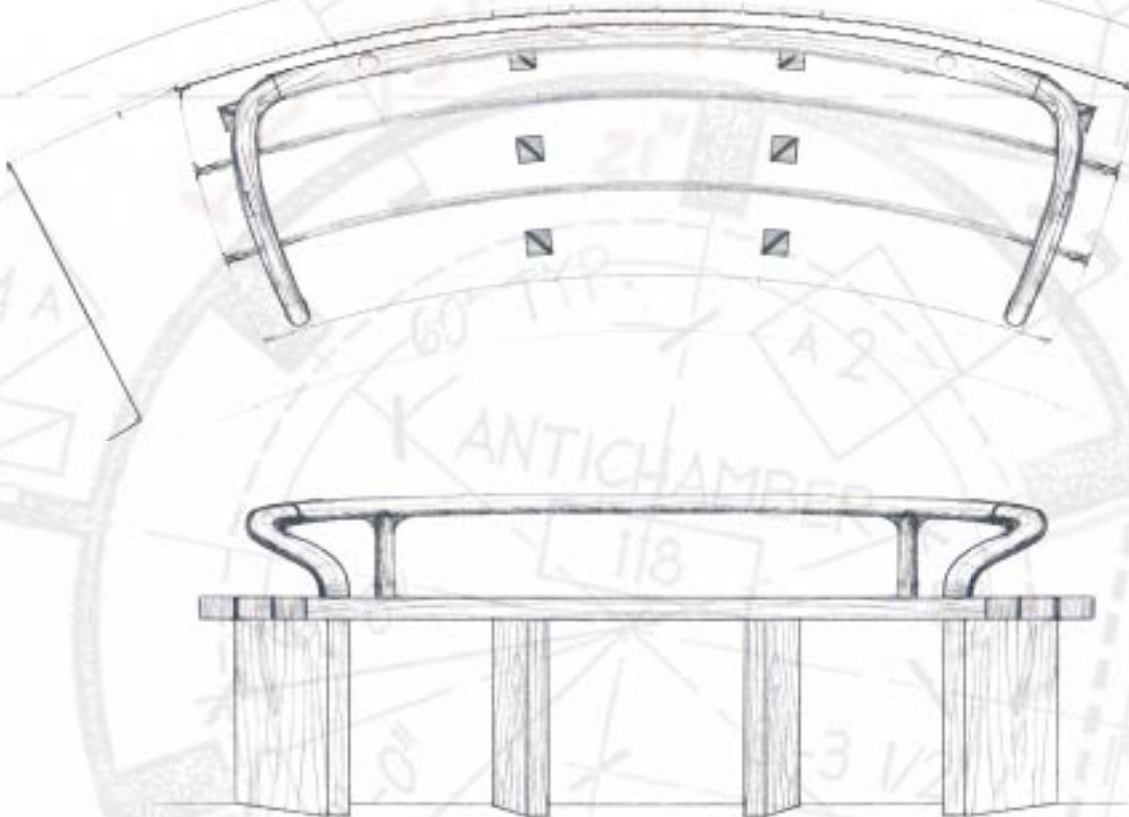


CURVED BENCH FOR PANORAMA CITY ANTECHAMBER

DON FREAS
WOODWORK



January 2004

The Panorama City Board commissioned artist Tom Anderson to create artwork for the round antechamber in the Panorama administration facility. Tom asked me to design and create a park bench that would provide an elegant spot for relaxed viewing of the artwork.

Don Freas

Design

CURVED BENCH FOR PANORAMA CITY ANTECHAMBER

page 2



January 31, 2004

The design called for lumber that was thicker than usual. I stopped by Windfall Lumber in Olympia and found that they had some beautiful old-growth Douglas Fir planks salvaged from huge, eighty year old vinegar tanks. The tanks had been part of a pickle factory in Oakland California. (I checked to be sure the wood didn't smell like vinegar or pickles.)

I liked the idea of using vintage lumber for this project, so Harlan, pictured above, helped me select four twenty-foot boards, two and a half by four and a half inches.

Don Freas

Wood

CURVED BENCH FOR PANORAMA CITY ANTECHAMBER

page 3



February 7, 2004

With the lumber in the shop I visited the site for final measurements, then began cutting the pieces for the bench top and legs. I glued them together, surfaced and sanded the resulting planks, then set up a nine-foot compass to lay out the curves of the bench top.



The design called for strong mortise and tenon joints holding the legs to the bench seat. The tenons on the leg tops would be wedged through the seat much like an ax handle is attached to the axhead. I cut twelve square mortises in the bench top, in a radial pattern, to receive the leg tenons.

Don Freas

Craft

CURVED BENCH FOR PANORAMA CITY ANTECHAMBER

page 4



February 21, 2004

With the bench top shaped and the tenons on the leg structures cut, everything was clamps and glue for a couple of days. The tenons fit well into the mortices, and I used walnut wedges to hold them in place. (The walnut was from a local tree, I had a small piece that's been in the shop for twenty years, maybe more.)



To make the back rail I sawed one of the planks into strips a quarter inch thick and clamped them around a form that matched the curve of the antechamber wall. I was able to glue the strips back together in the same orientation and order as the wood in the tree.

Don Freas

Clamps

CURVED BENCH FOR PANORAMA CITY ANTECHAMBER



February 28, 2004
I didn't have the camera out for a few days and things got ahead of me. Here's the rail, nearly finished.

The rail is composed of over fifty separate pieces of wood, I counted them while I was sanding. I had to build up the stock with cross-grain laminates at the tight curves, so the rail would be strong. That's why it took so many.

The final rail provides a good grip for the hand because it's not quite round.

Don Freas

Rail

CURVED BENCH FOR PANORAMA CITY ANTECHAMBER



March 3, 2004
I'm always excited to see what happens when the final finish goes on. The oil brought out a lot of beautiful tone and color in the vintage wood.

The bench is ready for delivery.

Don Freas

Finish