

St.Paul's, Halifax, Nova Scotia,

and

St.Peter's, Vere Street, London, England



fig.1 **St.Paul's Church, Halifax, exterior, view from north, 1970.**

(Photo: R.E. Merrick, by permission of Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax.)

The Anglican church of St.Paul's is, in parts, the oldest building still standing in Halifax (fig.1). It was founded in the same year as the city, 1749, and is often identified as the oldest Protestant church building in Canada.¹ Located at the south end of the parade grounds of the then newly laid out city, St.Paul's still occupies a conspicuous position in downtown Halifax. It

now faces the Victorian structure of the City Hall, across the formal flower beds of the Grand Parade, and still manages to assert a strong presence among the banal and brutal buildings of the twentieth century that surround and tower over it. Because of its position in the chronological and spatial framework of the city, it has continued to be the object of affection and interest.

However, the architectural fabric of the church has received little serious study. An indication of this is the fact that locally, the design of the building has often been vaguely associated with the work of Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) and, in a somewhat more specific manner, with that of the architect James Gibbs (1682-1754), one of the most influential architects to succeed Wren in eighteenth-century England. This is the aspect of the history of St. Paul's that I would like to examine briefly in this paper: is the design of St. Paul's to be properly associated with the work of either architect — directly or indirectly — and, if so, to which buildings in their *oeuvres* is St. Paul's most closely related? The attempt to answer these two specific questions will involve surveying the building history of St. Paul's in order to establish its appearance at the time it was built; detailed comparisons with those buildings that appear to be related to it will then be made. The latter process seems particularly necessary, as so many church buildings of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries belong to the same general type. The formal differences or similarities can be best understood and appreciated on the level of architectural "detail": the nature of the mural articulation, the character of the door and window surrounds, the specifics of the Order used and the types of vaulting imitated for the ceilings.

The Exterior

At the time that Halifax was initially planned, provision was made in the plans for the inclusion of a church for the established religion, that of the Church of England. The site finally chosen was a conspicuous one, at the south end of the parade grounds, directly under the position of the Citadel, and between it and the harbour below. Perhaps because of the strong slope, the building was placed with its long axis north-south; as a result, its main entrance was at the north, and the chancel was at the south, instead of west and east, respectively. The church that was to be St. Paul's was one of the first permanent structures erected in the fledgling town.²

St. Paul's, as it now stands (figs. 1, 2), has been significantly altered from the form in which it was first constructed in 1750, but much of the original structure still exists. Fortunately, its exterior appearance in the eighteenth



fig.2 St.Paul's Church, exterior, view from south, 1983. (Photo: the author.)

century is recorded in the views of Halifax prepared by Richard Short, purser on the *Prince of Orange*, which was in Halifax in May of 1759 with the British Fleet, on its way to the siege of Québec. Engravings, based on paintings after Short's drawings, were later published in London in 1764 and again in 1777.³

The most important of Short's views for our purpose is *The Church of St. Paul and the Parade at Halifax, Nova Scotia* (fig.3).⁴ It depicts the newly built church — then only nine years old — from the south, so that the liturgical "east" and the actual east wall are shown. From this view it can be seen that the original St. Paul's was a box-like building with two rows of seven windows down each side (implying the existence of interior galleries); the lower ones were shorter than the upper and both rows had arched heads and alternating quoins. The south end was dominated by a large Venetian window which appears to have been of the Tuscan order, with an emphasized keystone in the centre arch. Below the levels of the sill of this window, on east and west sides, were rectangular doors, with bracketed lintels, approached by flights of four or five steps. Above each door, and to either side of the Venetian window and on the level of the upper side windows, was a single window similar to the latter. The basic box was further articulated, vertically and horizontally, by a plain double belt course

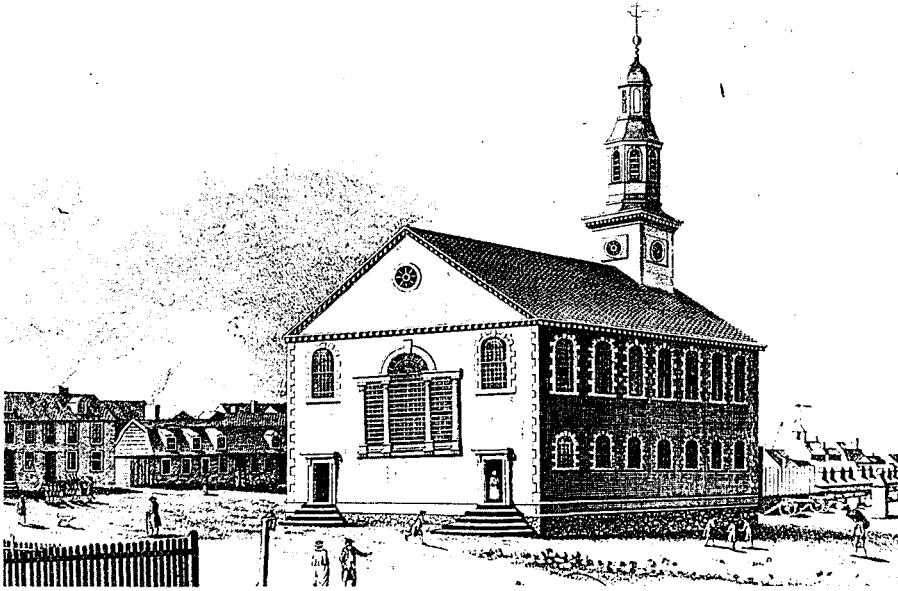


fig.3 The Church of St. Paul and the Parade at Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1764, engraving (after R. Short), 35 cm. x 49.5 cm., detail. Coll.: St. Paul's Church, Halifax. (Photo: P. Toman.)

that ran around the base of the building: alternating quoins that emphasized the corners, and brackets, which were placed under the eaves and which outlined the gable in pediment-like fashion. Finally, a round window was centered in the gable.

On the north or entrance façade, that faced toward the Parade, only the tower can be seen in Short's engraving. It sat on the roof and, as its first element, had a square base with an oculus set in a square surround on each face, and bracketed eaves. Its two upper stages were both octagonal; openings with semi-circular arches were found on each face. The intermediate roof between the stages had a slight curve and the capping roof was given the exuberant form of an ogee-curve and, consequently, the appearance of a small cupola rather than a steeple.

