

The Church and its Furnishings

St. James was designed by Richard M. Upjohn of New York, Built in 1855-56, it follows an American version of the English Queen Anne Style. Carl Michaelis of LaGrange was the contractor.

The Queen Anne style was based on a revival on England and made popular by Richard Norman Shaw. The style reached the U.S. in the 1870's and was transformed from half-timber and brick to an entirely wood fabric. In this wooden-framed building shingles cover most of the walls and steeply pitched roof. The tower is decorated with boards in geometrical patterns. Tudor spindles support the porch roofs. This church is also noteworthy for the manner in which the design responded to the climate. Louvered and screened openings, closed by removable panels on the interior, flank the pews, allowing for air circulation in hot weather.

The interior is typical of Episcopal designs of the period, with warm wood hues enriched with brilliant color from the leaded stained glass window. The interior is composed to accentuate the altar, with secondary emphasis on the pulpit and lectern.

In addition to commissioning the plans and raising most of the money for the church, the rector at the time, The Rev. W.G.W. Smith, also designed and built the altar, lectern, communion rail, and Bishop's chair, all of which are still in use. The windows and cross on the tower were also his selection. The pews are original, designed by Mr. Smith and built locally in the shop of Mr. Frank Reichert.

The memorial window in the south transept, "Faith," was made in Europe and given in 1885 in memory of Judge and Mrs. Benjamin Shropshire by their children. The brass cross was given in 1887 as a legacy from Mrs. Charlotte Critchley.

The tower bell, weighing 711 pounds, was struck by the Meneely Bell Company of West Troy, New York, and hung in the tower in January, 1892. The font was placed in the church in September, 1892, and electricity replaced the original kerosene lamps in 1893.

Acknowledgements:

W.B. Robinson, *Texas Public Buildings of the 19th Century*
John A. Logan, Jr., *St. James' Church*