WELLS CATHEDRAL

New entry cloister, Education and Music Resource Centre, chapter house undercroft, works yard

01

PROJECT ARCHITECT:
Martin Stancliffe,
Purcell Miller Tritton

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Peter Bird

In some ways, the great medieval cathedrals are dinosaurs: creations of another era, fascinating, impressive and inspiring – but ill-equipped for the demands of the twenty-first century. Yet their continued significance is not to be doubted. Wells attracts some 470,000 visitors a year, 170,000 of whom attend one of the 1,730 services, concerts, educational visits and other events organised by the cathedral. That's almost five events a day, each with its own logistical demands, each attracting a different public.

So it is easy to understand why the chapter at Wells had, by the late 1990s, begun to feel as if they were reaching a kind of evolutionary crossroads. There was no safe accommodation for visiting school groups, no disabled access to many areas of the cathedral church itself, and no covered route to the visitors' toilets. The cathedral shop and restaurant occupied one walk of the medieval cloister; part of the Song School filled another. Girl choristers practised in the chapter house undercroft, which had otherwise become a large storeroom; choirs of both sexes robed here, too. Child protection legislation and the Disability Discrimination Act increased the imperative for change. The status quo was untenable.

It took some time for the right solution to emerge. The first scheme was opposed by several consultees. It took all the negotiation skills of the cathedral authorities and planning advisors, including English Heritage and the CFCE, to arrive at the eventual answer – a design which balanced the building's extraordinary significance with the needs of modern users and which was capable of attracting consent and funding.

Detailed knowledge of the cathedral and its complex building history was essential. It was Warwick Rodwell, cathedral archaeologist, for example, who pointed out a series of blocked doors in the cathedral complex, each adjacent to sites that might have potential for redevelopment. The doors allowed new connections to be made between different parts of the complex, connections that revealed and enhanced the historic patterns of its use. As discussions developed, like turning a key in some great and ancient lock, the scheme began to fall into place.

The first focus was the Camery, an enclosed location on the south-east side of the cathedral, where the mason's yard had for many centuries been located. By unblocking a medieval door in the east cloister walk, the area could be reconnected to the cloister and hence to the building as a whole. Two groups of new buildings were created: the first formed an improved base for the Clerk of Works' department; the second included the much-needed public toilets, education facilities and Song School. The latter two facilities, which are securely separated from the public, are arguably the project's most effective interiors: hall-like structures built around a cruck frame of solid oak.

Top: new cloister is main visitors' entrance
Bottom: a pentice of oak links cloister and Education and Music Resource Centre
Opposite: education classroom

Top: choir practice room

Bottom: chapter house undercroft

Opposite: Education and Music Resource Centre, with south side of cathedral

It was now possible to clear and conserve the spaces previously used by the Song School: one range of the cloister and the chapter house undercroft. This latter stands on the other side of the church, in the angle between the choir and the north transept. It could only be reached via a vestry, which needed to remain in use. Once again, a blocked door was the key: a low, medieval opening that let onto an area of small, recent structures housing heating equipment. These stood in the angle between the chapter house and the church; permission was granted to demolish them.

The cathedral was also permitted to make a breach in the external wall of the north choir aisle, and to open and heighten the door in the chapter house undercroft. The first of these was particularly sensitive, but without it the entire project became impossible. And the benefits were immediate. A new corridor has been built on the site, providing public access to the undercroft. This beautiful, octagonal, vaulted space now houses the cathedral's first effective interpretation area.

At the same time, the most high-profile part of the project was underway. Off the west walk of the cloister, directly adjacent to the great thirteenth-century west front, stood a walled-off area passed by most visitors as they approached the building from the city. It included the ruined medieval Choristers' House, later the Organist's House, and the Mary Mitchell Garden of 1984. Here stood perhaps the most significant of all the cathedral's blocked doorways, the Pilgrims' Porch. This was, for most people in medieval times, the main entrance to the building.

This has been triumphantly reopened, unblocking access between the precinct, the cloister and the church. The area around the Mary Mitchell Garden has then been used as the basis for an ambitious new structure, a small cloister, through which visitors will enter and leave the cathedral. Here lies a reception/greeting area, an expanded cathedral shop and, via a stairway built into the gable end of the ruined Choristers' House, a first-floor restaurant. The dominant tone throughout is of darkened steel and seasoned oak. Everything is on a raft of concrete so as to protect the buried remains of the Anglo-Saxon cathedral, which lie just a metre below the ground. The new cloister leads visitors to the west walk of its medieval predecessor, from which they reach the cathedral interior itself, following the same route as their medieval forebears.

All this came with an architectural poisoned chalice: the design of an exterior that was to be intervisible with the Wells west front, one of the great architectural set-pieces of medieval Europe. The upper parts of the resulting design carefully reflect the former gable patterns and rooflines on this part of the site, but most of it is hidden politely behind the low curtain wall. The new main public entrance is marked by a porch, capped by a low spirelet and with simple detailing in a modernised late Gothic idiom. It provides a visual marker for people approaching the cathedral, and acts as a foil for the west front itself.