Unfortunately, there is not a comparable view among Short's drawings of Halifax that shows the church from the north and which would, therefore, give a precise record of the main façade. St. Paul's does appear in another view by Short, *The Governor's House and St. Mather's Meeting House in Hollis Street ...*,⁵ but it is distantly seen from the northeast, and lower buildings in the city block the view of the north façade. Only part of the gable with an oculus, and a window on the upper east corner, are visible; these are, however, features that are similar to those at the south end.

The entrance façade is clearly shown in a later watercolour, *National School of Halifax, Nova Scotia*, executed ca.1819 by Joseph Partridge (1797-?) (fig.4).⁶ This view, however, was made after the first significant alterations to the original structure had been completed. In 1812, the church had been extended the equivalent of one bay by the addition of a vestibule extending the full width of the church, and including new sets of stairs giving access to the gallery. This extension involved the dismantling of the tower and its rebuilding over the vestibule. This form apparently duplicates the original⁷ as seen in Short's views (figs.1,3).



fig.4 J. Partridge, *National School at Halifax, Nova Scotia*, ca. 1819, watercolour, 27.4 cm. x 39.1 cm. Coll.: PANS. (Photo: courtesy PANS.)

The design of the north façade as rebuilt in 1812 is quite similar to the south one of 1750. The major difference, of course, is the presence of a central portal. It is placed under a small pedimented porch supported by columns and with pilaster responds. The porch is flanked by windows similar to those of the lower tier of the side elevation. In addition, there is a Venetian window, rather smaller than the south one, above the main door.

Early views of the entrance façade occur in the works of two other artists who worked in Halifax. Although less detailed than Partridge's view, they confirm its accuracy. A sepia wash sketch by J.E. Woolford (1778-1866), of 1818,⁸ shows similar features, as does a watercolour by William Eagar (ca. 1796-1839), which was probably executed in the 1830's.⁹ However, a

projecting porch such as that appearing in the early nineteenth-century works is not shown in the very distant glimpse of the church included in another of the engravings after Short, *The Town and Harbour of Halifax in Nova Scotia as they appear from the opposite shore called Dartmouth*.¹⁰ While the entire façade is visible, and the view of it is unobstructed by other buildings, no details are included, even though the scale of the original engraving would have allowed at least the general depiction of a porch.

Despite the fact that a porch is not shown in Short's rendering, there is some non-visual evidence that suggests that a small porch over the main portal on the north probably formed part of the initial design. In 1783 the Vestry Minutes for June 30 recorded expenditures for the erection of four new columns and the repair of mouldings.¹¹ The wording of the entry is explicit, and is concerned with the repair of an existing feature rather than the construction of a new one.¹² Nevertheless, even if a projecting porch is accepted as part of the original church, a problem about its form remains. The 1783 entry refers to *four* columns while the early nineteenth century views all indicate only a single column at each outer angle of the porch. That Partridge's view, and the less detailed ones of Woolford and Eagar, are correct in this respect is confirmed by the earliest daguerreotype of the church, taken in 1853 by David J. Smith.¹³ It shows that the open porch had only two columns, one at each angle. It would then appear most probable that when the porch was rebuilt at the time of the construction of the vestibule, the number of columns was reduced from four to two.

Later alterations in the nineteenth century were more extensive; they were also more obvious and somewhat better documented. They affected parts of the church well recorded in Short's major view of St. Paul's. Most conspicuously, double-decker aisles were added in a Romanesquoid style during 1868-69 and, a few years later, in 1872, a flat-ended projecting chancel was constructed (fig. 2).¹⁴ Consequently, all the side windows shown in Short's elevation have disappeared, as well as the original form of the "east" end. The major feature of the old south elevation is perpetuated by the new, round-headed and very large window in the opulent Corinthian order, and with three lights of quasi-Gothic tracery. Thus today, of the exterior as first built, nothing remains. But the drawings by Short and the watercolour by Partridge allow a reasonably precise reconstruction of the exterior, making it possible to compare St. Paul's in this respect with the works of Gibbs and Wren.

The search for parallels for the first design of St. Paul's is not a difficult one. In his 1949 book on the history of the church, R.V. Harris drew

attention to letters written by the Rev. William Tutty, Anglican minister of the newly founded city, and the Hon. (Col.) Edward Cornwallis, Governor of Halifax.¹⁵ These letters state unequivocally that the frame of the church was being constructed in Boston during the winter of 1749-50.¹⁶ Both writers also referred to the fact that the church framing was based on a specific model: "... it is exactly the model of Mary'bone Chapel," (Tutty to the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 17 March 1750) and "... the plan is the same with that of Marybone," (Cornwallis to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 19 March 1750). Harris pointed out that the Marybone Chapel referred to by both was not the famous London parish church which stood on the High Street, St.Marylebone, between Marylebone Road and Devonshire Street, but rather the church now known as St.Peter's, Vere Street, located between Henrietta Place and Oxford Street in London.¹⁷



fig.5 James Gibbs, St.Peter's, Vere Street, London, 1721-24, exterior, view from northwest.
(Photo: courtesy Courtauld Institute of Art, London.)

St.Peter's, Vere Street (fig.5) was built by James Gibbs in 1721-24. It was originally the chapel of the estate, newly laid out on the old Marylebone Fields, centering around Cavendish Square. From an early date it was known as Oxford Chapel after the most important owner of the estate, Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, and husband of Henrietta, daughter of John Holles, Duke of Newcastle, who had purchased the Fields in 1708.¹⁸ At

first, however, the chapel was known as Marybone Chapel.¹⁹ On the basis of this identification of Marybone Chapel as St.Peter's, Harris accepted James Gibbs as "indirectly [the architect] of St.Paul's Halifax." He quoted several Haligonians regarding the close resemblance between St.Paul's and St.Peter's. For example, Dr. Hill, in his history of St.Paul's, wrote, "It cannot be doubted that St.Paul's church, as it was until 1812, was identical in architecture and size and even in the most minute particulars, such as the size of the panes of glass, with St.Peter's, Vere Street, Oxford St., London." A Mr. John Y. Payzant wrote in 1903, "Strange to say, the church itself [St.Peter's] looks just as St.Paul's used to look before the wings were added." Harris added that "many others have noted the resemblance of the two buildings,"²⁰ but he did not examine the particulars of this resemblance in his history of the church. Writing of St.Paul's in 1962, Alan Gowans commented:

Traditionally it is supposed to have been modeled on a London church (Marylebone Chapel, or St.Peter's, Vere Street, are usually suggested), but since all records indicate that the frame of the church was shipped over from Boston, the design probably came from there too, and like so much church architecture of the period in New England, derived from James Gibbs' *A Book of Architecture*.²¹

Harris and Gowans, two of the major authorities on St.Paul's to appear in print, thus connect the church with James Gibbs, one through the model of a specific building, the other through the medium of printed representation, suggesting two slightly different routes, one direct from London, the other from London via Boston.

