

WHY SUCH AN ODD PLAN? MILTON EARL BEEBE'S ST. THOMAS ANGLICAN CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO

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FIG. 1. ST. THOMAS ANGLICAN CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, 1877. MILTON EARL BEEBE, ARCHITECT. EXTERIOR, FAÇADE. | Malcolm Thurlby

In the small city of St. Catharines, Ontario, stands a large monument to the Anglican faith. St. Thomas Anglican Church, however, is not a traditional Anglican building. Designed by an American architect, Milton Earl Beebe, in 1877, the church rejects the traditional Anglican-church planning that was promoted by the Cambridge Camden Society and rather demonstrates a strong progressive and eclectic nature akin to the building style of the celebrated American architect, H.H. Richardson (1838-1886), and the novel interior planning of Protestant church designers. This paper examines the church structure and offers an explanation for its oddity amongst Anglican churches of its time.

THE ARCHITECT

Born on November 27, 1840, the eldest son of a farmer, Milton Earl Beebe hailed from Cassadaga, Chautauqua County in New York State. Beebe would mature to become both an architect and a politician in nineteenth-century America. In the spring of 1866, at the age of twenty-five, Beebe traveled to Chicago to study architecture professionally with the Victorian architect and pattern book author Gurdon P. Randall (1821-1884). He spent two years with Randall, departing to reside in New York for an additional two years. Once leaving New York, Beebe spent one year in Boston and then an additional year in Worcester, Massachusetts.² It is Beebe's two-year Massachusetts stretch that would prove to be most influential in his work in St. Catharines. While in Boston, Beebe would have familiarized himself with the



FIG. 2. TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, MASS., 1872. H.H. RICHARDSON, ARCHITECT. EXTERIOR FAÇADE. | Candace Iron.

architecture of Henry Hobson Richardson, whose signature “Richardsonian Romanesque” style of building was in its formative years. The year that Beebe spent in Worcester, Massachusetts, corresponds to the date that Richardson submitted a design, which was accepted, for the building of Trinity Episcopal Church in Boston.³ Richardson’s winning design was published widely in various architectural journals throughout the United States, making it an architectural icon and, as it was for many architects, Trinity Church became an inspiration for Beebe’s St. Catharines’s design.

Upon completion of his architectural studies in 1873, Beebe settled in Buffalo, New York, and established an architectural practice there. From that Buffalo office, Beebe designed and built various structures in and around Buffalo and throughout the remainder of the Northern United States. The Richardsonian-styled St. Thomas, however, would represent Beebe’s only opportunity to design a Canadian edifice.

TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN CHURCH PLANS

In 1839, a group of Cambridge undergraduate students, calling themselves The Cambridge Camden Society, later known simply as “The Ecclesiologists,” set out to “promote the study of Ecclesiastical Architecture and Antiques, and the restoration of mutilated Architectural remains.”⁴ The publications produced by the society, which included pamphlets, reports, and a journal titled *The Ecclesiologist*, effectively transformed every Anglican church in the world by 1867.⁵ The effectiveness of the publications lay in their circulation, for they were not only exchanged amongst the wealthy, but also within the average churchgoing class. Essentially, the society promoted the use of Gothic or pointed architecture stating that it was “the pure offspring of the genius of the Christian religion.”⁶ While praising the architectural authority and validity of the Gothic style as Christian, the Ecclesiologists condemned the use of the round-arch style for Christian building as being “an imper-

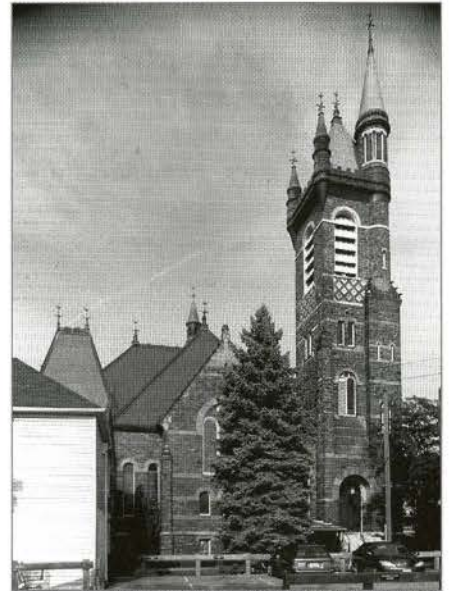


FIG. 3. ST. THOMAS CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, 1877. LITURGICAL NORTH SIDE. | Malcolm Thurlby.

fect imitation, or rather debasement of Roman Architecture.”⁷ The ecclesiastical architecture that the society was promoting as the only Christian architecture appropriate for Anglican churches was Gothic in style with a long chancel and altar raised on steps, stained glass windows, with a choir in the chancel, and having the congregation in the nave occupying liturgically east-facing benches.⁸ The manifesto of the Cambridge Camden Society was felt so strongly by its followers that all other forms of religious architecture were often referred to as “contemptible.”⁹ Those ecclesiological concepts were employed throughout the Anglican world, where one finds that nearly all Anglican structures are Gothic in style, representing the architectural authority that was called for by the society.