The Wells project has been long in the making. With an overall vision in place around 1996, it took seven years to get permissions, years that were valuable in working out the detail of what would be done. Some £6.4 million has been raised, including £700,000 from the Sainsbury Foundation's Monument Trust, £550,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation, and – for conversion of the chapter house undercroft and installation of the interpretation there – £525,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Further funds came from some 34 other trusts. Works began in 2005, with the final elements opened on 30 March 2009. The entire construction has cost £7 million; budgets have been particularly tight in the final phase. Nevertheless, the works ensure that Wells is equipped with the basic functions a cathedral needs if it is to go forward into the twenty-first century: anything but a dinosaur.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL
Font

02

DESIGNER:
William Pye

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Michael Drury,
St Ann's Gate Architects

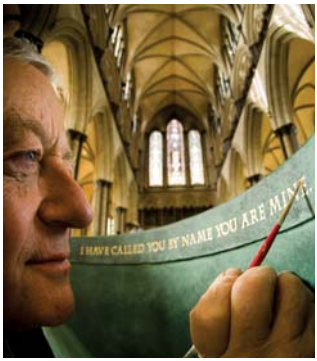
It is impossible to define cathedral architecture in terms of simple, practical 'need'. These buildings, almost by definition, bring structure and art together; they blur the boundaries between a building and its fittings. The new font at Salisbury is only the most recent, and most striking, response to the creative challenge that results. It attempts to embody something of the theology, even the poetry, of its function.

Its predecessor was a neo-Gothic creation of about 1850. Situated in the north-east transept, this was the product of another era: one in which baptism was a relatively private, family affair, and a sacrament performed only on infants. Today it is felt that this moment of entry into the Church should be celebrated in front of a congregation; that fonts should be adjacent to a main door; and that they should be capable of being used for baptism by immersion. Those coming forward for baptism now include adults for whom the ceremony, a mark of their conversion, is a very significant life event. At Salisbury, in 1998, it was decided to commission a new font, to stand near the north door at the west end of the cathedral.

Baptism is replete with meaning: the life-giving associations of water, and of the Baptism of Christ in the river Jordan; the sense that a rite of passage is being marked. The new font makes these visible even when it is not in active use. It is permanently filled with water. The liquid appears motionless on the surface, reflecting the architecture that rises around it, yet it tumbles ceaselessly from spouts positioned at each corner. This combination of movement and stillness is a hallmark of the font's creator, William Pye, who calls such works 'brimming bowls'; the design was refined through a series of pilot versions installed in the cathedral from 2001 onwards. The final result was consecrated by Archbishop Rowan Williams in September 2008, 750 years to the day since the consecration of the current cathedral. As part of this historic event, the font was used for two baptisms.

The permissions process focused on the archaeological challenges as well as the aesthetic ones: the issues raised by digging up the nave floor to house hydraulic equipment; the wiring necessary to provide controls for the font. The project cost £180,000; it was generously funded by supporters of the cathedral, principally Sir Christopher and Lady Benson and The Jerusalem Trust.

The font's design picks up on several aesthetic themes of the cathedral's architecture. Its colour scheme of patinated bronze and near-white limestone, for example, echoes the Chilmark limestone walls and Purbeck marble detailing for which Salisbury is famous. The result is unmissable: no less than three metres wide, and holding 1,300 litres at any one time, the font's shifting waters form a beguiling presence in the heart of the thirteenth-century church. It has already proved a magnetic attraction to the 250,000 people who visit the cathedral each year.



Top: William Pye working on font
Bottom: reflection in 'brimming bowl'
Opposite: prominent location in cathedral nave

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL
Nave altar

03

PROJECT ARCHITECT:
Martin Stancliffe,
Martin Stancliffe Architects

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Martin Stancliffe

Lichfield Cathedral has long played an important role in local cultural life, for example in the annual Lichfield Festival. Yet the platform for its previous nave altar had become a major impediment to the use of this part of the building.

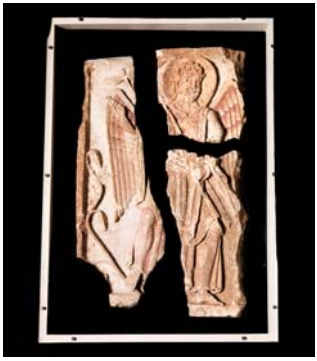
This is partly because of the acoustics of the cathedral, which mean that the sound of orchestral music is greatly improved when the performers are positioned against the west wall. In this situation, the nave altar reduced the amount of space available for seating by some 20 per cent.

Discussions as to a solution had been taking place for many years. The most obvious idea also seemed to be the most impossible one: to create an altar that had the presence of a permanent fitting, but which could also be removed when required. Not the least of the issues raised by this was the archaeology of the area immediately west of the crossing, which was likely to include important portions of the cathedral's Anglo-Saxon and Norman predecessors.

Yet this is what has been done. Cathedral archaeologist Warwick Rodwell helped the chapter persuade the CFCE and others of the benefits of discovery, while reassuring them that major finds would lead to the abandonment of the project.

