

BATH ABBEY PEWS
A Photographic and Drawn Record

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For
Bath Abbey



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Introduction

Bath Abbey is situated at National Grid Ref: ST 75109 64766 in Bath and North East Somerset. This record has been made following a Faculty to remove the pews from the nave and dispose of them as part of the *Bath Abbey Footprint Project*. The work was undertaken to an agreed WSI and follows the guidelines for Level II recording as set out in Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice* (revised 2016). The on site recording was undertaken in January and February 2019 and the photo editing and illustrations prepared in February and March 2019.

Abbreviations

SA = South Aisle; NA = North Aisle; NN = North Nave; SN = South Nave

In-situ and ex-situ pews (Figs 1-14)

Pews at the front of SA (4 rows), SN (5 rows) and NN (5 rows) had been removed before the contextual photography, as had all of the NN pews. The rear four pews at the back of the SA had also been removed. All in-situ pews were photographed in the abbey. Those that had already been moved were photographed at the storage location (Colerne Airfield, Hangers 18 and 19), save all the 'A' pews which had already been sold. All four front pews (the 'A's) were taken out in 2003 (under a Faculty) - it was not possible to photograph these for the current study, and colour photographs taken by the Chairman of the Fabric Committee used instead. See Appendix I: Table of Faculties, which gives fuller details of the movement of pews from the Abbey between 1927 and 1997 (kindly provided by Bath Abbey Archives).

Pew numbering (Fig 1)

Pew numbering was referenced to the original lettering of the pews (each pew has a letter attached to the back of the pew above shelf level). The rear pew in each row is marked 'REAR', rather than having an individual letter.

Photography (Figs 2-3)

Photographs were taken with a digital SLR (Nikon D3200) with an 18-200mm lens. The photographs were shot as RAW images and then converted to TIFF images for the archive. Rectification of the photographs was undertaken in Adobe Photoshop. A list of all photographs is provided in Appendix II.

Duplication of contextual photographs is deliberate and was undertaken both with a flash and without to show different levels of detail. Almost all of the detailed photographs were taken with a flash.

The scale used in most of the photography is an 8cm colour bar scale. On occasion a 0.5m (red-and-white) scale has been used. Scales are not included in contextual photographs.

Drawings (Figs 1-6)

Illustrations were prepared in a combination of Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. Fig 1 is a location plan of the pews, Figs 2 and 3 show location of low level and high level photographs, Fig 4 shows a 'plain' pew, Fig 5 shows a 'decorated' pew, Figs 6-7 shows moulding profiles.

Drawings 8-14 have been prepared as guides to the detailed drawings on the rear of the decorated pews. Detailed (scale 1:10) drawings of pew types and moulding profiles (scale 1:1) were drawn by hand, scanned and worked up in Adobe Illustrator.

Detailed pew-end drawings are labelled with the pew letter, to save confusion and are presented at 1:4 scale.

Report

A digital version of the report will be presented to Bath Abbey, who have agreed to deposit a copy of the digital archive with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The report being deposited with Bath Abbey will also contain a hard copy, including all illustrations, photographs of each pew and any details (in A4 format) and all contextual photographs.

Archive

The final digital archive will be deposited with Bath Abbey and ADS.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to Alix Gilmer (Project Director, Bath Abbey Footprint Project), Anna Riggs (Archivist, Bath Abbey), Nicholas Wall (Senior Conservation Officer SWHT) and Bob Croft (DAC monitor and SWHT), for discussing the methodology, Frank Mowat (Bath Abbey) for his assistance with the heavy pews and access to the Colerne hangers .

