

TASIS ENGLAND UPPER SCHOOL LIBRARY

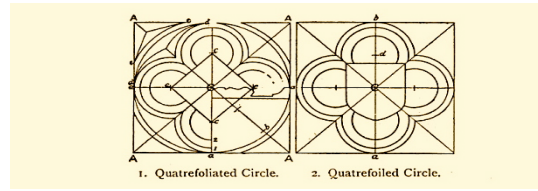
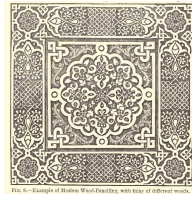


Wood over-mantle relief panel by Alfred Robinson, circa 1875

DRAWINGS & WOOD CARVINGS FROM THE J. R. SPALDING JOINERY

The working design drawings and wood carvings on display here in the Library are part of a collection of some two hundred items recently acquired by the TASIS England Art Department for the school's permanent art collection. They represent many decades of church design work produced by the J. R. Spalding Joinery in Kingston upon Thames, which closed recently after the death of its proprietor and head designer Julian Spalding.

The Joinery was founded in London in the 1860s by wood carver Alfred Robinson, who employed local craftsmen, joiners, and carvers, and specialized in the manufacture of church furniture, receiving commissions from many well known church architects.



The Gothic Revival movement was in the ascendant in England during the 19th century and the Joinery's craftsmen would have employed skills which required knowledge of a wide range of traditional Gothic ornamental styles as prescribed by the architect Augustus Pugin, whose masterpieces include the interior and clock tower of "Big Ben" of the Palace of Westminster. Two beautifully illustrated 19th century editions of his technical design manuals are among the items acquired in the purchase of this collection from the Spalding Joinery.

The Joinery's London workshops were destroyed during the Blitz and in 1945, the premises were moved to Kingston. The next 30 years proved to be a hay day for the business, as many churches throughout Britain had been bombed, some totally destroyed, and the government were giving grants for the re-building of churches. Many of the drawings in the present collection are from this period and display a marvelous vitality and precision of execution, while remaining true "working drawings", covered in notations and wood dust from the workshop.

Next winter, we'll install an exhibition in The Fleming Gallery, displaying the rest of this wonderful collection, celebrating the enduring qualities of design sensitively integrated with the aspirations of the spirit.

John Smalley
Head of Visual Art