In fact it is not so much the altar as its entire platform that can retract. This quatrefoil of pale Derbyshire limestone and darker Somerset Blue Lias was dedicated in 2004. It is mounted on hydraulic machinery that can raise it 18 inches above the floor, yet it is broad and strong enough to support seating. The altar itself has also been replaced: it is a simple creation, the work of conservation contractor Linford Bridgeman, with fine oak carvings of the Tree of Life; silverwork was by Rod Kelly. It can be removed independently of the hydraulic platform beneath. Construction and excavation combined cost about £120,000. An important contribution was made by the Friends of Lichfield Cathedral; the altar itself was a gift of the Linford Family Trust.

And the archaeology? It revealed the famous Lichfield Angel – probably part of the shrine of St Chad and arguably the finest Anglo-Saxon stone carving in existence. It proved possible to fit the machinery between the buried foundations discovered. The excavation justified itself without preventing the creation of a new altar.



Top: retracted nave altar allows extra seating

Bottom: Lichfield Angel, uncovered during excavations

Opposite: nave altar, raised on platform

CHESTER CATHEDRAL
Song School

04

ARCHITECT:
Andrew Arrol,
Arrol & Snell Architects

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Andrew Arrol

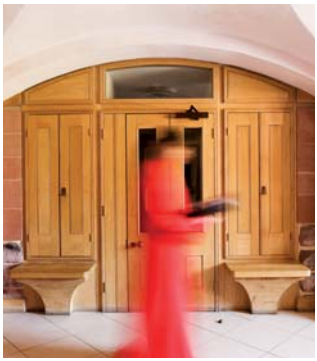
It takes resources to maintain a proud and ancient choral tradition: resources, and space. Choirs need to rehearse on a daily basis; often, more than one choir needs to practise at the same time. Practice spaces need to be acoustically separate, both from one another and from the rest of the cathedral complex. The musical director and his staff need a functional and accessible library. All these were lacking at Chester, a cathedral with lay clerks, both boy and girl choristers, and an impressive voluntary 'Nave Choir'. Indeed, the girls' choir, founded in 1996, was based in a house in Abbey Square, without covered access to the cathedral itself.

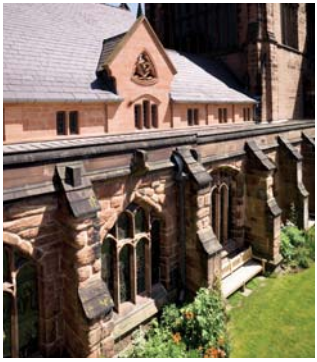
The solution is a bold one. The only practice space occupied a medieval structure next to the east range of the cloister, originally perhaps the undercroft of the monastic dormitory. It had a flat, nineteenth-century concrete roof, the stability of which was anything but assured. Adjacent to this were further ancient single-storey structures, the slype passage and chapter house vestibule. An upper storey could thus be placed almost along the length of the cloister range.

The result, opened in 2003, is at once generally historicist in approach, without being beholden to any single style. This gentle approach to the past was a deliberate choice arising from the extreme sensitivity of the site. Engineering matters required care, too, given that much of the structure sat on medieval walls. Dumfries and Galloway sandstone clads the building, but within the walls there are breeze blocks made from volcanic ash, which has excellent insulating qualities while being exceptionally light.

