

Charterhouse stacking pews - lookbook

The architectural setting

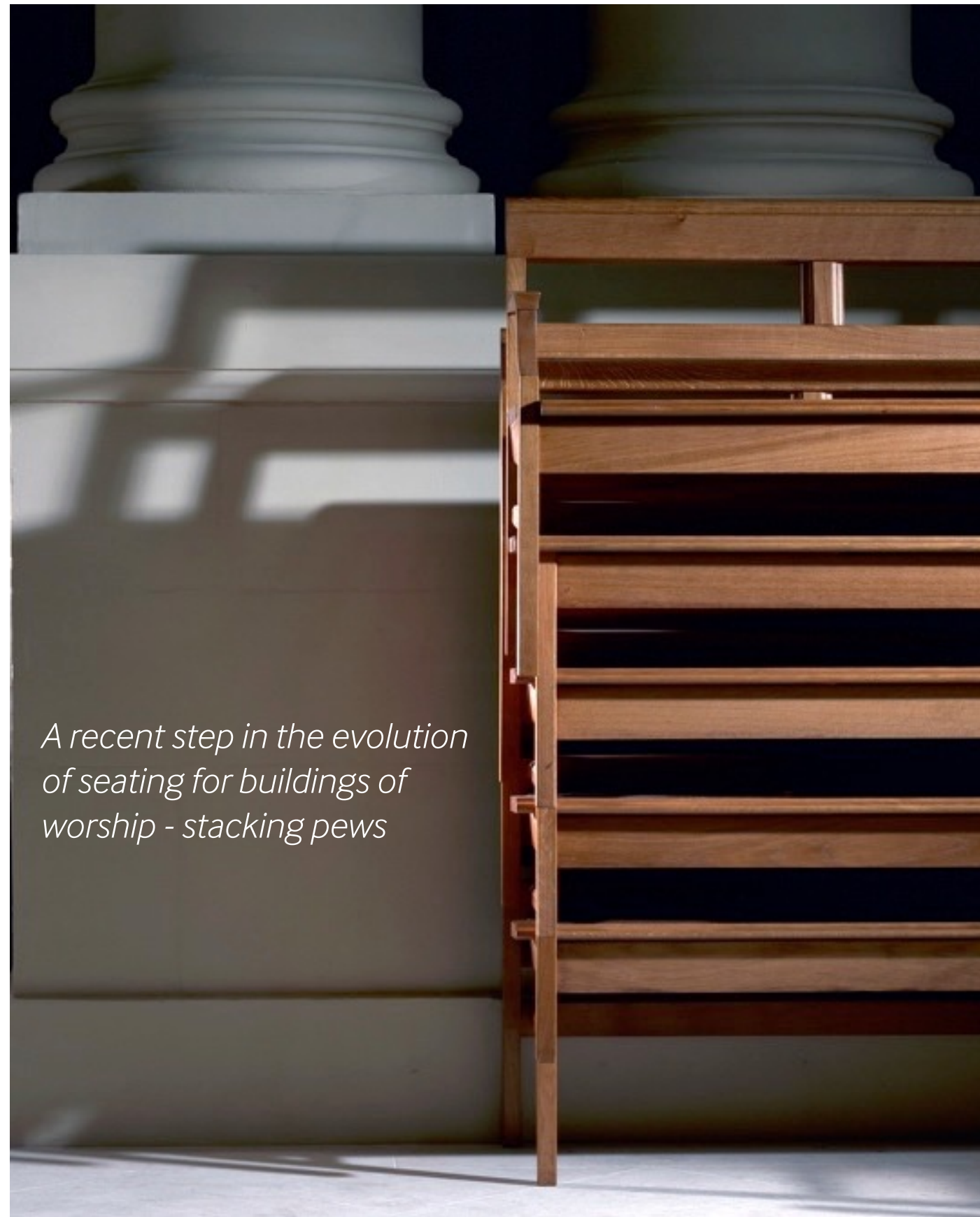


v1

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*A recent step in the evolution
of seating for buildings of
worship - stacking pews*

In 1996, after over 2000 years of evolution in church architecture, Luke Hughes designed the very first stacking pew in response to the changing needs of today's places of worship.

Early buildings of worship were left empty. Floors were often decorative and designed to be seen. Occasionally there were stone benches along the walls. Only on very special occasions were backless benches brought into play.

In the latter half of the 20th century, 're- configurability' became the desire. The use of buildings of worship for community meetings, for plays and concerts, and for different levels of worship can be better accommodated if the furniture can be moved. Chairs may have seemed the immediate solution and parish communities have rushed to strip out pews and replace them with the cheapest option - products that were principally designed for the post-war educational or health-care markets. These have generally been manufactured in light-coloured timber, pressed metal, plywood and tubular steel, or even polypropylene, some with highly coloured fabrics - hardly conducive to the interior of a fine architectural or liturgical interior.

