

## Pugin, Augustus Welby Northmore 1812 - 1852



Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin was born in Bloomsbury, London on 1 March 1812. He died in Ramsgate, Kent on 14 September 1852. His father, Augustus Charles Pugin (1762-1832) was an architectural draughtsman who had emigrated to England in c.1798. Between 1821 and 1838 he published a series of drawings on Gothic architecture.

After leaving school, the younger Pugin worked in his father's office from 1825 to 1827. His career as an independent designer commenced at the early age of 15 in 1827 when he received a commission to design a gothic-style chalice for George IV [now known as the Coronation Cup]. Soon after, he was commissioned by the upholsterers Morel and Seddon to design furniture for the new apartments at Windsor Castle.

By the late 1820s he had developed an interest in the theatre and in 1829 was employed as a stage carpenter at Covent Garden in London. Within a year he was designing stage sets for William Grieve (1800-1844) at the King's Theatre in London, including for the ballet Kenilworth in 1831.

In 1829, Pugin set up a business designing and making interior decorations and furniture. However, it failed in 1831. In the early 1830s he decided to pursue a career as an architect. Although he had done some work for the Scottish architect James Gillespie Graham (1776-1855), he lacked the necessary training for the profession. He therefore, appears to have embarked on a course of self-education. Between 1832 and 1834 he toured France, Germany, Belgium and England studying and drawing mediaeval architecture. He also began designing

imaginary mediaeval buildings in book form. These included *The Hospital of St. John* (1833), *The Deanery* (1834), and *St. Marie's College* (1834).

In c.1834 he began working for the architects James Gillespie Graham (1776-1855) and [Charles Barry](#) (1795-1860). In the autumn of 1835 he drew their competition entries for the new houses of parliament. In January 1836 Barry was declared the winner. Pugin continued to assist him for a further year with the preparatory drawings for the estimate.

In 1835-36 he designed and built a house for himself, *St. Marie's Grange* in Alderbury, near Salisbury, and in August 1836 he published what is considered one of his most influential books: *Contrasts, or, A parallel between the noble edifices of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and similar buildings of the present day; shewing the present decay of taste: accompanied by appropriate text*. The book has been described as his manifesto on Gothic Revival architecture.

In 1837 Pugin embarked on his career as an independent architect. His first commission came from Charles Scarisbrick (1801-1860), for whom he made substantial alterations to his sixteenth-century manor house, *Scarisbrick Hall* in Scarisbrick, Lancashire between 1837 and 1845. In 1838 he began work on his first major architectural commission, *Alton Towers*, Staffordshire, designed for John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury (1791-1852).

By the early 1840s Pugin was being recognized as the leading Roman Catholic church architect of his generation. His first important commissions were *St. Mary's Church* in Derby (1837-39), *St Alban's* in Macclesfield (1839-41) and the Roman Catholic cathedral of *St Chad* in Birmingham (1839-41). Numerous other churches followed.

In 1841 he published what is considered his most important text on Gothic Revival architecture: *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, in which he asserted that "Every feature of a building should be essential to its proper functioning and construction, and every feature of this construction should be frankly expressed."

Concurrent with his work as an architect, Pugin also worked as a designer. The extent of his work as a designer can be seen in the permanent collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. It includes textiles for John G. Crace and Frederick Crace & Son, stained glass, for John Hardman, tiles for Minton, wallpaper for John G Crace & Son, furniture, art metalwork, and ecclesiastical for

Hardman and Co. and Hardman and Iliffe.

In the late 1830s [or early 1840s - sources differ] Pugin left St. Marie's Grange in Alderbury which he was finding inconvenient as a base for his architectural practice, and after living temporarily in Chelsea, London, moved to Ramsgate in Kent, where he had built a house for himself, St Augustine's on the edge of a cliff. In February 1852 he experienced a complete mental collapse, possibly the result of overwork and inappropriate medical treatment. His health was never to recover and he died at St Augustine's on 14 September 1852.

Worked in

UK

Works

Restoration of John Halle's Hall, Salisbury (1834); Saint Marie's Grange, Clarendon Park, Aldbury, Wiltshire (1835-36); Decorations at King Edward VI Grammar School, Warwickshire (1835-36); St. James's, Reading (1837); Chapel, and completion of building, Oscott (1837-38) Saint Mary's church and presbytery, Derby (1837-39); Partial design of Scarisbrick Hall, Ormskirk, Lancashire, designed (1837-45); additions to Alton Towers, Staffordshire (1838-46); Church of Our Blessed Lady and Saint Thomas church of Canterbury, Dudley, Worcestershire (1838); St. Anne's, Keightley, Yorkshire (1838); Saint Augustine's church (1838); Chapel and interior fittings, St. Peter's church, Wexford, Ireland (1838); St. Alban's church, Macclesfield, Cheshire (1838-41); Convent of Mercy, Bermondsey, London (1839); Chapel, altar and roof, Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, Ireland (1839); Church and convent, St. Michael the Archangel, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire (1839); St. Marie's church, Warwick Bridge, Cumberland (1839-40); Metropolitan Cathedral of St. Chad, Warwickshire (1839-41); School, presbytery, and decoration of chancel, St. John's church, Banbury, Oxfordshire (1839-42); Mount St. Bernard Abbey, Coalville, Leicestershire (1839); Entrance and interior details, Castle Rock, Leicestershire 1840); Church of Our Lady, Warwick Bridge, Cumberland (1840); St. Cuthbert's College, Durham (1840); Chapel and School, St. Oswald's, Liverpool (1840); St. Winifrede's Chapel, Shepshed, Leicestershire (1840); Hospital, and adjoining presbytery and house, St. John and Alston Castle, Alton, Staffordshire (1840); Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, Handsworth, Birmingham (1840); Decorations and additions, Grace Dieu Manor, Leicestershire (1840); Church, presbytery and school, St. Winifrede's, Neston, Cheshire (1840-43); St. Alphonsus, Barntown, Wexford, Ireland (1840-44); Church, St. Joseph's Convent, presbytery and school, St. Giles's, Cheadle, Staffordshire (1840-48); St. George's Cathedral, Southwark, London (1840-48); St. Cuthbert's College, Durham (1840-52); Jesus Chapel and alterations to house, Ackworth Grange,