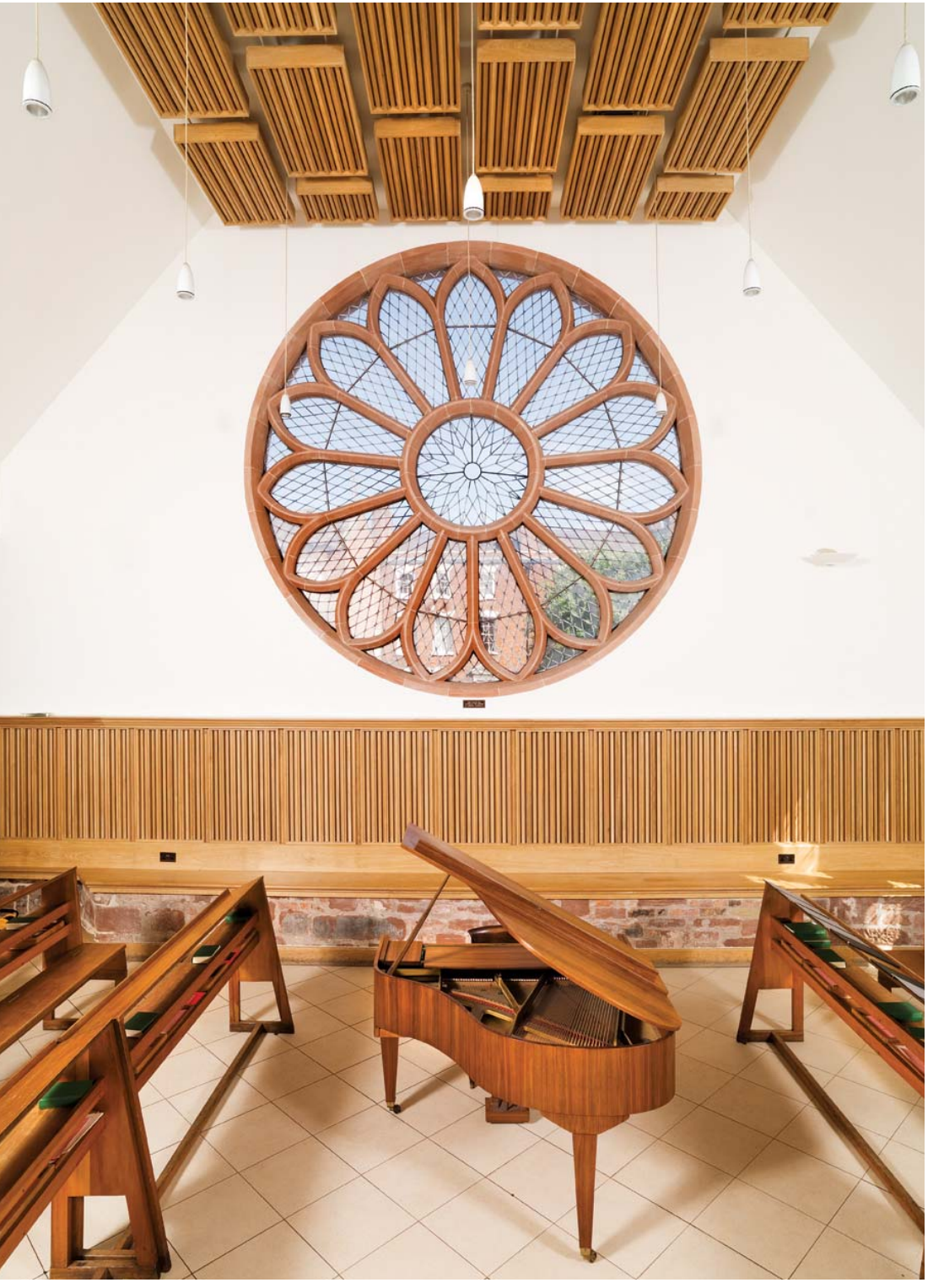
Inside, the main room on the upper floor is dominated by a new rose window – the first of the twenty-first century? – throwing copious natural light onto this, the boys' practice room. This is reached by climbing the former dormitory day stair to a wide central 'robing passage', which, with its oak lockers and seats, helps isolate the practice room acoustically. The lower courses of the lost medieval upper floor rise visibly into this passage, which is closed by a series of elegant pendentive vaults. Across the robing passage is another smaller practice room, used regularly by the girls. The undercroft beneath is used for individual tuition. Other facilities include the office of the Director of Music, a music library and two small galleries which look into the rehearsal rooms.

This structure, effectively a new eastern range, looks over the cloister on one side and the Chester city walls on the other. Its simple detailing evokes its lost predecessors, while remaining unmistakably contemporary. Of the total cost of £1.6 million, £1 million was met by a fundraising campaign that also paid for two other major projects in the cathedral. No longer will the girls' choir have to traipse across Abbey Square in the rain in order to sing.





Top: robing passage
Bottom: Song School and medieval cloister
Opposite: boys' practice room



ELY CATHEDRAL

Processional Way to Lady Chapel

05

PROJECT ARCHITECT:
Jane Kennedy,
Purcell Miller Tritton

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Jane Kennedy

Ely – medieval 'Ship of the Fens', with its spectacular Octagon – is popular both as a tourist attraction and as a venue for concerts and events. Yet until 2006 the building had no public toilets. The only facilities were for customers of the Refectory, and were thus unavailable when this was closed. This caused real inconvenience to visitors; matters were even worse when large congregations gathered or public events were held.