Gibbs' St.Peter's, Vere Street still exists and, although made of brick, its exterior (figs.5,6) even today bears a close resemblance to St.Paul's original exterior. It is a simple rectangular box, seven bays long. The double tier of windows of the long walls is similar, but not identical, to St.Paul's; at St.Peter's the lower windows have segmental heads, and neither tier has quoins, but rather brick voussoirs. However, the stone angle quoins alternate and the cornice and pedimented gable are bracketed. At the east end, there is a Venetian window flanked by a tall window above a portal, as at St.Paul's. A podium runs along the lower slope of the roof; this feature is not recorded as having been at St.Paul's. A round oculus occupied the east gable as well as the west one.

The east front (fig.6) of St.Peter's has three portals, the two lateral ones under arched pediments and the central one, not in itself much larger, under a



fig.6 St.Peter's, Vere Street, exterior, west façade and tower. (Photo: courtesy PANS.)

projecting Tuscan portico with a pediment and two pairs of columns responded by fluteless pilasters on the west wall. The façade wall under the portico is faced with stone. The porch pediment, level with the sill of the upper lateral windows, rises high enough to preclude the appearance of a Venetian window at the west, as was present at St.Paul's. The presence of the porch does reinforce the likelihood that there was originally a porch at St.Paul's, with *pairs* of columns at the outer angles, thus accounting for the four columns repaired or replaced in 1783. The designs of the towers of both

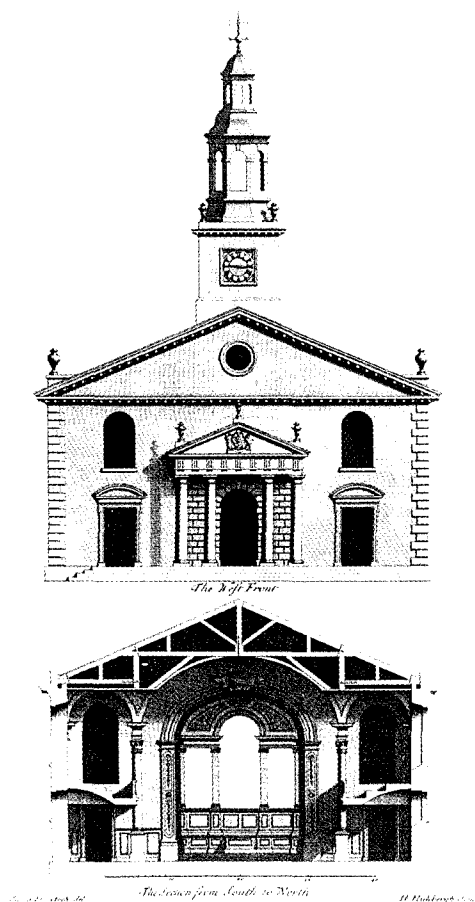


fig.8 St.Peter's, Vere Street, west façade and section, engraving,
from James Gibbs, *A Book of Architecture*, pl. XXIV.
(Photo: R.E. Merrick, by permission of Nova Scotia Museum.)

wall would have had to have been invented, as its exterior elevation was not included in Gibbs' plates.²³

Compared to St.Peter's, Gibbs' more famous London churches, St.Mary-le-Strand (1714-17) and St.Martin's-in-the-Fields (1721-26), also published in his book,²⁴ have exteriors of much greater complexity and pretense, as they are articulated by engaged columns or giant pilasters and are not left as flat walls adorned only by window frames. One can understand why the simpler exterior form of St.Peter's was chosen as the model for execution in wood, especially as the carpenters available in Nova Scotia were, no doubt, more skilled in straightforward joining than in the carving of the Orders. However, one aspect of St.Paul's does seem to derive from St.Martin's: the quoined window surrounds, which suggest a dependence on Gibbs' book rather than only upon the building.²⁵

At this stage in the investigation it is obvious that the Haligonians of a century ago were correct in their perception of a strong resemblance between St. Paul's and St. Peter's, even if they were not particularly concerned with the mechanics of the dependence. Now it is necessary to look at the interior to see if the similarity holds and if its nature suggests the way in which the design was transferred to the New World from the Old.



fig.9 St. Paul's Church, interior, view to chancel, 1971.
(Photo: R.E. Merrick, by permission of Nova Scotia Museum.)

The Interior

There are no early views of the interior of St. Paul's comparable to those of the exterior. Indeed, there are no views of the interior until the 1860's. It is therefore fortunate that the later expansion has left the core of the first building intact. Although the effect of the interior space has been greatly altered by the addition of outer aisles, the addition simply doubled the width of the original aisles; the outside walls and windows have been lost but the elevation of the nave, along with the plaster barrel vault covering it, was not modified (fig.9). The earlier extensions at the north (the vestibule) also did not affect the nave.

Square piers with Tuscan capitals separate the nave from the single side aisles and support a gallery over each of them. An entablature, with an

architrave of two fasciae, a plain frieze and a moulded cornice, breaks out slightly over the tiers. The solid front of the gallery is panelled and is brought forward in the vertical line of the piers. The second tier of piers is also square, but in this case the piers are fluted — seven flutes per side. The order is once again Tuscan and is somewhat more elaborate than the order below as the echinus is carved with egg and dart and the three other mouldings with leaf, bead and reel, and bead and leaf. The arcade arches, of a very depressed curve, are formed in the design of a bent architrave of two fasciae with a large flat keystone. The nave is covered by a plain ceiling in the form of a barrel vault. The gallery and inner aisles are now covered by continuous flat ceilings which are probably original, at least in form if not in structure.