St. Thomas Anglican Church in St. Catharines, however, does not conform to these ideas and in fact employs the very round-arch style, here the Richardsonian Romanesque, which the Ecclesiologists condemned.

THE EXTERIOR OF ST. THOMAS CHURCH

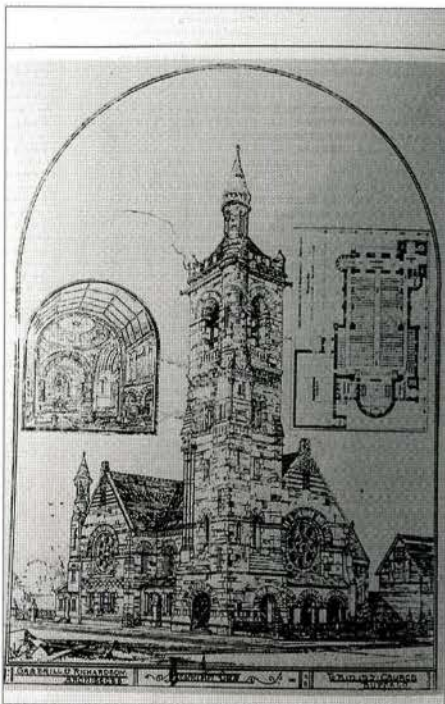
In 1952, *The Standard*, the St. Catharines's newspaper, described the architectural style of St. Thomas Church as "a combination of Romanesque and Norman design."¹⁰

From the exterior, Beebe's church can immediately be classified as a round-arch styled structure. St. Thomas is as a whole, however, not representative of the English (Norman) Romanesque, but is Richardsonian in its composition, ultimately recalling the grandeur of Trinity Episcopal Church, Boston. The church is entirely constructed of a Queenston stone core with freestone facings.¹¹ That, along with variations in wall recessions and processions, creates an effect of visual massiveness that acts to emphasize the sheer size and imposing effect of the building. That concept of monumentality is a key feature in Richardson's work and here is translated very effectively by Beebe. Various surface textures, best seen in the interplay between rough hammer-dressed masonry blocks coupled with smooth courses and mouldings, emphasize the monumentality of the overall building. The surface variations seen in St. Catharines recall the weighty masonry compositions of Richardson's many buildings, including Trinity Episcopal Church. In Trinity, the interplay of rough and smooth masonry enhances the already weighty look of the structure and emphasizes the sheer mass of the church. Polychrome, a Richardsonian trademark, can also be found on the exterior of Trinity Church, providing Beebe with a point of inspiration. Richardson, however, encountered that in the French Auvergne and therefore its use makes reference to the medieval Romanesque. The polychrome and textual interplays found at St. Thomas give an overall effect of Richardsonian architectural mass and

also creates an anchor for the picturesque St. Catharines Church Street.

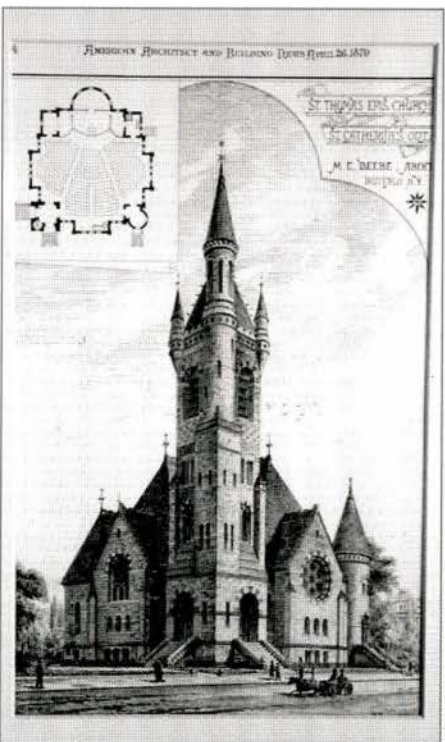
Dominating the profile of St. Thomas and creating a magnificent composition at the head of Church Street is St. Thomas's massive corner tower. Located liturgically on the northwest corner (actually the southeast) of the building, the tower of the church is accentuated with Richardsonian patterning and a pyramidal roof. The overall placement of the tower and its composition do not correspond to what Richardson planned at Trinity Church, Boston, however its origin is still Richardsonian. It is likely that Beebe was inspired by Richardson's design for the 1872 rebuilding of Trinity Episcopal Church, Buffalo.¹² In the proposed Buffalo plan, which was never executed, Richardson incorporated a side tower, with conical turrets and a rose window, creating a striking similarity with Beebe's later work in St. Catharines.

While the actual placement of the tower does not descend from Trinity Church, Boston, the architectural elements and ornamentation found on it do. St. Thomas's tower is the most ornamented area of the exterior of the church. It is accented with abutments of smooth and rough masonry, as well as being punctuated by both round-headed arch and rectangular openings. This, along with the diamond or lozenge pattern that decorates the upper portion of the tower, demonstrates Beebe's reliance on Richardson for inspiration. Richardson replicated the polychromatic block and flora work found on French Romanesque buildings of the Auvergne¹³ in many of his buildings, including Trinity Church. Beebe, looking to Richardson, interpreted that pattern loosely and created a lozenge ornament using various surface textures and building materials.



