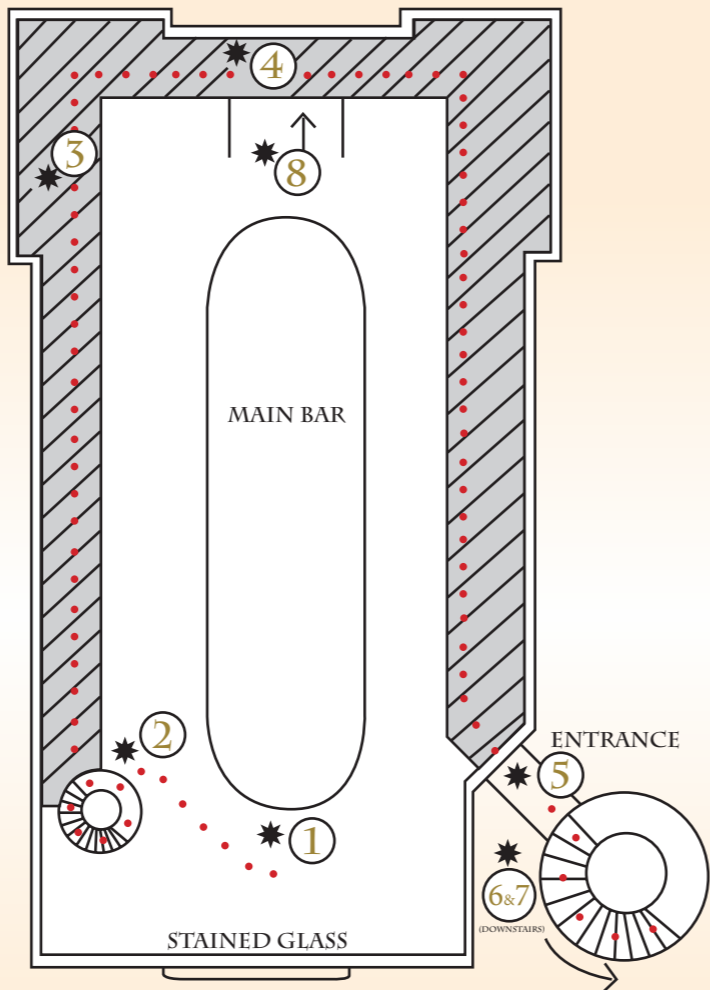


## SELF GUIDED TOUR ROUTE MAP



1. BUST OF ARTHUR GUINNESS
2. BAPTISMAL FONT BELOW SPIRAL STAIRCASE
3. THE GALLERY
4. THE RENATUS HARRIS DESIGNED ORGAN
5. THE GLASS ENCLOSED BRIDGE TO THE TOWER
6. THE TOWER ROOM
7. THE BURIAL CRYPTS
8. THE ORIGINAL ENTRANCE PORCH

- ★ INDIVIDUAL STOP
- GROUND FLOOR
- ▨ GALLERY AT FIRST FLOOR
- WALKING ROUTE

## OPENING TIMES

MONDAY-THURSDAY  
10.30 AM-11.30 PM

FRIDAY & SATURDAY  
10.30 AM-LATE

SUNDAY  
11.00 AM-11.00 PM

Visitors are welcome throughout the year.  
Self-Guided Tours are welcome and available  
everyday until 5pm



#TheChurchDublin



The Church, Cafe | Bar | Restaurant  
The Church Junction Of Mary & Jervis St. Dublin 1, Ireland  
+353 (0)1 828 0102 Reservations@thechurch.ie www.thechurch.ie



THE CHURCH  
CAFE | BAR | RESTAURANT | TOURIST ATTRACTION

## HISTORY & SELF GUIDED TOUR



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Welcome to *The Church Café, Bar & Restaurant*. This is a Self-Guided Tour around the building and grounds of the early 18th Century church of St. Mary's.

## HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE AREA

The parish of St. Mary's was founded in 1697 and was only the second parish on the north side of the River Liffey. It took its name from the medieval monastery of St. Mary's Abbey that occupied most of the north side of the river from 1139 until its dissolution in 1539. The original Viking town of Dyflin was built on the south side of the river in the 10th century while only a small community lived on the north side. This community expanded greatly in the late 17th century at which point the parish of St. Mary's came into existence.

## THE CHURCH BUILDING

Work on **The Church** building began almost immediately and was largely finished by 1702. It was mostly the work of English architect **William Robinson**, who was also responsible for the **Royal Hospital in Kilmainham**. It is likely, however, that it was finished by his successor as Surveyor General, **Thomas Burgh** (also responsible for the Old Library in Trinity College). St Mary's is currently most renowned as the first galleried church in Dublin and is a perfect example of classical church architecture. With the falling Protestant population and the change in the local area from residential to commercial use, St. Mary's was finally forced to shut in 1986. The building was put to numerous uses over the next 20 years. It was then purchased by publican John M. Keating in 1997 and underwent a major refurbishment until 2005 and began trading as John M. Keating's. Remarkably, until the changes made for its renovation as a café/bar, it possessed the oldest unaltered church interior in Dublin and much of this has been beautifully preserved. It was acquired by its present owners in 2007 and renamed "The Church".

