

Stacking, linking chairs and pews

Suitable for buildings of worship - overview (Feb 2025)



St Edmund's



Assembly



Academy



Coventry



Lincoln



Temple



Charterhouse stacking pews



*All covered by 10-year warranty

Churches, cathedrals and synagogues are major community buildings, many of them rich in history, sentiment and architectural significance. Cathedrals in particular, serve a very broad constituency, including regular worshippers and 'transitory' visitors, civic or community dignitaries, the diocesan team, local schools and tourists – all of whom use the space differently. Today's cathedral must provide space for private prayer and reflection, corporate worship, meetings, concerts and drama, educational assemblies and guided or unguided tours. The right furniture can make this flexibility a reality.

Our aim is to produce ecclesiastical furniture that is compatible, dignified, supportive to the Liturgy, practical, long-lasting and, of course, subservient to the architecture.

In our view, no design standard template can work for every church - what might work in a Romanesque cathedral will not necessarily work in a 19th century Gothic Revival chapel. The key to a successful reordering is to respond to the architectural space and the way it is used. Therein lies our expertise.

This range of seating, suitable for buildings of worship, goes some way to illustrate how we have applied our experience over the last 40 years.

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'We are in this for permanence, for eternity, so our furnishings, while being flexible, have to signal something of that as well... Luke Hughes's designs provide that noble look and effect of permanence'

LH 33 St Edmund's chair



v1

© Luke Hughes Designs 2024



LH 33 *St Edmund's* chair was developed as a stacking, linking liturgical seat that is easy to connect, handle, and store. More specifically, it was designed to show a strong horizontal top-rail when laid out and connected (i.e. no gaps, minimum fuss), consciously echoing the architectural impact of traditional pews.

The LH 33 *St Edmund's* chairs are light, comfortable, extremely robust and exceptionally easy to handle. It took only fifteen minutes for a team of three to lay out 300 chairs for the first service.

The chairs are made in European oak, can be left in a natural colour or stained to blend in with the interior landscape of the building. The seat can be upholstered or left with a timber seat, with or without a hymn book shelf.

It has since been specified for the Cathedral of St Philip in Atlanta (GA) and the Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii in Chicago (IL).

'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 - THANK YOU to everyone who has brought this great scheme to fruition - from us all here'

Canon Philip Banks, Precentor, St Edmundsbury Cathedral

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

Introduction

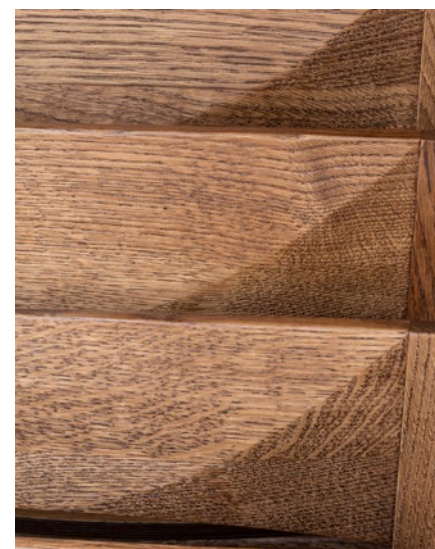
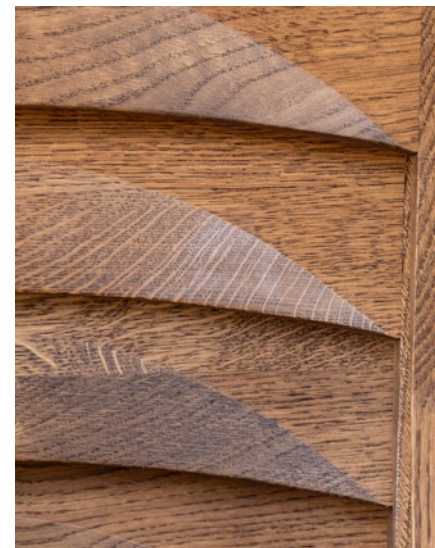
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LH 33 St Edmund's linking stacking chairs