It is here in the interior that the design of St. Paul's most definitely — and rather unexpectedly — does not follow St. Peter's, Vere Street, nor indeed any of the church interiors designed by Gibbs. On the interior of St. Peter's (fig. 10), tall Corinthian columns on pedestals rise in front of the gallery, placed over each side aisle, and support a barrel vaulted ceiling. Arches spring across the gallery from the entablature blocks of the capitals to volute brackets on the exterior wall. In between the arches, the bays are covered by groin vaults. Although both churches have naves flanked by single aisles with a gallery above, there is nevertheless a significant difference in the natures of their nave elevations and in the systems of the ceilings over their naves, aisles and galleries.

The significance of St. Peter's, Vere Street in the career of James Gibbs has long ago been pointed out by Sir John Summerson. Internally, St. Peter's looks like a "preliminary model" for the better-known St. Martin-in-the-Fields.²⁶ The significance of St. Martin's in the evolution of church design in the eighteenth century, as also demonstrated by Summerson, was the use of the *single* tall order instead of the double tier of supports used by Christopher Wren in his churches with aisles and galleries: "Wren had always hesitated between emphasis on the gallery and on the order (compare St. Bride's with St. James's, Piccadilly). Hawksmore awarded pre-eminence to the order, and at St. Martin's Gibbs agrees with him."²⁷ As has been seen, this is also true for St. Peter's. The designs of both churches were initiated by Gibbs at the same time in 1721, although the smaller church was finished earlier. Even in the circular and domed first version of St. Martin's, the single order of pedestals was used. Thus, it is evident that the supports of the gallery and the nave vault in St. Paul's are in the form of the two-tier system favoured by Wren and that the significant innovation of the single tall order closely associated with Gibbs has been avoided — or missed.



fig.10 St.Peter's, Vere Street, interior, view to west.
(Photo: courtesy National Monuments Record, London.)

Wren had used the two-tiered system in three notable churches: St.Andrew by the Wardrobe (1685-95), St.James's, Piccadilly (1680-84), and St.Andrew's, Holburn (1686-87). In the latter two, piers of a slightly cruciform shape below the galleries support round, unfluted columns above the galleries. At St.Andrew's by the Wardrobe (fig.11), the upper level is composed of square, panelled Tuscan piers with egg and dart on the echini. They rest directly on the lower entablature, which consists only of a triple fasciaed architrave, so that the gallery front fits in between the piers. This is in contrast to both the St.James's and St.Andrew's, Holburn, where the columns begin at the top of the gallery front, which has been emphasized so as to create a pedestal for each upper column, a device that strengthens the vertical line from floor to arches.



fig.11 Christopher Wren, **St.Andrew by the Wardrobe, London, 1865-95**, interior view to chancel. (Photo: courtesy National Monuments Record, London.)

The elevation of St.Paul's as a whole bears a strong resemblance to that of St.Andrew by the Wardrobe because of the double tier of square piers, but the horizontal between the tiers follows the principle used at the other two Wren churches. These similarities do not necessarily mean that St.Paul's was directly derived from these London churches; a two-tiered system, similar to that of St.Andrew by the Wardrobe, had already appeared in North America in Christ Church (Old North Church) in Boston, built in 1723 (fig.12). That church features square panelled piers supporting the balcony, with square fluted ones rising from the top of the gallery front, just as in St.Paul's. This system was repeated almost without variation two years later (1725-26) at Trinity Church in Newport, Rhode Island, which is attributed to the builder Richard Munday.²⁸

As might be expected, Wren used various systems of imitation vaults for his plaster ceilings. The nave of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe was covered by a barrel vault which was penetrated in each bay by one of the severies of the groin vaults over the galleries, in a manner similar to the later St. Peter's, Vere Street (figs. 10, 11). This system was not followed at either Christ Church or Trinity Church in New England. In both of these churches, entablatures are extended across the galleries, from the upper tier of columns, to serve as lintels from which barrel vaults spring — a device that Wren had used at St. James's, Piccadilly. In contrast to that church, the nave of Christ Church is covered by an elliptical barrel vault that springs from a horizontal cornice above the level of the gallery barrels (fig. 12); the nave vault of Trinity Church is an almost flat, cove-like groin vault. Neither of the New England churches copies the full barrel of St. James's, which is penetrated by the lateral barrels over the galleries. As has been seen, St. Paul's did not have either barrel vaults resting on transverse lintels over the galleries, or a series of groin vaults. Its much simpler scheme, a nave barrel flanked by flat gallery ceilings, did not imitate the Wren churches or their North American counterparts, nor was it adapted from St. Peter's, Vere Street.²⁹ No doubt flat ceilings were considered more economical to build and



fig. 12 Christ Church, Boston, 1723, interior, view to entrance. (Photo: Boston Public Library.)

the display of significant form was restricted to the nave, where it would be most obvious, and was not extended to the galleries, where its absence would be less noticeable.

The chancel walls of these buildings also were or are not identical. At St. Andrew by the Wardrobe there is a straight wall with only a large arched window over the altar (fig.11); a shallow apse was introduced at Christ Church, whereas Trinity Church originally had a straight wall with a single arched window.³⁰ None of them had a Venetian window as was found at Gibbs' St. Peter's, Vere Street (fig.13) and St. Martin-in-the-Fields, or at St. Paul's, the design of its chancel wall being a consequence of the model used for the exterior.



fig. 13 St. Peter's, Vere Street, interior, view to east.
(Photo: courtesy National Monuments Record, London.)

