



The **presbytery**, completed after the church was built, was also designed by Leonard Stokes. It is **Grade 11 listed**. There is a particularly fine grouping formed by Presbytery and church.

What the critics say :

Architectural Guide to Liverpool : Joseph Sharples

“One of the most imaginative churches of its date in the country”

Victorian Churches : RIBA

*“Although an early work of its architect (built 1888-90), St Clares is **one of his masterpieces** and shows him breaking away from the Gothic conventions towards his own forthright and individual style.”*

Buildings of S. Lancashire : Sir Nicholas Pevsner

*“ St Clares Arundel Avenue. By Stokes and a **memorable building**. The development in the three years from Pearson’s St Agnes (Ullet Road) is striking. Stokes handles his Gothic with much more individuality, so that the ensemble is far away from any period precedent.”*

The Shell Guide to English Parish Churches : Robert Harbison

*(This area) - A haven of interesting Victorian churches. Important works by Pearson and Leonard Stokes, and probably the most lavish and artistically accomplished Unitarian church in England. **Stoke’s St Clares is the most exciting.**”*

Catholic Churches since 1623 : Brian Little

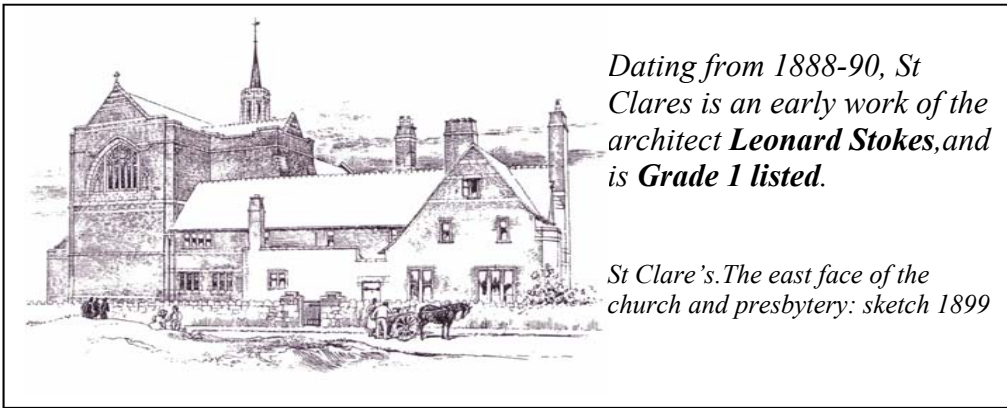
“St Clares is a true masterpiece.”



**St Clares,
Arundel Avenue, Sefton Park
Liverpool**



St Clares Church : Arundel Avenue : Sefton Park : Liverpool



Dating from 1888-90, St Clare's is an early work of the architect **Leonard Stokes**, and is **Grade 1 listed**.

St Clare's. The east face of the church and presbytery: sketch 1899

The altarpiece is arranged with a wide central section and with narrower folding wings and combines painting and relief sculpture. This draws freely on Renaissance sources and provides a sumptuous focus for the whole interior. The altarpiece was the joint work of two artists, **George Frampton** (1860-1928) and **Robert Anning Bell** (1863-1933). Bell was chiefly a painter. Frampton became best known as a sculptor

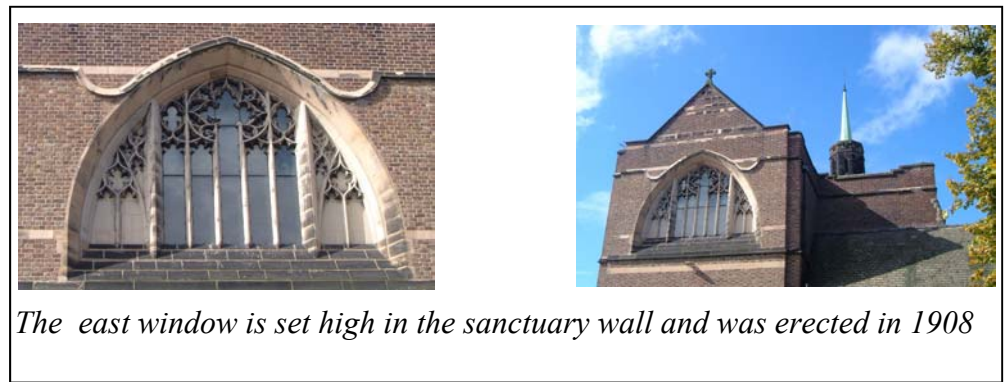


Shallow relief carved angels



cat key hole covers.

With its rich colours, gilding and carving the altarpiece contrasts with the relatively plain interior of the church and is designed to focus attention on the altar and sanctuary



The east window is set high in the sanctuary wall and was erected in 1908

The church was the gift of William James and Francis Ecksley Reynolds of a Liverpool family of Cotton Brokers. (Francis was godfather to the architect Stokes). The church was dedicated to St Clare and it is interesting that both the wives of Francis and James were called Clare. It is interesting also in that three of the saints depicted on the altarpiece had the names of the church's benefactors. There are small statues of **St Clare** and **St Francis** in niches over the north and west porches.

St Francis is closely linked with the story of St Clare.



Statue of St Francis



The west front of St Clare's has a large window which dominates this façade. The style of the tracery could be classed as late decorated or reticulated. The glazing is plain as are most of the high level windows to this church.

The carving over the front door of the presbytery is regarded as being a fine early example of Art Nouveau decoration



Front Door to Presbytery : sketch



detail