THE ARCHITECTURAL SKETCHBOOK, 1, OCT. 1873.

FIG. 4. PLAN OF PROPOSED REBUILDING OF TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON. H.H. RICHARDSON, ARCHITECT.



THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDING NEWS, APRIL 26, 1879.

FIG. 5. PLAN OF ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO.



FIG. 6. ST. THOMAS CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, 1877. TOWER. | Malcolm Thurby.

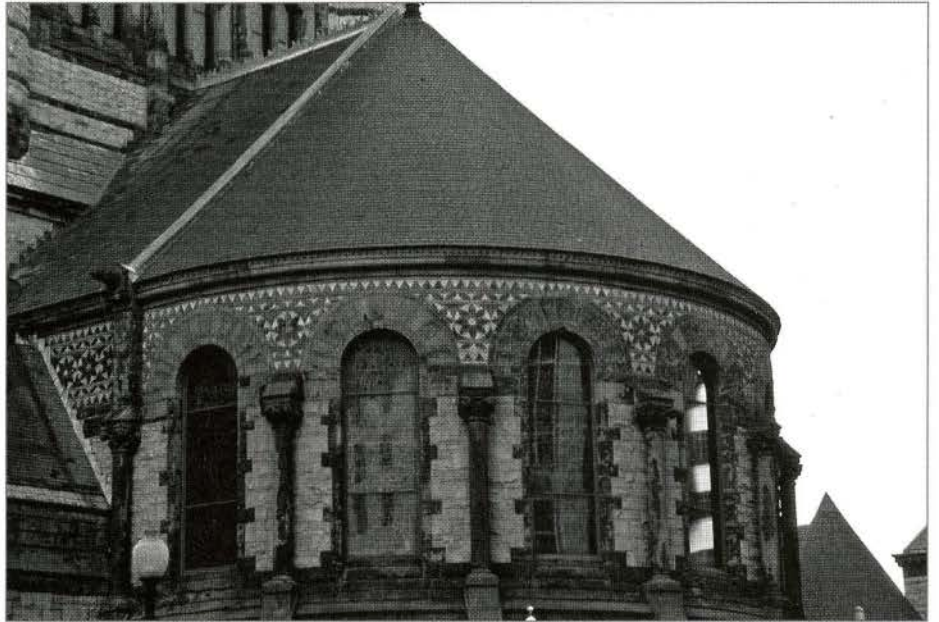


FIG. 7. TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, 1872. EXTERIOR, LITURGICAL EAST END WITH POLYCHROME BLOCK AND FLORA WORK. | Candace Iron.

Although the general exterior and ornamentation of St. Thomas is overall Richardsonian, there is an eclectic value to the decoration. Emphasizing such eclectic nature on the exterior of the church is the use of quatrefoils on the tower and the incorporation of a fleche over the body of the sanctuary where there traditionally would have been a crossing tower or fleche on a medieval or Gothic building. Such architectural elements do not appear on Trinity Church and are not standard traits on any Richardsonian buildings. Those ornamental features can, however, be traced to Beebe's earlier Buffalo Gothic designs wherein he incorporated them in several of his plans. Although that particular Anglican congregation was demonstrating a break from the traditional Gothic revival mode of church building, motifs such as those become visual reminders of that congregation's heritage.

The exterior of a structure can often be telling of what the interior will present.

At St. Thomas's that is exactly the case, as the exterior planning suggests what the interior arrangement holds, a centrally-planned, Richardsonian Romanesque building.

THE INTERIOR OF ST. THOMAS

While at first glance the interior of St. Thomas appears to be rather unadorned, it is actually thriving with ornamentation. The adornment is best demonstrated in the embellishment of the arch mouldings in St. Thomas where Beebe has designed something akin to medieval Romanesque churches and cathedrals. The extremely ornamented, multi-ordered mouldings recall those that can be found in British Romanesque buildings, the most famous, perhaps, being Durham Cathedral (1093-1133). It could be argued that British Romanesque church design may have been incorporated into Beebe's plans, as he was designing an Anglican church and Anglicanism was born in England.

The individual motifs Beebe selected for his mouldings, however, are not from a medieval source, but are an amalgamation of more contemporary sources. Beginning from the outside and moving inward, we find a billet range, a chevron and bead motif, a quarter round moulding, and a cable motif. Billet ranges are a Romanesque motif that date back to ancient Roman architecture. Here the billet range can be traced to Trinity Church, as Richardson used billetes throughout the interior of the church and in the arch mouldings.

The next "order" includes a chevron and bead motif. That ornamentation is the most akin to British Romanesque; however, again it can be linked to Trinity Church. In the chancel arch of Trinity Church, Richardson employed an arch ornament that is not entirely removed from that which was used by Beebe. Its primary difference is that it is painted, rather than plaster-casted, as it is in St. Catharines. The painted ornament in



FIG. 8. ST. THOMAS CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, 1877. INTERIOR. | Malcolm Thurby.