Pews look far better than chairs in most worship interiors, whatever their age or style. They enable congregations to bunch up, are easy to move, lighter and more versatile than conventional pews and less obtrusive than chairs. It is a concept that, with changes to sizes, colours, mouldings, can accommodate a huge variety of layouts and be adapted to suit the architectural style of each building.

It is clear to us that every building of worship is unique so there is rarely such a thing as a standard solution. The examples show here illustrate how we have adapted the general concept to fit a range of outstanding architectural spaces.

So, when it comes to seating for buildings of worship, it is no longer merely a matter of buying new chairs. It is about running a major community building, albeit one steeped in history, sentiment and splendour.

Introduction





The basic design (without upholstery or lower shelf) - 2, 3 and 4 seat version



Easy to stack without crushing your knuckles...



No danger of cutting into your calf muscles...



Optional back panels...



Optional arms (and alternative top rail detail) ...

Charterhouse stacking pews

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Charterhouse stacking pews
Sheffield Cathedral

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Charterhouse stacking pews
Sheffield Cathedral



Charterhouse stacking pews (with modified top rail)
Sheffield Cathedral



Charterhouse stacking pews

Bristol Cathedral

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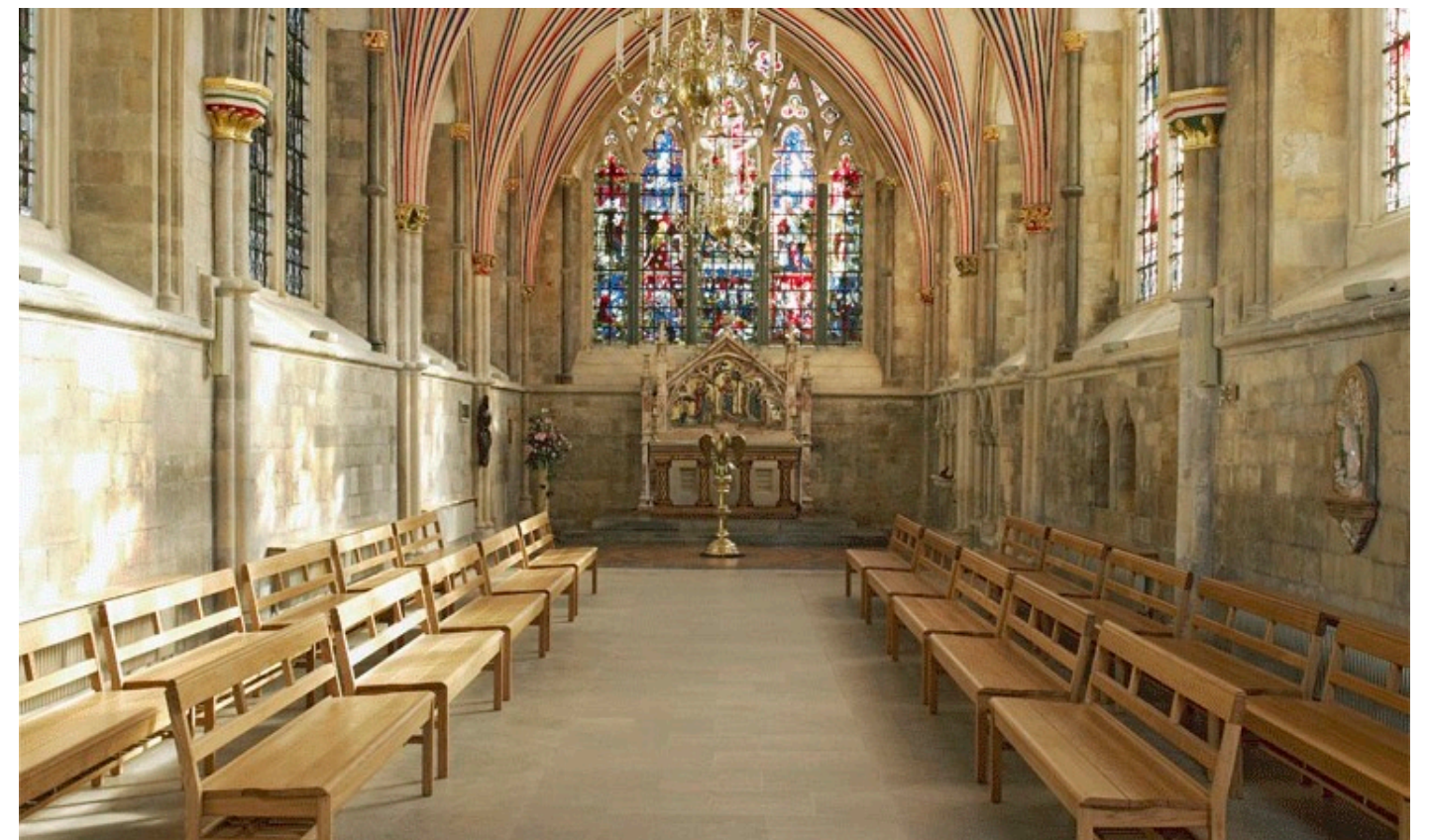
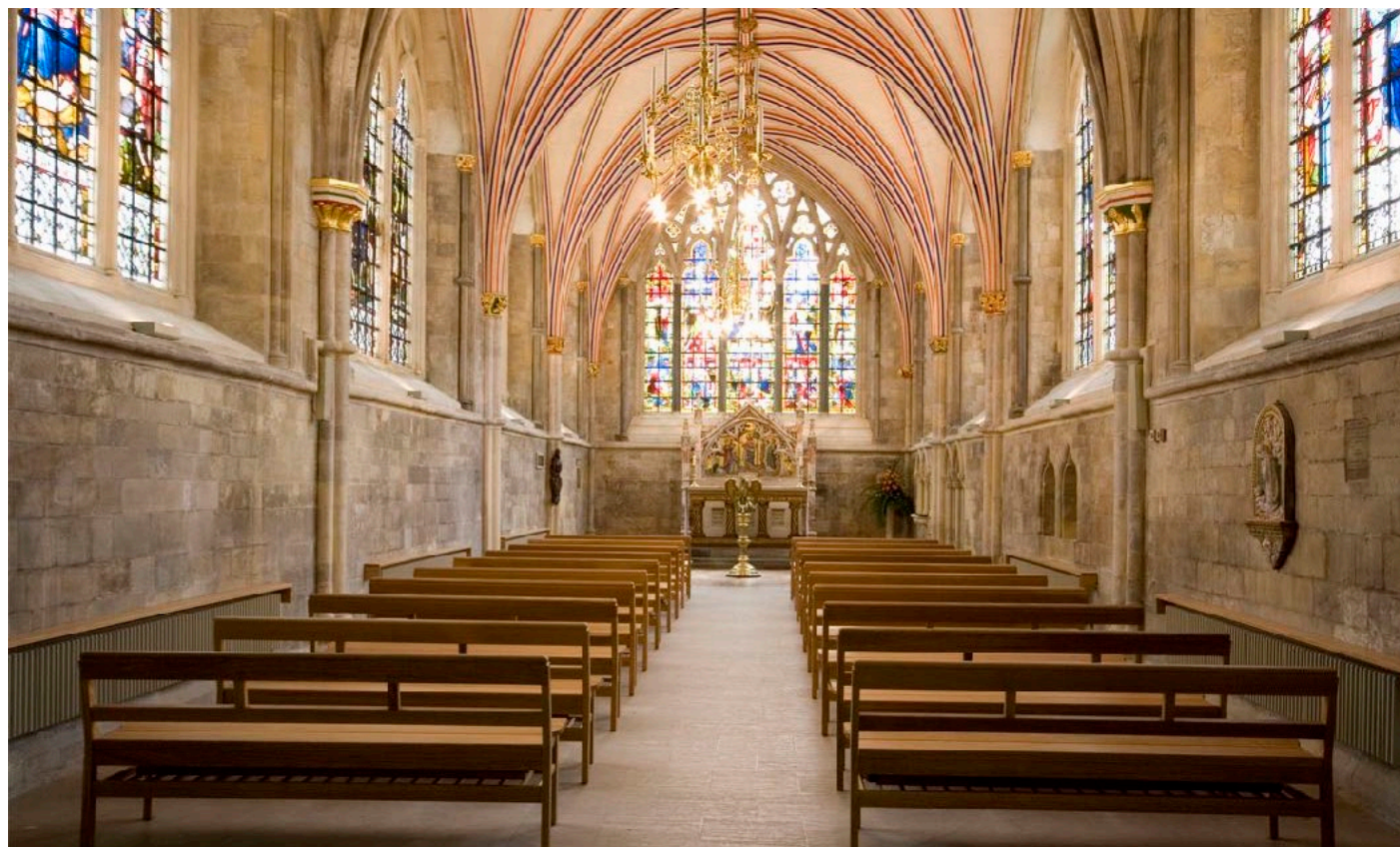




Charterhouse stacking pews
Epsom College Chapel

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Charterhouse stacking pews
Chichester Cathedral



Charterhouse stacking pews (note: floor grid used for setting out)

St Andrew's Holborn

© Luke Hughes Designs Ltd 2025





Charterhouse stacking pews
All Saints, Carshalton



Charterhouse stacking pews
Boxgrove Priory



Charterhouse stacking pews
St Andrew, Feniton



Charterhouse stacking pews
Bangor Cathedral, Wales



Charterhouse stacking pews
St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen

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Charterhouse stacking pews
St Thomas's, Salisbury



European oak, stained to match wainscot panelling in 17th century church

Charterhouse stacking pews

St Paul's, Covent Garden



Cleared for musical reception

St Paul's, Covent Garden



Arm version with panelled back



Charterhouse stacking pews (with optional back panel)