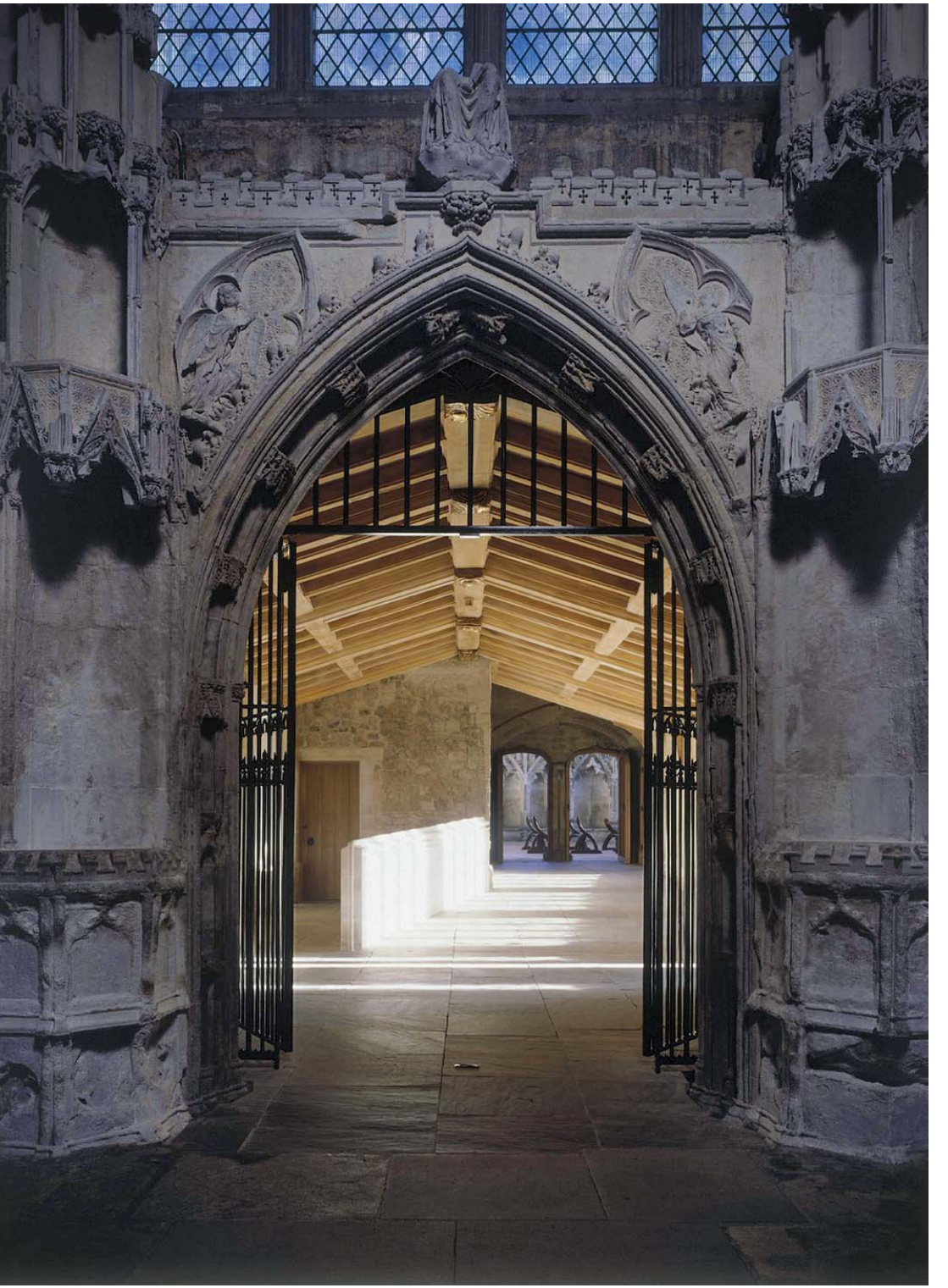
Meanwhile, the fourteenth-century Lady Chapel, one of medieval England's most breathtaking buildings, had for many years been reached through an unprepossessing corridor off the north transept. Many visitors missed it entirely; processions had to take a circuitous, awkward route. Originally, however, the Lady Chapel was approached along a passage that linked it to the north side of the choir. While this corridor has long been demolished and its site overlain by burials, its location was marked by an ornate doorway that stood, blocked, in the north choir aisle.

Excavations by cathedral archaeologist Philip Dixon revealed the original course of the passage itself. As a result, there was no need to create foundations for the new building. Taking the form of a simple glazed passageway of Clipsham stone with a roof of unseasoned oak, this Processional Way is the first structural addition to the cathedral since the Reformation. Much of its detailing is derived from that surviving in the cathedral cloisters, but with a contemporary twist. Burials, all of which were unmarked, were re-interred and a commemorative inscription placed in the floor. Tucked in behind the new passage are the vital toilets, as well as a kitchen/rest area for those working in the cathedral.

The new Processional Way cost £750,000, and was funded by the Friends of Ely Cathedral, two local authorities, and Peter and Gail Dawe. It is an asset to an extraordinary building, at once opening up the great Lady Chapel, integrating it more fully into the liturgy and – as a result of those crucial toilets – hugely enhancing the potential of the cathedral as a whole to host public events.

Top: detail of window and corbel

Bottom and opposite: Processional Way connects cathedral to Lady Chapel



LIVERPOOL METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL

Entrance approaches, rotunda, Lutyens crypt

06

ARCHITECT:
Phil Vincent,
Nightingale Associates

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT AND DIRECTOR-IN-CHARGE:
Adrian Swain,
Nightingale Associates

Liverpool is unique. Not only does it have two cathedrals, both on the grandest scale, but they are both essentially works of the twentieth century. Indeed, this proud city is itself largely a creation of the modern world, its growth fuelled by the Atlantic trade.

Yet by the end of the last century, the Roman Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral, completed in 1967, was not even watertight. Neither was it complete: a monumental flight of steps, intended to approach the main entrance, was never built, making a nonsense of the church's grand porch. Meanwhile, there was the Lutyens crypt.