Trinity also has a less pointed chevron with intermediary beads.

The final orders consist of a quarter round and a cable motif. The quarter round is very common and therefore can be found in nearly all buildings, including Trinity Church. The cable motif however can undeniably be traced to Trinity Church, where it can be found in the crossing piers.

The large central chancel arch in St. Thomas introduces an indisputably Richardsonian order. In that moulding range Beebe has reproduced the Richardsonian "spiky" foliage motif. That type of ornament is most often associated with Richardson's capitals. Here it is used not only for capitals, but also in a coursing creating a sense of continuity throughout the interior of the church.

While all the arch mouldings in St. Thomas can be understood as descendents from British Romanesque buildings, it is far more

likely that, since they can also be found in Trinity Church, they descend directly from Richardson. In looking to Richardson for general design inspiration, Beebe has likely also looked to him for inspiration in his ornamentation.

While the arch mouldings can be shown to descend from Trinity Church, the soffit of the arch presents an ornament whose provenance is somewhat more controversial. The conjoined circular motifs inset with boss-like floral ornaments can be directly traced to an English classical building, James Gibbs's St. Martin-in-the-Fields (1721-1726). In North America, St. Martin-in-the-Fields was often copied and used for inspiration. That is primarily due to its architect, James Gibbs, having published his 1728 *Book of Architecture*, which outlined St. Martin-in-the-Fields with precise specifications.¹⁴ The floral motif in St. Thomas may have come directly from Gibbs or his publication. Such link could demonstrate an eclectic point on the interior of the church, as Beebe

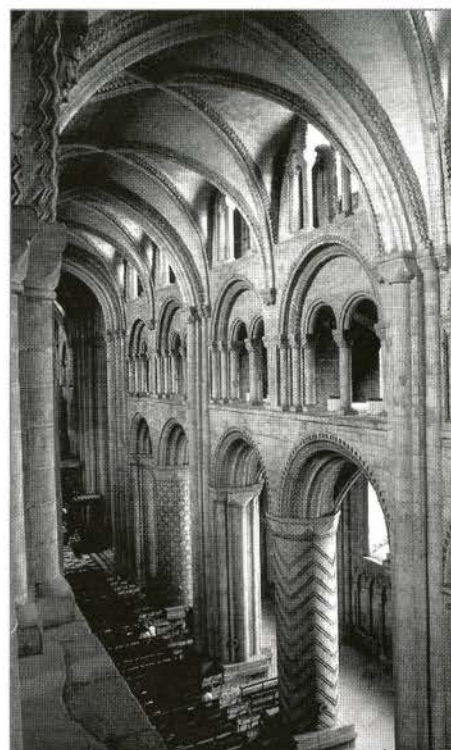


FIG. 9. DURHAM CATHEDRAL, 1093-1133. INTERIOR NAVE. | Malcolm Thurby.

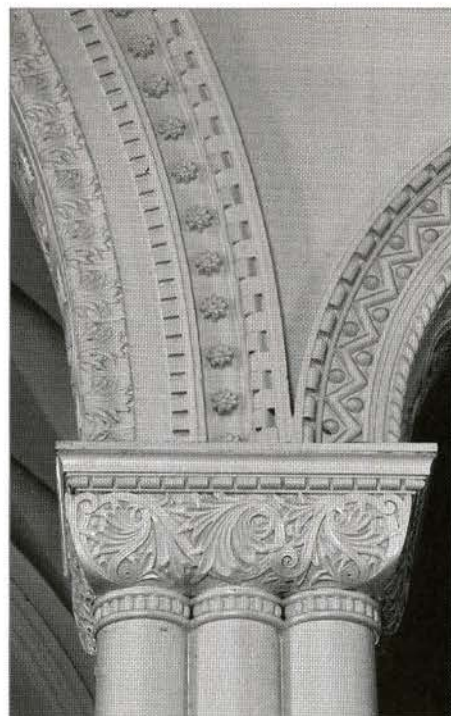


FIG. 10. ST. THOMAS CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, 1877. INTERIOR, ARCH MOULDING DETAIL. | Malcolm Thurby.



FIG. 11. TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, 1872. INTERIOR, ARCH MOULDING RANGE. | Candace Iron.



FIG. 12. TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, 1872. GENERAL INTERIOR. | Candace Iron.

may have wanted to tie St. Thomas to its English Anglican heritage, but it is far more likely that the motif came from a secondary source. Again, looking to Richardson's Trinity Church, that motif can be located in the sanctuary, which could indicate that Beebe was again looking to Richardson and employing the motifs that Richardson employed. The ornaments' existence within the St. Catharines Church adds to the eclectic nature of the overall building and contributes to the oddity of the structure. That eclecticism links the congregation of St. Thomas's to its English heritage, while still denying any Gothic styling, for even the Gibbsian motif found within the sanctuary comes from a non-Ecclesiologists, classical tradition.