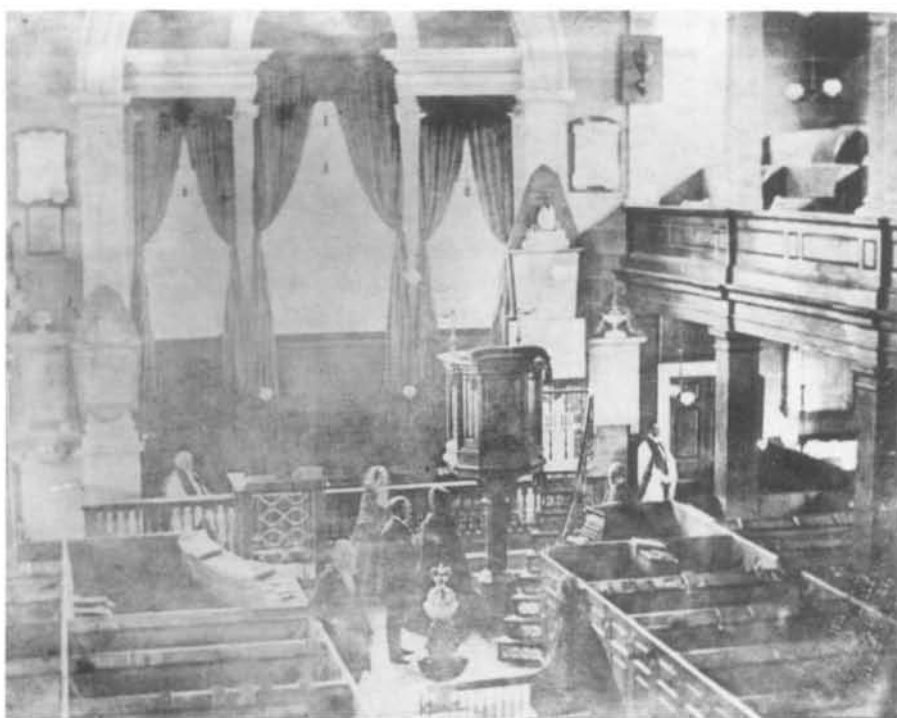


fig. 14 **St. Paul's Church**, interior, view of original chancel of 1750, ca. 1860-68, photograph by Wellington A. Chase. Coll.: St. Paul's Church. (Photo: P. Toman.)

In addition to the differences in the natures of the supports and ceilings, there was also a significant alteration in the character of the spatial organization between St. Paul's and St. Peter's. Originally, St. Paul's was simply one big box of space, divided from chancel wall (south) to entrance wall (north) by two rows of supports. As a result, the chancel was flanked by the last bays of the aisles and was looked down upon by the gallery bay above (fig. 14).³¹ At the opposite end, the stairs to the galleries must have been placed in the northernmost bay, one on each side. At St. Peter's, the gallery stairs were enclosed, forming a vestibule bay between them. At the east end, the bays flanking the chancel were also enclosed vestibules. Perhaps more significantly, as an arch separated the nave space from the chancel, the effect of a distinct, projecting chancel was created, having a slightly lower and flatter barrel vault than the nave.³² The nave at St. Peter's was therefore only five bays long, as opposed to seven at St. Paul's.

In spite of the interior similarities to St. Paul's, neither Boston's Christ Church nor Newport's Trinity Church bears any particular resemblance to St. Paul's on their exteriors. Both are quite plain, with two tiers of equal-size

windows down the side walls and at the west and east, although Christ Church is built of brick and Trinity of wood. Both churches also had west towers rising from the ground, fully projecting in front of the west wall — and neither spire bore any similarity to that of St.Paul's, as they were probably somewhat loosely based on Wren's St.Lawrence Jewry (1670-86).

We can conclude that St.Paul's does indeed seem to have been based on Gibbs' Marybone Chapel/Oxford Chapel/St.Peter's, Vere Street, but only as far as the exterior design is concerned. No doubt it was based on the plates of Gibbs' book. Gibbs had, in fact, published the book in order to provide models to be used "especially in the remote parts of the Country, where little or no assistance for Designs can be procured. Such may here be furnished ... which may be executed by a Workman who understands Lines, either as here Design'd, or with some alteration, which may be easily made by a person of Judgement...."³³ The alterations to the exterior design seem to have been primarily the appropriation of the window surrounds of St.Martin's, the reduction in the size of the portico and of the number of "west" entrances from three to one, the insertion of a Venetian window over the entrance portico and the elimination of the roof podium and urns — all relatively minor changes, little affecting the spirit of the original, but very much in the spirit of Gibbs' intentions as cited above.

However, as has been seen, neither the spirit nor the letter of the original had been retained in the interior of St.Paul's (fig.15). It resembles Gibbs' work only insofar as there is a general resemblance between the churches of Gibbs and Wren; their styles are certainly related, although the particulars are significantly different. Whether or not Gibbs would have approved of the reversion on the interior to the Wren system of gallery and ceiling supports is another matter. Nonetheless, the use of Boston's Christ Church as a model in this respect is not surprising, considering the evidence for St.Paul's having been prefabricated in Boston in order to be shipped to Halifax. But one may wonder why a Wren-like interior was inserted into a Gibbs exterior. Neither Christ Church nor Trinity Church owes anything to Gibbs, although they are contemporary constructions to Gibbs' St.Peter's and St.Martin's. N.M. Isham has pointed out that Christ Church and Trinity Church are the only examples in the United States to use the (Wren) two-tier system for supports, as opposed to a single order rising from floor to ceiling.³⁴ It should be noted that the examples he cites of the latter, King's College Chapel, Boston (1749-58), St.Paul's Chapel, New York (1764-66) and the First Baptist Meeting House, Providence (1774-75) are all later than Gibbs' publication.³⁵



*fig.15 St. Paul's Church, interior, view to north, ca. 1891, photograph by William Notman Studio.
Coll.: PANS. (Photo: courtesy PANS.)*

It is therefore clear why neither Christ Church nor Trinity Church followed the Gibbsian model — they were built before his book was published — but why did St. Paul's, in 1749-50, revert, if not to a Wren church, then to a Wren-inspired design as at Christ Church of 1723?³⁶ One can only suggest that it was due to the ease with which the small square piers of the Tuscan order could be constructed, as opposed to the giant round columns of the Corinthian order. Both Christ Church and Trinity Church used the Tuscan order, although in the year St. Paul's was being prepared in Boston, Peter Harrison (1716-65) was beginning King's Chapel, which has pairs of fluted Corinthian columns rising in Gibbs' fashion from floor to ceiling.³⁷ This does raise the question of how much of St. Paul's was constructed or prefabricated in Boston and how much was left for execution from drawings in Halifax.³⁸

Although the interior system of St. Paul's does resemble Christ Church in Boston, the proportions of the two buildings are very different (figs.12,15). St. Paul's is low and broad in the Gibbs manner, rather than tall and narrow.

