HISTORY AND GUIDE:

SAINT JOHN'S MEMORIAL CHAPEL

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
TO THE MEMORY OF

ARTHUR CARL LICHTENBERGER

1900 - 1968

BISHOP, DOCTOR IN DIVINITY

PROFESSOR OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY

WHO LOVED THE CHAPEL
CONTENTS

History of the Chapel ........................................ Page 1
Guide to the Chapel ............................................ Page 6
Bibliography ....................................................... Page 9
PREFACE

THIS BOOKLET would not normally need a preface. As originally issued in 1972 it was the work of a hot summer week, much of which was spent musing on the view of what was then the Chapel of the Episcopal Theological School from the window of my study at 101 Battle Street.

As now reissued, however, this booklet deals with the Chapel of the new Episcopal Divinity School, the result of the merger of the Episcopal Theological School and the Philadelphia Divinity School in 1974.

In the nature of the case, the history of the Chapel, and much of the description of it, remains as it was before. It may well be a matter of regret that the splendid St. Andrew’s Collegiate Chapel in Philadelphia was not among the movable assets of the merger, though Philadelphia graduates will recognize familiar ornaments, vessels, and vestments now in use in Cambridge. But in a profound sense, the building itself has been possessed by the new institution; and it is of this building that we are now speaking.

As I did before, I should express my thanks to the Rev. Dr. John E. Booty, who took the first "walking tour" with a draft of the book in hand; and to the Rev. David Siegenthaler, who helped in locating and interpreting the original drawings and early photographs of the building.

Mr. Edward Nilsson, architect and sometime resident at the School, designed the cover, and continues to be a valuable friend of the new School as he was of the old.

L.G. Patterson

August 1978
HISTORY OF THE CHAPEL

The Chapel of the Episcopal Divinity School, now over a century old, is of considerable historical and architectural interest in an historic town which is a virtual gallery of architectural styles. Its fundamental purpose for being, however, is that of providing a liturgical center for the life of the School. It is also used by Weston School of Theology, (Society of Jesus), with which the School has a particularly close association within the Boston Theological Institute.

This brief history and guide is concerned with the historical and architectural features of the Chapel primarily as they may be of interest to those who visit or use it today. If the work touches on other aspects of the past and present history of our School, it is because of the peculiar way in which the building itself reflects that history.

Beginnings. The Episcopal Theological School was scarcely a year old when it received a gift of $75,000 from one of the original members of its Board of Trustees and Board of Visitors, Robert Means Mason, for the erection of a building in memory of his wife, brother, and other members of his family, to be "perpetually maintained as its chapel". The cornerstone was laid on July 24, 1868, on land already purchased by the School at the intersection of Mason and Brattle Streets, and the Chapel was consecrated with considerable ceremony on November 16, 1869, by the Right Reverend Manton Eastburn, D.D., fourth Bishop of Massachusetts and President ex-officio of the Board of Visitors.

A memorial inscription in the wall opposite the tower entrance records the Mason Memorial. Immediately visible from what was long the main entrance of the building, above whose doorway runs the text, "These stones shall be for a memorial" (Joshua 4:7), the inscription leaves no doubt of Robert Means Mason's interest in the building.

The inscription is incidentally of interest for its use of the earliest designation of the School as the "Protestant Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge". The later shortening of the name may have been, as has been suggested in a recent history, merely an effort at simplification. However, the dropping of reference to location, together with the abandonment of the Board of Visitors, made up of the Bishop, priests, and laity of the Diocese, was part of the School's assertion of its position as an independent theological institution of more than local character. Without formal canonical process, the Chapel attained the ad hoc position of an Ecclesiastical Peculiar, the Dean of the School being responsible for the ordering of its public worship.