The capitals of the interior are perhaps the most impressive points of ornamentation within the building. Beebe's capitals are undoubtedly Richardsonian, employing "spiky" Byzantine foliage. It is impossible to definitively say where Richardson acquired the inspiration for his capitals, but it is likely that it came from an amalgamation of sources. Richardson did not strictly follow a canon for building. He rejected exact reproductions of historically authoritative buildings and, in an exceedingly eclectic fashion, utilized various motifs, concepts, and designs from varying sources that appealed to him. Richardson's piecing together of various architectural designs and elements is paralleled in Beebe's interior design.

While the ornamentation of the interior can be shown to be Richardsonian Romanesque, the layout stems from an entirely different tradition. That sort of church arrangement is exceptionally unusual for an Anglican structure. Most Anglican churches in the nineteenth century were basilican in form and Gothic in style, as was suggested by the Cambridge Camden Society, two things that St. Thomas is not.

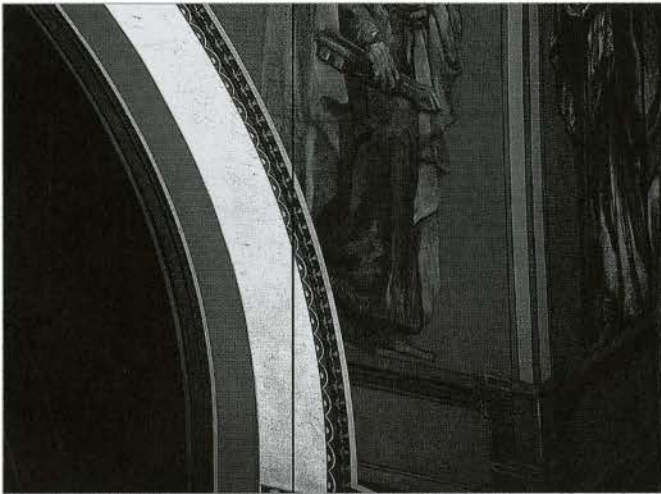


FIG. 13. TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, 1872. DETAIL OF PAINTED CHEVRON AND BEAD MOTIF. | Candace Iron.

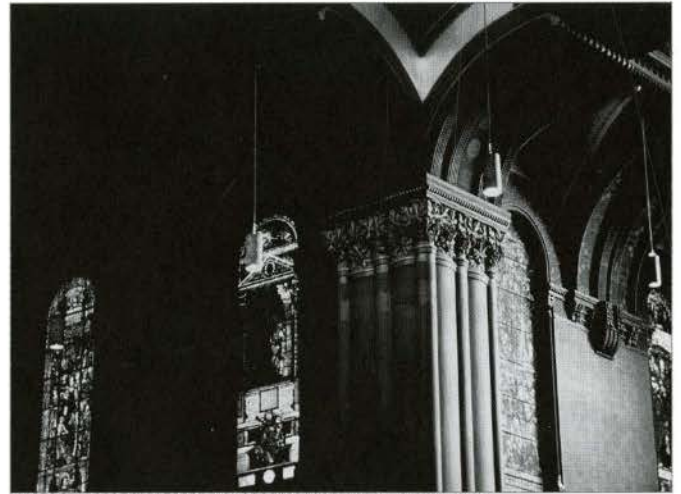


FIG. 14. TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, 1872. DETAIL OF MOULDINGS AND CAPITALS. | Candace Iron.

Centralized sanctuaries are primarily reserved for nonconformist congregations. The use of centralized planning was not recommended for Anglican-church construction by the Cambridge Camden Society; as it was not a traditional architectural form of building for Anglicans, it would not suit the High-Church liturgy that the Society supported and, most importantly, it was not a Gothic mode of building. Centralization was however promoted for nonconformists or Protestants by James Cubitt. In 1870, during which time Beebe was still studying architecture and Richardson was starting an architectural practice, the British architect, James Cubitt, published *Church Designs for Congregation: Its Developments and Possibilities*, which, essentially, was a guide for architects who were designing structures appropriate for evangelical religions. In his book, Cubitt indicated that a centralized structure, that is one that deviates from the basilican style of church design, and rather focuses on a less longitudinal plan, is more appropriate for congregations that necessitate seeing and hearing a speaker. He suggested that that form of church building was new and needed to

be experimented with and developed as it would “plan a grand open space before the pulpit and communion table—surely a natural arrangement for a Protestant church.”¹⁵ Cubitt encouraged church builders to design progressively:

step out of the enchanted circle of habit and precedent in which we go round and round and get no further—to break through the ‘tyranny of custom,’ and to find a type on which architecture and practical utility are not incompatible [...] It was for Catholic times to perfect the long, many-columned avenues of nave and aisles; it remains for us to develop the equally magnificent capabilities of the central dome and lantern tower.¹⁶

For inspiration Cubitt illustrates Byzantine interiors, such as the Constantinopolitan churches of Sta. Sophia and Sta. Irene, and suggests that their centralized plans can be modeled after in the nineteenth century for Protestant-church design.

In Beebe’s plan, it is precisely the sort of church arrangement that was followed. The sanctuary is a centralized space with



FIG. 15. ST. THOMAS CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, 1877. DETAIL OF SOFFIT MOULDING. | Candace Iron.

no transepts, a small chancel area and an amphitheatrical seating arrangement.