St Paul's, Covent Garden



Looking neat, even when stacked

Stacking pews arranged along wainscot

St Paul's, Covent Garden



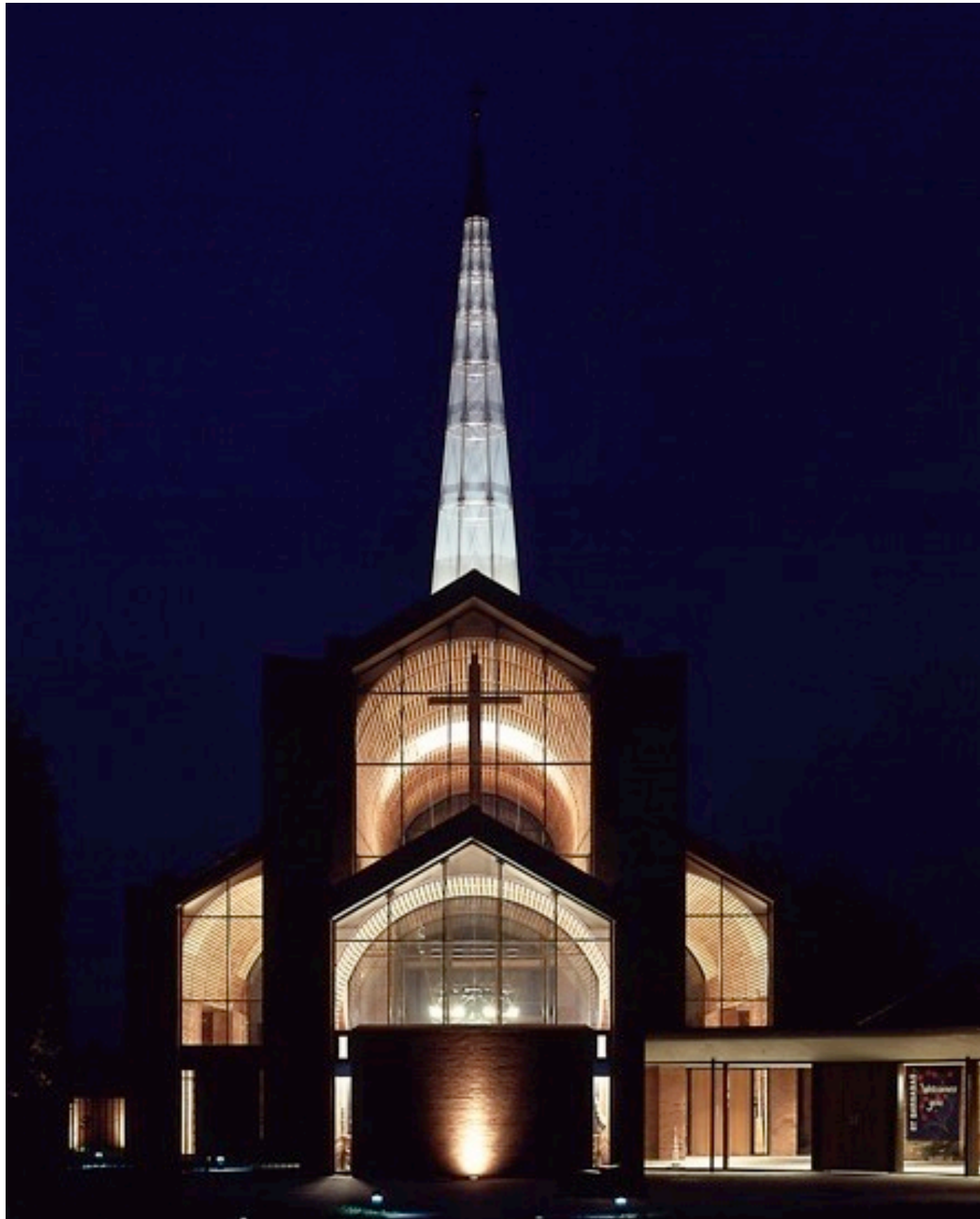
Arm version (on right) stacks on non-arm version but not vice-versa

Charterhouse stacking pews (with optional back panel)

St Paul's, Covent Garden



Cleared for social events
St Paul's, Covent Garden
24



St Barnabas, Dulwich (1997)

Re-ordering scheme

Cathedral of the Incarnation (Long Island)



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New seating (combination of *Coventry* chairs and *Charterhouse* stacking pews)

Cathedral of the Incarnation, Long Island NY

© Luke Hughes Designs Ltd 2025





Laid out in collegiate style
Cathedral of the Incarnation, Long Island NY



Social distancing during COVID

Cathedral of the Incarnation, Long Island NY



Family Eucharist

Cathedral of the Incarnation, Long Island NY



Showing loose upholstered cushions



Showing linking mechanism

Further views

Cathedral of the Incarnation, Long Island NY



Main prayer hall (with bespoke curved pews)

Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, NYC



Dedication service (15 April 2016)

Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, NYC



Linking mechanism (and fixed upholstered cushion)

Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, NYC



Combination of *Charterhouse* stacking pews (with fixed upholstered cushions) and chairs

Rye Community Synagogue, NYC



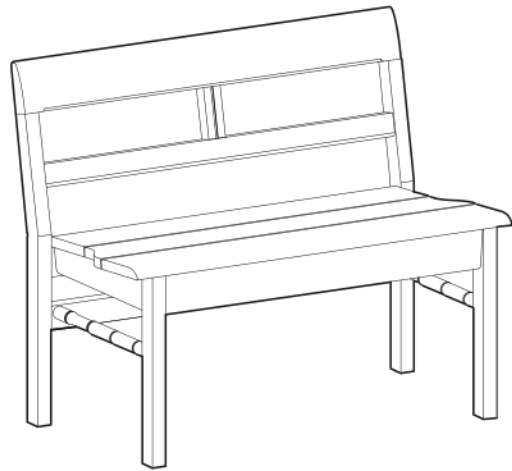
Charterhouse stacking pews (handling and storage)
Sheffield Cathedral



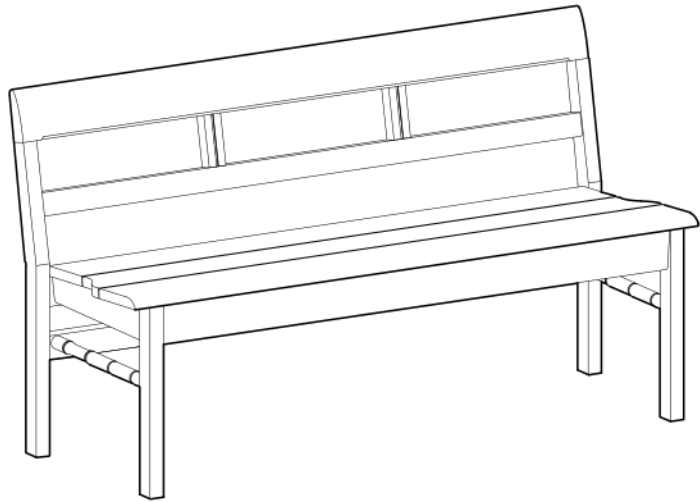
Storage of the pews remains using the dollies - thus avoids double-handling