The Chapel was the first building erected specifically for the use of the School. Its consecration roughly coincided with occupancy by the Dean of a frame dwelling at the corner of Phillips Place and Mason Street (since moved to 170 Brattle Street). Prior to that time, the School had functioned from a location farther to the west along Brattle Street. The land on which the Chapel was built was an open field. The nearest buildings to the north and west were the Richard Henry Dana, Jr. House at 4 Berkeley Street (the present Deanery), and the Oliver Hastings House at 101 Brattle Street (now faculty residences). Sources speak of a view from both of these houses toward the Charles River.

Several things will seem odd to a person who can envision the Chapel in its original setting. For one thing, the considerable size and prominent position of the building will seem to contrast oddly with the quite inconsiderable and unobtrusive place which the School might be thought to have had in the Cambridge of the time. Indeed, when the Chapel was built, none of the established seminaries of the Episcopal Church had a place of such dimensions set apart for public worship.

For another thing, it will be evident that the building was originally intended to face the intersection of Brattle and Mason Streets rather than the present campus. Successive efforts have been made to obscure this fact, the last being the abandonment in 1967 of a gravelled drive from the street to the tower entrance and the opening of a new main entrance at the west end of the nave. But even a cursory view of the exterior will show that the side of the building facing the campus is less impressive than that facing the street.

The size and prominence of the building, as well as its relationship to the surrounding streets, are explained by the circumstances of the founding of the School. The physical size of the new institution was deceptive. It had a broad base in local Episcopalianism, whose leaders had long sought a visible witness to its presence in the intellectual and theological world of Cambridge. It was
also their hope that the School would function not merely as a center of theological learning, but as a place from which something different from the prevalent Unitarianism would receive a serious hearing.

As one of those who shared these views, Robert Means Mason proposed to do more than provide a Chapel for the School. His aim was to attract a congregation from throughout the town as well. It was announced at the consecration that the building would be a "Free Church", which strictly meant that no pew rents would be charged but already implied the wider purpose intended for the building. We shall have occasion to return to this wider purpose in the sections which follow.

**Design.** The Chapel is the work of the architectural firm of Ware and Van Brunt, which designed the School quadrangle only a few years later, and a Deanery at 3 Mason Street (a building which partly obscured the original design of the Chapel and was demolished to make way for Sherrill Hall). Other surviving local buildings of the firm include the Memorial Hall of Harvard University, the Cambridge Public Library, and the Henry Van Brunt House at 167 Brattle Street. A comparison of these buildings suggests that the Chapel is among the least conventional and most adaptable of the firm's contributions to Cambridge architecture.

The Chapel is badly described in the *Guide to Cambridge Architecture* as "modeled after English parish churches of the 13th and 14th centuries". Such may be the impression conveyed by the unusually high "broach" spire of banded stone, and by certain other decorative features of the south and east sides of the building. But in fact the central design is a novel mixture of elements which defies easy characterization. It is best understood by references to the problems which the several purposes intended for the building imposed upon the architects.

As already suggested, the task of the architects was to erect a building facing on the intersection of Mason and Brattle Streets, to serve the dual purpose of a Chapel for the School and a center for a wider congregation. An additional requirement was plainly that the building should be "oriented", with the apse or "altar end" facing east in the manner of Early Christian and Medieval churches. This additional requirement is presumably the result of the architectural tastes of the time. Cambridge then had no major ecclesiastical building reflecting the interests of the Camden Society and similar groups concerned with the revival of older architectural forms. The work of the firm of Ware and Van Brunt -- and particularly of Henry Van Brunt himself -- moved in that direction. Mason was later remembered as having "catholic" instincts and a commitment to traditional forms of public worship.

The central features of the building are easily grasped once the requirements imposed on the architect are understood. The building is roughly "oriented", with its axis somewhat south of east. The south wall, facing Brattle Street, has been given the character of a facade by the dominant position of the tower. The east end, once immediately visible from Mason Street, presents a pleasing series of retreating roof lines, and exhibits decorative features lacking on both the west and north sides of the building.