Traditionally, Anglican services were conducted in a chancel, an area of the east end of the church equivalent to an apse. In St. Thomas Church, the importance of the chancel (as being the area of the sanctuary that holds the most significance) is subtly accentuated, with the central chancel arch being composed of multiple orders. It is the only arch in the sanctuary to be given such distinction. The reason for that is to indicate that this is where the “action” of the service is going to take place or where the preacher is going to be located. That area of the interior further adds to the eclectic nature of the building,



FIG. 16. ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, LONDON, 1721-1726. JAMES GIBBS. EXTERIOR: SOUTHWEST FAÇADE. | Candace Iron.



FIG. 17. ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, LONDON, 1721-1726. JAMES GIBBS. EXTERIOR: INTERIOR. | Candace Iron.



FIG. 18. ST. THOMAS CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, 1877. DETAIL OF CAPITAL. | Candace Iron.

as it harkens back to traditional Anglican sanctuary design, wherein the apsidal end of a church/cathedral was marked by a roodscreen blocking the congregation from the mystical aspects of the church service. That concept is however in direct contradiction with the seating arrangement, again adding to the unease or incongruity of that church.

The seating arrangement is a feature of Beebe's design that deviates greatly from Richardson's work. In St. Catharines, Beebe planned to incorporate an amphitheatrical seating arrangement. That sort of arrangement was most often used by Protestant religions by the mid 1870s, as their church practice required attention and participation from the audience. As Jeanne Halgren Kilde explains, "Listening became the primary worship."¹⁷ The traditional basilican plan of seating allowed the voices of the speakers to carry only part of the way down the nave, thus not all of the congregation members could hear the clergy. In an evangelical church, that lack of auditory access to the clergy defies the very purpose of the church

service and therefore makes a basilican church impractical for an evangelical service. The amphitheatrical plan, however, acts to improve acoustics, by "lowering the authority figure and placing the audience in an expanding circle above that individual [...] sound naturally carries upward. Thus, it is far more effective to speak to a crowd of people from below rather than above because many more individuals can hear the voice."¹⁸ For that reason, the amphitheatre arrangement of seating was far more effective for evangelical congregations. That intended seating plan, while existing now, was not originally executed, but the concept can be seen in the original plan.

As Richardson's Trinity Church was not centralized, it did not feature an amphitheatrical sanctuary. Again looking to James Cubitt's book of designs, there is a discussion about the uses of the "theatre plan" and its effectiveness for preaching. Although Cubitt does not discuss the advantages acoustically, he does advocate its ability to have all of the audience face the clergy equally.¹⁹

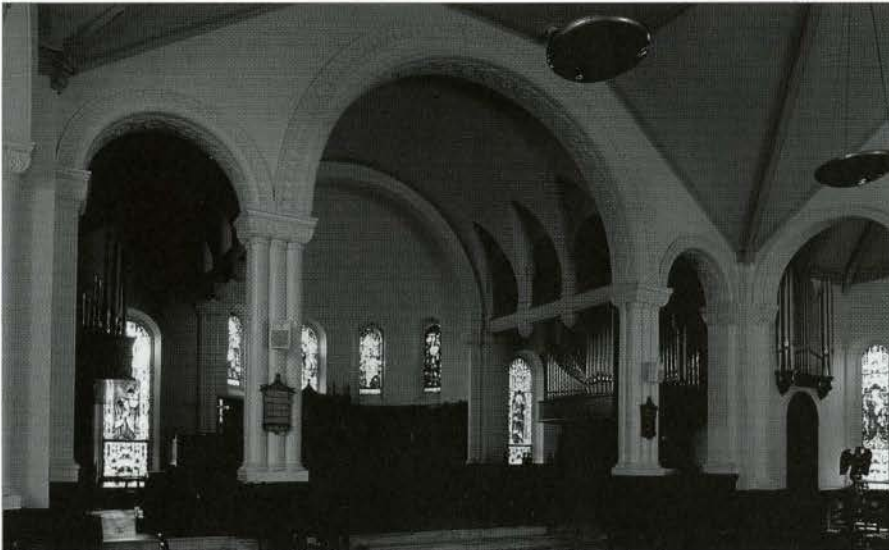


FIG. 19. ST. THOMAS CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, 1877. INTERIOR, CHANCEL. | Malcolm Thurby.

The seating arrangement Beebe employed at St. Thomas illuminates an important influence for Beebe in his career: Gurdon P. Randall, his mentor. Randall, as a pattern book producer, wrote of his enthusiasm for amphitheatrical planning. In his 1882 *How to Build School Houses; with Systems of Heating, Lighting, and Ventilation*, Randall not only expressed his keen attitude toward the arrangement, but also took full credit for executing the first fully-developed amphitheatrical sanctuary composition. Beebe seems to have followed Randall in his use of the theatre plan in St. Catharines where all of the congregation members have access to the speaker and what is going on in the apse, both visually and audibly.