SEATING

Date of faculty			Document reference
16 November 1927	Faculty	Four pews on southwest side of nave removed <i>'to give more convenient access to and from the new Cloister on the south side of the church and to place the pews so removed in the North Transept'</i>	Bath Abbey faculty certificates 2000/11/36 (clergy vestry safe)
25 April 1961	Faculty	Remove easternmost pew in north and south nave blocks and move pulpit	Bath Abbey faculty certificates 2000/11/36 (clergy vestry safe); Somerset Heritage Centre faculty papers D/D/cf/1961/4/15
10 May 1974	Faculty file	<i>Remove choir stall, remove pew from each side, behind choir stalls, and reduce the height of the boys' music desks by 3" on each side</i>	Somerset Local Studies and Archives: D\D/cf/1974/5/5
5 June 1979	Faculty	<i>The disposal of five short pews, by way of gift, to Banwell Parish Church</i>	BA/4/ABB/1/2/1
13 December 1994	Faculty	<i>To make permanent the re-ordering of the south transept and to remove four pews to the south of the choir stalls. The carved panelling from the rear of these pews to be re-fixed to pews 19 and 94 in the nave and south aisle and also re-used for forming 'counters' for literature. The remaining useable timber and carved ends of the dismantled redundant pews to be retained for future use.</i>	BA/4/ABB/1/3/13
17 September 1997	Faculty	2. <i>Four pews to be dismantled and the usable wood retained.</i> <i>[this includes other works to the Abbey]</i>	BA/4/ABB/1/3/27
February 2003	Faculty	Front pews on north and south sides of nave and each side aisle removed. Carved fronts installed on next pew. Four removed pews donated to Landmark Trust.	Bath Abbey faculty certificates 2000/11/36; BA/3/ADM/2/3;

				BA/4/ABB/4/3/33
Early 2011		Pews removed from southwest corner of south nave aisle, in preparation for four archaeological excavations.		FA22 (Charles Curnock files)
Late 2013		<i>North nave aisle pews removed.</i>		FA26 (Charles Curnock files)
11 August 2015	Temporary licence	<i>The removal of the two front pews of the nave. To move the wooden screen on the front pew back to the 'new front pew'. To construct a trial dais...</i>		FA32 (Charles Curnock files)

CHOIR STALLS

Date of faculty				Document reference
7 September 1948	Faculty	<i>Re-arrange choir seating: removal of seats affixed to carved panelled front, move panelling forward and insert new pews.</i>		Bath Abbey faculty certificates 2000/11/36; Bath Abbey BA/4/ABB/4/1/2(Acc no 1998/1/27/42)
10 May 1974	Faculty file	<i>Remove choir stall, remove pew from each side, behind choir stalls, and reduce the height of the boys' music desks by 3" on each side</i>		Somerset Local Studies and Archives: D\D/cf/1974/5/5
13 December 1994	Faculty	<i>To make permanent the re-ordering of the south transept and to remove four pews to the south of the choir stalls. The carved panelling from the rear of these pews to be re-fixed to pews 19 and 94 in the nave and south aisle and also re-used for forming 'counters' for literature. The remaining useable timber and carved ends of the dismantled redundant pews to be retained for future use.</i>		BA/4/ABB/1/3/13
3 November 1997	Faculty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>To improve the existing choir stalls to accommodate the full choir by lengthening and modifying the seating and music desk positions to the best ergonomic advantage.</i> 2. <i>To provide improved lighting arrangements on the choir stalls and rector's stalls.</i> 		BA/4/ABB/1/3/28 (faculty); BA/4/ABB/4/3/8 (correspondence and working drawings)

APPENDIX I
ARCHIVE INDEX TO ALL PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo No.	Description	Direction
<i>General contextual photographs (low level)</i>		
01	SA general view	w
02	SA general view	w
03	SA general view	w
04	SA general view	nw
05	SN and NN general view	nw
06	SN and NN general view	n
07	SN and NN general view	n
08	SN and NN general view	sw
09	SN general view	w
10	NN general view	w
11	SN and NN general view	sw
12	NN P-S general view	s
13	NN P-S general view	s
14	NN W-Z general view	s
15	NN W-Z general view	s
16	NN W-Z general view	s
17	NN SN general view	se
18	NN and SN general view	se
19	NN rear pews general view	e
20	SN and NN general view	ne
21	SN and NN general view	ne
22	SN rear pews general view	ne
23	SN rear pews general view	ne
24	SN rear pews general view	n
25	SN rear pews general view	n
26	SN rear pews general view	n
27	SN rear pews general view	n
28	SA general view	e
29	SA general view	e
30	SN W-BB general view	n
31	SN W-BB general view	n
32	SN AA-Rear general view	w
33	SN Z-Rear general view	w
34	SN Z-Rear general view	w
35	SA general view	se
36	SA general view	se
37	SA rear of W forwards	e
38	SA rear of W forwards	e
39	General view looking north between SN W and Z	n
40	General view looking north between SN W and Z	n
41	SA general view	ne
42	SA general view	ne

