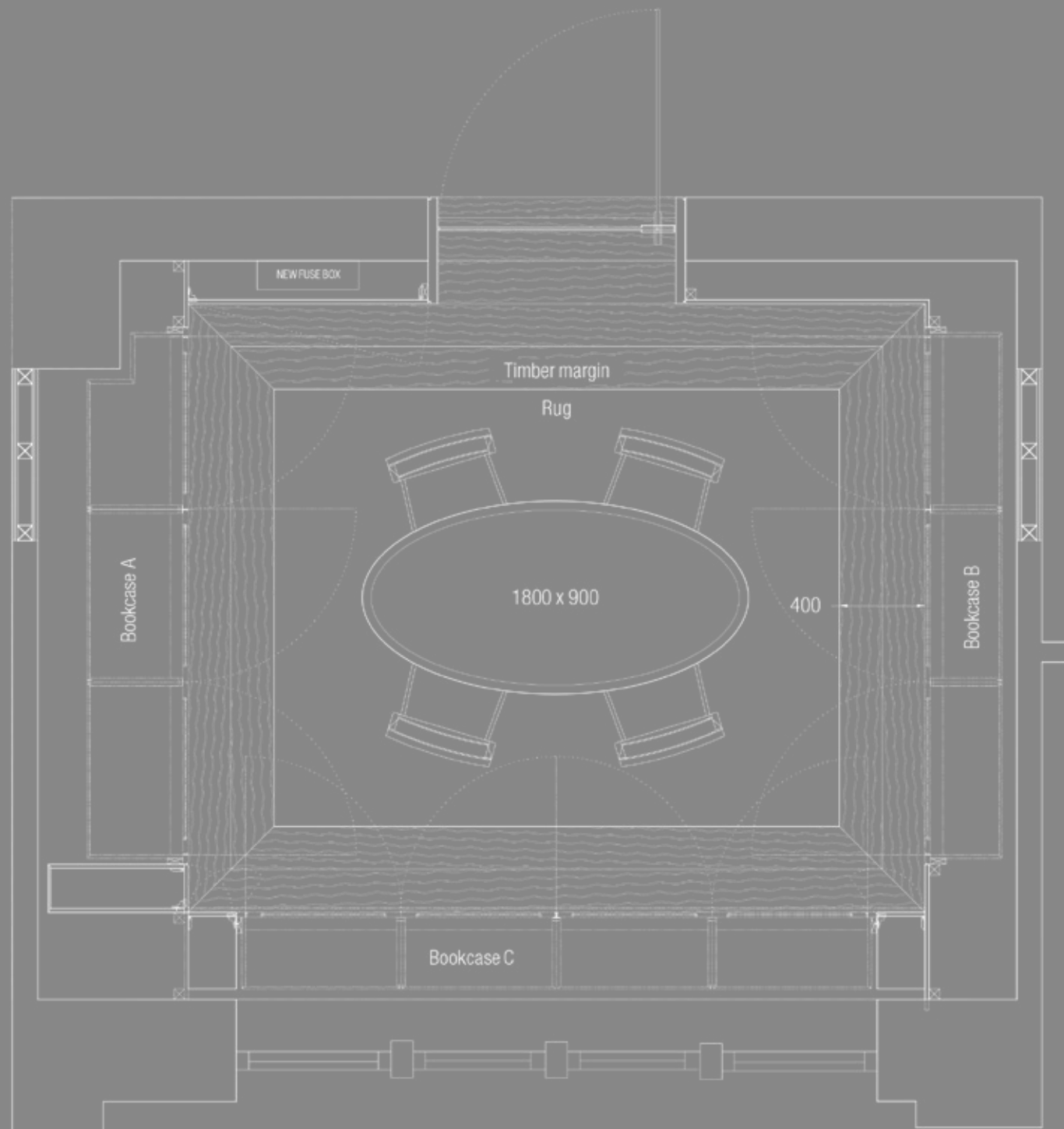


Oxbridge and Academe



Luke Hughes

Furniture in Architecture



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The Geological Society of London

Introduction

Major academic institutions, especially the older universities, have the most extraordinary collection of outstanding architecture. Keeping these buildings comfortable and relevant in a rapidly changing world is, ultimately, down to the design of the furniture.