The interior of the building is no less novel than the exterior. When approached as originally intended, through the tower entrance, the attention of the visitor is immediately attracted to the eastern part of the building, with its nicely proportioned arrangement of columns and beams leading to the apsidal arch. This part of the building consists of a well-defined apse, balanced by side rooms which originally opened directly on it (designated "Robing Room" and "Side Porch" in the architect's drawings), and a transept of considerable proportions. The architect's drawings and other contemporary records show that the altar, pulpit, and lectern were located in the apse, and that the central space was filled with a set of eastward-facing pews, without a central aisle.

The relationship of the apse and transept of the building is more like that of an early Christian basilica than a Medieval parish church. Almost certainly, however, historical models were less important than the views of Bishop Eastburn and others, who insisted that there be a close proximity between the congregation and the clergy during public worship. That these views did not altogether coincide with those of the architect is evident from the fact that the proportions of the eastern part of the building are carefully obscured on the outside. The gabled windows at the north and south ends of the transept conceal the size of the transept, while the height of the roof which extends from the organ chamber in the tower to the niche containing the Mason Memorial inscription suggests a transept located further to the west than is actually the case. By this "conceit" the exterior of the building is given what would have been thought of at the time to be a Medieval aspect not actually reproduced in the interior.
The western part of the building consists of a nave of comparative simplicity (now perhaps a virtue but then a sign of disinterest), ending in a west wall dominated by a window in the Decorated Gothic style. A west door was not opened until the renovation of 1966-67, and from an historical point of view obscures the original plan of the building. An impression of size is given to the nave by the low walls and steeply pitched roof. Fundamentally, however, the nave served only to provide additional seating needed at the Sunday services.

It may be added here that the investigation of the structural aspects of the building undertaken in connection with the renovation of 1966-67 revealed few merely decorative features in any part of the building. Not only the exterior walls but also the interior columns and beams are carefully calculated to sustain the weight of the roof. Several schemes for the further acquisition of useable space in the eastern part of the building by the elimination of some of the columns and beams were abandoned as a result.

It has been suggested that the plan of the Chapel influenced Henry H. Richardson's design for Grace Church, Medford, Massachusetts, an early work of the famous architect of Trinity Church, Boston. In fact, the evidence shows that Van Brunt adapted and elaborated Richardson's slightly earlier and much less venturesome plan in the quite different circumstances in which he had to work. A comparison of the two buildings substantiates many of the suggestions made here regarding the task which the architect confronted and the means he used to accomplish it. The "legend" that Richardson was, whether initially or subsequently, impressed by Van Brunt's work, and that the relationship of apse and transept in Trinity Church owes something to the Chapel must remain in the nature of a legend.

The Chapel and the Parish. The opening of the Chapel as a church with a congregation meeting regularly just west of Christ Church was not everywhere well received. As early as the parochial report to the Diocese in December, 1869, there is a bitter reference to "the great reduction in communicants...partly due to the opening of St. John's Memorial Chapel...a few rods from Christ Church". Shortly both the Chapel and the parish suffered from the end of compulsory attendance by students of Harvard College, for whom pews at the front of each building had been specifically set aside. But in each case the loss was compensated for in other ways, and both places of worship prospered for a time.

The complete story of this aspect of the history of the Chapel remains untold. The Reverend Gardiner M. Day, D.D., in his Biography of a Church: A Brief History of Christ Church, Cambridge, Massachusetts, necessarily treats the establishment of the Chapel as an incident in the longer history of the parish. The several histories of the School have its function as an academic institution chiefly in view. The tendency of the parish was to regard those who attended the Chapel as rich intellectuals, while those associated with the School clung to the notion that it could function as a center of religious and theological life for the whole of Cambridge. Each had perhaps mistaken the realities of the situation in which they found themselves.

What can be said concretely is that the possibility of combining teaching and pastoral work was an important factor in negotiations leading the the first appointments to the faculty, through the Reverend Frederic Dan Huntington, D.D., Rector of Emmanuel Church, Boston, foresaw the difficulties involved when he elaborated the view that the academic responsibilities of a faculty of the sort envisioned would inevitably supercede all others.