Charterhouse stacking pews on transport dollies

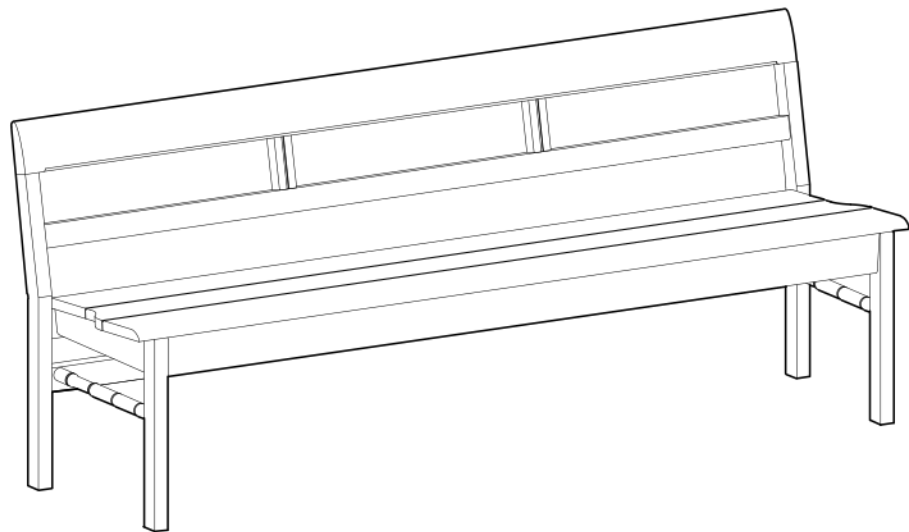
St Paul's, Covent Garden



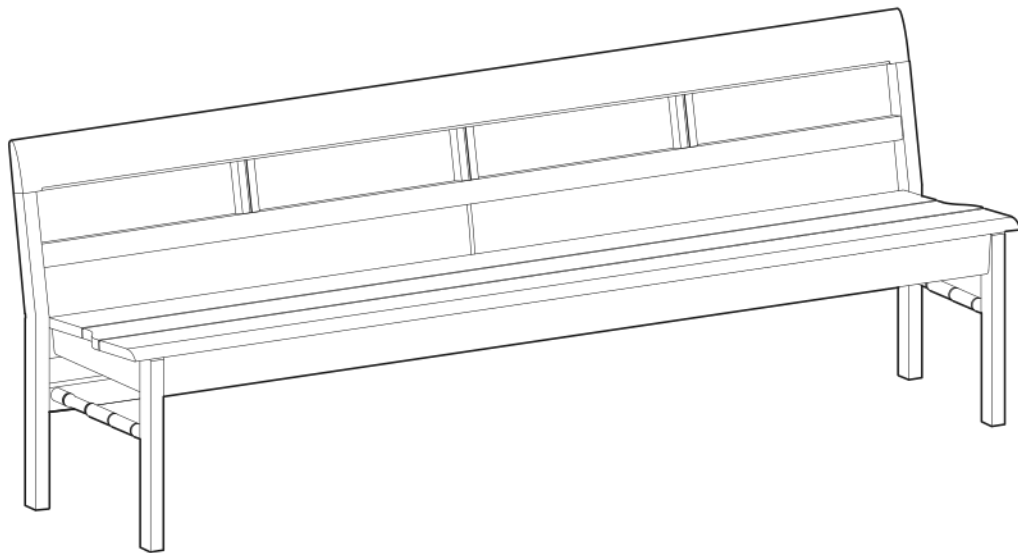
Charterhouse bench 2 seater •
W 900mm (35 7/16")
D 521mm (20 3/4")
H 768mm (30 1/4")



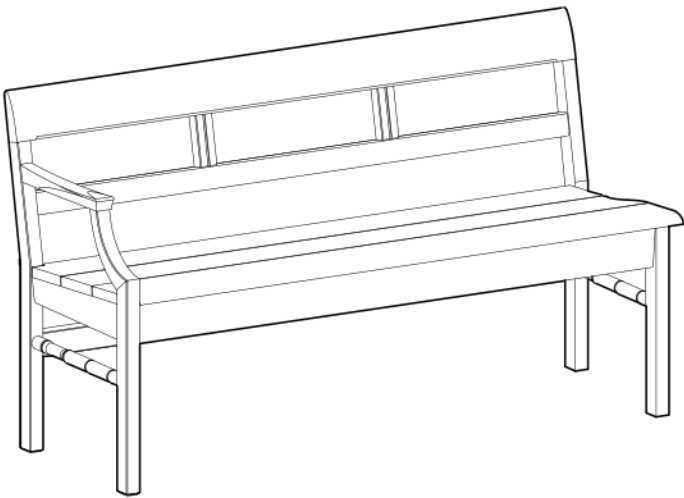
Charterhouse bench 3 seater •
W 1360mm (53 3/4")
D 521mm (20 3/4")
H 768mm (30 1/4")



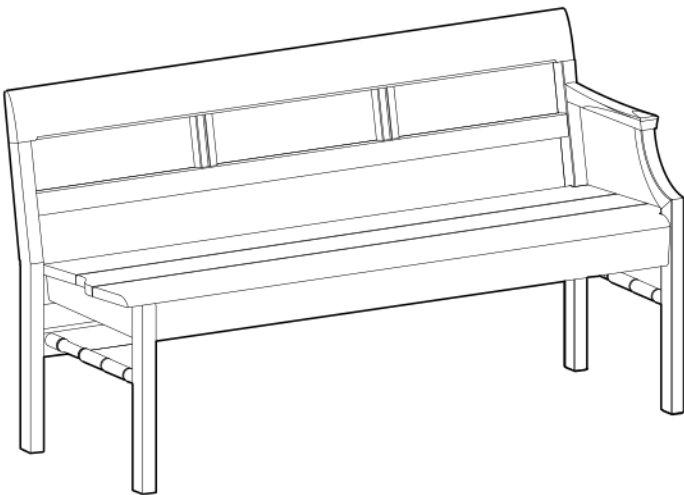
Charterhouse bench 4 seater •
W 1820 (71 3/4")
D 521mm (20 3/4")
H 768mm (30 1/4")



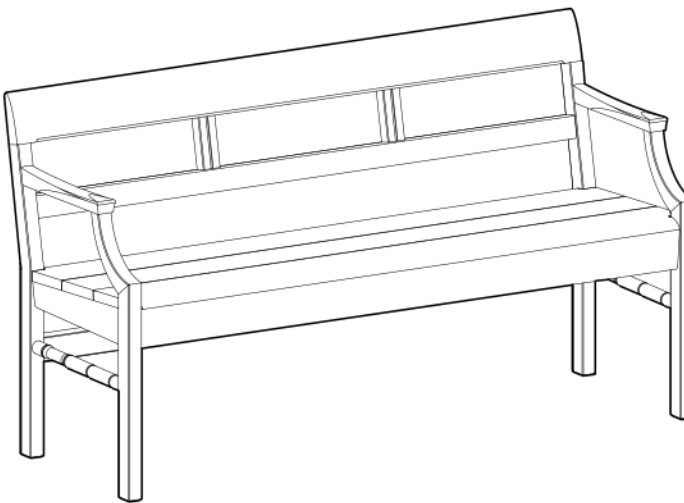
Charterhouse bench 5 seater •
W 2120mm (83 1/2")
D 521mm (20 3/4")
H 768mm (30 1/4")



