windows were met by Rev. William Haughton Freer, Rector of the parish of Seckington and his brother Thomas, one of the church wardens, in memory of their sister. The foundation stone was laid by William Legge, 5th Earl of Dartmouth at a special service on 26th May 1863 and consecrated on 17th May 1864 by the Bishop of Lichfield.