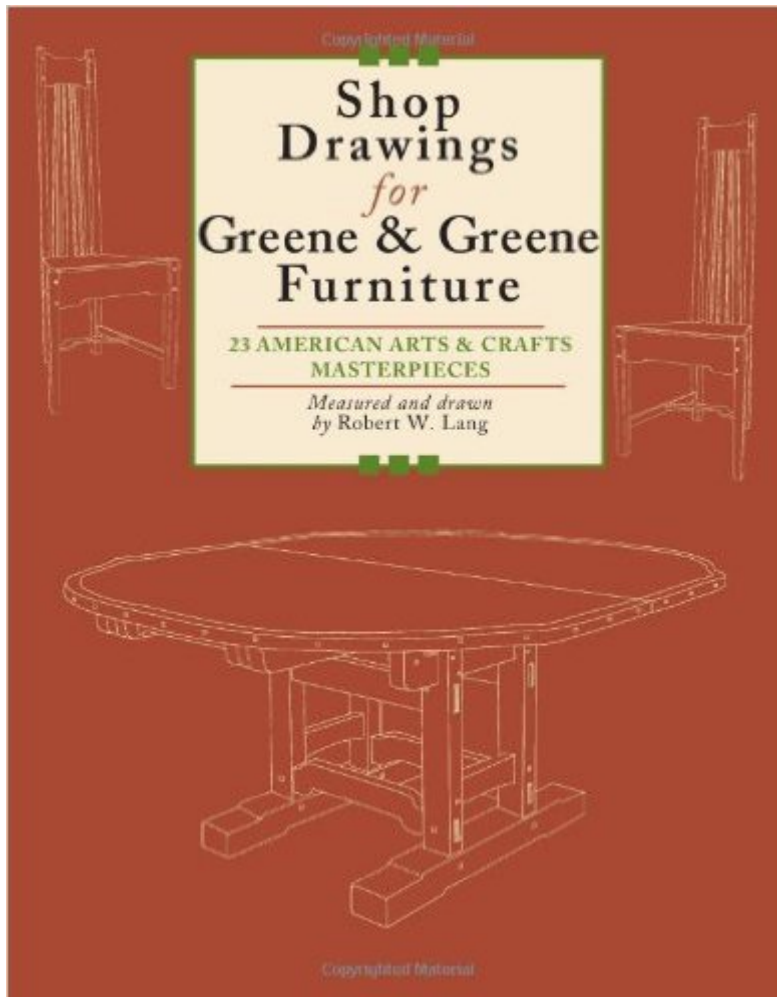


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Shop Drawings For Greene & Greene Furniture: 23 American Arts And Crafts Masterpieces



Synopsis

Greene and Greene furniture, recognized as the finest expression of the American Arts and Crafts movement, is presented as working shop drawings for the first time. These drawings offer accurate front, side, top and detail views in addition to complete cutting lists.

Book Information

Paperback: 159 pages

Publisher: Fox Chapel Publishing (February 1, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1892836297

ISBN-13: 978-1892836298

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.5 x 10.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (30 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #249,213 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #45 inÂ Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > Furniture #52 inÂ Books > Arts & Photography > Decorative Arts & Design > Furniture Design #149 inÂ Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Carpentry

Customer Reviews

Having purchased two other books of this nature by Mr. Lang, I placed myself on the waiting list at and waited months to get the book in my hands. I did not hesitate to break it out of the packaging and dove right into it. The first forty-five pages were dedicated to the history and other background information necessary to get a good understanding of the Greenes' design concepts and the practical methods used by the Hall brothers to construct the pieces. I was very disappointed with the scant number of details that one might expect from such a technical manual. There are a few photographs that show some of the processes (most of us know how to use a shoulder plane) but what was lacking were drawings to reinforce or to make clear some of the principles Lang was trying to describe. The book read like a series of essays rather than a substantive, technical manual with supporting details. The actual measured drawings are just that as they lack certain pertinent construction details. I am a fairly skilled woodworker, having started the craft at the age of fourteen and have continued until today, even after a successful career in architecture; and what I have concluded is that this book was hurriedly put together to meet some preset deadline. It is my opinion that if more time and thought was given by the author to the details it would have resulted in a much

better book. So I am sorely disappointed with the contents and the lack of detailing and would not recommend this book to anyone but very experienced woodworkers. Mr. Lang has missed the mark this time and what a pity.

