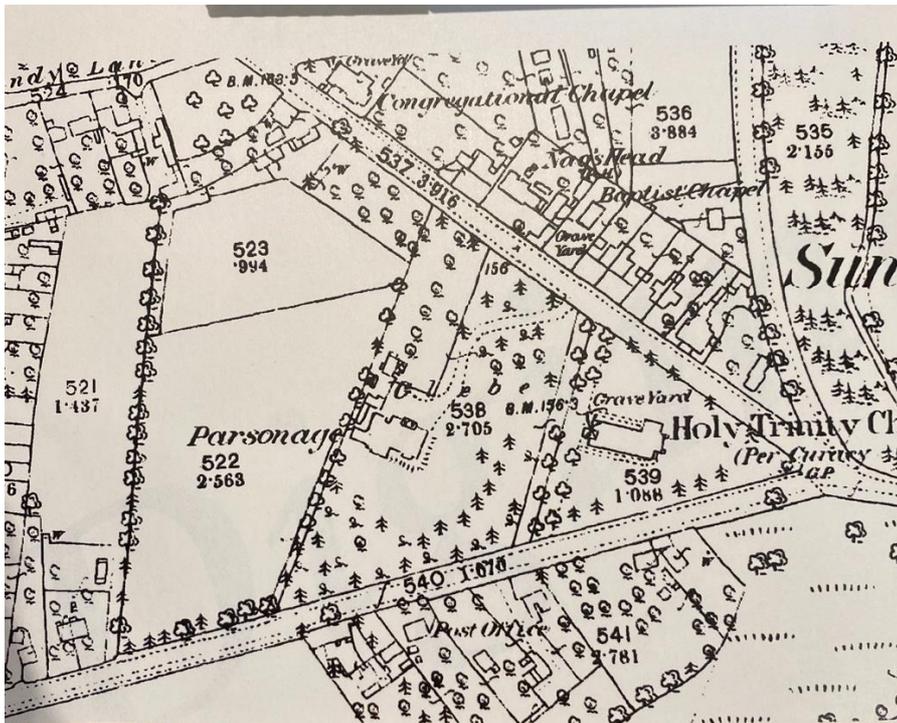


The Parish Church of Sunningdale.

In preparing for the launch of Transforming Trinity one step at a time, it has been fascinating to discover something of the history of the church built on this site since 1839.

This Old OS map is pre 1880 and shows the outline of the original church.

It shows the Vicarage (Parsonage) with a driveway coming from the High Street set in about 3 acres of land. There is a lane between Church Road and High Street but no Trinity Crescent. Sidbury Close where Vicarage number 2 (now Old Church House) and Vicarage number 3 (where I now live) didn't exist.

