

St Edward's Furniture and Fittings

The Pews and the Font

The oak pews were made by craftsmen in the Gloucester Joinery Company based on designs by Gimson and Barnsley. The design is typically Arts & Crafts: square section timbers with 'box style' panels on the seatbacks and the front-facing timbers of the front rows. Note the exposed joints on the ends of the pews.



Front view of pews to show panelling, exposed tenon joint and wavy edge to the pew ends



Rear view of the pews showing different style of panelling on the pew backs



Front pew showing different style of panelling to that behind the seats



Side view of pews showing exposed tenon joints and wavy decoration on the ends of the pews

The Font



The wavy edges to the pew ends are reflected also in the carving on the font. In Arts & Crafts design a wavy line is believed to have represented baptism and life cycles (the ups and downs of life; the cycle of birth to death; etc), and possibly even Circadian Rhythms. Psychologists refer to these cycles as phases of expansion and contraction. Such cycles are described in the Bible (*Ecclesiastes*, Ch 3, v 1 – 8): “***To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven; a time to be born, a time to die;***”

Within each of the ‘waves’ on the font is a large ‘dot’ that represents ‘the spirit of man’ as typified in Japanese Art (see Owen Jones (1988) *The Grammar of Ornament*, Dover Pictorial Archives).

The Priest’s Chair & Prayer Desk



Both the seat and the prayer desk illustrate the deliberate use of woodworking joints to decorate the piece of furniture. Although most of the joints are rectangular, some are square and a few are circular (dowels) – all typify Arts & Crafts design.

Similar effects are seen in the Altar Rails, below left. The general lattice design of the altar rails is also typical of the Arts and Crafts ethos and contrast markedly with the more modern extension piece at the left of the picture.



The Wooden Candelabra and the Lectern

Peter van der Waals made these in the Daneway Workshop to the design of Gimson. The single leg of each candelabrum is of oak with a chamfered hexagonal cross section, sitting on a base plate with four feet. The candleholder is shaped and ends with a plate into which the candle is placed. Note especially the elaborate symbolic decoration with inlaid squares and rectangles of Mother of Pearl both on the leg and on the candleholder itself.



The leg of the lectern is of similar design but the foot is significantly different and is essentially shaped like the head of a 19C hay rake – it was characteristic of Arts and Crafts workers to use rural implements to inform the design. The head of the lectern is double sided, to carry the Bible on the larger side and a Gospel or Prayer book on the other side, and swivels so that the reader is always facing the congregation. Note again the use of detailed inlay of Mother of Pearl on the leg and on the sides of the book rest but with a darker wood (probably boxwood and holly) to provide an elaborate pattern on the surface of the book rest. The pattern represents the four gospels situated around the cross.



The Altar Table

The Altar Table, also made at Daneway by Peter van der Waals, has solid oak front and side panels. The plain oak top is imprinted with five consecration crosses, which provide “an indelible mark on the building by reason of which it may never be transferred to common or profane uses.” This is signified by a physical mark of the consecration cross on the wall of a church or on an altar.

