



## About us

Grand Junction at St Mary Magdalene's is a new venue for community and the arts, welcoming people of all faiths and none, and run by Paddington Development Trust. The church continues to be a place of worship.

We offer activities, events and courses, including art workshops for children and families, English classes, talks, music performances, and much more. Pick up a What's On Guide to find out what's coming up!

## About this guide

St Mary Magdalene Church was completed in 1878. It is an exceptionally fine, Grade 1 listed, example of Gothic Revival architecture. The architect was George Edmund Street (1824–1881) who was an expert in medieval architecture.

Use this guide to find your way around the church. See the ten things that we think every visit should include, and the colours and details that our 2018 conservation project revealed. Whether you are a fan of Gothic Revival architecture, or would like to find out a little more about the church's history, this guide will help you to get stuck in.

While you are here, enjoy a cup of coffee in our café!

Follow us: @grandjunctionw2



[www.grandjunction.org.uk](http://www.grandjunction.org.uk)



Paddington Development Trust and St Mary Magdalene Church would like to thank all our generous funders and donors for their support.



The visitor guide is free to take away and has been created as part of a new interpretation scheme.



## 8, St Mary Magdalene sculpture

Over the south porch door is a sculpture, also by Thomas Earp, of the patron saint, St Mary Magdalene. Earp became known as 'Street's hands' for his skill at executing Street's ideas. The sculpture depicts the moment when Mary Magdalene recognises the risen Christ outside the tomb on Easter morning, and reaches out to touch him.

## 9, The tower

G.E. Street had to fit the building into an existing street plan. Hemmed-in by rows of terraced houses, only at the east end could he build something to be looked at, where five streets came together. The octagonal tower, with its spire, is 79 metres high. A staircase turret goes as high as the clock chamber, and above that there are bells, although they are not currently in working order.

## 10, The War Memorial Calvary

Added by Martin Travers in 1929, the wooden cross bears a three-quarter life-size figure of Christ. The only clue that it is a First World War memorial is the inscription, '1914–1918 Infinitum est' on the stone base. 'Infinitum est' is an unusual choice of words. It is neither a biblical quotation, nor a conventional classical phrase; it simply means 'it is not finished'. The figure of Christ is made of cast iron and gilded (characteristic of Martin Travers).

## Gothic Revival & Anglo-Catholicism

From around 1850 almost all new Anglican churches were Gothic. This movement revived the Gothic architecture of the 13th–16th century. Its enthusiasts believed it to be authentic, honest and Christian. Pointed arches lead the eye upwards, and forms derived from nature celebrate the beauty of God's creation. St Mary Magdalene's is an Anglo-Catholic Church, part of a religious movement that grew in popularity during the 19th century. Anglo-Catholic churches emphasised the Catholic heritage and identity of the Church of England and were often built in the poorest areas; their clergy believing that services full of light, colour, music and ritual were likely to appeal to the poor.