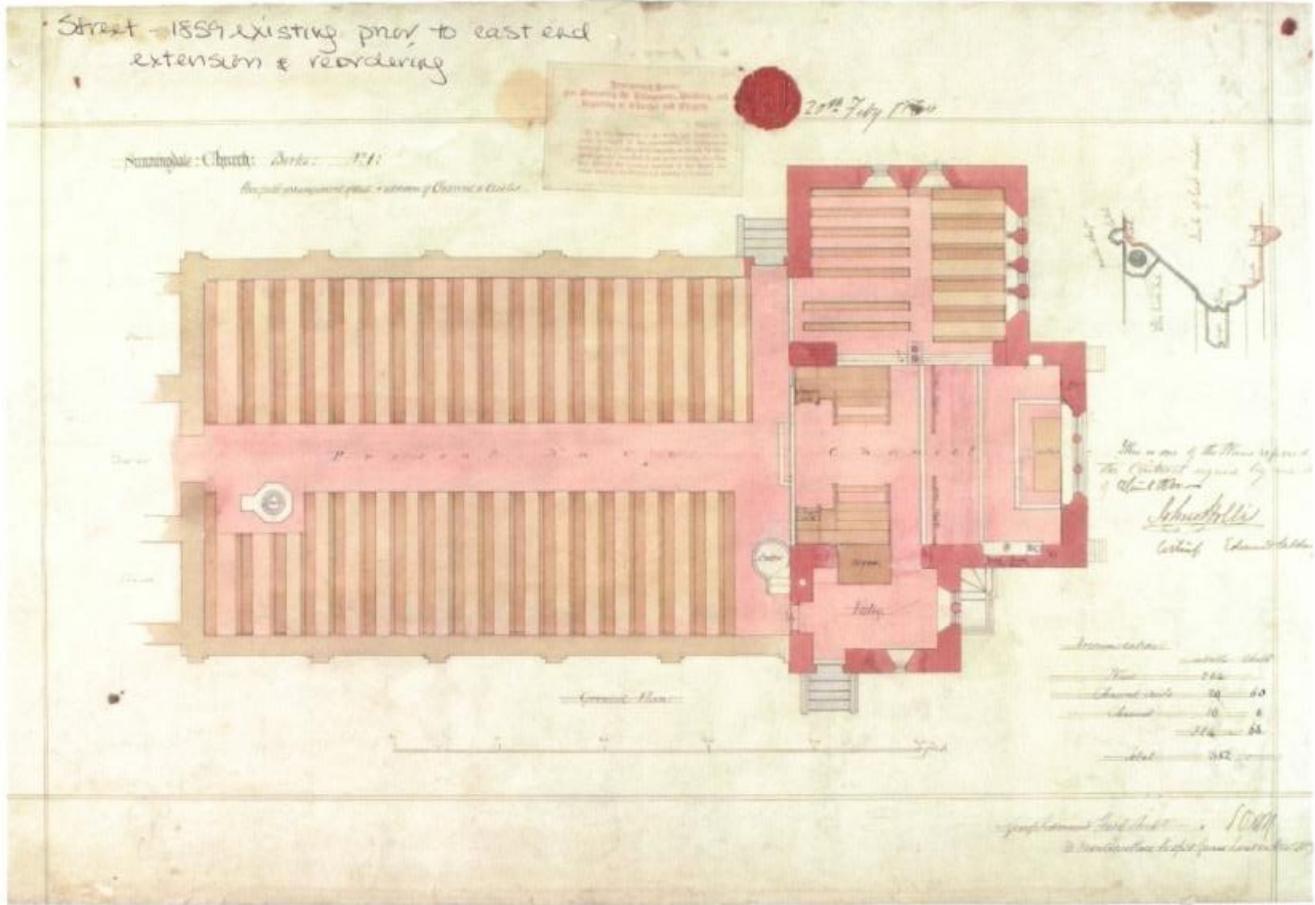


The picture below is the Parsonage – this picture was sent to me by Mr. John Edge.



Clergy used to live in some style!!

The first church was started in 1839 and completed in 1840, the architect was Robert Ebbles. There are no pictures or paintings of the first church, but we do have this illustration. As the handwritten note says, this is how the church was before architect GE Street changed the east end with a remodelled sanctuary and chapel.



It was the Revd. WC Raffles who had the sanctuary and chapel remodelled and these photographs show those two new parts and the original church.



Slightly obscured by a tree you can see the sanctuary (central) and chapel (to the right) and the details of the windows show that these are the same part of the building as we know them. Almost completely obscured by a tree is the small vestry to the left of the sanctuary. This was later extended and adapted to house the organ. The current vestry is also absent – that would be to the right of the chapel.

To the left is a large nave with high arched windows. There was clearly time for a creeper to cover the walls! At the west end a high square tower and a clock. One wonders if they had bells in the tower?