Since moving to Covent Garden 35 years ago, Luke Hughes® has designed and made furniture for nearly 60 Oxbridge colleges, 25 major institutional libraries, 22 private schools and 11 other universities, including Yale and Harvard. There is a common theme to our approach: the connection between the architecture and the furniture should be seamless, creating a sense of 'rightness', functionally and aesthetically. Most buildings have neither function nor purpose without furniture: inappropriate pieces grossly undermine great architecture.

Another theme in our approach is to design furniture that allows buildings to be capable of more than one use. Dining halls, common rooms, libraries, places of worship, theatres and auditoria, galleries, meeting and conference rooms – all the significant public spaces that proclaim the values of a school or university – are seeing an increasing requirement for tables to fold, seating to stack, trolleys to make handling and storage efficient. Over the years, Luke Hughes® has developed ingenious solutions to enable academic buildings to work harder.

We take the greatest pride in combining the old with the new, heritage with modernity, traditional craftsmanship with 21st century engineering. The greatest value lies in offering sustainable, long-term solutions. In principle, we design for 50-100 year life expectancy.

Here are a selection of design solutions tailored to enable academic buildings to look more elegant and operate more efficiently.



Dining Halls and Refectories

Luke Hughes® has designed chairs and tables for more than 30 dining halls, common rooms and refectories - from Henry VIII's Tudor palace at Hampton Court to the Gothic Revival interior of St John's College, Cambridge; from the striking Modernist architecture at Churchill College or Yale NUS, to the Arts and Crafts environment of Newnham College.

The key to our approach is designing the furniture to match the architecture thus making it easy for those who have to manage the building to rearrange it.