In Protestant religions, that accessibility was a key element, as their services are intended to be meetings where the congregations can discuss God. Generally speaking, Anglicans do not place as much emphasis on the discussion of God in their practice and therefore the accessibility of the speaker to the crowd is not relevant in their architecture, a fact demonstrated

by the medieval roodscreen. In St. Catharines, however, the oddity of the church planning can be explained through an examination of its congregational history.

WHY SUCH AN ODD PLAN?

Like many religious orders, Anglicanism can be described as having a "High" and a "Low" sect. Although both are essentially Anglican, they differ in their ecclesiological values. Anglicanism as a whole developed as a break from the *Ecclesia Anglicana*, the title that was given to the English Catholic Church. Basically, departure from Catholicism involved the rejection of the authority of the Papacy, the denial of Church infallibility, the non-necessity of Confession and, among other things, the Supremacy of the Scriptures and the triple Eucharist. As Anglicanism was formed out of an act of reformation, there was always a sect of the Church that continued that reformative vein. This faction of Anglicanism created an Evangelical or "Low" order of Anglicanism, which sought further reforms and modernizing akin to those of the Protestants. High

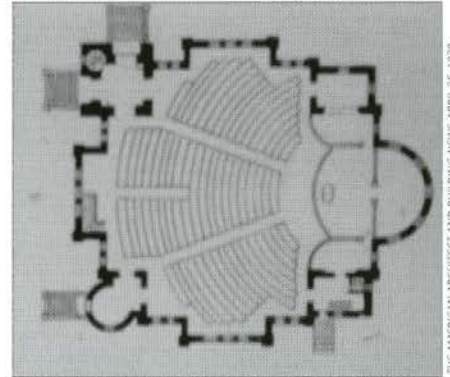


FIG. 20. DETAIL FROM PLAN OF ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO.

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDING NEWS, APRIL 26, 1879.

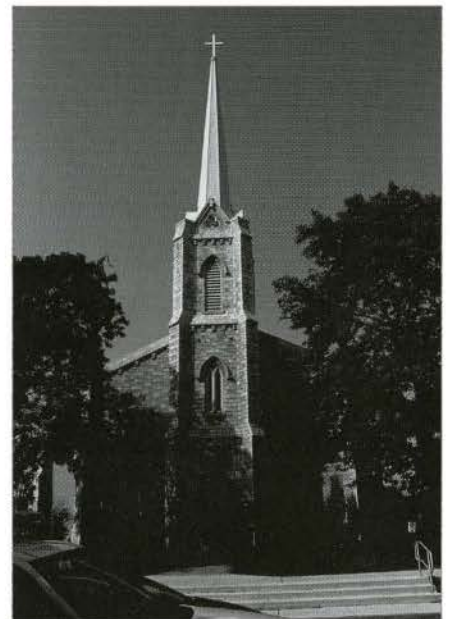


FIG. 21. ST. GEORGE ANGLICAN CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO. EXTERIOR FAÇADE. | Candace Iron.

Anglican services are analogous to Catholic services, in that the preacher acts as an intermediary to God. The congregation does not directly have an experience with God and often is often cut off from the religious experience altogether. The service is quite medieval in its form, as often the clergyman stands facing the liturgical east end of the church, where God resides, with his back to the congregation.

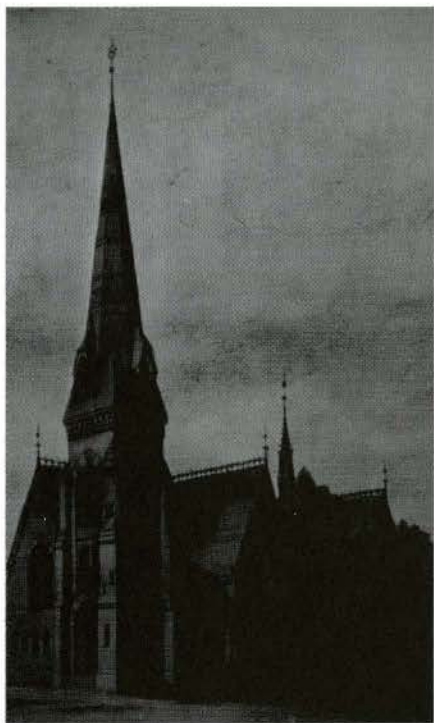


FIG. 22. FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, JAMESTOWN, NEW YORK. MILTON EARL BEEBE, ARCHITECT.



FIG. 23. ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, BUFFALO, NEW YORK. MILTON EARL BEEBE, ARCHITECT.

