

St Marys Church, Bridgwater

Joinery Cleaning and Reordering



St Mary's Church is Grade I listed building dating from the 13th C with a Victorian styled interior. Ellis and Company were principle contractor to reorder the church for contemporary use by completing a programme of structural repairs and underpinning, laying a new stone floor, installing heating, lighting sound and catering facilities, and conservation cleaning historic timber ceilings, fittings and lime rendered walls.

The works were designed by Benjamin Beauchamp Architects and took place over a 12-month period from June 2016.

The floor of the St George Chapel was lowered to enable disabled access. Floor levels were rebuilt with additional structural support for the fragile vaults. Human remains were uncovered and sensitively reinterred during the excavation by archaeological experts working alongside Ellis and Co. A new sub-floor level was laid with recycled glass foam insulation and limecrete then finished with new Blue Lias paving and relaid original Victorian tiles.



The decorative oak ceiling and Victorian church furniture were thick with residue of decades of wax, dirt and unknown finishes. Ellis and Co was commissioned to clean the oak furniture and fittings to reveal the original timber. The Oak ceiling was blast cleaned with soda. This method, usually employed by furniture restorers, employed on such a large scale is unusual but effective. The soda is a gentle abrasive that removes dirt residue without damaging original carved details.



Pews were shortened to create more space for church activities and refreshments. We stripped the pews back and reduced their size, and mounted them on movable frames to enable the flexible use of space. The pew details were painstakingly sanded by hand to retain the crisp carved edges of the original Victorian carvings. Ellis and Co's joiners created a new kitchen servery in oil finished Oak skilfully combining historic decorative joinery retained from the pews with modern timber carved to match. The whole structure contains a modern fitted kitchen with cabinets, plumbing and white goods yet retains the character of the gothic Victorian elements of the church.



Church masonry and stonework was conservation cleaned using a Thermatec superheated water system and delicate poultice method. We relocated the font to a new foundation base carved by our masons. Areas of lime render were repaired wherever possible and or re-rendered and redecorated.