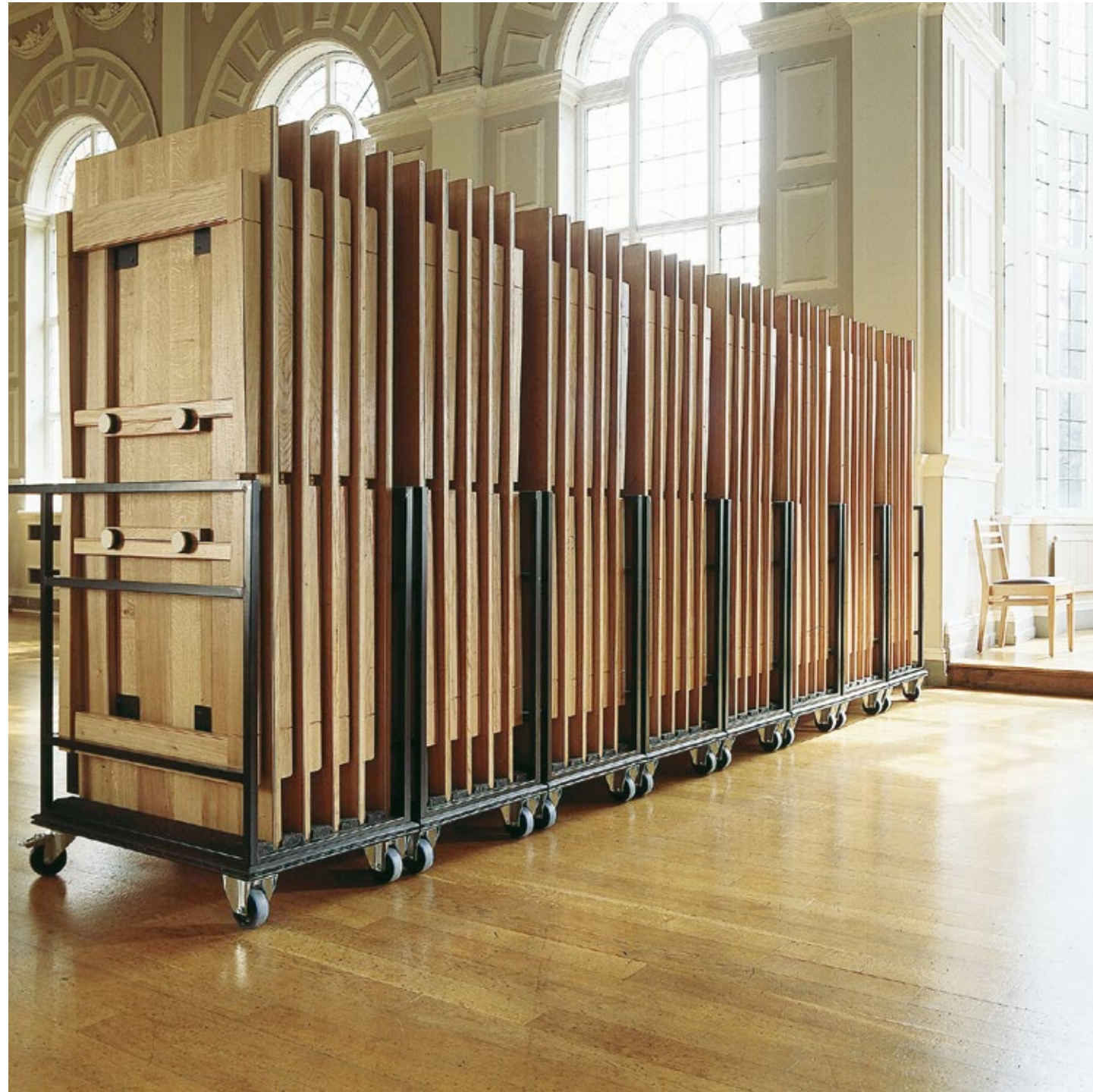


Churchill College, Cambridge



St John's College, Cambridge





"You will be pleased to know that the Newnham chairs are standing up superbly to the rigours of college life and, 23 years on, still look like new. They are a great testament of the skills and workmanship of your team."

Dame Patricia Hodgson,
Principal, Newnham College, Cambridge.

Newnham College, Cambridge





Dining halls increasingly need tables which can be reconfigured or folded and cleared away to accommodate informal luncheons, formal dinners, buffet receptions as well as wedding parties, theatrical and musical events.

They also need long-lasting stacking chairs that enhance the interior.

Over the last 35 years, Luke Hughes® has developed a wide range of ingenious, efficient, robust and proven engineering techniques to enable this to happen.