43	SA front view E	w
44	SA front view E	w
45	NN front view F	w
46	NN front view F	w
47	SA rear view REAR	e
48	Detail upper front frame of 'plain' pew	w
49	Detail lower front frame of 'plain' pew	w
50	Detail of decoration on side of pew above seat level	s
51	Detail of decoration on side of pew above seat level	w
52	Detail of bracket under seat (front view)	w
53	Detail of bracket under seat (side view)	s
54	Detail of junction back and end of 'plain' pew (shelf on left)	plan
55	Detail of junction back and end of 'plain' pew (shelf on left)	plan
56	Detail junction end of pew and seat	plan
57	Detail bracket below shelf (rear view)	e
58	Detail bracket below main frame (rear view)	e
59	Detail bracket below shelf (side view)	s
60	Detail bracket below main frame (angled view)	ne
61	Detail bracket below main frame (side view)	n
62	Detail front of 'decorated' pew above seat level	w
63	Detail junction rear and end of 'decorated' pew	plan
64	Detail upper carving on 'decorated' pew	e
65	Detail SA REAR note decorated back screwed to a 'plain' pew	e
66	Detail SN W upper back of 'decorated' pew	e
67	Detail junction back and end of 'decorated' pew	plan
<i>General contextual photographs (high level)</i>		
68	SN and NN general view	w
69	SA and SN general view	sw
70	SN, NN and NA general view	nw
71	SA general view	w
72	SA, SN and NN general view	nw
73	SA, SN and NN general view	sw
74	SA, SN and NN general view	sw
75	NN general view	e
76	SN and NN general view	se
77	SN and NN general view	e
78	SN and NN general view rear pews	ne
79	SA general view	e
<i>Photographs of pew platform being dismantled</i>		
80	SA removal of E-H showing frame of platform and planking	w
81	SA detail of platform frame and planking	w
<i>Details of pews</i>		
82	SA REAR south end	n
83	SA X south end	n
84	SA W south end	n
85	SA V south end	n
86	SA T south end	n

87	SA S south end	n
88	SA R south end	n
89	SA Q south end	n
90	SA P south end	n
91	SA M south end	n
92	SA L south end	n
93	SA K south end	n
94	SA J south end	n
95	SA H south end	n
96	SA G south end	n
97	SA F south end	n
98	SA E south end	n
99	SA E north end	s
100	SA F north end	s
101	SA G north end	s
102	SA H north end	s
103	SA J north end	s
104	SA K north end	s
105	SA L north end	s
106	SA M north end	s
107	SA P north end	s
108	SA Q north end	s
109	SA R north end	s
110	SA S north end	s
111	SA T north end	s
112	SA V north end	s
113	SA W north end	s
114	SA X north end	s
115	SA REAR north end	s
116-122	SA REAR back views (overlapping right to left 1-7)	e
123	SN F south end	n
124	SN G south end	n
125	SN H south end	n
126	SN J south end	n
127	SN M south end	n
128	SN P south end	n
129	SN Q south end	n
130	SN R south end	n
131	SN S south end	n
132	SN W south end	n
133	SN Z south end	n
134	SN AA south end	n
135	SN DD south end	n
136	SN EE south end	n
137	SN REAR south end	n
138	SN REAR North end	n
139	SN EE north end	n

140	SN DD north end	n
141	SN CC north end	n
142	SN BB north end	n
143	SN AA north end	n
144	SN Z north end	n
145	SN W north end	n
146	SN V north end	n
147	SN T north end	n
148	SN S north end	n
149	SN R north end	n
150	SN Q north end	n
151	SN P north end	n
152	SN M north end	n
153	SN L north end	n
154	SN K north end	n
155	SN J north end	n
156	SN H north end	n
157	SN G north end	n
158	SN F north end	n
159	NN F south end	n
160	NN G south end	n
161	NN H south end	n
162	NN J south end	n
163	NN K south end	n
164	NN L south end	n
165	NN M south end	n
166	NN P south end	n
167	NN Q south end	n
168	NN R south end	n
169	NN S south end	n
170	NN T south end	n
171	NN V south end	n
172	NN W south end	n
173	NN X south end	n
174	NN Y south end	n
175	NN Z south end	n
176	NN AA south end	n
177	NN BB south end	n
178	NN CC south end	n
179	NN DD south end	n
180	NN EE south end	n
181	NN REAR south end	n
182	NN REAR north end	s
183	NN EE north end	s
184	NN DD north end	s
185	NN AA north end	s
186	NN Z north end	s

