

All Saints, Boyne Hill, Maidenhead

EXTENSION OF THE CHANCEL

The church of All Saints, Boyne Hill, was designed by George Edmund Street and built in 1857. The tower and spire were added by him in 1865 and the west end extension was designed by his son, Arthur Street, in 1907. The part of the chancel facing the congregation, with its dwarf wall protruding from beneath the chancel arch and the pulpit in front of it on the north side, appears always to have been an integral part of the church in its present state, see figures 1 and 2.



Fig 1 The interior of All Saints looking towards the chancel



Fig 2 The dwarf wall separating the chancel from the nave

However, it is likely G. E. Street did not design it that way originally. A plan of Street's original design in Lambeth Palace Library shows that the dwarf wall was to be placed between the columns of the chancel arch, not in front, as it is now. Architects' plans can of course change and the current structure appears to have always been as it is now. However, there are clues that work was done at some time to alter it from the original state.

The dwarf wall The wall presents as a homogenous whole. However, If one looks carefully at either end of the wall it is noticeable that the marble tile is a slightly darker shade than the remaining tiles, and at the point there is a vertical join from top to bottom of the wall at both the south and the north ends. One could infer therefore that the wall may have been shorter by this amount, allowing it to have fitted inside the columns of the chancel arch, whilst the central opening with its gates remained the same size.



Fig 3 the south end of the wall



Fig 4 The north end of the wall

The wrought ironwork. On top of the wall there is an ornate rail constructed by James Leaver, a local man renowned for his artistry, much used by Street, and a churchwarden of All Saints. See figure 5. At first glance, the rails would be too large to go between the columns. However, it is quite possible for the horizontal finial on the South side to have been added later, as could the bar on the north side, whose scroll appears different from the others. Figures 6 and 7.



Fig 5 Leaver's ironwork rail



Fig 6 Wrought iron rail – horizontal finial at south end



Fig 7 Wrought iron rail – horizontal bar and scroll at north end

The choir stalls. There is evidence that the stalls have been extended at the eastern end albeit with the same level of skill which went into the construction of the original. A join can be seen about three feet in on both sides, and the wood, although oak again, is of a slightly lighter colour, actually more obvious in a photograph than in situ. Both these features can be seen in figure 8.



Fig 8 The join in the choir stalls and the different colour wood.

The extension to the backs of the misericord stalls have been carried out in a more complicated manner but nevertheless the joins can be seen. The book rests on the back stalls, figure 9, have no joins. This is because they were not included in Street's design, as can be seen in old photographs, but were added later presumably when the chancel extension was carried out.



Fig 9 Book rest

Choir stall canopies. Figure 10. The canopies, on both sides, are where the clergy sit. These were not part of Street's design, as, again, they do not appear in early photographs, and would not have fitted into place anyway.



Fig 10 Priest's canopy

In figure 11 the different coloured oak can clearly be seen.

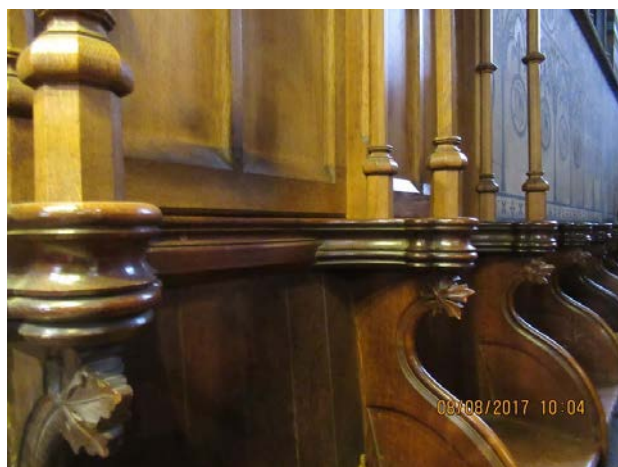


Fig 11 Canopy detail

The pulpit. Street's plan and early photographs show that the pulpit was against the column of the chancel arch and has since been brought forward. Two clues to the original placement are to be seen. Firstly, to the back of the pulpit where it cannot be easily seen even now one of the decorative arched panels is blank – see figure 12. This panel would have been closer to the column originally and almost unseen.



Fig 12 The blank panel on the pulpit

Secondly, there is a lighter mark on the column behind the pulpit, suggestive that the pulpit may have been against it, although the shape cannot be easily matched - Figure 13.

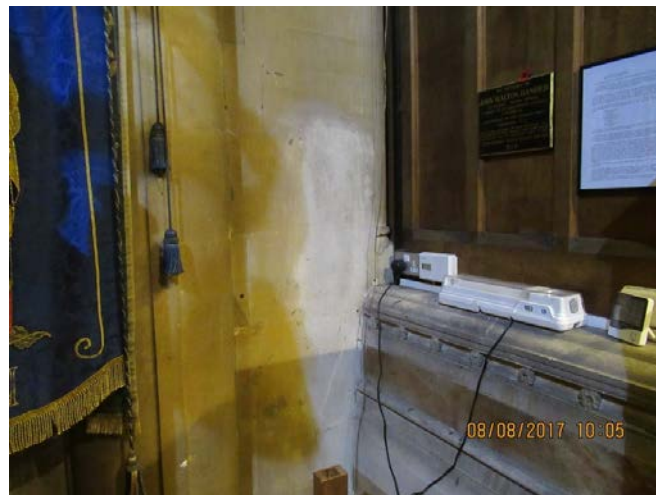


Fig 13 The shape on the column behind the pulpit

Overall, therefore, there are many clues to the fact that the chancel has been extended. One still has to wonder how the chancel floor was extended so skilfully. There are no signs here of alterations.

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