In practice, the Chapel remained the domain of the small faculty and student body on weekdays, except when such notable figures as the Right Reverend Phillips Brooks, D.D. (Rector of Trinity Church, Boston, later sixth Bishop of Massachusetts) occupied the pulpit, while the burden of the Sunday services fell increasingly on the Dean of the School.

In the Deanship of the Right Reverend William Lawrence, D.D. (Dean 1889-93, later seventh Bishop of Massachusetts), members of the congregation erected the Gray Room (a vestry opposite the tower entrance given in memory of the Reverend George Zabriskie Gray, D.D., (Dean 1876-89), and also moved the organ from its original position in a chamber in the tower to a new location in the original "Robing Room" on the north side of the apse. At this time a frame Sunday School building (now housing the Building and Grounds Department of the School) was also erected.

Records of baptisms, marriages, and burials also testify to the continuing life of the Chapel congregation. But the wider function of the Chapel obviously came to pose a difficulty. A certain sense of relief on both sides marked the negotiations with Christ Church, begun in 1926 and ended in 1930, by which the independent congregation was brought to an end.
The rivalry between the Chapel and the parish has ceased. Until recently a few local residents attended the Sunday morning Eucharist in the Chapel as a matter of course; and records of baptisms, marriages, and burials are still kept at the School without being recorded at Christ Church. But the building itself, with its peculiar design and position facing the street, is the chief remaining witness to the wider function which the Mason Memorial envisioned.

Renovations. No building in regular use over a long period of time remains quite as originally conceived. Each, in fact, becomes a reflection of the various uses to which it has been put. In the case of the Chapel, the record of the changes which the building has undergone forms a history of the changing conceptions of its place in the life of the School.

The most subtle and pervasive change -- and the least often recognized -- was that worked by the erection of the School quadrangle on the adjacent ground to the north and west (1872-80). The quadrangle, and the other buildings later erected or acquired in the same direction, immediately altered the focus of the School away from the surrounding streets, and reversed the psychological and physical direction from which faculty and student body approached the building. It is interesting to note that in most recent publications of the School it is the view of the School from the quadrangle rather than from Brattle Street which is shown.

Two major renovations of the building itself have been undertaken (in 1930 and in 1966-67), each in its own way seeking to make the Chapel more useable for the worship of the School as conceived at the time.

The year 1930 actually marks the end rather than the beginning of a series of alterations in the interior of the building begun in the Deanship of William Lawrence (1889-93). At that time new pews were introduced in the nave or western part of the building, and a central aisle created. In the eastern part of the building, a series of choir-wise stalls were installed on either side of a central aisle. Pictures of the interior at this time also show the apse relieved of some of its original furnishings, the altar adorned with a cross, and an eagle lectern set below the steps at the head of the central aisle.

The effect of the changes was to make the eastern part of the building into an English "collegiate" church in which the daily offices could be more easily recited by the faculty and student body. What is recorded in them is the alteration in the worship of the School in a more traditional Anglican direction, an alteration paralleled in other similar institutions of the Episcopal Church at the time. They also show the growing concern with the needs of the School over those of the wider congregation which eventually led to the latter's abandonment.

The work actually undertaken in 1930 was basically a refinement of the Chapel in its new form. It was, appropriately enough, a gift of Bishop Lawrence's family in memory of his wife, Julia Cunningham Lawrence. At this time a stone altar was erected, the walls of the apse wainscoted, a handsomely carved pulpit and lectern established at either end of the steps leading to the apse, and carved chairs and kneeling desks for the officiants introduced within the apse itself. Inscriptions carved in wainscoting still record aspects of the Lawrence gift and the names of particular donors.

This renovation, which may be said to have taken over thirty years to complete, created the Chapel as it was to be used for over thirty years more. It made the Chapel a quite new building, since its overall effect was to make it seem far longer and narrower than before, uniting nave and choir and obscuring the transept. The building did now give the impression, not so much of an English parish church as of an English collegiate Chapel. Those involved in the renovation of 1966-67 can remember the surprise with which they viewed the building when the choir-wise stalls, and the rises on which they stood, were removed, and the dimensions of the eastern end once more exposed to view.