This book is divided into two sections. The first describes several woodworking techniques that are useful in making this furniture. This material is adequate and informative. However, if you are planning to make G&G furniture, you should also buy Darrell Peart's book regarding techniques for Greene and Greene furniture. Mr. Peart's discussion is more extensive. The second section is the measured drawings. I have mixed feelings about this section. Mr. Lang tells us that he really wants the reader to think hard about the furniture before beginning construction. Therefore, he provides the minimum necessary information. I disagree. I am purchasing this book because I want my life to be easy. I've built many pieces of furniture from drawings and it would be so very nice to have dimensions that are repeated instead of flipping pages. Mr. Lang does this because he learned mechanical drafting, where each dimension is provided only once. In mechanical drafting this is important because of tolerance stacking. But tolerance stacking is not an issue with furniture. He writes that he can make mistakes in his drawings and he wants us to verify his measurements. Wonderful (voice dripping with sarcasm). So, I am left flipping pages again. Now, for specific criticisms. The drawings for the Gamble Chiffonier are woefully inadequate if the reader wants to reproduce this. First, there are no dimensions provided for the mirror assembly on top. The reader is left to determine the dimensions from the scale printed on the bottom of the page. I find this utterly unacceptable. These are supposed to be measured drawings--why keep the measurements a secret? The drawings in the book are too small to get accurate dimensions. There are no details provided that show how the mirror is attached into the frame. Also, the drawer details are lacking. The drawer sides are topped with another piece of wood. What species is this? Also, there is a drop down along the edge. How deep is this drop? Does it vary according to the size of the drawer? It shows that these edges are attached with round things. Are these ebony plugs? Mother of pearl? Also, Mr. Lang shows two types of handles on the drawers (the bottom handles are different than the top handles on page 51). This is likely a typo but I can't be certain. The drawing 'profile of the rails and stiles on front' is so small that it is useless. Also, why can't he provide dimensions for this? Why does he keep these a secret? Let me criticize another drawing, the Gamble Entry Table. The profile view of the legs is very important. But the author leaves so much unsaid. For example, the width of the upper portion of the leg is 1-3/4" but the bottom is left unsaid. What is the radius of the curves? Unsaid. Where should the radius be cut? Also, the reader is left to 'eyeball' the location

of the cloud lifts on the upper rail. Sigh. The Gamble Bed. The author details the original twin size and adds drawings for a queen size (very nice). But I was left wondering how the head and foot boards are attached to the rails. Also, there is absolutely nothing shown to support the mattress. Now a few general comments: The author should show pictures of the original piece. Only about half are shown with photos. The inclusion of the kitchen cabinets from the Gamble House is great. The lack of the famous sideboard from the Thorsen house is a glaring omission. And finally, the author shows all of the mortise and tenon joints as housed mortise and tenon joints. This is great if you are looking for authenticity. But the lack of so many other details required for a modicum of authenticity leaves this reviewer wondering why all of fuss here and absolutely nothing in other places. After all that, is this book worth buying? Yes, absolutely. It will help you create furniture in the Greene and Greene style but be prepared to make a lot of your own judgments. If you want to reproduce a piece, you'll need to head to Pasadena and measure it yourself. (By the way, in the recipe for the stain on page 38, the author lists 1/8 part sylvan green. Because yellow and blue make green, you can buy a slightly different shade of yellow and skip the purchase of the green. Any art student in an art store should be able to help.) In response to Mr. Greer. If you can find printed dimensions for the mirror on the chiffonier, more power to you. But they ain't there in my edition. If you take a close look you will find other places where dimensions are lacking. In response to Mr. Gabriel: You state exactly why I am disappointed in this book--it requires a lot of "inference" and "derivation". Sure, I and most other woodworkers could build furniture that looks great from these shop drawings. But too many derivations are required in order for these drawing to be great. Each derivation is a place for a clerical error to arise. Woodworking takes too much time as it is. The drawings could be so much more helpful and they should have been. And you are right--I am a sad, lonely pathetic man. Even my dog won't play with me because I smell so bad. My cat ran away years ago. Hell, they won't even feed me at the homeless shelter because they say I am communicable (whatever that means). I haven't had a decent conversation with a woman in years, let alone a date. But hey, I am a master of video games. Have you tried that new Wii yet?

"Shop Drawings" is little more than it says it is. It would have been nice if it were more but it doesn't claim to be. If you have a background similar to Mr. Lang's as I do with drafting, then there is all you need to reproduce the Greene and Greene designs, at least from a dimensional stand point. You will however need to figure out the details on your own or reference some of the magazine articles on reproducing the Greene and Greene furniture. As Mr. Lang states in his book, it's not a how to guide. It's still a very good and informative book however and one you will want if you have visions

of building some of this unique furniture.

The original drawings for G&G furniture were often just rough ideas and nothing more than a starting point - typically, they did not accurately represent the finished piece. Bob Lang's book fills that gap with measured drawings of several original G&G pieces. If you are a serious student of design, measured drawings are an invaluable resource. A feel for the balance and proportion of a design is essential in understanding that design. Nothing does that better than good 2-D elevations. Bob's book provides much more information than just the measured drawings though. For the G&G enthusiast, it goes a long way in furthering the study of Greene & Greene furniture. A must have! Darrell Peart author of Greene & Greene: Design Elements for the Workshop

I am going to disagree with the negative reviews of this book. Robert Lang in his introduction, explains what he thinks of as limitations of the book - some of those being that he had limited or no access to the actual pieces, and that the plans were developed in part by some educated guessing. The book itself is very nicely printed on heavy gloss paper, with a number of color photographs - really a very nice book. There is quite a lot of introductory material - much more than in his other measured drawings books. I think that this book should be used in conjunction with the Darrel Peart books, and other material, such as the many photograph collection books on Greene and Greene.

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