

Guildford Cathedral

This essay is an architectural analysis of Guildford Cathedral and will discuss the design process, its inception and how the design changed, the construction, the area and analyse the building section by section. This essay will also cover why the Cathedral is an influential and iconic building including architectural styles of the time and new updates to the site. Furthermore, it will discuss the possible changes to the site in the future and whether these should go through and how it could change the site negatively.

Guildford Cathedral is one of the last cathedrals built in the world, it was opened in 1947 and its construction was fully complete in 1961 with its consecration in May of that year. Guildford Cathedral's conception evolved when the diocese of Winchester was divided into three in 1927. In 1928 the new bishop of Guildford, John Greig, proposed to build a new Cathedral to serve the area. An architectural competition was held for the design of the new Cathedral. The requirements of the competition were clearly laid out in order to make sure the Cathedral could easily serve Guildford. The specifications stated that it had to contain a Nave which would be able to seat 1500 people, with uninterrupted views of the altar from every seat, there also had to be a smaller chapel on the same level as the main nave area and the building could not be longer than 450 feet. The five architects selected included Harold Gibbons, Thomas Worthington, A.G Crimp, W.S Palmer Jones and Maufe (Guildford Cathedral Archive, n.d.), 183 proposals were submitted and Edward Maufe was chosen out of the final five that were voted by the public.

Sir Edward Maufe was an architect born in Yorkshire in 1882, he became interested in architecture and studied in London for five years. He and his family then moved to the Red House, an iconic dwelling in south-east London designed by Phillip Webb in the Arts and Crafts style. The design of Red House influenced his work in later life as we can see in his designs all throughout his career. His first design was Kelling Hall in Norfolk. He became known for his private dwellings and his work on memorials, places of worship as well as work on the Air Forces Memorial. He received a knighthood for his work on the Imperial War Graves Commission.

Guildford Cathedral is a very influential and important place of worship as it is one of the last cathedrals ever built, other late cathedrals include the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral also known as 'Paddy's Wigwam', Clifton and Coventry Cathedral. The significance of this is important as we have built cathedrals for 1000 years due to our devotion to religion however no cathedrals are going to be built in the near future as we have become more agnostic and multicultural which has led to a loss of an incredible architectural style. Guildford Cathedral can teach us how the style of these structures have changed over time.

Stag Hill was chosen as the build site for the Cathedral as it has a vantage point and is easily accessible, the foundation of the Cathedral involved using piles 15m into the ground and in July of 1936 the stone foundations were complete and construction of the building could start. Unfortunately, the building process of the Cathedral slowed to a halt due to the start of the war bringing a shortage of money, materials and manpower. The Crypt Chapel was used from 1947 to host services until the rest of the

building could be completed. In order to progress the Cathedral in 1952, the “buy a brick” campaign was launched which invited ordinary people to buy a brick, inscribe it with their name and donate it to the church to be built. The campaign was extremely successful and popular as 200,000 people volunteered to buy a brick. The population of the Guildford District at the time was around 90,000 (www.visionofbritain.org.uk, n.d.) which illustrates the popularity of the campaign. Through this the Cathedral build was invigorated and progress was made. Progress was still extremely slow and even by its consecration in 1961 the tower was still not complete. Construction continued and the tower was finally completed in 1966 and additions to the Cathedral have been ongoing until 2005 with the addition of the statues on the west of the Cathedral. This means that the Cathedral’s construction process was not entirely complete until around 70 years after the initial designs were written down.

Maufe when designing the cathedral wrote that his idea was “[t]o produce a design definitely of our time, yet in the line of the great English cathedrals, to build anew on tradition, to rely on proportion, mass, volume and line rather than on elaboration and ornament” (Maufe, 1933). Maufe took this design philosophy and designed the cathedral, which displayed gothic modern architecture with modern abilities in construction. Constructed using brick and limestone in a neo-Gothic style, the tower reaches 49m with an angel statue on top. The Cathedral follows a traditional shape with a long Nave leading to a crossing with altar and choir area. The building also has structures extending from each side of the front serving as entrances straight into the aisles. At the back there is an extended area behind the main structure of the apse with a few smaller buildings attached to the sides of the back, these areas behind the main area are used for offices, essential facilities and an entrance to the crypt. The Cathedral is about 115m long and 40m wide which makes it a reasonably large cathedral and visible throughout many points of Guildford. The roof of the Cathedral is clad in copper, contrasting with the brick very well and making the design even more unique as a cathedral. (possibility to include complimentary colours as a design decision, contrasting old and new) Being a modern Cathedral designed in the 1930s the influence of art deco and the combination with neo-Gothicism is what gave Guildford Cathedral its unique appearance, with gothic arches, lack of extreme depth in facades and smoothness all around the exterior and interior.

Other modern cathedrals like the Liverpool Cathedral by George Gilbert Scott and the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral designed by Sir Frederick Gibberd are useful for comparison. These two modern cathedrals built less than a kilometre away from each other are completely different designs, the Liverpool Cathedral was built in a Gothic revival style and Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral was built in a modern and gothic revival style. Giles Gilbert Scott was extremely well known for his work designing modern gothic structures and did not change the way he designed Liverpool Cathedral even with new modern architectural styles constantly coming up and changing architecture. Sir Frederick Gibberd was influenced by two architectural styles, the gothic-style as well as by modern architecture and we can see how massively that



changed the design of the cathedral, it does not have a traditional cross shape plan and appears very different to any other cathedrals.