Between 1930 and 1966, the only substantial change in the Chapel was occasioned by the gift of a Holtkamp organ by the Friends of the School, and its installation in the upper tower chamber where the original organ had been located. Changes in the conduct of the services in the building, the addition of lights and hangings, and occasional refurbishing did not materially alter its interior aspect.

By the summer of 1966, however, the Deanship of the Right Reverend John B. Coburn, D.D., (Dean 1957-68, present Bishop of Massachusetts), new buildings were being erected by the School in close proximity to the Chapel, and liturgical changes were underway in Episcopal and other churches for which the Chapel seemed poorly adapted. The very demolition of the building was suggested. In the end, it was decided to remove the choir stalls, and to embark upon a period of experimentation with the use of the interior. At the same time a committee was appointed, under the
chairmanship of the Right Reverend Arthur C. Lichtenberger, D.D. (sometime Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, Professor of Pastoral Theology 1965-68), to consider the possibilities offered by the existing building. Other members of the committee were the Reverend Charles W. F. Smith, D.D. (Professor of the New Testament, Member of the Standing Liturgical Commission of the Episcopal Church), and the present writer. The recommendations of the committee began to be implemented during the Christmas recess of that year, and were completed in the summer of 1967 with the help of the architectural firm of Campbell, Aldrich, and Nutty.

These changes, which resulted roughly in what is now seen in the interior, included the replacement of the pews and choir-wide stalls with chairs, the relocation of the pulpit and lectern away from the apsidal arch, the placing of chairs for the officiants in the center of the apse, and the erection of a free-standing altar. At the same time a door was opened in the west wall of the nave, and an "hexagon" of stone-work laid outside the building to unite this new entrance with both the campus and Brattle Street. The old drive to the tower entrance was abandoned, and a projected drive leading to the "hexagon" delayed due to the difficulties posed by increased traffic on Brattle Street.

It should be added that a major assumption of the renovation, that all interior furnishings should be movable, has been justified by subsequent events. The altar, originally designed to stand at the top of the steps leading to the apse, is now normally kept in the midst of the choir. The hanging cross in the apse, made and later painted in red and gold by students, was a temporary expedient which has attained a certain degree of permanence. The need for colorful vestments and hangings is filled by the designs and workmanship of students. As now seen, the Chapel is still in the process of renovation, in keeping with the liturgical needs of the present time.

The renovation of 1966-67 was no less revolutionary than that begun by Bishop Lawrence. It retained most of the furnishings of 1930 (with the exception of the stone altar, now in use at The Church of Our Saviour, Brookline), at the same time that it revealed the spacious transept of the original building. But while it thus kept touch with the recent past and uncovered the virtues of the original interior, it once again created something new. The choir-wise arrangement of chairs still provides space for the recitation of the daily office, but a flexibility has been introduced which extends far beyond the mere possibility of celebrating the Eucharist facing the congregation, which was perhaps the main impetus behind the first changes made.

Unlike the earlier renovation, that of 1966-67 extended beyond the interior of the building. Through the opening of the west door, it attempted to relate the building more closely to the rest of the campus than had been the case in the earlier renovation. At the same time it opened new possibilities of relating the interior to the exterior space. Those who have attended the Easter Vigil, Baptism, and Eucharist which has become a high point in the celebration of the Christian Year at the School will testify that the lighting of a fire at the Hexagon serves to relate what goes on inside the building not only to the campus but to the town beyond it.

The Present. From what has been said, it should be clear that the Chapel is a building of considerable architectural interest as an example of the Gothic revival in Cambridge, as well as that it reflects the unfolding history of the School. More than once it has proved a tribute to the architect whose design is capable of doing more than he could possibly have foreseen.

This has never been more clear than at the present, in which the Chapel serves as the central place of worship of the Episcopal Divinity School. The existence of the new School has as yet had little impact on the building itself. But it is a fact which ought to be recorded somewhere that the suitability of the building for the liturgical purposes which the faculties engaged in discussing the merger of 1974 saw to be necessary was a factor in the accomplishment of the merger itself.

