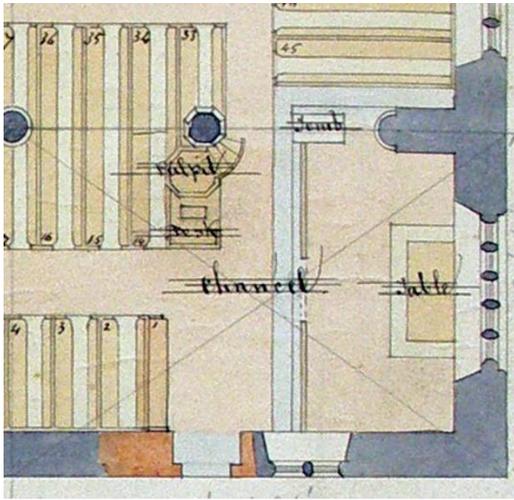
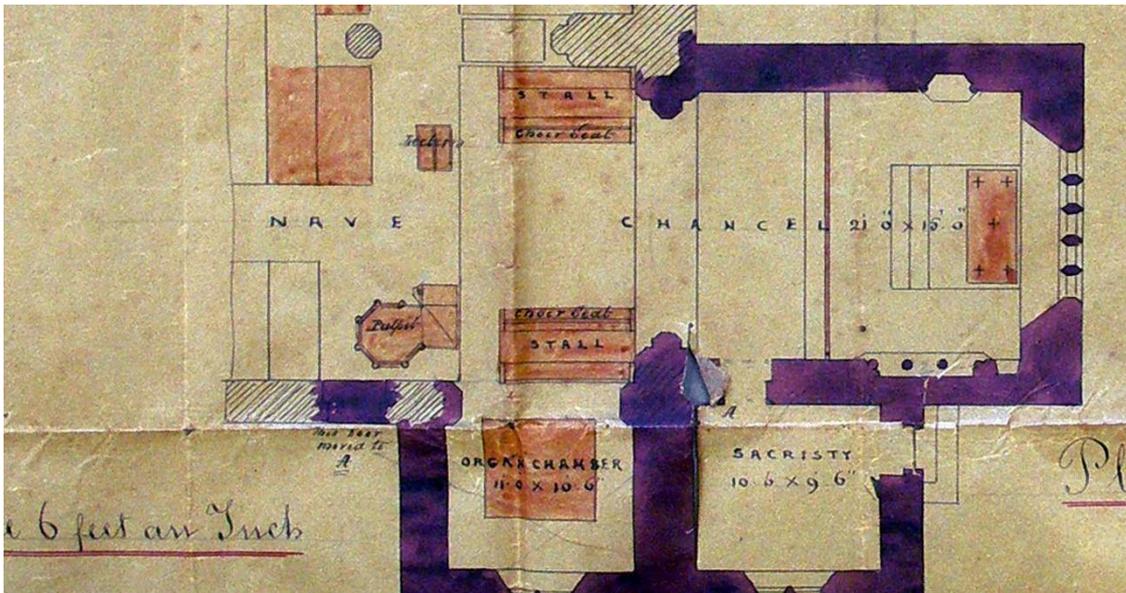


23. THE PULPIT, STALLS, READING DESKS AND LECTERN

The location of the pulpit and lectern or reading desk in a church has varied over the centuries, the pulpit usually standing at the front of the chancel, which was the province of the clergy, in front of the nave where the congregation stood or sat. The pulpit was raised so that the clergyman could be heard easily.



There is some information about the position of the pulpit. The plan made by J. P. Seddon in 1870 clearly shows the pulpit located to the south of the first column of the arcade, with a desk in front. This would have allowed the clergyman to face the congregation in the now-vanished gallery on the south wall, though not the unfortunates in the north aisle. Nicholson's proposal of 1876 resulted in the organ chamber only being built, but in the extract from his plan below you can see that the pulpit was moved nearer to its present position. As the chancel was never extended to the east, the stalls pushed the pulpit further to the west.



There are now two stalls facing each other across the aisle and a lectern behind the stall on the north side of the aisle. The pulpit is now squashed between a reader's desk and the first pew, the number of pews having been reduced to accommodate it. The lower part of the pulpit is in darker wood than the top, but it's impossible to see if this is older than the top. The current lectern, pulpit and stalls were given by the parishioners in memory of Douglas Seaton, vicar of the parish for from 1875 until his death in 1923. Col. Meyrick had offered to supply a new 'comely and decent pulpit and reading desk' in 1860.

Mentions of the pulpit occur in the churchwardens' records. In 1695 John Mayor and Thomas Weaver were paid 14s 6d for 'removing the pulpit'. In 1805 it cost 4s. 2d. for the 'carriage of the pulpit cushion & cloth & communion table cloth to & from Hereford' to be dyed. These may have been the cloths purchased in 1792 for £14 7s. In 1706 the parish was charged with 15s. 2d. for covering a cushion, possibly of silk. In 1730 the pulpit was furnished with a mat.