## STOP ONE BUST OF ARTHUR GUINNESS

The founder of the **Guinness Brewery** in Dublin married his wife **Olivia Whitmore** here in St. Mary's Church in 1761. They subsequently had 21 children, 10 of whom survived until adulthood. **Arthur II**, followed in his father's footsteps and wed his wife Ann Lee here also. In front of the bust we see a fantastic example of a baroque stained-glass window. The framing of Portland stone shows a stylised design that

bypassed most Dublin churches. The window itself exhibits a more elaborate pattern than usually seen in Protestant churches of that time where the stained glass was used more as shading than anything else. However this is not the original window of St. Marys, it was unfortunately smashed by vandals on the result of the polling at the election in 1852. This current window was set in 1910 and commissioned by a wealthy Mr. John North, Proprietor of the "Hammam", a Turkish Bath on 41 O'Connell Street (Then Sackville Street) in 1909 and reads "To the glory of God and in affectionate memory of his daughters Maria North (Molly) and Rosanna (Rose) wife of Joseph Armstrong also his grandchild John Hubert Armstrong (Jack) erected by John North 1909". There is another memorial dedicated to the life of John North on the right hand side of the ground level. The gallery we see running around the interior of the church is the first of its kind in Dublin. This set a precedent as most Protestant churches followed this example over the next 150 years. The octagonal limestone pillars are timber clad and were extensively reconstructed during the conversion of the church in the late 90s.

## STOP TWO BAPTISMAL FONT BELOW SPIRAL STAIRCASE

Several influential people were baptised in St. Mary's Church including:

- ◇ Nationalist and United Irishmen founder **Theobald Wolfe Tone** 1763
- ◇ Irish playwright **Seán O'Casey** 1880

Alongside these famous names, there were more than 25,000 baptisms, 5,500 marriages and almost 18,000 burials at St. Mary's Church. Now walk up the metal spiral staircase.

## STOP THREE THE GALLERY

From the top of the stairs we get an excellent view over the whole converted church. We also see some of the 31 wall tablets, which are dedicated to people formerly buried in St. Mary's crypt and graveyard.

## STOP FOUR THE RENATUS HARRIS DESIGNED ORGAN

This is the most striking feature of the interior of The Church. Several of the figures on the organ casing were decapitated by an iconoclast but it is otherwise unaltered from the early 18th century. **George Frederick Handel**, of Messiah fame, lived on nearby Abbey St. and was a regular visitor to

St. Mary's to make use of the organ. There are two further tiny upper galleries on either side of the organ pipes though it is hard to imagine they were ever used. Though currently not functioning, it is hoped to get the organ back in working order soon though this will cost in excess of €100,000. We now continue walking past the kitchenette and bar area and around to the other end of the gallery and through the door to the external tower.

## STOP FIVE THE GLASS ENCLOSED BRIDGE TO THE TOWER

The wooden floorboards leading to the external tower were removed from the **Adelphi Cinema/Theatre** in 1995 prior to its demolition. Some of the famous acts to perform on its stage, including **The Beatles** and **The Rolling Stones** are listed on the floor below you. While in the glass tower, take note of our 1916 viewing points. Each viewing point details the significance of neighbouring buildings during the **1916 Rising**. This tower provides lift access to all floors of the church as well as an emergency fire exit. Continue down the stairs past street level to the basement level.

## STOP SIX THE TOWER ROOM

Continue forward about 20 metres and through the door on your left and enter The Cellar Bar. These function rooms are located in an area that was excavated out from underneath The Church. They are not part of the original building. Continue to the area (marked with an emergency exit sign) opposite the end of the bar counter and walk up the few steps.

## STOP SEVEN THE BURIAL CRYPTS

There were 6 crypts in the basement of the church and extensive excavation work had to be carried out during the conversion of the church to its current use. 32 skeletal remains had to be removed and reinterred elsewhere. Access to the crypts was from an external stairwell. Continue out of the Cellar and walk past the entrance to the toilets and go up the stairs to ground level. On the way you will pass one of the magnificent 18th Century timber staircases which formed the original entrances to the upper gallery. All 18th Century churches followed this design of two staircases surrounding the centre organ.

## STOP EIGHT THE ORIGINAL ENTRANCE PORCH

These two doors behind the display table were the original entrance doors to the Church. Note the wonderful wall

sculptures. Now walk through the exit door which leads outside to the Terrace. The former Church Yard is now home to our Beer Garden and Al Fresco dining area. (The red brick building on the far side of Mary St. houses the beer cold room and store of The Church. This means that if you drink a draught beer in The Church that the beer has travelled underneath the street!

The terrace gives a splendid view of the original front entrance of St. Mary's Church. The elegant Portland stone columns, with limestone surrounds, are elaborate for its period and certainly the most striking feature of the exterior. It is a later addition to the original church following its elevation as the parish church of the wealthy and powerful in the 18th century.

The stunted bell tower above the west front entrance is unfortunately the result of limited finances when the rich began to move to more fashionable areas on the Southside. The 'temporary' roof of the original construction is still in situ some 300 years later!

On the south side of the church building we find **Wolfe Tone Park**. This was once the site of the graveyard of the original St. Mary's Church. In the centre of a burgeoning fashionable northside, the graveyard soon found itself overcrowded and as early as the mid-19th century bodies were removed to make more space – much to the annoyance of local residents who had to endure the spectacle and smell of putrefied remains! With its restricted space, few new burials took place here following the mid-19th century and by the 1940s the area was allowed to grow into a public park, with most of the gravestones being removed to the outer walls. This was made official in 1966 with the sale of the area to Dublin City Council and the removal of the headstones. Many of the original gravestones are still visible on the southern wall of the public space today.

The graveyard became the final resting place of several eminent Irish figures. Most notable amongst these being **Lord Norbury** – the infamous "**Hanging Judge**", who sentenced Irish nationalist **Robert Emmet** to be hung and beheaded following his failed rebellion in 1803.

So that is "The Church" A Great Dublin Experience! We thank you for visiting and we do hope that you have enjoyed the art, architecture and history on this tour. We suggest that you now find yourself a comfortable seat and relax and enjoy some of our Irish hospitality. And if you would like to return later to dine in the Gallery Restaurant we suggest that you make a booking at the reservations desk. Bookings are not required for drinks and/or dining in the main Bar.