This enormous structure, which adjoins the current cathedral rather than lying directly underneath it, is part of an unfinished cathedral of the 1930s that would have been one of the largest churches in the world. Access to the crypt has been limited; it contains an impressive burial vault for former Archbishops of Liverpool, but much of the rest of the building was for many years used as storage space.

These problems suggested grand solutions; that these were possible owed much to the circumstances of the late 1990s. Funding was available for major projects from the European Regional Development Fund and the North West Regional Development Agency; and status as City of Culture for 2008 further increased the possibilities. The cathedral also had no use for several buildings adjacent to its site. With Liverpool John Moores University a potential purchaser, it was possible to unlock education-focused regeneration of the immediate area, while generating significant funds for the cathedral's own projects.

The first focus of this work was simply to remedy the building's structural problems. This process – itself costing some £7–8 million – was begun in 1992–3, partly supported by an English Heritage grant. Then development could begin. The mighty main stairway was built by architects Falconer Chester, updating Sir Frederick Gibberd's designs of the 1960s. A new visitor centre, featuring a popular café and a shop, lies at the foot of the steps, facing the street: it is as welcoming to passers-by as to members of the cathedral community.

As a result, the circular interior of the church, lit by its great concrete lantern and packed with twentieth-century artworks, is left free for worship and quiet exploration. At the same time, adjoining buildings have been demolished and redeveloped by the university. Other approaches to the cathedral have been cleared and improved. With Arts Council support the landscape has been enhanced with new artworks, including *Still Point*, a contemplative, circular open-air sculpture by Susanna Heron. A series of stained glass pylons mark the new approaches to the building. All this, completed in 2003, cost some £2.7 million, much of it from European and regional funds.

Top: café and shop, with new entrance approach beyond

Bottom: the Lutyens crypt

Opposite: rotunda, linking crypt to adjacent cathedral

Top: pylons frame approach from Brownlow Hill

Bottom left and right: details of rotunda and cathedral. Glazing bears names of donors

But the boldest stroke is the linkage between the cathedral and its earlier crypt. A new glazed passage runs out of a former eastern chapel of the church, leading to a simple external glass rotunda. Here a circular stairwell and lift shaft bore some nine metres downwards, entering the crypt via a doorway that was left blocked when work on the Lutyens church ceased.

The crypt is thus rendered truly accessible for the first time; the church interior is visually little changed; and the visitor, moving from a large circular structure to a smaller one and then descending into the vast brick-vaulted halls themselves, picks up an intuitive sense of the relationship of the two.

The rotunda, opened on 1 May 2009, has a sparse and elegant interior, with white walls and quiet tones and textures; its upper level has already become something of a contemplative space in its own right. On the way down there are new purpose-built offices for the Liverpool Archdiocesan Archives, a suite of public toilets, and connections to the cathedral's 1960s undercroft. Works on the rotunda and crypt were funded by community donations as well as by the archdiocese, the cathedral, and through ERDF and NWRDA grants: the names of the community donors, who gave in total some £200,000 out of a total cost of £3.3 million, are applied to the glass; the steps are numbered to reflect further contributions.

The number of visitors to the crypt has already increased dramatically: from 5 to 50 per cent of the 250,000 visitors the building receives each year. The vast interior has been respectfully conserved, leaving intact its Piranesian sense of ancient grandeur. It is a structure with enormous public potential: facing Brownlow Hill, a major thoroughfare, and surrounded by newly landscaped areas suggestive of outdoor events, of congregations spilling out of the building. New kitchens, a bar area, toilets and cloakrooms make it possible to host such occasions. One of the building's four great halls has potential seating for up to 280 people; another has already been used for exhibitions. Access to the existing main chapel, itself a parish church for city centre Catholics, has been greatly enhanced. Interpretative areas include the Treasury, where a rich collection of liturgical vessels is on display.

These beautiful objects are a reminder that the north-west has a proud Recusant heritage. Now its twentieth-century Catholic cathedral can make full use of a combination of spaces as thrilling and unexpected as that of any of its more ancient peers. All thanks to a twenty-first century intervention.

'ENGLISH HERITAGE AND OTHERS WERE REALLY SUPPORTIVE'

Fr Tony O'Brien,
DEAN OF LIVERPOOL METROPOLITAN CATEDRAL

LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL

Visitor centre and site interpretation

07

PROJECT ARCHITECT:
Suresh Rathod,
Brock Carmichael Architects

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT AND PARTNER-IN-CHARGE:
Martyn Coppin,
Brock Carmichael Architects

Many cathedrals – including several in this booklet – have moved visitor facilities such as shops, interpretation and eating areas away from the church interior. Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, however, has created a visitor centre, including a café, at the heart of the church itself. For the chapter at Liverpool, this is not a case of the merchants invading the temple: it is a natural extension of the Church's mission.

The visitor centre, opened at the end of 2006, replaces an SPCK bookshop. It is a structure of steel and glass in the north-west transept, with a café raised on a mezzanine floor above the cathedral shop. Those who climb to the café are privileged to have a raised view of the crossing of this mighty church. They can also study at close quarters a great Powell & Sons stained glass window, previously obscured. The nearby Refectory restaurant spreads out into the Welsford Porch, where it faces a quiet part of the city containing Georgian houses and the historic St James' Cemetery.