Christ Church was clearly not the model for any other aspect of St. Paul's, especially the exterior. While one might expect an influence of Wren's London churches via Christ Church, this is not evident. Christ Church was a significant and conspicuous church in Boston, but it does not seem to have been of any particular significance to those concerned with the establishment of Halifax, particularly Lord Halifax, Chairman of the sponsoring Board of Trade and Plantations, nor to Col. Cornwallis or Rev. Tutty, who were sent out from England. There may be some truth to the assertion that Lord Halifax chose his parish church, St. Peter's, Vere Street, as the model for the church of the new town,³⁹ and he no doubt would have known that the plans, etc., of it were available in Gibbs' publication, and that its relatively modest character vis-à-vis St. Martin's, for instance, would recommend it to the new colony and military outpost.

As was mentioned earlier, two main explanations have been proposed as to the method of conveying the design of St. Peter's, Vere Street to Halifax for St. Paul's. One, based on the writings of contemporaries, implies the design was sent directly to Halifax from London and then, presumably, to Boston, where the building was to be framed. The other explanation suggests that the design came from Boston. In either case, the source could have been Gibbs' *Book of Architecture*, either known to the Englishmen involved with establishing the new town or recommended to them (by Lord Halifax?), or else in the possession of the contractor or some other person in Boston who was responsible for arranging for and/or supervising the "framing." Whatever the route, it is clear that the exterior design of St. Peter's was not slavishly followed, but was "interpreted," especially in regard to the "west" façade. The east façade, which was more closely followed at St. Paul's, was not represented in the plates. Does this imply the participation of someone with first-hand knowledge of the actual building?

The choice of Boston as the site for the framing of the new church is not a surprising one, because Boston was the nearest major city to Halifax, and one with a long established building trade and facilities. What really is surprising is that having chosen the model of St. Peter's (because of Lord Halifax's connection with it?) as the prototype for St. Paul's, the plates from Gibbs' *Book of Architecture* were not more closely followed. If St. Peter's was the meaningful model, why was not its interior form also followed? If it is suggested that the Wren system of small square piers, known in Boston twenty-five years earlier, was easier to make than were giant round Corinthian columns, then does that imply that only the framing, literally, was done in Boston (where craftsmen were capable of making the Corinthian

columns), and that the design was altered because those parts were to be executed in Halifax? Was it then for reasons of economy and the lack of social skills that the interior design of St. Peter's was abandoned? Did this decision take place in Halifax, London or Boston? There seems to be no evidence to supply any definitive answers, especially to the last question. Whatever the answers, we clearly have at St. Paul's a Bostonian Wren building inside a Gibbsian box.⁴⁰

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Notes

¹ i.e., Allan DUFFUS, Edward MACFARLANE, Elizabeth PACEY and George ROGERS, *Thy Dwellings Fair: Churches of Nova Scotia, 1750-1830* (Hantsport, N.S.: Lancelot Press Limited, 1982), p. 47. For a concise history, plan, and photographs of St. Paul's present state, see pp. 45-52.

² The cornerstone was laid on 13 June 1750 and the church was first used for services on 2 September 1750, although apparently the interior furnishings were incomplete. In December 1760 it was still "almost finished," according to Reginald V. HARRIS, *The Church of St. Paul in Halifax, Nova Scotia: 1749-1949* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1949), pp. 17-18. c.f. also George W. HILL, "History of St. Paul's Church," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, I (1878), pp. 35-38, II (1879-80), pp. 63-99, and III (1882-83), pp. 13-70; (facsimile ed., Belleville, Ont.: Mika Publishing Company, 1976), I, pp. 43-44. The work of Hill is still the fundamental history of the church; that of Harris is heavily dependent on it for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The early plans of Halifax show that the site originally selected for the church was at the north end of the parade grounds. The church was not officially named St. Paul's until 1759 (HARRIS, pp. 14, 20).

³ HARRIS, p. 19. Also F. St. George SPENDLOVE, *The Face of Early Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1958), pp. 11-12, pls. 22-24.

⁴ The church of St. Paul's owns a copy of each edition of this plate.

⁵ Reproduced in: SPENDLOVE, pl. 22; GOWANS, *Building Canada*, pl. 87; and Pierre MAYRAND and John BLAND, *Three Centuries of Architecture in Canada/Trois siècles d'architecture au Canada* (Montréal: Federal Publications Service/Georges Le Pape, 1971), p. 77.

⁶ Reproduced in HARRIS, pl. opp. p. 132; see also p. 151. The original watercolour is now in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS). For J. Partridge see Harry PIERS, "Artists in Nova Scotia," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, XVIII (1914), pp. 101-65, 121; also Mary SPARLING and Scot ROBSON (eds.), *Great Expectations: The European Vision in Nova Scotia, 1794-1848. An Exhibition Organized by the Art Gallery, Mount St. Vincent University, Halifax*. 17 October — 23 February 1980 (Halifax, N.S., 1980), no. 5-19, pp. 62, 63, 70.

⁷ HARRIS, pp. 152, 249.

⁸ Woolford's sketch is in Special Collections (W.I. Morse Collection), Kilham Library, Dalhousie University; see Eugenie ARCHIBALD (comp.), *Catalogue of the William Inglis Morse Collection of Books, Pictures, Maps, Manuscripts, etc.* (London: Curwen Press, 1938), p. 114 and pl. between pp. 60 and 61. For more on Woolford by SPARLING and ROBSON, pp. 28-33.

⁹ Now in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; see Mary ALLODI, *Canadian Watercolours and Drawings in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto: The Royal Ontario Museum, 1974), no. 742; SPENDLOVE, pp. 32-33, watercolour reproduced facing p. xv. For more on Eagar, see SPARLING and ROBSON, pp. 38-47. Eagar's watercolour was the basis for a lithograph, *Argyle Street, Halifax*, published by Jenkins & Colburn of Boston ca. 1839. (Charles P. DE VOLPI, *Nova Scotia: A Pictorial Record* (Longmans Canada Limited, 1974), pl. 91).

¹⁰ SPENDLOVE, pl. 24.