Guildford Cathedral is an example of being influenced strongly by both traditional gothic and the styles of the time, with a traditional plan and gothic features as well as different materials, smoother finishes and modern shapes. The Cathedral does not have front towers like many traditional gothic cathedrals but has a flat front façade, the central tower gives it a design similar in shape to the Liverpool Cathedral. It is also

evident that Maufe was influenced by the Albi Cathedral (r(Guildford Cathedral - Architectural Origins Guildford Cathedral - Architectural Origins, n.d.)), giving it a brick construction which also influenced its window designs.

The main entrance to the cathedral is a long pathway with great access from the A3, coming up the hill the cathedral comes into view, the front is framed well using the hill. The foremost view of the grass allows you to see the front windows, with the tower and transepts behind. Walking around the cathedral reveals more aspects to the side structures which are used as side entrances, they have open limestone arches which provide views through and out to the side down the hill onto the houses below. Continuing past the side entrance on the south-side there is a pathway leading down the hill where when you look up from the bottom, there is another view framing the shape of the cathedral looking directly towards the main tower. Walking back up towards the hill the south elevation of the nave the gothic windows are thin and have small statues at the bottom with crosses detailed at the top. Smaller rectangular windows above the arches are in a face set back from the side of



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the nave then meeting the roof. This way of further layering the arches and windows is again similar to The Liverpool Cathedral nave elevation. Coming up towards the tower on the transept there are two doors in arches with an angel statue in the middle, which is at the bottom of a large gothic window. This is detailed with further angels and a star at the top, all within a deep-

set arch. The copper pitched roof then begins, and the tower is directly behind. The tower itself is square and 49m tall, it stops with a flat roof and has a statue at the top of a golden angel. Each side has two window arches and small rectangular windows near the top of the tower. Maufe subtly adds depth to the tower by keeping it simple but having extra layers of bricks either side of the windows



coming to a stop before the apexes. Continuing round the back past the transepts the Nave structure continues after the tower and with similar detailing and façade, with smaller structures extending the width on a lower level starting from the transept. These give it some depth and give more interesting views when coming round all the way to the back. At the back the main structure ends and extends, from the back is the apse of the cathedral, which is slightly more detailed. Buttresses are placed evenly framing small arched windows, with the buttresses detailed with limestone steps and angels on top, the apse church is a beautiful addition and a great way of incorporating detail the cathedral.

We can see the modern styles easily all throughout the outside of the cathedral and its obvious that Maufe wanted to avoid



repetitive design. In his quote mentioned earlier he stated that he would mainly rely on proportion and lines instead of ornamentation which was used in early gothic cathedrals. All throughout the exterior we can see how he subtly achieves this whether it is through added depth with the brick construction, how the limestone details created a change in colour and texture around features, inclusion of statues



and artwork with limestone details and especially with how he includes smaller structures surrounding the building which adds new edges brings depth and encompassing changing views. The smaller buildings to the side behind the transepts achieve this effect best as some have different roof levels with an arched entrance in the middle, with a pitched roof which again gives a subtle change in elevation. The main entrance to the nave does this also with the limestone artworks above the arches, and each within a deep-set arch themselves giving further depth.



Entering the cathedral through the main entrance there is a clear view of the nave all the way to the main altar area and to the very back of the nave. High gothic vaults go up to the ceiling about 30m high leading down the nave to the crossing where the tower is above. Detailed inside with white Italian marble floors and white limestone for the main pillars, with yellow limestone detailed on the edges.



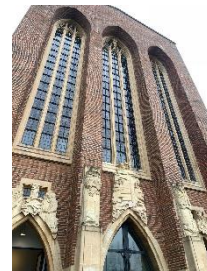
There are vaulted aisles created either side of the main nave which have views going all the way to the back to the entrance to the apse and office spaces. The main space has plenty of light provided by the entrance and nave windows, as well as the additional smaller rectangular windows above. The vaults created at the top are minimal and have even recessed lighting built in. The altar area and choir space is behind the crossing and the organ is built into the south transept. On the back wall of the Nave there is a circular stained-glass window at the top which is one of the only stained-glass windows in the

whole cathedral which depicts a cross and focuses attention to this feature, this is very uncommon for a cathedral and another way it is set apart from others. The rose stained window depicts a dove in the centre with gifts of the Holy spirit surrounding it, the stained glass in the cathedral was designed by Moira Forsyth (Guildford Cathedral Archive, n.d.). The gifts of the Holy spirit in the rose window are used as Guildford Cathedral is the only cathedral in England dedicated to the Holy Spirit. The statues added in 2004 on the west front were designed by Charles Gurrey, the statues are of nine figures and was designed in a way responding to how the whole cathedral was built(charlesgurrey.com, n.d.). The other statues around the building were designed by a selection of other sculptors such as Richard Browne, Alan Collins, John Cobbet. Dennis Huntley did the statues atop the buttresses.



In conclusion, Guildford Cathedral is an iconic and important cathedral for Guildford as well as the history of cathedral construction. It is highly reminiscent of traditional

cathedral design while being uniquely modern and still holding up today. With an interesting history of problems and even campaigns to get the building complete. Its even possible Guildford Cathedral may have large changes to the site as the cathedral has proposed new housing on the south side of the hill which would add around 100 homes next to the Cathedral changing completely how the entire building would be seen all throughout the town.



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