St Edmundsbury Cathdral



LH 33 St Edmund's overview

© Luke Hughes Designs 2024





LH 33 St Edmund's linking stacking chairs

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



LH 33 St Edmund's linking stacking chairs
St Edmundsbury Cathdral



LH 33 St Edmund's linking stacking chairs (back detail)

St Edmundsbury Cathdral



LH 33 St Edmund's linking stacking chairs (hymn book shelf)

St Edmundsbury Cathdral



LH 33 St Edmund's linking stacking chairs (back rest detail)

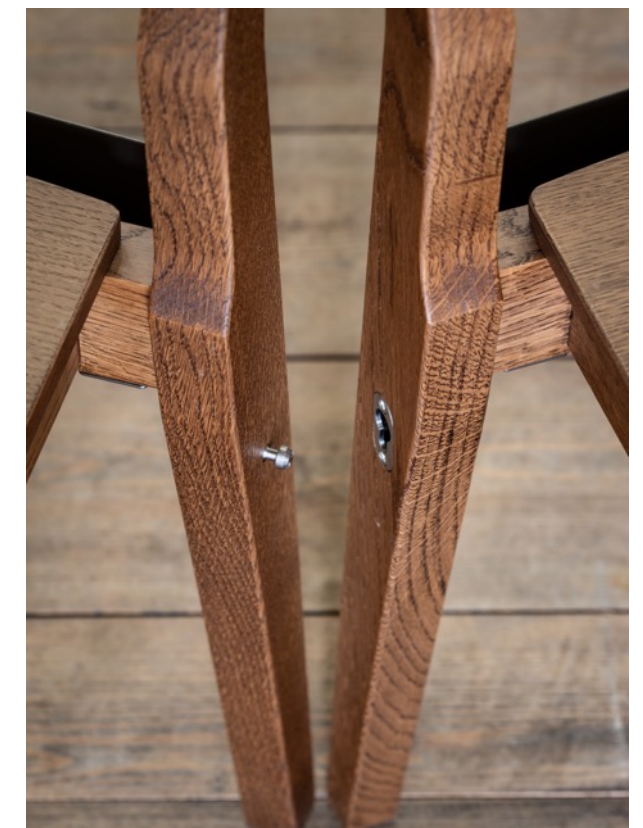
St Edmundsbury Cathdral



Upholstered version

LH 33 St Edmund's linking stacking chairs

St Edmundsbury Cathdral



LH 33 St Edmund's linking stacking chairs (select details)

St Edmundsbury Cathdral



The Precentor



The Dean

On the day of delivery

St Edmundsbury Cathdral



St Edmund's chairs (handling)

St Edmundsbury Cathdral



St Edmund's chairs (upholstered)

St Marylebone, London

Assembly chairs



v1

© Luke Hughes Designs 2024



Assembly chairs

Trinity, Wall Street, NYC



Assembly chairs

Trinity, Wall Street, NYC

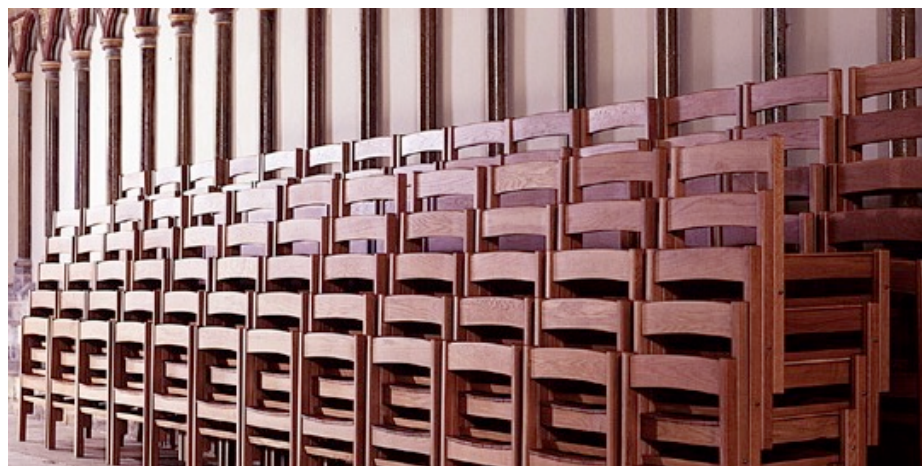
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Assembly chairs
Canterbury Cathedral



Assembly chairs

Canterbury Cathedral



Assembly chairs

St Peter ad Vincula, Tower of London



Assembly chairs

St Peter ad Vincula, Tower of London



Assembly chairs

St Peter ad Vincula, Tower of London

Academy chairs



v1

© Luke Hughes Designs 2024



St George's Bristol is one of the UK's leading concert hall. It boasts a superb acoustic and unique atmosphere which attracts the world's best artists.