The detailing is entirely contemporary, the free use of glazing and careful lighting providing a welcoming space that does not compete – as if anything could – with Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's vast neo-Gothic pile. It also owes its existence partly to Scott's plan, with short transepts and a very wide nave. The aim was to ensure that up to 3,000 people could, if necessary, see the high altar at once; one side effect was that there are few unoccupied ancillary spaces.

The idea of placing such a facility in the transept is based on the proposition that visitors deserve a proper welcome to a church; that nowadays this naturally includes the offer of a cup of coffee; and that anything that makes the visitor feel welcomed, at ease, refreshed when they are in a great church can only be of benefit to their soul. Naturally, the visitor centre closes during services.

But this is not the only change at Liverpool. A three-storey block in a more historicist idiom has been positioned nearby. It links directly to the visitor centre and contains public toilets and a presentation theatre in which an introduction to the building is screened. A high-quality interpretation trail known as The Great Space is positioned at key vantage points in the church.

This Great Space branding cleverly suggests a building with awesome dimensions, flexibility of use and diversity of activity: indeed the cathedral's size and facilities make it one of the city's chief cultural venues. The entire project cost £3.2 million, paid for by the cathedral's Development Campaign and the European Regional Development Fund. Having just won the region's prestigious Large Visitor Attraction of the Year Award it has been recognised as a modern welcome indeed – and a very effective one.

Top and opposite: shop and Mezzanine café bar, sitting in the north-west transept

Opposite bottom left: Refectory restaurant

Opposite bottom right: new interpretation introduces the Great Space


ZANINE CAFÉ BAR

HEREFORD CATHEDRAL
Celebrating the Saints

08

CREATED BY:
Tom Denny, Stephen Florence, Terry Hamaton, Robert Kilgour, Peter Murphy

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Robert Kilgour, Robert Kilgour Associates

The old English saints are easily overlooked, though many Anglican cathedrals were the focus of important cults before the Reformation. At Hereford, a series of artistic commissions, installed in 2007–8, has aimed to increase understanding of – and devotion to – three saintly figures associated with the church.

Impressive new windows in the fifteenth-century Audley Chapel celebrate the seventeenth-century poet and mystic, Thomas Traherne, a Herefordshire man. The result, by Tom Denny, responds to a series of carefully selected phrases by Traherne, communicating his devotional interests and deep love of the local area. The windows create a jewel-box effect in the tiny chantry chapel, where homilies are preached each Trinity Sunday as part of the Thomas Traherne Festival, and the Eucharist is regularly celebrated. Visitors use the chapel and its windows for private prayer.

The Traherne window, with its post-Reformation subject and contemplative function, is in a contemporary idiom: the other two installations in the sequence aim to evoke Hereford's medieval saints and an older aesthetic. Hereford's chief medieval saint was Thomas Cantilupe. His ancient shrine in the north transept, previously easily overlooked, is now the focus of important liturgical activity, and acts as a focus for childrens' pilgrimages and requests for intercession. The renewed shrine displays a very medieval level of life and colour.

A vivid new shrine canopy, designed by Robert Kilgour and made by Stephen Florence, gives a sense of the original appearance of the structure; other fittings include a new icon, a new altar and two large fabric panels. These works evoke the past while providing information about Cantilupe himself. They are also an implied invitation – to retrace the footsteps of the medieval pilgrims. Those who do this will find that, *en route* between Cantilupe in the north transept and the Traherne windows, they encounter an octagonal wooden structure encircling a pillar in the retroquire. This is a new shrine, telling the story of the eighth-century king St Ethelbert (d. 794), and stands adjacent to the most likely site of the original one. Here, too, Kilgour, Florence and Peter Murphy have brought light to a dark area of the building, creating a new liturgical focus: prayers are said here weekly. Indeed, a series of annual diocesan pilgrimage evenings link the three sites.

Celebrating the Saints was funded by a large number of individual donations and bequests, with particularly important contributions from the Friends of Hereford Cathedral, the Jerwood Foundation and local Freemasons. The total cost of the three projects has been £125,000.

The aim is to illuminate literally and metaphorically; to quietly create a new pilgrimage route, revivifying a tradition whose English and local dimensions are easily overlooked.

Top: new shrine of St Ethelbert

Bottom: renewed shrine of St Thomas Cantilupe; relic, within glass cover, loaned from Catholic Stonyhurst College

Opposite: Thomas Traherne evoked in contemporary glass

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL
South Churchyard

09

PROJECT ARCHITECT:
Martin Stancliffe,
Purcell Miller Tritton

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Martin Stancliffe

A new public open space is the most spectacular result of this project, yet it owes its origins to a rather more basic requirement, disabled access. Before 2008 the arrangements by which wheelchair users could get into St Paul's were becoming untenable: people had to wait by an unprepossessing door in the angle between the south aisle and the south transept. The lift beyond was too small for many modern wheelchairs and in any case was nearing the end of its operational life.