As history suggests, the Anglican congregation of St. Thomas Church is best described as a "Low" order of Anglicanism. In the 1860s, the congregation of St. George Anglican Church, the first Anglican church of St. Catharines, was led by Reverend Henry Holland and his curate, Reverend James Francis. In general, the 1860s present a time in Anglican history of controversy concerning ritualistic practices throughout the Anglican world. In Ontario, the Provincial Synod of 1868 passed resolutions condemning many practices, such as the use of candles and elevating the elements of the Communion Service.²⁰ These traditions were also under fire locally at St. George's, where much of the congregation was accusing Reverend James Francis of introducing and practicing ritualistic elements during services. He was accused of "turning to the Communion Table with his back to the

congregation, the use of candles, musical 'amens,' preaching in a surplice rather than a simple black gown; the lack of a prayer from the minister just before the sermon; the act of facing the altar during the creed,"²¹ among many other papist activities. Many members of St. George became increasingly dissatisfied with the excessively ritualistic services and formed a new "Low" congregation that better suited their evangelical beliefs. Prior to 1870, many of St. George's members left the congregation and began meeting in a schoolhouse to worship in their evangelical form of Anglicanism. In 1872, the new parish opened a frame building, Christ Church, in which they could continue to practice permanently. The congregation, rapidly growing, soon outgrew the church, necessitating another new building.²² The lot on Ontario Street at the top of Church Street was purchased and the

new, Richardsonian-styled St. Thomas was erected in 1877 and opened in 1879.²³ The words of Dr. Theophilus Mack, who spoke before the laying of the corner stone, best express the reasons why the evangelical congregation left St. George and felt a need to erect their own structure.

"We enter upon our task in the hope that we shall, ere long, bring to a satisfactory completion a church wherein we and our descendants for generations to come may pray in the beautiful and scriptural language of our liturgy, and worship in spirit and in truth in accordance with the tenets sanctified by the martyrdom of our bishops."²⁴ The cornerstone was then put in its permanent place.

There was an obvious desire felt by the congregation to separate itself from the High Church of St. George's parish. That likely presents a key factor in the styling of St. Thomas. Although the minutes of the original building committee do not survive, it is likely that they expressed a desire for "non-Gothic" designs when petitioning for architectural submissions. St. George was, in keeping with the Ecclesiologists and in following in the proverbial footsteps of the commissioner Gothic buildings that came before it, pointed (Gothic) and, in order to symbolically divest itself from that church, the new congregation likely would have specified non-Gothic before accepting designs.

In his Buffalo practice, Beebe had already designed many church buildings, all in the Gothic style. If the building committee for St. Thomas had not specified non-Gothic in some manner, then it is likely that his design submission would have been styled in the mode that he was accustomed to in his American practice. Beebe was, as would be expected, not the only architect who submitted design ideas for St. Catharines. William George

Storm, of Toronto, also submitted a drawing for the committee. In the Toronto urban landscape, Storm was most noted for building in the Richardsonian manner, something that can be best illustrated in his St. Andrew Presbyterian Church (1874-1875), which has all the monumentality of a Richardsonian structure.²⁵ A Toronto architect of Storm's stature would probably not have sent out drawings for churches outside of Toronto, unless they were specifically suited to his forte. The change in style for Beebe and retention of style for Storm, along with the congregation's history, which was very specific in its dislikes regarding non-evangelical services, collectively indicate that the building committee likely would have envisioned a concept for its new congregational home, making it a pre-requisite for submissions before soliciting architects to propose their ideas for the church. Thus it is important to note that the building committee was likely as responsible for the creative and somewhat pointed political statement made through the use of the Richardsonian style as the architect was.

CONCLUSION

St. Thomas church presents an interesting ecclesiastical occurrence and an architectural dilemma: "Why would an Anglican church choose an architectural design that is in many ways non-Anglican?" The only explanation for such oddity is that the church was designed for an evangelical congregation. Due to its wish to isolate itself from its "High" Anglican parent church, the congregation of St. Thomas likely requested a design that would deny its roots and emphasize its evangelical reformative vein. Through the use of the Richardsonian style, a new style that was not tied to any religious heritage, and through a sanctuary design appropriate for a nonconformist population, Beebe was able to submit an architectural plan

that was suited for that particular congregation. The building that Beebe created for St. Thomas represents an early benchmark in Canadian architectural tradition, wherein Anglicanism evolved into a new dimension, that change was marked in service, practice, and, as can be seen in St. Catharines, architecture. His church was an anomaly in its time, and while other architects and congregations would follow, St. Thomas stands out as an early symbol of Anglican reform. In 1877, the year St. Thomas Church was designed by Beebe, the "Low" Anglican Wycliffe College was founded in Toronto to train "Low Church" clergy in the evangelical ways of John Wycliffe. The ties between St. Thomas and the growing evangelical form of Anglicanism are best illustrated by the founding of St. Catharines's "Low Anglican" Ridley College in 1888. An oral history of St. Thomas suggests that the male students of Ridley would march to St. Thomas for weekly services in the Low Church.

The innovative method of creating a building that visually divides the "Low" from the "High" Church would be taken up by later architects, including William Ford Howland (1874-1948), who in 1907-1908 would design St. Anne Anglican Church, Toronto, in the Byzantine style, and George M. Miller (1854/5-1933), whose 1911 chapel for Wycliffe College, Toronto, would be in the Romanesque building mode.

Beebe's design is informed, eclectic, and monumental and not only reflects the likely wishes of the original building committee and the congregation, but also demonstrates Beebe's ability as an architect to design a grand-scale building that would become the picturesque symbol for a new, evangelical form of Anglican worship.

NOTES

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