The architect was Robert Smirke who, in 1810, at the age of 27, had given London its first Greek Doric building, the new opera house at Covent Garden.

The building was extensively refurbished in 1999. The new chairs were installed in the auditorium in place of the 1880s (Gothic Revival) pews. The pews in the gallery, there since the building's construction in 1823 (complete with narrow seats and bolt-upright backs), were transformed into comfortable seating whilst keeping the essence of their original design.



Academy stacking, linking chairs

St George's, Brandon Hill, Bristol



Academy chairs (2023, after nearly 25 years)

St George's, Bristol



Academy chairs (1999)

St George's, Bristol



Academy stacking, linking chairs

© Luke Hughes Designs 2024





Academy chairs
Park Avenue Synagogue, NYC

Coventry chairs

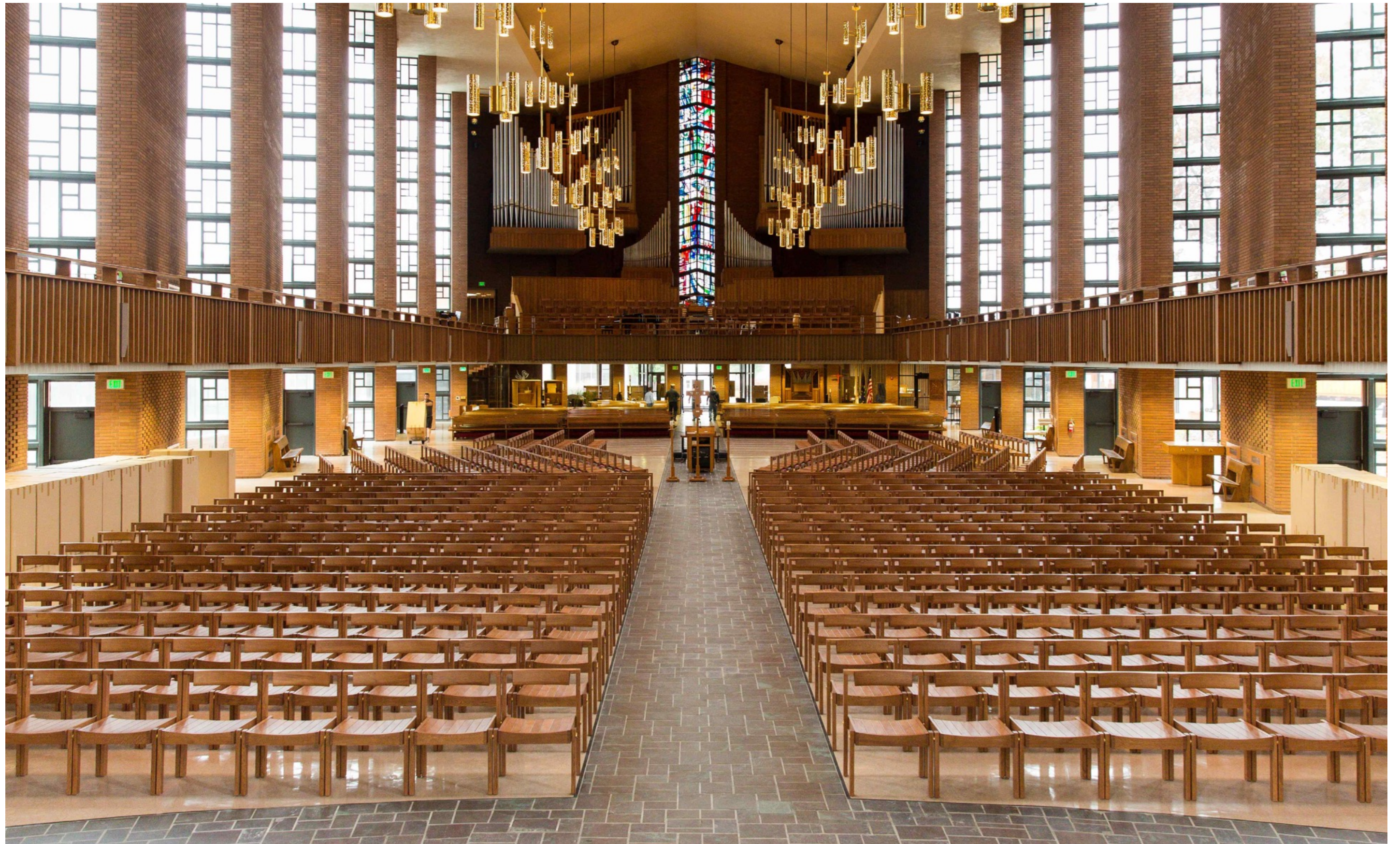


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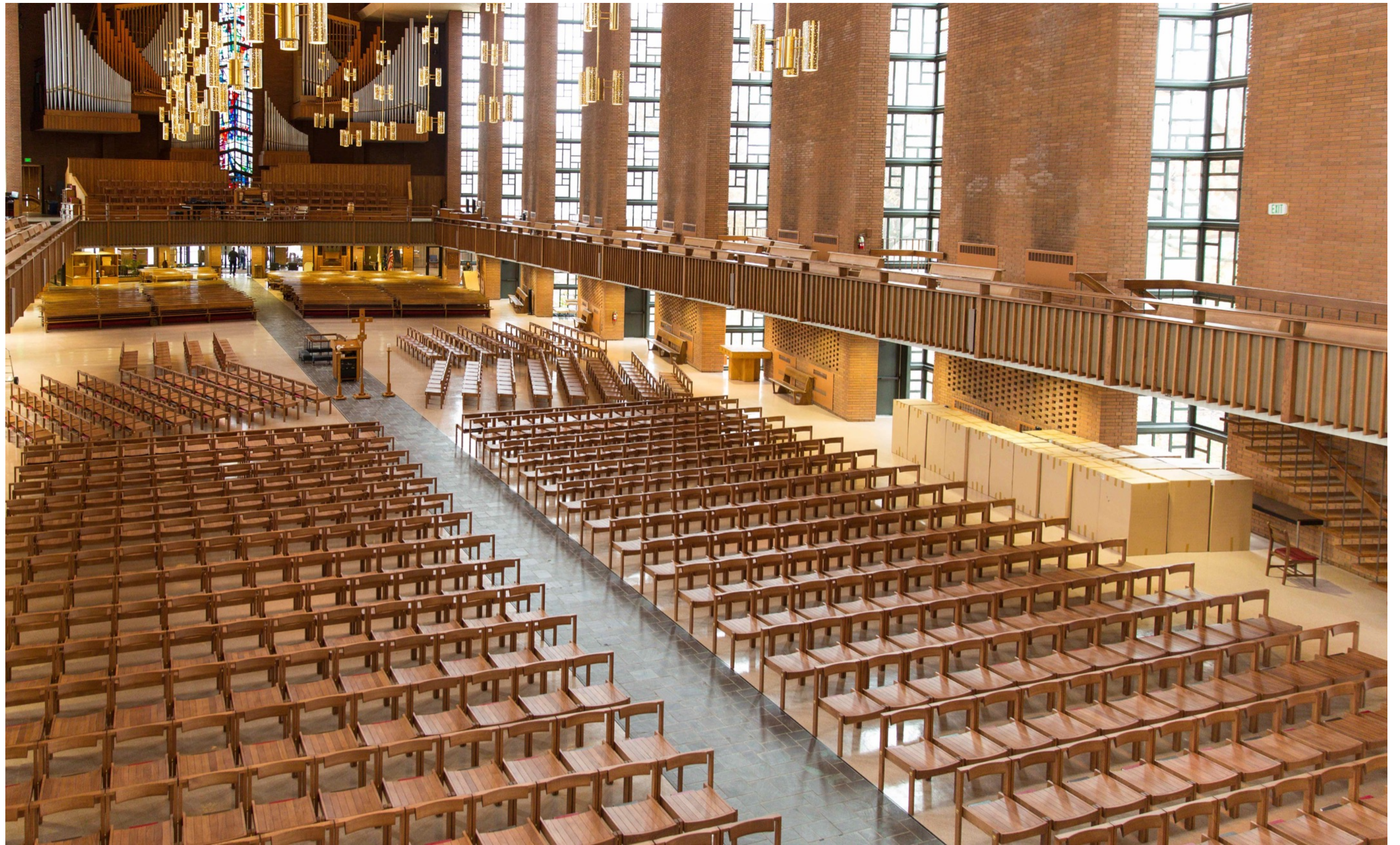