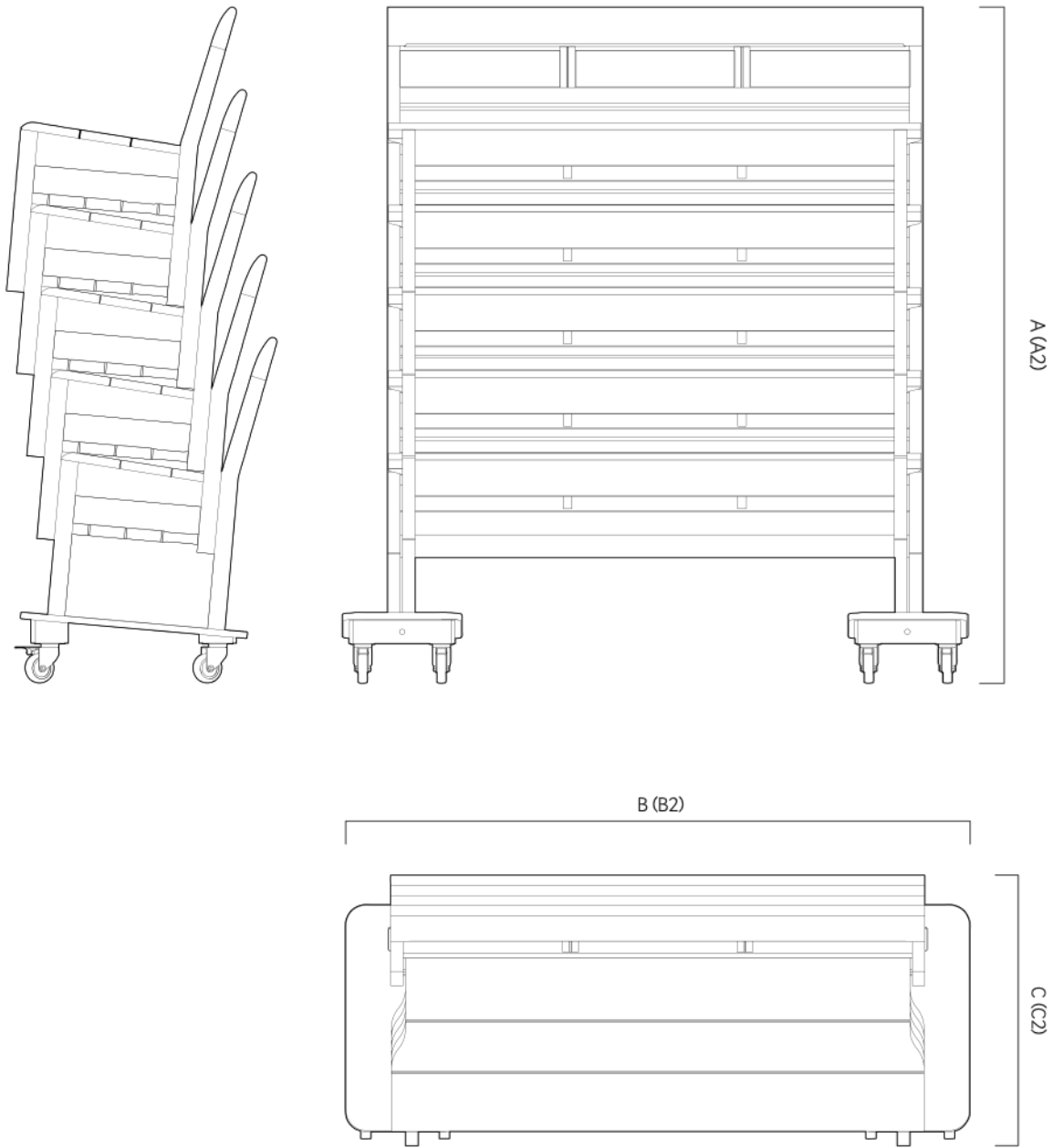
Right armrest •



Left armrest •



Both armrests •



Charterhouse stacking benches on dolly	A	A2	B	B2	C	C2
Charterhouse 2 seater bench	1721mm	68"	1128mm	44 ⁷ / ₁₆ "	688mm	27 ¹ / ₁₆ "
Charterhouse 3 seater bench	1721mm	68"	1590mm	62 ⁵ / ₈ "	688mm	27 ¹ / ₁₆ "
Charterhouse 4 seater bench	1721mm	68"	2058mm	81"	688mm	27 ¹ / ₁₆ "
Charterhouse 5 seater bench	1721mm	68"	2348mm	92 ⁷ / ₁₆ "	688mm	27 ¹ / ₁₆ "