The Chapel continues to serve an even wider constituency than the School. It has for some years been used for important public services by the Weston School of Theology (Society of Jesus), with which the School shares many of its facilities. It serves a Roman Catholic Sunday morning congregation which draws a diverse membership from across Cambridge. On more occasions than are perhaps known to those who regularly use it, the Chapel also sees baptisms, marriages, and burials held for graduates, friends, and neighbors of the School.

The Chapel continues to be adaptable to circumstances not envisioned by those who built it. It is the responsibility of those who now use it to do so to the full -- in grateful remembrance of the family of Robert Means Mason, of the family of William Lawrence, and of the others who have helped to maintain it "for a memorial" not to any of them, ultimately, but to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever.
GUIDE TO THE CHAPEL

Exterior. The Chapel is now normally approached through the west door. But those interested in the history and architectural design of the building will first circle the building on the outside, beginning at the tower entrance, originally the main entrance to the building.

Viewed from in front of the tower entrance, the peculiar features of the building already mentioned begin to be seen. While the building itself is only 107 feet in length, the tower rises to a height of 128 feet, and stands entirely free of the building. With the smaller turret to the left, which contains the stairway to the organ loft, it forms the center of a facade facing Brattle Street. Seen from this position, the original direction of the Chapel also becomes evident in the emphasis given the eastern part of the building facing Mason Street by the embellishment of the window opening into the transept and the complex lines of the roofs of transept and apse already visible from this position.

From this point it is also possible to note how different are the materials of the Chapel from those of the quadrangle built only a few years later. In color and arrangement, the combination of "Roxbury rubble and Nova Scotia freestone", it contrasts sharply with the brick and stonework of Lawrence Hall and the other buildings north and west of the Chapel.

The tower entrance with its text from Joshua 4:7, ("These stones shall be for a memorial"), is obviously in need of repair and, in fact, suffered neglect long before the new main entrance was opened at the west end of the building.

The Cross atop the spire, all that remains of the elaborate ironwork which once embellished the roof-lines of the building, is slightly scarred and bent, the result of being struck by lightning in the heavy snow-storm of January 1969.

If one now proceeds to the east of the building, and ascends the steps to the adjacent wall of Sherrill Hall, one can still gain an impression of this part of the Chapel then seen from Mason Street. The width of the transept (68 feet), the embellishment of the eastward doorways, and the rows of windows opening on the apse, gave this part of the building an interest similar to that given the south wall and facade. The roof-lines here, with the spire rising to the left, added to the interest of this side of the building.

The doors on either side of the apse are now kept closed, and the rooms beyond them used as a sacristy and a storage area. Until the renovation of 1966-67, however, they were used, with the tower entrance, for access to the building; and academic gowns then worn by faculty and student body were hung in these entrances and in the Gray Room on the north side of the building.

Moving to the north side, one is immediately struck by the relatively simple treatment originally given this part of the building and the complexities created by the addition of the Gray Room and its related chimney. Note should be made of the two windows on this side of the building: the window of the original "Robing Room" to the east, which contains one of the few remaining examples of the original glass by Cook of Boston, and the circular or "rose" window above the Gray Room, a duplicate of that on the south side of the tower, which suggests something of how the north side of the building looked before the Gray Room was build.

West Door and Nave. Since the building is now normally entered from the west end of the nave, it is from here that the interior is most easily described.

The west door and its approaches, including the stone "hexagon" by which the Chapel is visually connected with the campus, were part of the renovation of 1966-67. To the north of the entrance is a statue of Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, given at the time of the renovation by Mr. William A. Coolidge of the Board of Trustees in memory of Jonathan Daniels, Class of 1966, who was shot and killed at Haynesville, Lowndes County, Alabama, on August 20, 1965. The birthday of Jon Daniels is regularly observed on March 20 with a Eucharist in the Chapel. The sculpture, by Fitzgerald, is repeated, accompanied by figures of sleeping disciples, at Trinity Church, Topsfield, Massachusetts, and at the Cistercian Monastery at Gethsemane, Kentucky.