Design language

The *Coventry* chair



Coventry chairs
Chapel of the Resurrection, Valparaíso



Coventry chairs
Chapel of the Resurrection, Valparaíso

Lincoln chairs



© Luke Hughes Designs 2024

The *Lincoln* stacking and linking chair was originally designed for the Garden Building at Lincoln College, Oxford in 2014. It has since been used in dining halls, meetings rooms and buildings of worship.

'The chairs are a triumph - a classic design which is deceptively and agreeably comfortable. Thank you so much'

Prof Henry Wodehuysen, Rector

Lincoln stacking, linking chairs

Introduction





Lincoln chairs

Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, NYC



Lincoln chairs

Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, NYC



Lincoln chairs
Rye Community Synagogue, NYC

Temple chairs



© Luke Hughes Designs 2024



Temple chairs - congregation seating

Temple Israel, NYC



Temple chairs - congregation seating

Temple Israel, NYC



Temple chairs - congregation seating

Temple Israel, NYC



Temple chairs - congregation seating

Temple Israel, NYC



Presiders' chairs

Temple Israel, NYC

45

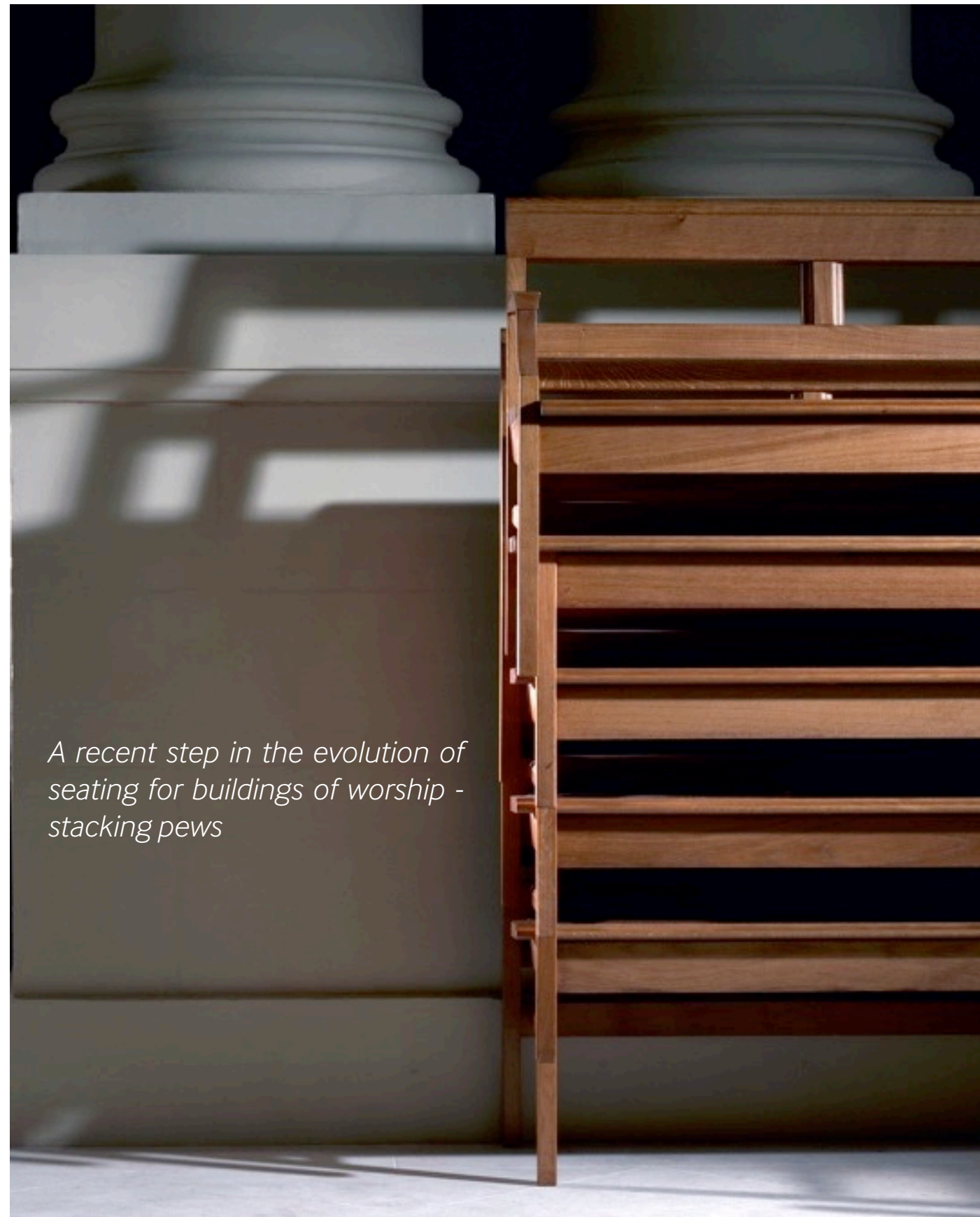
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Charterhouse stacking pews



