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1894 TRINITY
EPISC. CHURCH
FLORENCE



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1894 Trinity Episcopal Church
Florence, AL
photos Dec. 1988
Arthur (Sonny) Howard, AIA

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S. Transept

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1894 TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
FLORENCE, ALABAMA

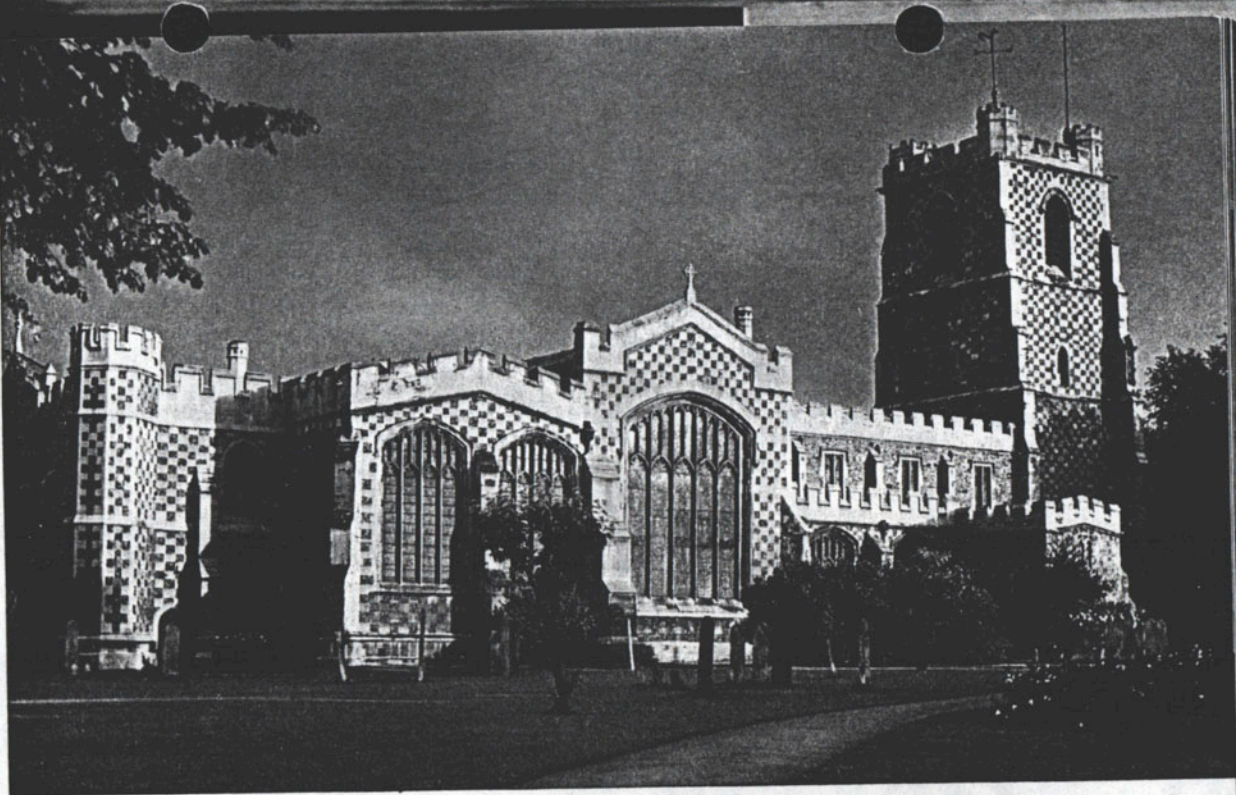
The late Gothic Revival 1894 Trinity Episcopal Church Sanctuary is of cruciform plan with a tower entrance at the south-west corner. It is of dark red brick construction with rock-faced coursed limestone foundation walls and sawn limestone sills at the lancet windows. The steep brick gables are topped with stepped corbels which form a heavy projecting gable-rake supporting five corbelled steps atop each gable. The tower is also topped with a corbelled step-parapet and a short spire surmounted by a simple cross. A pattern of projecting brick-ends enlivens the tower top below the parapet, and large bell-louvers occupy the top third of the tower. The tower has stepped buttresses turned at 45 degrees to the corners. The brickwork, typical of better late 19th century buildings, consists of precisely-moulded "pressed bricks" with thin mortar joints tinted red like the brick, the object being to make the wall appear to be monolithic.

Inside, the steep roof frame of large timber scissors-trusses is exposed, with dramatic effect. The exposed trusses, sloped ceiling, and window tracery are dark wood which effectively contrasts with the off-white plaster walls. While most of the lancet windows are fairly conventional late Gothic Revival in both tracery patterns and stained glass design, the south transept window is an exception. Its tracery pattern is quite dramatic and unusual and the stained glass is of a much bolder and more free design than the others. The chancel fittings are of elaborate carved wood late Gothic Revival tracery.

Harmonious additions have been made: the Parish House was built in 1929 and in 1967 Mullen Hall, an educational building and chapel, was added.

The design of the Sanctuary is loosely based on English 15th century examples, which employed corbelled and stepped parapets, lancet windows, cruciform plans and exposed wood scissors trusses. The 15th century church at Luton, Bedfordshire is one such example that shows a family resemblance. An 18th century "Gothic Revival" tower at Tattingstone, Suffolk is quite similar in design and proportions to Trinity. However, the architect of Trinity Episcopal Church produced an original design which has the flavor of late 19th century America, not of medieval England. While architecture is usually influenced by the past, good architecture such as we see here is never a slave to it, but grows beyond the influence to produce an expression of its own place and time.

John P. Jones FRIA
1988



84 LUTON · BEDFORDSHIRE (externally, largely 15th century). The tower, aisles, transept chapels and east end were added to the town church in about 1461 and are distinguished by their chequerboard walls of stone and flint.





89. TATTINGSTONE, Suffolk

incorporate in its structure some of the material from the stronghold of William de Warrenne, which by 1400 was already deserted and falling into decay. Its chalky ramparts rise but a few yards from Dyke Hill and give Castle Acre the appearance of a little walled town (see also 14).

89 The Tattingsstone Wonder, TATTINGSTONE, Suffolk, 1760.

Squire White of Tattingsstone, finding that a church tower was essential to the carefully composed landscape commanded by his library windows, decided that his tenants should inhabit a mock church. He is supposed also to have said that as people so often wondered at nothing, he would give them something to wonder at. The tower, like most of the medieval church towers of Suffolk, is built of flint, shaped and dressed in this case to present a gleaming, black façade edged by red bricks. Squire White's tower is three-sided only, and what appears on the north side to be a nave pierced by Gothic windows reveals itself on the south side to be a row of red brick, tiled cottages.

90 Hales Hall Farm, HALES, Norfolk.

Though much altered, the former window openings having vanished, and the roof having been covered with pantiles, Hales Hall Farm is still recognizably