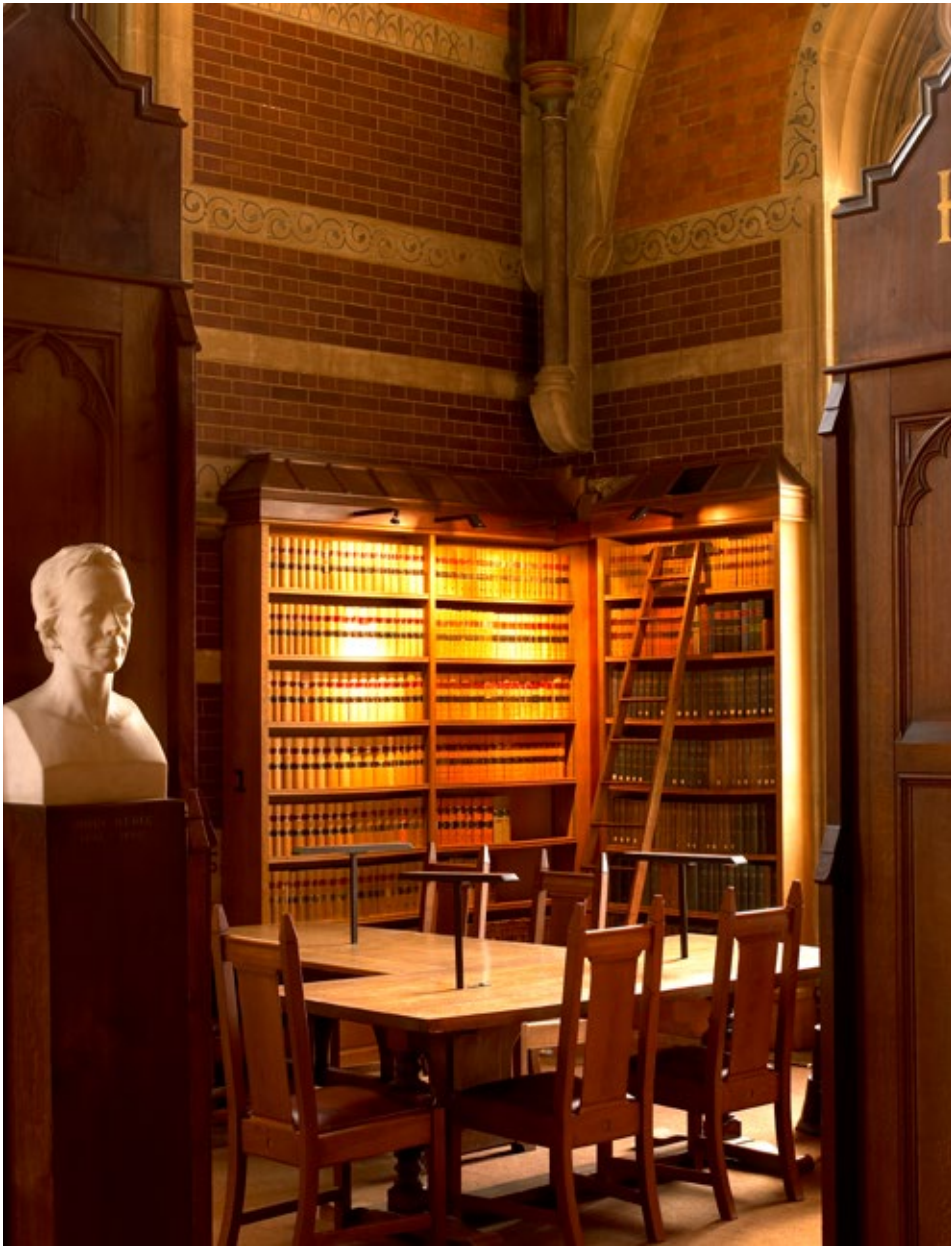
Trinity Hall, Cambridge



Libraries

Libraries are often in buildings of considerable distinction, old and new, and this makes it expensive to reflect advances in technology (or, indeed, social patterns) by changing the buildings – it is much easier to look at the way they are furnished. However, the choice of such furniture makes a profound impact on how libraries are perceived, whether they are 19th century Victorian gothic (like Keble College, Oxford) or a modern interpretation of the neo-classical (like Peterhouse, Cambridge).

Since libraries in particular reflect the values of a college or university, there is an increasing requirement for them to be flexible and capable of use for ceremonial occasions or lectures. Luke Hughes® has wide experience of designing solutions to enable such changes to be carried out swiftly and efficiently, without compromising either the function or the aesthetics of the interior.



Keble College, Oxford



Peterhouse, Cambridge





Highgate School, London



The promise of a digitised library-world, devoid of books, has proved to be as much of a chimera as the paper-free office. Yet contemporary libraries have certainly become more social, with more 'zoned-spaces' and an increase in casual visitors, while the need for access to on-line publications has radically altered the way libraries are used. In another twenty years they will undoubtedly change again, but people will still need to sit and work comfortably, in well-lit, inspiring surroundings.

Modern libraries can be transformed simply by changing the furnishings.

During the last quarter of a century, Luke Hughes® has built up an impressive portfolio of library products (including chairs, shelving systems with integrated lighting, readers' desks with power and data, display cases which double as sound-insulated interior partitions) that blend together and not only achieve design coherence but also keep refurbishment costs down.

Oundle School, Peterborough before and after refurbishing



Theatres, Lecture Halls, Auditoria

Furniture, especially seating, greatly impacts on the interior architecture of lecture halls, auditoria, theatres and speech rooms. Many of these spaces are also increasingly 'flexible'. In other words, the requirement for the seating to be easily removed or reconfigured can make a huge difference to the uses to which such buildings can be put.

Ceremonial furniture (such as cable-managed lecterns and other speakers' furniture) can have a major impact on these interiors, both visually and in terms of hiding audio-visual equipment.

Luke Hughes® has, over the years, worked with many architects and in a wide variety of architecturally significant interiors, to come up with practical solutions so all these aims can be realised.



Emmanuel College, Cambridge



Leggate Theatre, Liverpool University



Apex Theatre, Bury St Edmunds





Sainsbury Botanic Laboratory, Cambridge



TS Eliot Theatre, Merton College, Oxford

There are occasions when standard theatrical seating products are not appropriate to the setting, either because of visual considerations or because of the problems of complying with fire regulations in limited space. This is yet another area of particular expertise.



Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds

Buildings of worship

College chapels are often the heart of an academic community and are also amongst the most important architectural settings. Yet these too need to be flexible, not just for accommodating a variety of liturgical functions but also for clearing or rearranging the space for music recitals. Luke Hughes® has for many years designed seating, choir and liturgical furniture for a large number of cathedrals and churches across the UK and USA.