© Luke Hughes Designs 2024



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



© Luke Hughes Designs Ltd 2025

Charterhouse stacking pews - light enough to handle, heavy enough to be stable





Nave, looking east
Sheffield Cathedral



Charterhouse stacking pews
Sheffield Cathedral

© Luke Hughes Designs 2024





Charterhouse stacking pews - easy handling for vergers

Sheffield Cathedral





Charterhouse stacking pews

St Paul's, Covent Garden



Charterhouse stacking pews - view from balcony

St Paul's, Covent Garden



Charterhouse stacking pews - select details, with back panels

St Paul's, Covent Garden



©Luke Hughes and Company

Charterhouse stacking pews - with rear panels

St Paul's, Covent Garden





Stacking pews on transport dollies

St Paul's, Covent Garden



Charterhouse stacking pews - view from organ loft

St Paul's, Covent Garden



Cleared for musical reception

St Paul's, Covent Garden



Stacking pews arranged along wainscot

St Paul's, Covent Garden



Cleared for social events
St Paul's, Covent Garden
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Charterhouse stacking pews
Epsom College Chapel

© Luke Hughes Designs Ltd 2025





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

St Andrew's Holborn

© Luke Hughes Designs Ltd 2025





Charterhouse stacking pews
Boxgrove Priory



Charterhouse stacking pews
St Andrew, Feniton



Charterhouse stacking pews
Bangor Cathedral, Wales



Combination of *Coventry* chairs and *Charterhouse* stacking pews

Cathedral of the Incarnation, Long Island NY

© Luke Hughes Designs 2024





Combination of *Coventry* chairs and *Charterhouse* stacking pews

Cathedral of the Incarnation, Long Island NY

'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

'We continue to adore the new chancel furniture in the chapel here at Haileybury. It is exceedingly beautiful and has transformed the space'

Rev. Christopher Stoltz, Chaplain Haileybury School.

'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

'We are in this for permanence, for eternity, so our furnishings, while being flexible, have to signal something of that as well... Luke Hughes's designs provide that noble look and effect of permanence'

Rt Rev Richard Chartres, Bishop of London

Some of the things clients say



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

For further technical information about some of these projects and design details etc. please contact the Design Studio

CAD blocks are available on request.

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