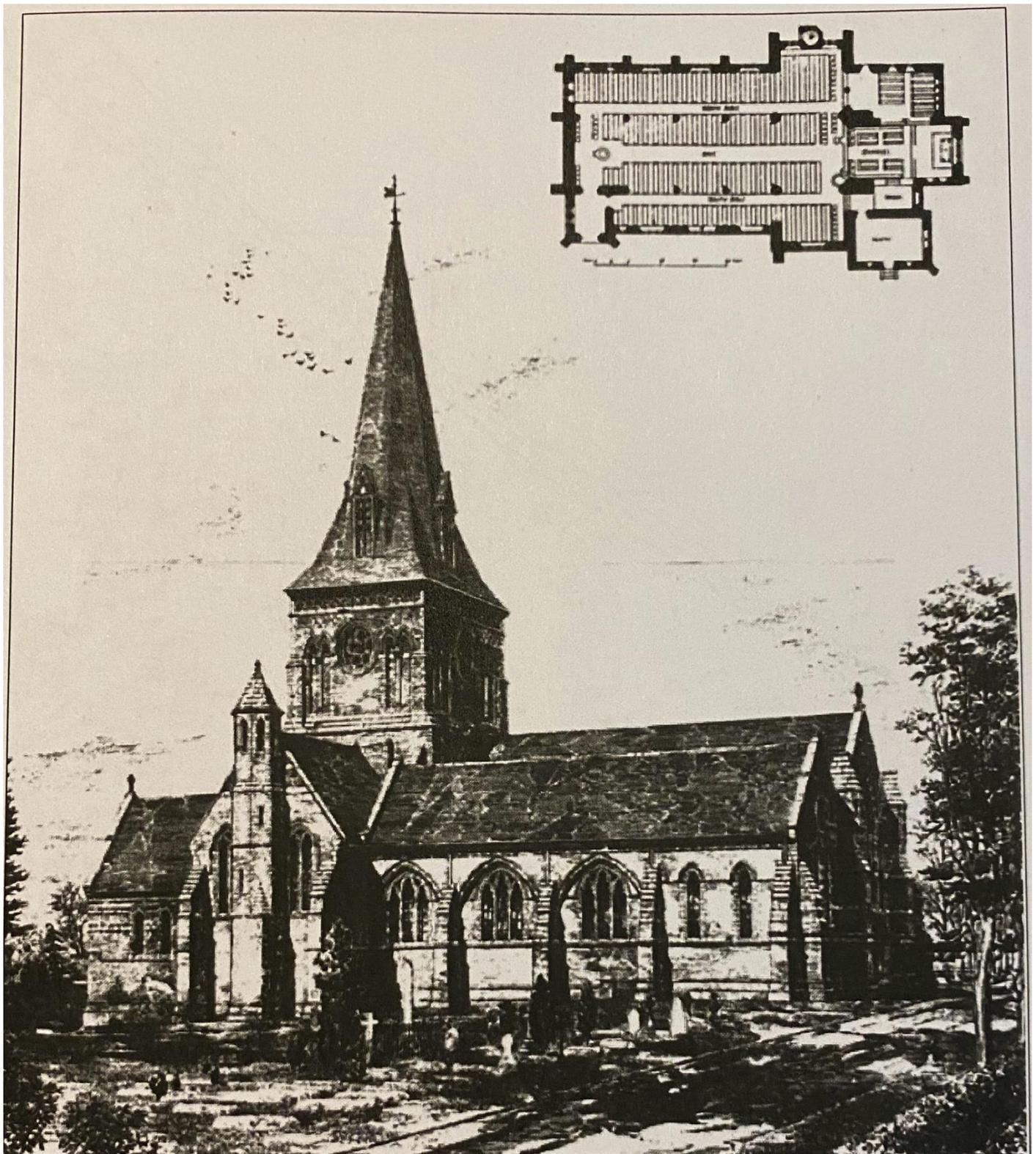
A similar view to this picture was represented in the painting used on FC Hodder's book "A short History of Sunningdale"



The next picture shows the sanctuary and chapel with the square tower looming over the top. The church in this format lasted only 20 years.