## Exterior details

- 8 St Mary Magdalene sculpture
- 9 The tower
- 10 The War Memorial Calvary



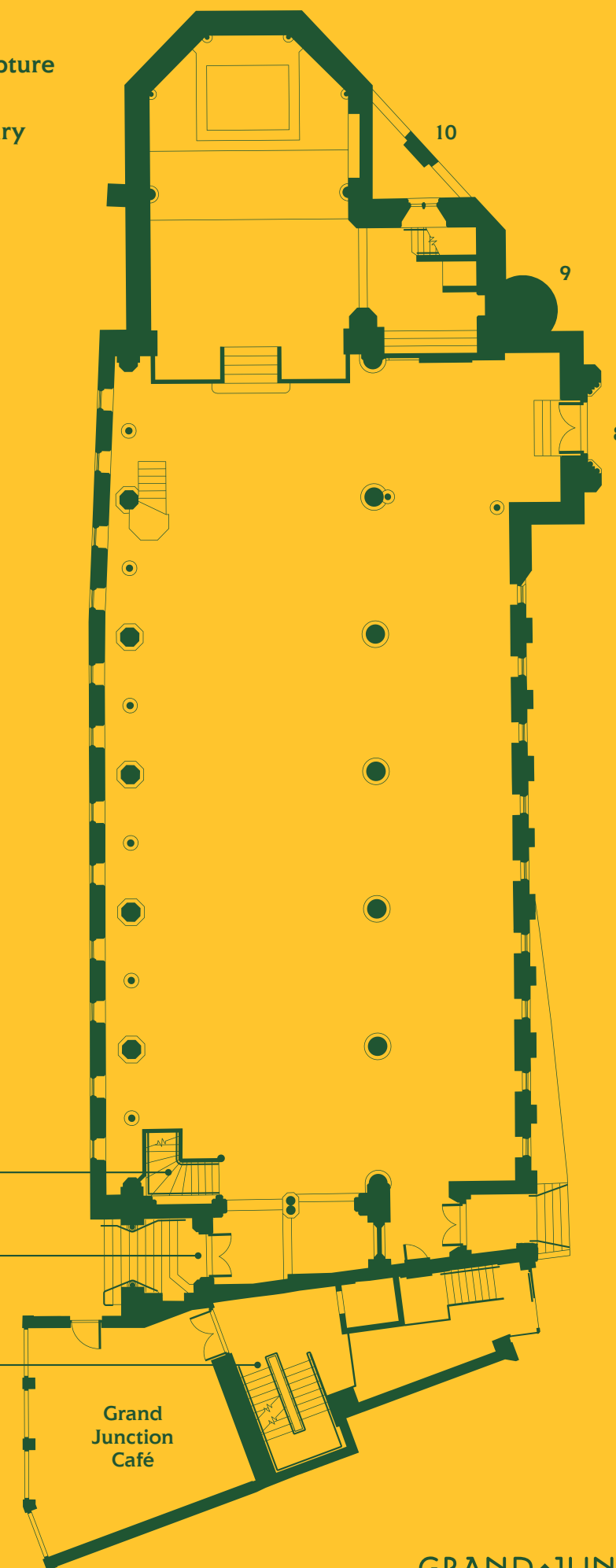
Stairs to Undercroft

Canalside entrance

Stairs to all floors

Grand Junction Café

Designed by Simon Leach Design and David Sudlow Designers, 2019



GRAND•JUNCTION

AT ST MARY MAGDALENE'S  
PADDINGTON

## 1, The nave ceiling

No other English parish church has a Victorian pictorial ceiling like this. The artist, Daniel Bell, stencilled directly onto the wooden boards. The faces of the saints, however, were painted onto canvas in the studio and applied once finished. The ceiling, 20 metres above the floor, is divided into twelve sections, with male saints on the south side and female on the north. What look like flames are rays of divine light, showing that the saints are bathed in light from God. During the conservation works in 2018, 20 conservators worked over six months to clean a century's worth of dirt and grime.

## 2, The sculptures in the nave

High on the walls of the nave are sculptures of saints carved by renowned church sculptor Thomas Earp (1823–1893). His best known work is his reproduction of the Eleanor Cross at Charing Cross Station. These statues are believed to be the first saints commissioned for the inside of an Anglican church since the Reformation of the Church in the 16th century. They are the four evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and St Mary Magdalene. The remainder are Old Testament figures.

## 3, Painting of St Mary Magdalene

On the south pillar of the chancel arch hangs a small oil painting in an elaborate gothic frame. The figure is the church's patron, St Mary Magdalene. It is was painted in 1896 by Charles Rickett, a typographer, theatre designer and illustrator, as well as painter.

## 4, The apse

The apse is the semi-circular space, (polygonal to be precise) at the east end of the church. It is covered with a hemispherical vault. St Mary Magdalene's apse is quite un-English, as almost all medieval Gothic churches in England had a flat, rectangular east end. However, the church's architect G.E. Street, had seen plenty of Flemish or French apses like this one, and it suits the site that he had available in 1865.

## 5, The chancel decorations

Some alterations were made to the chancel in the 1920s by the popular church artist and designer Martin Travers (1886–1948). He raised the floor level, and extended the chancel out to the west of the arch, enclosing it in the prominent marble balustrade. The decorative scheme of the chancel, however, is Street's, with a wealth of different colours, textures and surfaces reminiscent of the Islamic architecture of Andalusia. The recent conservation work has made the ceiling paintings by Daniel Bell fully visible to us again, after years blackened by pollution and the burning of incense.

## 6, The chancel windows

These windows were designed by Henry Holiday (1839–1927), a painter as well as a designer of stained glass. The windows are composed of pieces of coloured glass, often with further detail painted on by hand, then fitted together into lead frames. The windows show us several different stories drawn from the Bible, with different episodes concerning Mary Magdalene and Jesus.

## 7, The Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre (in the undercroft)

When the founder and first vicar Fr West died in 1893 the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre was created as a memorial to him and is an early work by the architect Ninian Comper. The enormous amounts of carved stone, stained glass, gilding and ornamental paintwork take us back in time to a 15th century chantry chapel; a place where priests would sing masses for the soul of a dead person (who had usually paid for the chapel). Looking around, you may notice the music on the walls, a piece of decoration that includes music for Easter Day and the feast of St Mary Magdalene. Can you find the window depicting the Last Judgement, based on the painting by famous 15th century Flemish painter Hans Memling? In the window furthest from the altar, is West himself, kneeling in prayer.

## Interior details

- 1 The nave ceiling
- 2 The sculptures in the nave
- 3 Painting of St Mary Magdalene
- 4 The apse
- 5 The chancel decorations
- 6 The chancel windows
- 7 St Mary Magdalene sculpture