Pontefract, Yorkshire (1841); Additions and remodelling, St. Mary's church, Edinburgh, with James Gillespie Graham (1841); Chapel of the Holy Trinity, convent, school and presbytery (1841); Decoration of chancel ceiling, St. Swithin's church, Leadenham, Leicestershire (1841); School, Spetchley, Worcestershire (1841); Presbytery, St. Augustine of England, Kenilworth, Warwickshire (1841-42); St. Mary's church, Stockton-on-Tees, Durham (1841-42); St. Wilfrid's, Hume, Manchester (1841-42); St. Barnabas's Presbytery, Nottingham (1841-44); St. Mary's church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland, with Joseph A. Hansom (1841-44); St. Marie's church, Liverpool (1841-47); Farm buildings, bridge, gatehouse, Oxenford Grange, Elstead, Surrey (1841-48); Renovations and additions, Peper Harow House, Godalming Surrey (1841-48); Renovation and additions, Bilton Grange, Rugby, Warwickshire (1841-51); Altar and reredos, St. Anne's church, Leeds, Yorkshire (1842); St. Mary's church, Killarney, Ireland (1842); St. Peter's Presbytery, Woolwich, London (1842-43); Church, presbytery and school, St. Mary's, Brewood, Staffordshire (1842-44); St. John the Evangelist church, Kirkham, Lancashire (1842-45); Restoration and repairs, St. Mary's church, Beverley, Yorkshire (1842-52); The Great, Ramsgate, Kent (1843-44); Girl's School, Chirk, Denbighshire (1843-44); Main front and general plan, Ratcliffe College, Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake, Leicestershire (1844), completed by Joseph A. Hansom and Edward Welby Pugin; Repairs and additions, St. Nicholas's, Peper Harow, Surrey (1844); Repairs and additions, St. Mary's church, Wymeswold, Leicestershire (1844-50); Restoration of the Cathedral of Our Lady, Northampton, Northamptonshire (1844-51); Oswaldcroft, Liverpool (1844); St. Wilfrid's College, Cotton College, Staffordshire (1844); Interior decoration of Houses of Parliament, London, with Charles Barry (1844-1852); Rectory, Rampisham, Dorset (1845-46); Restoration of chancel of parish church, Rampisham, Dorset (1845-46); Parish church, Tagoat, Ireland (1845-46); St. Marie's Church, Rugby, Warwickshire (1845-46); St. Mary's church, West Tofts, Norfolk (1845-46); Woodchester Park, near Stroud, Gloucestershire (1845-47; completed by others); Church, Rectory and school, St. Lawrence's, Tubney, Berkshire (1845-47); St. Peter's, Marlow, Buckinghamshire (1845-48); Convent of Mercy, Nottingham (1845-50); Our Lady of the Annunciation, Bishop Eton, Liverpool (1845-52); St. Augustine, Ramsgate, Kent (1845-53); St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Ireland (1845-52); Interior details, Adare Manor, Adare, Co. Limerick, Ireland (1846-47); Additions, village church, Adare Manor, Adare, Co. Limerick, Ireland (1846-48); Convent, Birr, Ireland (1846-48); Renovation and additions, Chirk Castle, Denbighshire (1846); Chapel and house, St. Edmund's College, Ware, Hertfordshire (1846-52); Rectory, Lanteglos-by-Camelford, Cornwall (1847); St. Anne's Bede Houses, Lincoln (1847); Additions and interior decorations, Burton Closes, Bakewell, Derbyshire (1847-48); Chance, St. Oswald's church, Winwick, Liverpool (1847-49); church and

presbytery, St. Thomas's, Fulham, London (1847-49); Manor House, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire (1848); Chapel, St. Cuthbert, Durham (1848); Interior decoration, Eastnor Castle, Ledbury, Hertfordshire (1849); Chapel decoration, Jesus College, Cambridge (1849); Furniture and decoration, Lismore Castle, Ireland, with John G. Crace (1849-50); Aston Cemetery Chapel, Birmingham (1849-50); Interior vdecoration, Leighton Hall, Welshpool, Montgomeryshire, Wales (1850); Rolle, Bicton, Mortuary Chapel, Bicton Grange, Devon (1850); Petre Chantry interior, St. George's Cathedral, Southwark, London (1850); and decoration of the chancel and Chapel of St. Joseph, Church of Our Ladye Star of the Sea, Greenwich, London, with Edward Welby Pugin (1851).

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- RIBApix!- Pugin - over 600 images in the Royal Institute of British Architects picture library

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