

Building Report

The Swedenborgian Church, Comberton Hill Kidderminster

Author: John Combe/Nigel Gilbert

Date: 9th March 2009

Historic Kidderminster Project Ref: 116

Introduction

This report was undertaken as part of the Historic Kidderminster Project. The short history of this church is a good example of the pace of change in the twentieth century. This church was built on the corner of Comberton Hill and George Street and replaced an earlier temporary building. In recent years, after demolition of the church, the site has been occupied by a branch of LloydsTSB Bank, a video store and now Tesco.

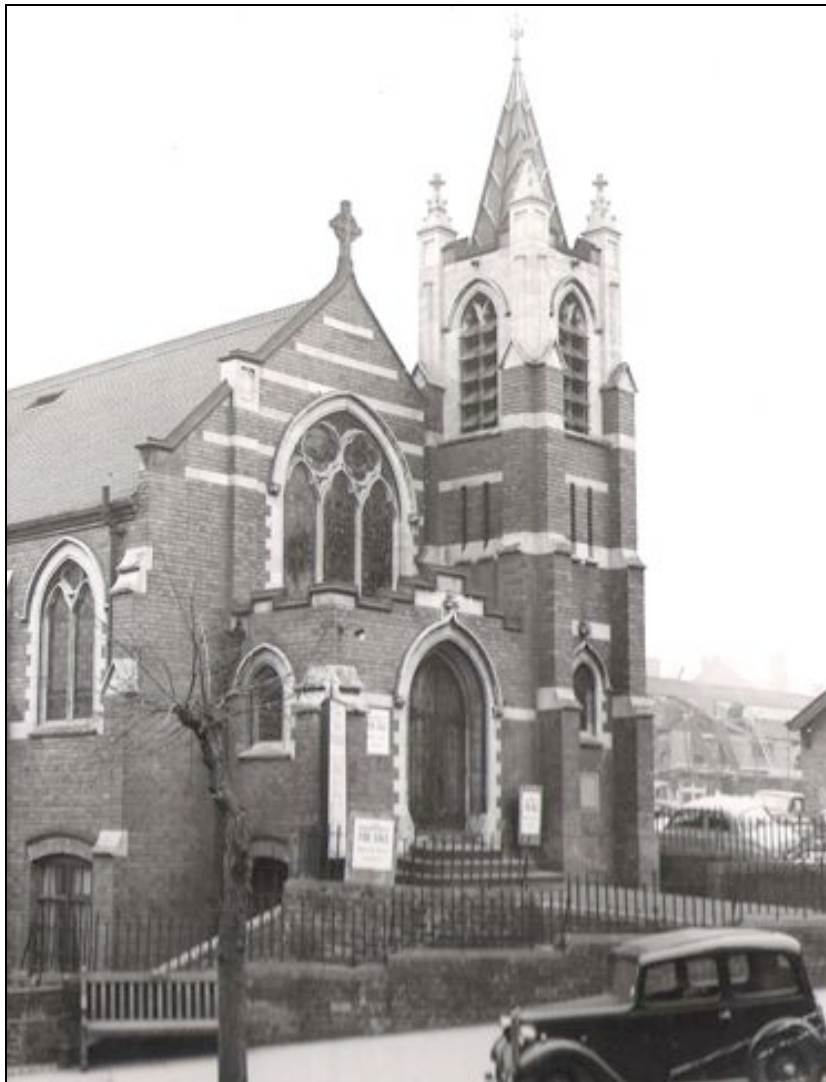


Photo from Kidderminster Shuttle (Courtesy of Kidderminster Library)

History

Initially the Swedenborgian Church was also known as The New Church. The formal ceremony of laying the first stone took place on Monday September 1st 1908, on a rainy day. Emanuel Swedenborg was a Swedish mystic who had some unorthodox beliefs. He was interested in the spirit world and believed in supernatural beings like fairies. However the Rev. Joseph Deans of London laid the first brick and said that the Swedenborgians were essentially Christian, which brought a positive response from the onlookers.

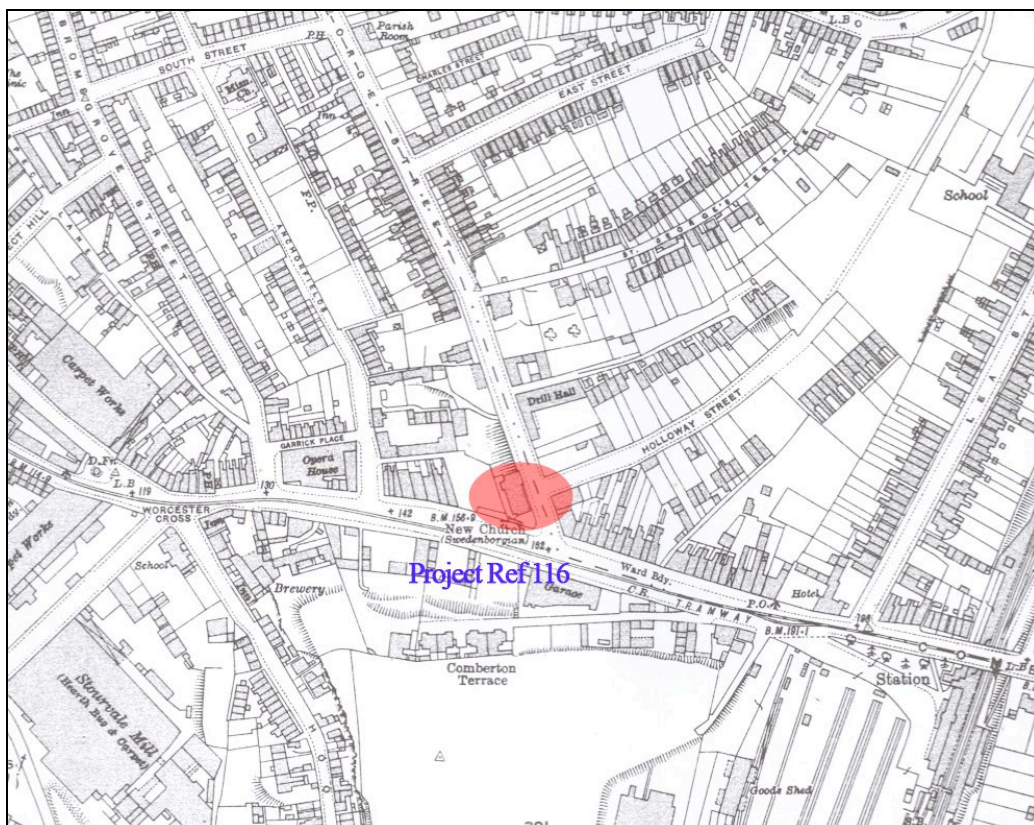
The handsome new church was opened and dedicated on 3rd April 1909. The total cost of the land and building of the church came to £3,000. It was built in the gothic style in red brick and dressed stone and accommodated 200 worshippers. All the windows contained coloured glass, the east and west windows with emblematical stained glass. The interior fittings were made by Mr. Perks of Park Lane and the heating and lighting arrangements by Mr. Pritchard of Bewdley Street. The first wedding there took place in 1911 when Mr. Frederick Parker married Miss Elsie Phipps. The church closed in 1960. After standing for only 54 years it was demolished to make way for the ring road in December 1963.

Sources

Kidderminster Times September 5th 1908 and April 10th 1909

Historien om Sverige-Herman Lindqvist

P28 and 32, Kidderminster since 1800, Ken Tomkinson and George Hall, 1975.



Swedenborgian Church in 1921 - OS Ref: 836764