Top: Cranleigh School. Bottom: Sheffield Cathedral



Epsom College





Meeting and Conference rooms

Furniture for faculty conference rooms that can double-up for occasional dining or be cleared away completely for a reception is another requirement of modern colleges.

Luke Hughes® has developed engineering solutions to enable tables to fold, without looking like trestle tables. The techniques can be easily applied to bespoke tables, made to match a specific interior scheme, which can be stored in dedicated, inconspicuous storage racks or in existing cupboards.

Similarly, the portfolio includes a wide selection of elegant and resilient stacking chairs that have been specially designed for long life expectancy and heavy institutional use.



Lincoln College, Oxford



Wolfson College, Cambridge



All the folding tables illustrated here were made specifically for the rooms in which they now reside and can fold away, either into an existing storage cupboard or into a rack clad in panelling to match the existing joinery.



Opposite page: Darwin College, Cambridge. This page: St Catharine's College, Cambridge

Museums

Gallery benches and display cases, developed for clients that include the British Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum, and the Art Workers Guild, form another group of products in the design portfolio.



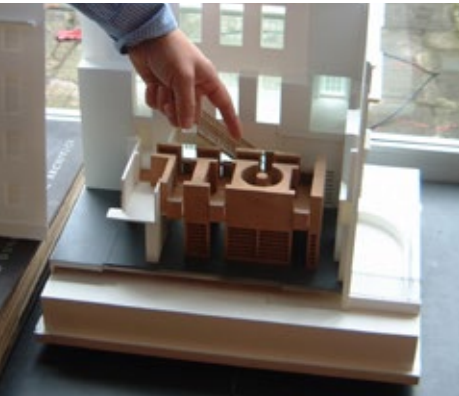
Clockwise from far left: Athenaeum Club, London; British Museum, London; Art Workers Guild, London; British Museum, London; Philip Mould Gallery, London



Special architectural projects

Some of the most successful projects have come as a result of creative cooperation. For special projects, we work regularly with international, award-winning architectural and interior design firms (such as Allies & Morrison, Eric Parry Architects, Foster+Partners, Gensler, Hopkins Architects, HOK, Ian Ritchie Architects, Kohn Pedersen Fox, Pelli Clarke Pelli, and Stanton Williams). We have collaborated successfully with many practices for more than 30 years.

“Designing furniture well demands a knowledge of social anthropology. What an object looks like is less important than the influence that the object can have on the space in which it resides; furniture should embellish the space, not embarrass it.” Luke Hughes



Clockwise from left: Boardroom, Sainsbury Botanic Laboratory, Cambridge; model of the Scottish Supreme Court library; model of the Luke Hughes 120° for UCL; public area seating for Yale University's Edward P. Evans School of Management.
Opposite page: Worshipful Company of Mercers, London



History and Philosophy

Luke Hughes was educated at Cambridge University before setting up a small craft workshop in the back-yard of a house in Bloomsbury in 1978, then moving to Covent Garden in 1981. The business was incorporated in 1986, at that time producing design work and prototypes for Liberty & Co., Heals and John Lewis Partnership.

Hughes's design philosophy is heavily influenced by the principles of the Arts and Crafts Movement, not least about the nature of craftsmanship. Another central principle is that, in any quality building, the connection between architecture and furniture should be seamless: most buildings cannot function without furniture, yet inappropriate pieces grossly undermine great architecture.

Since 1990, he has focused on design for public spaces, particularly in the corporate, leisure, institutional and ecclesiastical sectors – principally for buildings with significant architectural interiors.





Client comments

“When I saw the new chairs in the library, I had the curious sense that they had always been there, so right do they look. As to the craftsmanship, it is superb . . .”

Bursar, Keble College, Oxford



“We all think the room looks absolutely spectacular. Your furniture is really the pièce de résistance. Please pass on my congratulations to everyone involved. We could not be more delighted.”

Bursar, Pembroke College, Cambridge



“Now that we have got the Queen’s visit safely over I have time to write and say what a wonderful job you made of the furniture. It looks totally in keeping . . . and all comment on the quality of both design and manufacture.”

Bursar, Charterhouse School

“Can I express our thanks for the speed and efficiency with which you have delivered this project? Particular thanks must go to your craftsmen and installers who performed so well.”

Project Manager, Liverpool University



Press comments

“You can put a piece of his furniture in any kind of building and after about 10 minutes it looks as if it has been there forever.”

