

St Andrew's Church, Huntington

St. Andrew's Church was built in 1938 and the stone commemorating this was laid by the Dean of York, The Very Rev. H. N. Bate, on 18th June 1938. This stone can be seen built into the South-Western corner of the building.

Influences Governing Design

1. **Site.** When the architect, Mr. Leslie Temple Moore, came to design and build what is now the Church of St. Andrew, he was faced with some very limiting factors – i.e. an existing building in full use as a church, on the South-Eastern boundary (this was built in 1914 and is now known and used as a NARTHEX), and a site which did not readily lend itself to the generally adopted principle of a church being built on a truly East-West axis, with the altar on the Eastern end.
2. **Religious.** There can be no doubt that Mr. Moore showed immense knowledge of his profession and subject by going right back to the 4th Century A.D. and modelling the new St. Andrew's Church on similar lines to those of the Basilican era, which existed in Rome from the 4th to 7th Centuries. This early Christian period is accepted as beginning in A.D. 313 when Constantine decreed that Christianity must be given equal rights with other religions. In A.D. 323 he himself professed the Christian Faith and it became the official religion of the Roman Empire. At first suitable existing buildings were used for public worship prior to erecting specifically Christian churches as the number of worshippers increased.

Comparative Analysis

The early Christians most probably modelled their new churches on the Roman Hall of Justice or 'BASILICA' (from the Greek word 'BASILIKOS' meaning KINGLY, was an appropriate designation for a building dedicated to the service and worship of the King of kings.)

Further adaptations and modifications were gradually made to suit the rites and rituals which they felt were essential in their worship.

In 1891 our altar was repositioned so that the celebrant faces east and towards the congregation, which was the original layout of the Roman Basilica.

Architectural Character

1. **Stonework.** As each era of human development adapts the skills and arts of the past to provide for the needs of the future, it follows then that those early Christians, having been trained as Roman craftsmen and being far from wealthy, were influenced by tradition and the availability of materials. They used stone from the Roman temples or basilicas, many of which had fallen into disrepair or had been badly damaged by the successive waves of wanton destruction by the Huns, Goths and Vandals, etc., during these troublesome periods.

The supply of ready dressed stonework and stone columns, etc. would gradually be lessened due to weather and attack. Thus, the heights of columns were often considerably foreshortened and with the introduction of arches to span openings instead of stone lintels, columns could be spaced further apart.

The design details of columns in these re-built churches differed in many instances, due again to the diminishing source of supply of materials after further attacks. Columns and distinguishing features could, and did, differ within the same building.

Internal faces of walls were rendered with cement or plaster to give a smoother finish, especially where mosaics were not used or to fill gaps between the damaged mosaics where these could be re-used.

2. **Woodwork:**

ROOF. Timber was becoming increasingly used in roof construction, especially as column spaces increased due either to shortage of existing materials, as already mentioned, or the developing skills and knowledge of craftsmen. Only the simpler forms of construction like King Post or Queen Post roof trusses were used.

The skills also being developed in building ships of ever increasing sizes for overseas trading and other requirements were certainly a help in building construction on land.

Here at St. Andrew's, we have in outline a series of Queen Post type trusses forming the supports for the main roof, whilst the trusses of the roof of the South aisle resemble Half King Post type.

A point of interest with the Queen Post trusses are the curved braces which help the framing to maintain stability and also give the outline of a much later and more highly skilled Hammer Beam truss.

PANELLING. The panelling forming the enclosed Clergy Vestry and the Screen at the South Door are plain mortice and tenon construction with pinned joints. This is a very early pattern with some of the joints cut a trifle short – giving another example of 'make do and mend'.

Another interesting feature can be seen on the door of the Choir Vestry. The two Stiles or vertical pieces forming the frame of the panelled door are of different widths. This is repeated on the South Door and is again a reminder of the adaptations by which these early craftsmen made full use of existing materials and partly damaged items as economy measures.

When we realise that we only have a small copy of a Basilican church here at St. Andrew's, it is not possible to visualise the treasures and skills brought into use in the construction of those Basilican churches erected in the early Christian era. There are reported to be about thirty in Rome itself.

3. **Other Items of Interest:**

THE FONT. The bowl of the Font is very much older than St. Andrew's Church and is reported to have stood in an earlier church at Huntington. The pedestal and base are of a more recent period.

OAK FURNITURE. The Lectern, Clergy Stalls, Litany Desk and Communion Rails were made by Messrs. Thompson of Kilburn and each piece bears their famous mouse mark.

THE PROCESSIONAL CROSS. The wood of this Cross was cur from a tree at Fountains Abbey and was made by the late Mr. Herbert Wheeler of New Earswick, at one time a Churchwarden at St. Andrew's.

THE STONE CUBE. Forming the 'heel stone' for the Mothers' Union Banner, the cube was made for St. Andrew's Church by a Czech refugee from the 1939-45 War.