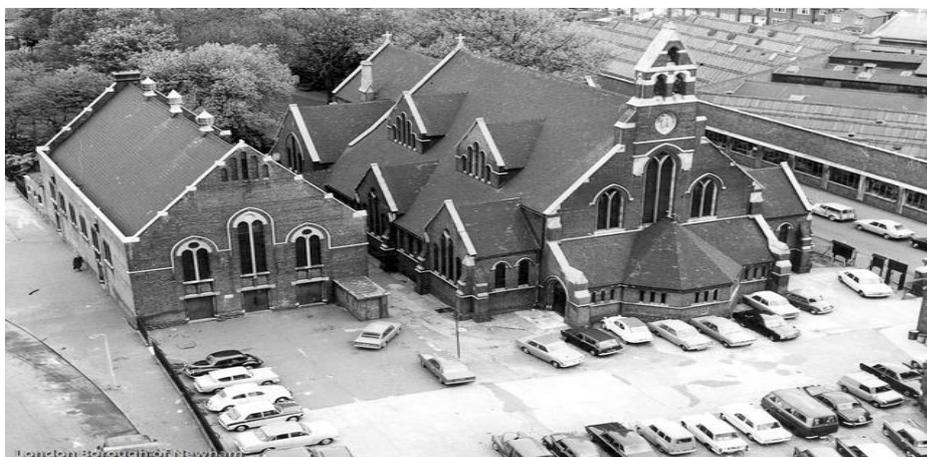




The church of *ST. MARY*, Plaistow, St. Mary's Road, was built in 1830 as a chapel of ease to All Saints, on a site given by Sir John H. Pelly. It was a brick building designed by Thomas Curtis in a late Perpendicular style, with pinnacled turrets and a clock-tower. (fn. 117) West of it were added the National school (1831) and a hall for the men's guild (1836). (fn. 118) A separate parish was formed in 1844, the advowson of the vicarage being vested in the vicar of West Ham. (fn. 119) During the incumbency of W. B. Marsh (1842–84) the population of Plaistow was increasing rapidly, and much mission work was done, leading to the formation of the new parishes of St. Mark, Victoria Docks, The Holy Trinity, St. Andrew, and St. Gabriel, and the building of St. Peter's. Thomas Given-Wilson (vicar 1884–1914) was the outstanding figure in the history of the parish. He recruited a team of trained nurses to tend poor parishioners, opened two convalescent homes at Southend-on-Sea, founded a children's hospital, organized penny dinners, and sold second-hand clothes. By the 1890s the philanthropic work of St. Mary's was costing about £8,000 a year, which he raised by world-wide appeals. (fn. 120) His pamphlets describing poverty at Plaistow caused resentment among the more independent residents, partly because they were thought to have caused a decline in property values there. (fn. 121) He also rebuilt the parish church on a much larger scale, to seat 1,000. The new building, in the Early English style, was completed in 1894 to the design of Sir Arthur Blomfield. It is of yellow brick with grouped lancet windows and a tall double bellcote. During Given-Wilson's time St. Peter's church and that of St. Matthias (opened 1887) were assigned their own parishes. The mission church of *ST. KATHERINE*, Chapman Road, was opened in 1891 in a building previously used as the infants department of St. Mary's day-schools; a permanent church was completed in 1894. (fn. 122) It was demolished in 1965 as part of a redevelopment scheme. (fn. 123) The mission church of *ST. THOMAS*, Northern Road, was built in 1898 and was demolished about 1950. (fn. 124) In 1912 Given-Wilson founded an institute named after him, independent of St. Mary's, and he retained control of it, after his retirement, until his death in 1916. (fn. 125) In 1935 the Given-Wilson institute was vested in a new committee with the vicar of St. Mary's as vice-chairman and secretary. (fn. 126) Its building was originally the Pelly Road United Free church, later the Upton Manor Congregational church.



St. Mary church, built in 1894. This second church proved too large for post-war needs and was demolished in about 1977. The site was redeveloped for housing with a much smaller church and opened in 1981

The church of *ST. ANDREW*, Plaistow, Barking Road, originated in 1860, when a small mission (later that of St. Philip) was built in Whitwell Road in connexion with St. Mary's. (fn. 159) St. Andrew's itself was opened in 1870 on a site, given by the Revd. A. Kent, a few yards south of the northern outfall sewer embankment. The large stone building, designed by James Brooks, is in an Early English style with an apsidal chancel and large but uncompleted crossing tower; a spire, of which the fontcover may be a model, was part of the original plan. A separate parish was formed in 1871, the advowson of the vicarage being vested in the bishop. (fn. 160) Schools were added in 1873 and a parish hall in 1883. Under its first vicar George Godsell (retired 1898) St. Andrew's established a distinctive ceremonial tradition in the face of strong opposition from Bishop Claughton. During the Second World War St. Andrew's suffered heavy bomb damage. Extensive repairs were carried out after the war, and in 1957 the old school was rebuilt as a family centre. (fn. 161) The church of *ST. PHILIP*, Whitwell Road, remained in use as a mission after the building of St. Andrew's. In 1894 it was taken over by the Society of the Divine Compassion and became the centre of their settlement at Plaistow. (fn. 162) It was destroyed by bombing in 1941, but services continued in borrowed premises. In 1953 the S.D.C. was taken over by Anglican Franciscans, and in 1955 a new church of yellow brick with an Italian-style tower, dedicated to *ST. PHILIP AND ST. JAMES*, was opened. (fn. 163) The mission church of *ST. MARTIN*, Boundary Road, was built in 1894. For a period between the two world wars it served a conventional district, (fn. 164) but it has since reverted to its original status. In 1997 St Martin's church was restored, re-ordered, and consecrated (it had formerly been a 'dedicated building' only).



The church of *ST. MATTHIAS*, Canning Town, Hermit Road, originated in 1887, when the vicar of St. Mary's, Plaistow, opened a mission in Garfield Road, with help from St. Matthias's church, Torquay (Devon). (fn. 194) This mission was merged in 1906 with that of *ST. CYPRIAN*, Beaconsfield Road, for which an iron church had been built in 1896. (fn. 195) In 1907 the church was built in Hermit Road, and a separate parish was formed from parts of St. Mary, St. Andrew, and St. Gabriel, the advowson of the vicarage being vested in the bishop. (fn. 196) In 1961 parts of the parishes of St. Gabriel and The Holy Trinity were merged with that of St. Matthias.

In 1983 the then parishes of St Philip and St James with St Andrew, Plaistow (with its two churches of St Philip and St James and St Martin), and St Mary, Plaistow, were united to form the parish of Plaistow, served by a team ministry. The church of St Philip and St James became the parish church, with St Martin's and St Mary's as district churches. In 1996 the parish was united with the former parish of St Matthias, Canning Town, to form the parish of The Divine Compassion, Plaistow and North Canning Town.