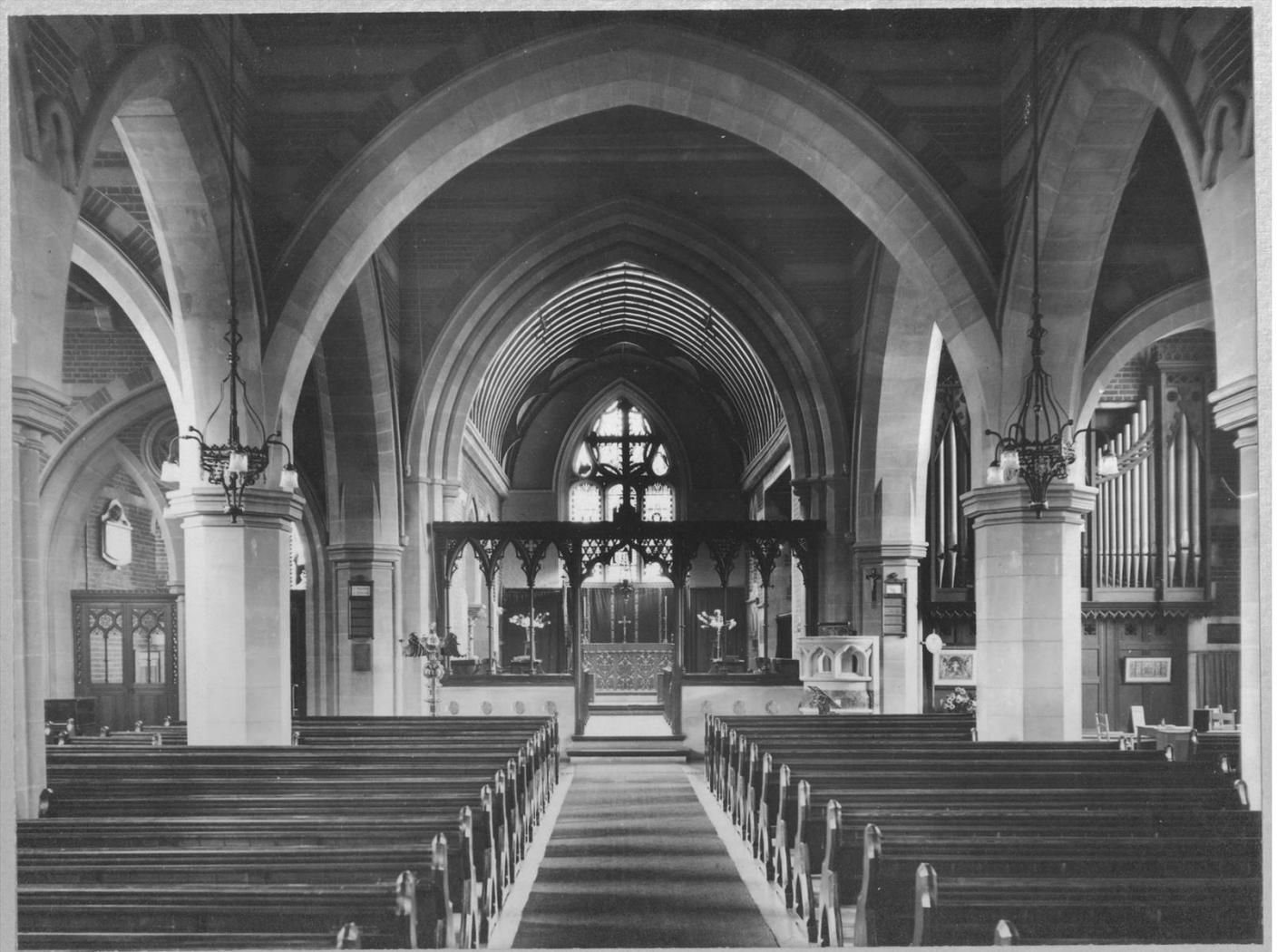
A growing population meant a larger church was required and the Victorians didn't hold back. Guided by architect JO Scott all of the original church was removed and the nave, aisles, crossing, transepts and spire were added...the church we have now.



1887 (J. Oldrid Scott). Published in *The Architect*, May 28th 1887. From archiseek.com.

This view of church is from the High Street. Note – the North door is missing and the current vestry hasn't been built. There is no avenue of trees either.

The insert shows what mattered most in churches at this time – as many pews as possible!



The above photograph shows the church as Scott planned it but has already been slightly adapted. Over to the right some pews have been removed to create a children's corner. Curtains have been hung covering over the tile work behind the altar.

The candelabra that now hang in the aisles used to hang over the nave and this photograph was taken long before the north transept was enclosed to create the room we use as a creche and for meetings and long before the South Transept was enclosed with sliding doors.

Churches were designed for one purpose, to hold worship services where the congregation would sit in rows and face the front. They didn't require many facilities (no toilets for example!) and storage requirement was minimal. A bookcase for the liturgy books and hymnbooks. Possibly cupboards for the choir robes and their manuscripts. The flower team needed a space and the liturgical altar coverings needed a cupboard, and most churches had a safe to keep the silver locked away. Apart from cleaning materials, that was it. The clergy usually had a vestry and often that was the space to house all of the above expect the books to be handed out at the door.

Our theology, thinking and practice have moved on a long way. Worship must always be central, but we want to do so much more than sit in rows and face the front.

Our task is to retain the inheritance of Holy Trinity but not as a museum to how things used to be, but as a living building that celebrates its history and modernises it's facilities.

Added 26th April 2021

In archiving papers I came across this view of the church taken by F Frith in 1955. The church is much more visible from the bottom of Bedford Lane and the war memorial a lot less crowded out.

It is our hope that with careful management and care the churchyard can be brought back to a much higher standard.

To this end the Parish Council has taken over the care of the churchyard from April 1st 2021.