The narthex screen inside the west door is also part of the renovation of 1966-67. It was designed to protect the nave from drafts, and, with similar screens now kept out of the way against the walls of the transept, to repair some of the accoustical difficulties of the building. The roof of the nave, as well as other parts of the building, was much simplified in 1966-67 by the enclosing of
the various exposed beams whose contributions to the sustaining of the roof could not be exactly determined.

The story of the windows in the nave and the rest of the building is a subject too complex for treatment in this brief guide. The west window, now reduced in size by the opening of the west door, shows Christ with St. Paul and St. John, and is the gift of the donor of the building in memory of his parents. The newer windows of the nave commemorate such English figures as William of Wyckham and Cranmer, Keble, and Maurice, and are of the same period as the windows of the apse, which show Christ and the Evangelists, a selection of the Prophets, and of the Doctors of the Eastern and Western Churches in medieval vestments. Other windows in the building are earlier and commemorate a wide variety of figures such as Wycliffe and Anselm, Benedict and Francis of Assisi, Elizabeth of Hungary and the Archangel Michael, and the Wesley brothers, Charles and John. The present sacristy, north of the apse, has already been mentioned as containing an example of the "Boston Glass" originally used in the windows of the nave.

At the present time the nave is fitted with chairs, and an effort is made through arranging them in relation to the table from which the bread and wine of the Eucharist are brought forward, to adjust the seating in this part of the building to the numbers present.

The cross affixed to the south wall of the nave was brought from Philadelphia, where it had been the central element in the reredos of St. Andrew's Collegiate Chapel. It was installed in the Chapel as a tangible witness to the merger of the Episcopal Theological School and the Philadelphia Divinity School in the New Episcopal Divinity School.

**Crossing.** The area at the foot of the nave and before the transept may be called the "crossing", not in the normal sense of being the junction of nave and transept but because this area was the place at which one originally entered the building from the tower. To the right is the doorway to the "Porch" or entrance beneath the tower. An upper chamber is approached by a stairway within the small turret already noted on the outside of the building, and now contains the pipes and main console of the Holtkamp organ installed in 1957.

The doorway from the "Porch" to the transept was opened in 1966-67, and facilitates movement between the organ console and the south end of the transept where instruments other than the organ are now often placed. The memorial doors opening on the crossing date from the period of the Lawrence furnishings, and have above them the seal of the Episcopal Theological School worked in glass.

Opposite the doorway to the tower is that to the Gray Room, and above it the inscription recording the Mason Memorial. The supporting columns of Tennessee marble (as an earlier description of the building is careful to describe them), have capitals of oak and ivy leaves -- motifs which recur in the capitals of the columns on either side of the apse and elsewhere in the interior and exterior of the building.

The font originally stood below the inscription, and was thus in the traditional place near the main entrance of the building. When the Gray Room doorway was opened beneath the inscription, the font was placed in the south end of the transept, and was largely obscured by the choir stalls. At present, baptisms are performed at a temporary font erected in the crossing, thus combining a modern practice with the original position of the font.

The Gray Room originally contained a fireplace with fender, accounting for the now unused chimney seen from the outside, and an enclosed marble wash basin at the point where a doorway was opened into the north end of the transept in 1966-67. As thus conceived, it was obviously a comfortable room in its own right, as well as a vestry opening on the Chapel. The new doorway provides direct access through the transept to the present sacristy on the north side of the apse, as well as another entrance to the Chapel itself.

The frieze above the doorway from the Gray Room to the nave has long been an object of curiosity. It is a plaster replica of the "Singing Boys", by Luca Della Robia, intended for the Duomo of Florence, but now housed in the Uffizi Palace. It may be that the frieze once occupied a place in the original organ chamber in the tower, perhaps as a balustrade, and was placed in its present position when the organ was moved to the north side of the apse in conjunction with the building of the Gray Room itself.