¹¹ HILL, II, p. 71, and HARRIS, p. 55, identified it as "the portico at the south end." This is an error; the north end was intended. In the next paragraph HARRIS says, "These columns remained until the church received an addition at the north end in the year 1812," which is a near quote from HILL (II, p. 71), who refers to it as the portico at the north end. All doubt is removed by reference to the Vestry Minutes of St. Paul's for 30 June 1783. I wish to express my appreciation to the rector, Rev. Peter Mason, the curate, Rev. Michael Knowles, and the church guide, (Mrs.) Rhoda P.N. Weldon, for their permission to search the Vestry Minutes in order to confirm the accuracy of Hill's statement and also to ascertain the exact year, which was not cited by Hill and was implied by Harris as being 1780.

¹² The Vestry Minutes also reveal a payment for repairing the "Platform of the Porch" in 1765. (The north is most likely meant, as the southern entrances were not covered by porches). On 19 January 1774, the Governor of Nova Scotia was petitioned (unsuccessfully) to remove the artillery barracks "so closely situated and nearly in the front of the Church Portico." The artillery barracks were located on the site of the present Parade Ground, immediately to the north of the Church. I think these references make it certain that a north entrance, with a projecting portico, was part of the original design.

¹³ For the daguerreotype, which is in the Nova Scotia Museum (acc. no. 75.70.2), see: Jim BURANT, "Pre-Confederation Photography in Halifax, Nova Scotia," *Journal of Canadian Art History*, IV (No. 1, Spring, 1977), pp. 35-44, fig. 4.

¹⁴ Two photographs of ca. 1860 by Joseph Rogers (Rogers Collection, pl. 76), and Wellington A. Chase, PANS, include partial views of St. Paul's from the east. They show that prior to the addition of the aisles and the Romanesquoid windows in 1868-69, the windows had already been altered. Simple moulded frames had replaced those with quoins delineated by Short, and the lower windows appear with segmental heads. In addition, pilasters at angles of the main box had replaced the quoins that had formerly been there; angle quoins are clearly depicted in the watercolour by Partridge, although the façade windows have simple moulded frames like the ones in the later photographs.

¹⁵ HARRIS, pp. 14-15. Tutty's letters were published in full in "Papers Relating to the Early History of the Church of England in Nova Scotia," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, VII (1889-91), pp. 89-127. See especially pp. 96-108, 110-114.

¹⁶ A second New England centre is mentioned without authority in *Founded Upon a Rock: Historic Buildings of Halifax and Vicinity Standing in 1967* (Halifax: The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, 2nd ed., 1971), p. 12: "The oak frame and pine timbers were brought by sea from Boston, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire." (my italics)

¹⁷ HARRIS, pp. 15-16. The old parish church, rebuilt ca. 1400 and remodelled by James Gibbs ca. 1741, should not be confused with the present parish church of St. Mary, a building of 1813-17 by Thomas Hardwick (1752-1829), on a different site on Marylebone Road. Upon the completion of Hardwick's new church, the old church became the parish chapel. It was damaged in World War II, and was demolished in 1949. See: L. Russell MUIRHEAD, ed., *The Blue Guides: Short Guide to London* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 8th ed., 1956), p. 66.

¹⁸ Harris' account is confirmed by John SUMMERSON, *Georgian London* (rev. ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1962), pp. 105-110, and by Nikolaus PEVSNER, *The Buildings of England: London (except the cities of London and Westminster)* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1952), pp. 323-324, 331 (St. Peter's).

¹⁹ Neither SUMMERSON nor PEVSNER refer to it as Marybone Chapel but cf. MUIRHEAD, p. 58: "Opposite is St. Peter, Vere Street (formerly Marylebone Chapel), a neat little church by Gibbs (1823-4 [sic])." The unnamed authority for both Harris and Muirhead would appear to be the architect James Gibbs, who, in the notes on p. vii to pls. XXIV and XXV of his *A Book of Architecture* (London: 1728), refers to St. Peter's as "Marybone Chapell."

²⁰ HARRIS, p. 17; HILL, I, pp. 36-37.

²¹ [Alan GOWANS], "New England Architecture in Nova Scotia," *The Art Quarterly*, XXV (No. 1, Spring, 1962), p. 17, fig. 8; repeated in *Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), pl. 53. Gowans does not pursue the particulars of the relationship suggested.

²² Curiously enough, this design of the open arcaded, octagonal stage(s) is identical or very similar to that found at a great number of québécois churches, which often have a spire instead of the upper ogee cupola. More interestingly, many of these, whether of one or two tiers, are also rotated: see Gérard MORISSET, *L'architecture en Nouvelle-France* (Québec: Charrier et Dugal, 1949), pls. 53, 54, 55b, 58, 59, 61, 64, 77, 78, 80, 81.

At Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré (pl. 75), there is an ogee cupola with a tower almost identical to that of St. Paul's and St. Peter's, dated at the end of the seventeenth century.

²³ From the plan (pl. XXIV), the two east portals and the chancel window are obvious; the section (pl. XXV) gives the interior elevation of the chancel window, but the frames of the portals, the exterior form of the window, and the two upper windows, would all have had to be improvised.

²⁴ Plates XVI-XXII, and I-VII, respectively, in GIBBS, *A Book of Architecture*.

²⁵ Similar quoined window surrounds were used on the first circular designs for St. Martin's, pls. X, XXV, and for All Hallows in Derby, pl. XXVI. Marcus WHIFFEN, "The Progeny of St. Martin-in-the-Fields," *Architectural Review*, C (No. 595, July, 1946), pp. 3-4, and *Stuart and Georgian Churches: The Architecture of the Church of England Outside London, 1603-1837* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1947-48), p. 33, drew attention to the use by Gibbs of this treatment of windows in a series, a treatment which was very influential.

²⁶ John SUMMERSON, *Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1953), p. 211.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 212. On p. 211, Summerson had emphasized the enormous and wide influence of St. Martin's: "Through the fine engravings of it in Gibbs's book, it became the type of the Anglican parish church and was imitated wherever in the world English was spoken and Anglican worship upheld."

²⁸ Norman M. ISHAM, *Trinity Church in Newport, Rhode Island: A History of Fabric* (Boston: 1936). Pp. 37-49 contain a detailed comparison between the Newport and Boston churches and the Wren buildings on which they seem most dependent. Cf. SUMMERSON, *Architecture in Britain*, p. 340. The arrangement of the stairs to the galleries at Christ Church (fig. 12) may well have been employed at St. Paul's. The stairs are very narrow, "single-file," "flying" staircases, one at the end of each aisle. No evidence survives at St. Paul's for the original form.