187	NN Y north end	s
188	NN X north end	s
189	NN W north end	s
190	NN S north end	s
191	NN R north end	s
192	NN Q north end	s
193	NN P north end	s
194-206	SN REAR lower back views (overlapping right to left 1-12)	e
204	SN REAR detail top of photo 205	e
207-218	NN REAR lower back views (overlapping right to left 1-12)	e
219-230	SN W back views (overlapping right to left 1-12)	e
231-236	SN REAR upper back views (overlapping right to left 1-6)	e
237-242	NN REAR upper back views (overlapping right to left 1-6)	e
243-244	SN REAR back views (overlapping)	e
245	SN REAR back view	e
246-247	NN REAR back views (overlapping)	e
248	NN REAR back view	e
249	Detail SA M south end	n
250	Detail SA Q south end	n
251	Detail SA T north end	n
252	Detail SA Q north end	n
253	Detail SN Z south end	n
254	Detail SN REAR south end	n
255	Detail SN REAR north end	n
256	Detail SN T north end	n
257	Detail NN F south end	n
258	Detail NN G south end	n
259	Detail NN H south end	n
260	Detail NN BB south end	n
261	Detail NN REAR south end	n
262	Detail NN REAR north end	n
263	NA REAR back views	e
264-267	NA REAR upper back views (overlapping right to left 1-4)	e
268-275	NA REAR back views (overlapping right to left 1-8)	e
276	NA Z south end	n
277	NA Z north end	s
278	NA Z back view	e
279	NA AA south end	n
280	NA AA north end	S
281	NA BB south end	n
282	NA BB north end	s
283	NA P south end	n
284	NA P north end	s
285	Detail NA P south end	n
286	Detail NA P north end	s
287	Detail NA AA north end	s
288	NA H north end	s

289	NA H south end	n
290	NA S north end	s
291	NA S south end	n
292	NA W north end	s
293	NA W south end	n
294	NA X north end	s
295	NA X south end	n
296	NA Y north end	s
297	NA Y south end	n
298	NA V north end	s
299	NA V south end	n
300	Detail NA V south end	n
301	SA DD north end	s
302	SA DD south end	n
303	Detail SA DD south end	n
304	Detail SA DD north end	s
305-308	Detail SA DD upper back (overlapping right to left 1-4)	e
309-316	Detail SA DD lower back (overlapping right to left 1-8)	e
317-324	Detail SA DD boards from back (1-8, order not known)	e
325	NN C north end	s
326	SN B north end	s
327	NN B north end	s
328	SN C north end	s
329	NN C south end	n
330	SN B south end	n
331	NN B south end	n
332	SN C south end	n
333	SA AA north end	s
334	SA CC north end	s
335	NA G north end	s
336	SA BB north end	s
337	NA B north end	s
338	NA D north end	s
339	NA C north end	s
340	NA Q north end	s
341	NA R north end	s
342	NA E south end	n
343	NA K south end	n
344	NA F south end	n
345	NA J south end	n
346	NA M south end	n
347	NA L south end	n
348	NA T south end	n
349	Detail NA L south end	n
350	Detail SA CC north end	s
351-352	NA REAR south end (in two parts)	n
353-354	NA REAR north end (in two parts)	s

355	NA T north end	S
356	NA L north end	S
357	NA M north end	S
358	NA J north end	S
359	NA F north end	S
360	NA K north end	S
361	NA E north end	S
362	SA AA south end	n
363	SA CC south end	n
364	NA G south end	n
365	SA BB south end	n
366	NA B south end	n
367	NA D south end	n
368	NA C south end	n
369	NA Q south end	n
370	NA R south end	n
371	NN D north end	S
372	NN E north end	S
373	SN E north end	S
374	SN D north end	S
375	SA B north end	S
376	SA D north end	S
377	SA C north end	S
378	Detail SA B north end	S
379	SA B south end	n
380	SA C south end	n
381	SA D south end	n
382	SN D south end	n
383	Detail SN D south end	n
384	SN E south end	n
385	Detail SN E south end	n
386	NN D south end	n
387	NN E south end	n
388	SN K south end	n
389	SN L south end	n
390	SN T north end	S
391	SN V north end	S
392	SN BB north end	S
393	SN CC north end	S
394	NN F north end	S
395	NN G north end	S
396	NN H north end	S
397	NN J north end	S
398	NN K north end	S
399	NN L north end	S
400	NN M north end	S
401	NN T north end	S

402	Detail NN T north end	S
403	NN V north end	S
404	NN BB north end	S
405	NN CC north end	S