

### SIMON FELTON

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*St. Martin in the Bull Ring* as it is formally known, is the parish church of Birmingham and has been at the heart of the city, next to its markets, since 1263. Despite its age and Gothic appearance it was rebuilt by the Victorians and is now Grade II\* listed. The hammer beam roof is reminiscent of Westminster Hall. The church has been a landmark in its religious role, but also as physical landmark with spire and a focal point during the changing city around it. An apocryphal story is that of the construction lorry driver who was looking for the black church when driving into the city but was unable to recognise St. Martin's because it had been cleaned following the regeneration of the Bull Ring shopping centre into new Bullring.

The regeneration proposals of the 1990s from London and Edinburgh Trust (LET) thankfully were rejected which would have blocked the view of St Martin's and the redevelopment proposals of 2000 saw a central walkway with view down to St. Martin's, reinstating its landmark view from the junction of High Street and New Street and restoring the historical views.

Indeed St Martin's has long been a landmark and focal point of Birmingham's skyline, as seen in Westley's *East Prospect of Birmingham* (<https://billdargue.jimdofree.com/glossary-brief-histories/a-brief-history-of-birmingham/georgian-birmingham/>).

The photos I have taken shown the traditional views of the church from Digbeth, the oldest part of Birmingham, as well as the view from Rotunda place at the junction of New Street and High Street.

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