**Transept.** While the renovations of 1966-67 did much to restore the openness of this part of the building, the arrangement of furniture here is still roughly that which has existed since the introduction of the choir, the place where the daily offices are recited. The chairs of the nave front
directly on the choir area, and the long run serves to define the area and to unite it to the apse. Such a rug was an integral part of the plan for the renovation of the Chapel, and the present rug was selected by Dean Coburn from the collection of Gregorian of Wellesley. The pulpit, lectern, and kneeling benches are gifts of the Lawrence family in 1930, but originally occupied positions closer to the apse.

The altar now normally stands in the midst of the choir, and is returned to the place originally intended for it at the top of the steps leading to the apse only on occasions when extra space is needed for chairs. The altar itself is an oak table made at the School, and is covered with an Jacobean "carpet" except on Good Friday. The "carpet" and other hangings are chiefly the design and workmanship of students, as is the "trendle", actually a carriage wheel supporting twelve candles, which is suspended over the altar from Advent to Epiphany.

The eastward-facing walls of the transept carry memorial plaques once distributed throughout the building, among which is that to the Reverend John Seely Stone, D.D. (first Dean of the School 1867-76), who had much to do with the erection of the building. This is not a time when such memorials are much in favor, but an effort was here made to provide a location for former and future memorials to those who have contributed to the life of the School.

The Aps. e. The eastern end of the building culminates in the apse. Immediate access to this part of the building was once had from the "Robing Room" and the "Side Porch", which also opened upon the transept. During the early years of the Chapel it was from here that all of the services were conducted. The original altar and pulpit were those brought from Grace Church, Boston, and were the work of its Rector, the Reverend Charles Mason, brother of the donor and one of the two principal subjects of the Mason Memorial.

As described elsewhere, direct access to the "Robing Room" and "Side Porch" was cut off by the introduction of the wainscoting and reredos in 1930, and a stone altar introduced. A close inspection of the woodwork still reveals the outline of the reredos, and credence table, while a closer inspection of the north side of the apse shows the fashion in which the organ aperture was closed off when the Holtkamp organ was erected in the tower chamber in 1957.

It was pointed out earlier that the building is "oriented", with the apsidal or eastern end facing east. In fact, the apse, whether by design or otherwise, is slanted several feet further toward the east. In consequence, the arrangement of furniture through the building from west to east can never do more than create an illusion of symmetry.

The three principal chairs now situated facing the choir and nave belong to the renovation of 1930, though they are now differently positioned. The carving of the two side chairs repeats the seal of the Episcopal Theological School also found in the glass-work over the doors from the tower. That of the central chair shows an Episcopal mitre, though the chair is normally occupied by the Dean of the School.

The shallow steps and platform before the apse date from the renovation of 1966-67. The platform was then intended to carry the altar. It is now normally occupied by chairs for the ministers of the Eucharist, while the three memorial chairs, together with the surrounding benches, are used only at Matriculation and Commencement.

The dedication of the Chapel is taken, with some certainty, to be St. John the Evangelist. December 27 is regularly kept as the patronal festival, and November 16 celebrated as the Feast of the Dedication.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Records of the Chapel, including the original architect’s drawings, sketches, and photographs, are kept in the School’s library, now housed in Sherrill Hall. Among these records is a printed account of the consecration of the Chapel, the text of Bishop Eastburn’s sermon on the occasion, and a description of the building: *Consecration of St. John’s Memorial Chapel* (Boston: Nathan Sawyer and Son, 1870).

For further information about the building and its history see:


*Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge* (Report One: East Cambridge, Cambridge Historical Commission, 1965, Part I) contains a general history of the architecture of the city, and refers to the work of the firm of Ware and Van Brunt and to the Chapel. (Report Four: Old Cambridge, 19973, Part VI), contains a brief description of the Chapel, and an interior view which shows the interim arrangements in effect just prior to the renovation of 1966-67.