

Press Release: Immediate Release

Theo Furniture Range Marks 15 Years of Enduring Design

The Theo furniture range reaches its 15th year in production in 2026, marking the longevity of a design that began with a single wooden stacking chair for the ecclesiastical sector and has since grown into a family of more than 25 furniture pieces used internationally.

A special focus will be given to the range at Clerkenwell Design Week at [New Design Group's](#) showroom.

First launched in 2011, the original Theo chair was developed at a time when churches across the UK were moving away from fixed Victorian pews towards more flexible interiors. These evolving spaces required lightweight, durable chairs that could be stacked, moved and handled regularly, often by volunteers, while remaining robust enough for long-term use.

Simon Pengelly, the designer of Theo, said: “Issued in 2009, the brief was immediately compelling because of the various challenges it posed, not least to create a wooden stacking chair that was also lightweight, which initially felt like a contradiction in terms.”

In response the team turned to laminated timber, allowing smaller and lighter sections to be used while achieving greater structural strength. This manufacturing approach became fundamental to the chair’s character and performance.

It also directly informed Theo’s distinctive visual identity, including the tying together of the front and back legs, now a defining feature of the range.

“The chair’s appearance is a direct outcome of the laminating process and its method of manufacture,” Pengelly explained. “Many of its details emerged directly from what the process allowed, and always from what was required of the chair.”

The clarity and durability of the original design led naturally to the expansion of the range. Over time, stools, benches and tables were introduced, each developed to relate proportionally and visually to the original stacking chair. Today, all pieces in the Theo collection are connected by a shared constructional logic and material language that also stems from the intelligent use of common components across the range.

“Over the 15 years since its launch, the concept has grown into a broad family, each new piece feeling like an organic extension of the original idea,” said Pengelly. “Projects like this are rare, particularly when you consider the people involved and the genuine pleasure it brought throughout the process.”

“Truth be told, it still feels as though this quiet, understated chair is only just getting started,” Pengelly added. “In every situation, Theo products are quietly and assuredly fit for purpose.”

Fifteen years on, Theo remains defined less by change than by continuity, demonstrating how a clear idea, carefully developed, can adapt to different contexts while staying true to its origins.

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Editor Notes

About Theo Furniture

Theo is a family of contract furniture products designed for New Design Group by award-winning British designer [Simon Pengelly](#). Originally created for ecclesiastical spaces, Theo’s refined, purposeful design has since evolved into a full collection used across a wide range of environments. Today the range includes more than twenty complementary products, from chairs and stools to meeting booths, each carrying the same elegant, functional aesthetic that made the original Theo chair a success.

About New Design Group

[New Design Group](#) is a UK designer and manufacturer of contract furniture, creating well-made, adaptable products for workplaces, learning environments and hospitality spaces.

As long-standing specialists in British-made commercial furniture, the team designs and produces a diverse range of high-quality pieces. New Design Group is the home of the award-winning Theo furniture collection.

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