

St Mary's the Virgin Church Non-Designated Heritage Assets Proposed by the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan October 2023

The foundation stone of St Mary's was laid in 1900 but the church was not built as originally designed: a shortage of money meant that it was never finished. It was consecrated on 12th December 1901 by Frederick Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Its prominent position in the town, together with the War Memorial and the only burial ground and adjacent open space, mean that it is a focus for Swanley People. It is a Church of England Parish church which has functioned as a COVID vaccination centre, and with an active community hall and busy wedding and other celebrations schedule.



A view of St Mary's Church from the roundabout connecting London Road to Bartholomew Way and St Mary's Road. Note the war memorial to the right of the lamp post which used to be located at the junction of the High Street and Swanley Lane which is now part of ASDA's car park.

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Below is the character assessment of the site, providing details prepared as part of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Layout	Topography	Spaces	Roads, streets, routes
Relationship between buildings, spaces, and routes and how these elements are arranged in relation to each other	Landscape setting/ gradient of the local area (flat, sloping, valley, plateau, hilltop)	Parks, playing fields, allotments, cemeteries, village greens, car parks, market squares.	Vehicular routes, pedestrian pathways, cycle paths, shared surfaces, rights of way, bridleways.
St Mary's church was built in the early 1900's. The elevation facing the roundabout is quiet imposing with its tall stone window frames set in brickwork with buttress supports and pitched tiled roof. The entrance in St Mary's Road by contrast is rather plain with its flat end. The length of the building looks almost as if the church should have been built much longer. Nether the less it's a large church for a small rural town at the time of its construction. This is a High Church of England, place of worship.	The building is built upon high ground at an elevation of 77 metres with the surrounding land being fairly level in all directions, except that London Road falls to a low point at 65 metres.	The church has a small car park and is enclosed by a hedge with tall mature trees around the grounds. There is a cemetery accessed from St Mary's Road which looks to have very little capacity for any further burials.	Access is from St Mary's Road. There are no cycle paths or cycle parking facilities. There is a shared surface for access to the Church and grassed footpaths around the cemetery. There are no rights of way.