All Saints is also included in Pevsner’s series of books on ‘The Buildings of England’ which emphasises the attractive use of alternating bands of red brick and dressed stone.

The interior of the church was refurbished in 1993.

**Significant Features**

As well as the overall architectural effect of interior design, there are many interesting features to note in All Saints including:

- The font reputed to be thirteenth century
- Over the west door, which is the main entrance, there is a gallery which houses the organ, built by Walker and Son and erected in 1947.
- The windows of the church have been refurbished with plain Remy antique glass to the main nave windows. The chancel windows are of a modern design based on a theme of Christ in Majesty. The original glass has been preserved in one window in the south wall of the sanctuary.
- The Rose Window at the west end, a typical feature of Gothic churches, but without the usual stained glass.
- The well-designed arch between the nave and chancel with its high triple open arches. This is an attractive feature marking the traditional separation of the nave (the area for the congregation) from the chancel (the area for the priest).
- The Chancel and the Lady Chapel. Note the floor tiles around the altars which are of typical Victorian designs.

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**Produced jointly by Southend Borough Council & All Saints Church. July 2003**

5. All Saints Church interior. The distinctive brick and stone banding can be seen on the arches
6. All Saints Lady Chapel
7. Stained Glass detail
8. View of Altar from Organ Gallery
All Saints is a town Church built to cater for the rapidly expanding population of Southend towards the end of the 19th century. It was designed by the well-known Victorian church architect James Brooks and is a good example of the simple early Gothic style which competed with the highly decorated Gothic Revival architecture most associated with Victorian churches.

All Saints is a nationally notable Church and is on the Council's Local List of historic buildings.

**Historic Development of the Church**

Porters, on the opposite side of Southchurch Road to the Church, is a former manor house built in the late 15th or early 16th century. It had a large estate of mostly farm land which stretched eastwards towards Southchurch and southwards down to the shore. With the arrival of the railway in 1856, Southend began to expand as a seaside resort and a residential town with new shops, houses and facilities for visitors gradually being built. Taking advantage of this expansion, in 1868 the manor house and much of the land around it was partitioned and sold for future development which would become known as the Porters Grange Estate.

Porters and 29 acres around the house were bought by James Heygate. The Heygate family already had significant involvement in the development of Southend, including the first Pier. As Heygate's land was developed, mostly with small terraced housing, it became known as Porters Town.

The original medieval parish Church, St. Mary's at Prittlewell, and its daughter church of St. John's built in 1842 overlooking Southend seafront, could not adequately cater for the expanding population. Consequently, Porters Town was made into a separate parish and given its own church, All Saints. The Heygate family were great supporters of the new Church.

The Church was built in two main stages. The foundation stone was laid in 1886 and the building was completed in 1888. The Bishop of Chelmsford dedicated the building on June 18th 1889. Further extensions were built in 1924/5 and 1934. You can recognise these by the slight difference in the colour of the brickwork. Further work was completed recently when the modern stained glass windows replaced the Victorian plain coloured glass and the church was re-ordered and the altar placed in the nave.

**Church Architecture**

James Brooks was selected as the architect for the new Church. He was one of the most eminent Victorian church architects and was in practice from 1851 to his death in 1901. He specialised in building churches using early Gothic details in a contemporary way. 'Gracious form, large scale, massive parts, and lofty proportions, were the main characteristics of Brooks' compositions; and the dark red brickwork and austere simplicity he built in poor and crowded districts put a finishing touch to the sombre dignity of those works which easily lifted them above the rest' (obituary, RIBA Journal). The design for All Saints certainly fits this description.

All Saints Church was built between 1886-8 in the early Gothic style using local red brick with stone window surrounds and steeply pitched clay tiled roofs. Originally, it was designed to have a massive brick tower with tile spout on the south-west corner. However, as frequently happened for new churches, this non-essential element was not carried out and the west end of the Church was only completed to a modified design of Sir Charles Nicholson, in 1934.

Sir Charles Nicholson was another nationally eminent church architect. Locally, he designed St. Alban's Church, Westcliff, and St. Michael's Church, Leigh. He had a particular interest in All Saints, however, as he had bought Porters in 1912 to save it from demolition and twenty years later sold it to the Borough Council for it to become the Civic House and 'Mayor's Parlour'.

The vicarage, vestries and chapel adjoining the north east side were built in 1924-5 to designs by Nicholson. They generally have an 'Arts and Crafts' style which complements the original design of the Church.

During a tour by the Victorian Society, the Church was described by David Lloyd, the architectural historian, as being spatially interesting inside with a high arch-braced roof, austere arcades and chancel arch, a remarkable and effective feature, and triple open arches in its upper part; also note the tall east end with two tiers of lancet windows.