Country Life Magazine

“His designs speak strongly, if quietly, of an English tradition of furniture making that was one of his main inspirations.”

The Times



“All the designs have an Englishness and restraint that makes them infinitely appealing and infinitely usable.”

Financial Times

“Elegant and contemporary yet totally classic.”

House and Garden



“Commendably timeless designs.”

Financial Times

“Understated elegance and restraint.”

The Times

“Products combining 21st century engineering and 18th century craftsmanship.”

Country Life Magazine

Academic clients
All Souls College, Oxford
Atlantic College
Bancroft School
Bedford School
Benenden School
Brasenose College, Oxford
Broomwood Hall School
Bryanston School
Cambridge University Arts Theatre
Cambridge University Boat Club
Cambridge University Botanic Institute
Cambridge University Library
Cambridge University Old Schools
Cambridge University Press
Cambridge University Union Society
Campion Hall, Oxford
Charterhouse School
Christ Church, Oxford
Christ College, Cambridge
Churchill College, Cambridge
Clare College, Cambridge
College of Law
Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
Corpus Christi College, Oxford
Cranleigh School
Darwin College, Cambridge
Downing College, Cambridge
Emmanuel College, Cambridge
Epsom College
Eton College
Giggleswick School
Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge
Green College, Oxford
Harrow School
Harvard University, USA
Highgate School
Hughes Hall, Cambridge
Hurstpierpoint College
Institute of Criminology, Cambridge
Jesus College, Cambridge
Jesus College, Oxford
Keble College, Oxford
King's College, London
Lincoln College, Oxford
Liverpool Hope University
London School of Economics
Marlborough College

Merton College, Oxford
Middlesex University
New College, Oxford
New Hall, Cambridge
Newnham College, Cambridge
Nuffield College, Oxford
Open University
Oundle School
Oxford Centre for Hebrew Studies
Pembroke College, Cambridge
Pembroke College, Oxford
Peterhouse, Cambridge
Rhodes House, Oxford
Robinson College, Cambridge
Royal Academy of Music
Royal Grammar School, Guildford
St Anne's College, Oxford
St Antony's College, Oxford
St Catharine's, Cambridge
St Cross College, Oxford
St Edmund's College, Cambridge
St Edmund Hall, Oxford
St Hugh's College, Oxford
St John's College, Cambridge
St Paul's School
St Paul's Girls' School
St Peter's College, Oxford
Sherborne School
Shrewsbury School
Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge
Stowe School
The King's School Canterbury
The Queen's College, Oxford
Trinity College, Oxford
Trinity Hall, Cambridge
University of Birmingham
University of Chester
University College, London
University College, Oxford
University of Dundee
University of Liverpool
University of Roehampton
University of Warwick
Uppingham School
Wolfson College, Cambridge
Wolfson College, Oxford
Yale University, USA
Yale - National University of Singapore

Institutional clients
Art Workers Guild
Athenaeum Club
Beefsteak Club
British Academy
British Council
British Heart Foundation
British Museum
Buckingham Palace
Delfont Mackintosh Theatres Ltd
Department for Culture, Media & Sport
Eltham Palace
English Heritage
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Garrick Club
General Medical Council
Geological Society
Hampton Court Palace
Holyrood House
House of Commons
Institute for Government
Institute of Chartered Accountants
Institute of Electrical Engineers
Kew Gardens Herbarium
Kew Palace
London Library
Middle Temple
Ministry of Defence
National Gallery, London
National Gallery of Scotland
National Maritime Museum
Oxford and Cambridge Club
The Paul Mellon Centre, London
Royal Albert Hall
Royal Collection Trust
Royal College of Paediatrics
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
Royal Geographical Society
Royal Institute of British Architects
Royal Opera House
Royal Scottish Academy
Royal Society of Arts
Scottish Supreme Court
Society of Antiquaries
Somerset House
Special Air Service Regiment
Tate Modern

The Wallace Collection
Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds
Tower of London
TUC
United Kingdom Supreme Court
Victoria & Albert Museum
Windsor Castle
Worshipful Company of Butchers
Worshipful Company of Carpenters
Worshipful Company of Fishmongers
Worshipful Company of Haberdashers
Worshipful Company of Leathersellers
Worshipful Company of Mercers
Worshipful Company of Skinners