Buildings of Worship

Select client list

All Hallows, Gospel Oak
All Saints' Church, Carshalton
All Saints' Church, Woodford
Arundel Cathedral
Bangor Cathedral
Benenden School Chapel
Boxgrove Priory
Bristol Cathedral
Canterbury Cathedral
Cathedral of the Incarnation, NY
Cathedral of St Philip, Atlanta
Chapel of the Resurrection, Valparaiso University
Charterhouse School Chapel
Chester Cathedral
Chichester Cathedral
Church of Holy Rood, Holybourne
Church of the Holy Spirit, Southsea
Clare College Chapel
Community Synagogue of Rye, NY
Congregation Beit Simchat Torah Synagogue, NYC
Congregation Habonim, NYC
Corpus Christi Jesuit Community, Christchurch
Dorchester Abbey
Durham Cathedral
Ely Cathedral
Epsom College Chapel
Exeter Cathedral
Farm Street Church
Hereford Cathedral

Highgate Cemetery
Holy Trinity, Cuckfield
Holy Trinity, Geneva
Hull Minster
Hurst Pierpoint College Chapel
Keble College Chapel
Lichfield Cathedral
Lincoln's Inn Chapel
Mucknell Abbey
New North London Synagogue
Our Lady of Pompeii, Chicago IL
Park Avenue Synagogue, NYC
Peterborough Cathedral
Portsmouth Cathedral
Rochester Cathedral
Salisbury Cathedral
Sheffield Cathedral
Shrewsbury Abbey
Shrewsbury School Chapel
Sidney Sussex College Chapel
Southwark Cathedral
St Alban's Church, Romford
St Andrew's, Holborn
St Andrew's, Alderton
St Andrew's, Feniton
St Andrew's, Southwark
St Andrew's, Stapleford
St Andrew's, Surbiton
St Augustine's, Rumney
St Barnabas, Dulwich
St Bartholomew's, Wilmslow
St Catherine's, Burbage
St Clement Dane's
St Dunstan's Episcopal Church, Madison WI
St Dunstan's Church, Mayfield

St Edmundsbury Cathedral
St Francis at the Engine Room
St George's Chapel, Windsor
St George's, Bloomsbury
St George's, Bristol
St George's, Oakdale
St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh
St Joan of Arc, Highbury
St John the Baptist, Tisbury
St John's Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, CA
St John's, Waterloo
St John's, Berwick St John
St John's, Blackheath
St John's, Notting Hill
St John's, Preston
St John's, Shirley
St John's, Tisbury
St John's Chapel, Tower of London
St Joseph's Hospice, Hackney
St Lawrence Jewry
St Luke's, Darien, CT
St Luke's, Chelsea
St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen
St Margaret Pattens
St Margaret's, Bethersden
St Mark's, Swindon
St Martin's, Barford St Martin
St Mary and St Giles, Stony Stratford
St Mary Magdalene, Newark
St Mary Magdalene, Richmond
St Mary the Less, Durham
St Mary the Virgin, Oxford
St Mary-at-Hill, Billingsgate
St Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside

St Mary's, Witney
St Mary's House, Brighton
St Mary's, Ealing
St Mary's, Easton
St Mary's, Fairford
St Mary's, Houghton-on-the-Hill
St Mary's, Iffley
St Mary's, Kempsford
St Mary's, March
St Mary's, Shroton
St Mary's, Somers Town
St Mary's, Twickenham
St Mary's, Witney
St Mary's, Woodbridge
St Marylebone, Marylebone
St Matthew's, Wilton, CT
St Michael and All Angels, Kingsnorth
St Michael's, Stourport
St Paul's, Covent Garden
St Paul's Cathedral
St Paul's, Croxton
St Peter Ad Vincula, Tower of London
Temple Israel, NYC
The Royal Military Guards Chapel
The Temple Church
Trinity Wall Street, NYC
Westbourne Grove Methodist Church
Westminster Abbey
Westminster Cathedral
Westminster Synagogue
Winchester Cathedral
Winchester University Chapel
York Minster

'I am writing to say ... how delighted we are with the final design and especially the proportions and detailing and how marvellous is the craftsmanship of its execution. It is a fine tribute to your design skills and determination to get things exactly right and to the skill and perfectionism of the craftsmen who made it so beautifully. I would be grateful if you could pass on our thanks

Benefactors of St Barnabas, Dulwich

'The benches achieve a spectacular understatement and show us a different building'

Vicar, St Michael's, Stourport

What can we say?! HUGE gratitude to you and all your amazing colleagues; the new seating is truly wonderful and has transformed the nave. So - thankyou to everyone who has brought this great scheme to fruition - from us all here'

Canon Philip Banks, Precentor, St Edmundsbury Cathedral

'Thanks to you and the whole team for a superb job. It has been a real pleasure doing business with you and... we are delighted with the result'

Project Manager, St Mary's, Ealing

'I especially admire your recent work - each piece is so elegant, practical and singing in harmony with the architecture around it'

Surveyor, Salisbury Cathedral

Member of the congregation were full of delight. I myself was thrilled by the quality of your craftsmanship

Canon Precentor, Rochester Cathedral

Some of the things clients say



For further technical information about the chairs, linking mechanisms, storage and handling techniques, timber options etc. please contact the Design Studio

CAD blocks are available on request.

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