²⁹ I am not certain if the present vault is the original. Photographs by William Notman, now in the PANS (nos. 1964, 1965, 70039) and probably dating to the early or mid-1890's, show the vault surface subdivided into small rectangular panels with a series of simple medallions down the centre. The relatively new chancel vault has the same pattern, as does the gallery ceiling. These could have been painted designs rather than actual mouldings. More interestingly, the Notman photographs clearly show the nave vault springing from a series of curved lines paralleling the depressed curves of the arcade arches and, possibly, creating a series of curved segments to the main vault. The existing vault springs from an absolutely straight and level horizontal line just above the arcade arches. Harris does not record a rebuilding of the vault in the 1890's, and the Vestry Minutes for the nineteenth century are not available.

³⁰ It was lengthened in 1762 and a shallow apse was included in the rebuilding. See ISHAM, pp. 103-104.

³¹ This is the only known photograph of the interior of St. Paul's before the extension of the chancel. According to Wellington A. CHASE, it probably dates between 1859 in 1868; copies are at St. Paul's and in the PANS. It shows the chancel only, and reveals that the Venetian window was encompassed by a large arch supported by tall pilasters. The flanking end bays of the aisle and gallery are clearly included.

³² This is also the case at St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

³³ GIBBS, p. i (Introduction).

³⁴ ISHAM, p. 46.

³⁵ WHIFFEN, in *Stuart and Georgian Churches*, p. 45, observes that "vulgar error" more often credits Wren than Gibbs as an influence on American eighteenth-century church architecture.

³⁶ St. John's, Wolverhampton (Staffordshire) (1755-60) by William Baker seems to be a similar example of a retardataire design and split personality. Although the exterior is a version of St. Martin's, the interior has two tiers of supports in the Wren manner; the lower ones are panelled piers and the upper are Doric columns with the gallery front between them. The ceiling is a barrel vault with penetrations from the gallery vaults; see WHIFFEN, "Progeny," p. 5. The two-tier system appears to have been revived in the nineteenth century, as at St. Thomas's, Stockport (Cheshire) (1825) by George Basevi (1749-1845); see WHIFFEN, *Stuart and Georgian Churches*, p. 89 and fig. 111.

³⁷ Already the Gibbsian tall order had appeared in the United States, possibly as early as 1727, when Dr. John Kearsley's design for Christ Church, Philadelphia was begun; see SUMMERSON, *Architecture in Britain*, p. 340.

³⁸ GOWANS, "New England Architecture," p. 17, fig. 8 speculates that "probably window frames, glass and steeple were ... prefabricated."

³⁹ According to Beckles WILSON, *Nova Scotia: The Province That Has Been Passed By* (London: Constable & Company Ltd., rev. ed., 1912), p. 46, who states, without citing any authority, that Lord Halifax "sought out the architect of St. Peter's, got the plans, and sent them out to Nova Scotia." The entire passage is quoted by HARRIS, p. 15, who calls it a "new story about the plan of St. Paul's," although he does not deny it.

⁴⁰ Gowans' surmise that the design of Halifax's St. Paul's probably came from Boston turns out to be true, but perhaps not quite in the way he might have anticipated.

RÉSUMÉ

St.Paul's, Halifax, Nouvelle-Écosse

et

St.Peter's, rue Vere, Londres, Angleterre

Des historiens contemporains ont clairement établi que lors de la fondation de la ville d'Halifax en 1749, une église anglicane avait été prévue dans les plans. Des documents attestent en effet que la charpente de cette église était en voie de construction à Boston au cours de l'hiver 1749-1750. L'église dont il est question ici est l'église St.Paul's, aujourd'hui le plus vieux bâtiment d'Halifax. La structure originale n'est toutefois pas intacte: une rallonge a été construite en 1812, l'église a fait l'objet de travaux d'agrandissement en 1868-1869 et un chœur a été ajouté en 1872. Le nom de Christopher Wren est souvent associé à la conception des plans originaux, laquelle est aussi attribuée à James Gibbs. La présente analyse vise justement à faire le point sur cette question.

Il semble en effet que la petite église St.Peter's, rue Vere, à Londres, conçue par Gibbs entre 1721 et 1724, ait servi de modèle pour l'extérieur de l'église St.Paul's. Il est à noter que les détails architecturaux des oeuvres de Gibbs étaient entièrement expliqués dans son ouvrage *A Book of Architecture*, publié en 1728. Construite en bois plutôt qu'en brique, St.Paul's n'était pas une copie exacte de St.Peter's; les différences entre l'extérieur des deux bâtiments demeurent toutefois plutôt minimes et sans importance.

L'intérieur de St.Peter's, par contre, n'a pas servi de source d'inspiration. C'est ainsi que les colonnes monumentales s'élevant d'un seul jet en face des tribunes ont été remplacées, dans l'église St.Paul's, par un système de colonnes à deux étages, caractéristique de Wren et non de Gibbs et déjà relativement démodé au milieu de XVIII^e siècle. Il est intéressant de noter que l'intérieur de la Christ Church (Old North Church) de Boston, qui date de 1723, est très semblable à celui de l'église St.Paul's; son extérieur et sa tour inspirée de Wren s'en distinguent toutefois nettement. L'église St.Paul's présente donc un extérieur gibbsien avec un intérieur dans le style de Wren. Pourquoi? On pourrait avancer comme hypothèse que les grandes colonnes corinthiennes de St.Peter's étaient beaucoup trop compliquées à imiter en Amérique du nord, bien que la construction d'une église faisant appel à ce genre de colonnes ait débuté à Boston en 1749. Si une telle entreprise était possible pour Boston, peut-être ne l'était-elle pas pour Halifax. Il se peut que seule la charpente ait été préfabriquée à Boston et que les détails aient été réalisés à Halifax par des menuisiers qualifiés de la colonie. Ceux-ci se voyaient sans doute confier surtout des tâches de nature plutôt utilitaire et ont pu, par conséquent, trouvé plus facile de réaliser les petites colonnes carrées de style toscan, qui ornent encore aujourd'hui l'église St.Paul's.

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