There were steps between this door and the street, and to reach it visitors had to pass a neglected area of bushes, used by rough sleepers at night and largely ignored during the day. Changes to the door naturally suggested changes to the route approaching it. The question then was what form these alterations, which were beginning to look rather extensive, might take.

St Paul's has long sought a way of indicating that Wren's great cathedral is not the first on this site; indeed, that Old St Paul's was one of the greatest buildings of medieval Christendom. It was an idea that appealed to the City Corporation of London, who helped fund the £3.8 million project.

While the resulting disabled access has been a success, it is the new South Churchyard, opened in 2008, that is the eye-catcher. Here, on exactly the footprint of the actual building, the foundations of which lie beneath it, the ground plan of the chapter house and cloister of Old St Paul's has been picked out. The cloister is now a small public square. The great octagon of the chapter house is marked into its stone pavement, its mouldings making a series of exquisite and delicate curves within the overall design. Between the octagon and the edge of the cloister, the site of the former cloister garth is once again grassed over. Nearby the plan of Old St Paul's itself is shown, and its relationship *vis à vis* the current structure made clear. To one side, subtle signage and a low ramp explain the space and enable wheelchair users to reach the door. The original railings, taken down in the 1980s, have been reinstated.

All this has been done in Purbeck marble, a major new work by the inheritors of one of England's most famous medieval crafts: indeed, the lost chapter house itself made much use of this material. When polished, this stone has a dark, glossy, crisp quality, used in medieval buildings to scintillating effect. Today, it sits quietly beneath the feet of city workers on their lunch breaks, a permanent reminder of an illustrious past.

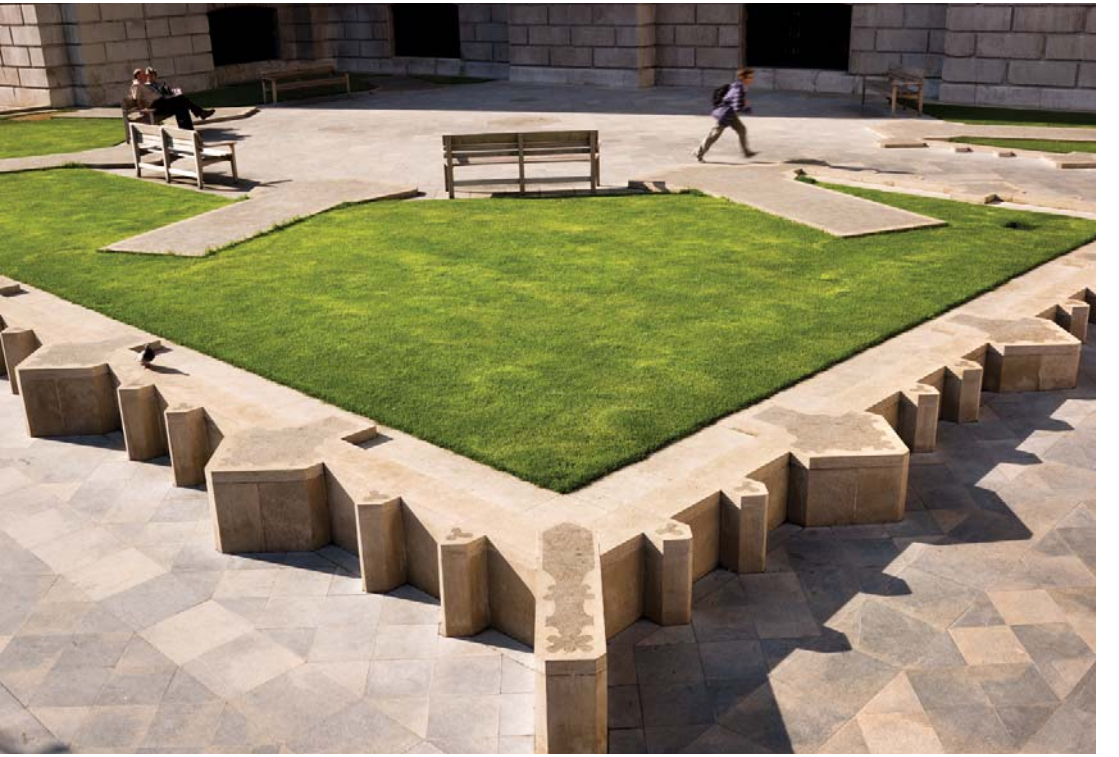
Top: Churchill Gates, installed in crypt in 2004

Bottom and opposite bottom right: plan of Old St Paul's, depicted in Purbeck marble

Opposite top and bottom: South Churchyard reveals buried cloister and chapter house

'WE HAD VERY FRIENDLY AND FORMATIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH EVERYONE INVOLVED'

Martin Stancliffe,
ARCHITECT




ON THE SITE OF THE FORMER CHAPTER

LEEDS CATHEDRAL

Cleaning, re-ordering, liturgical fittings, confessionals

10

PROJECT ARCHITECT:
Richard Williams,
Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Richard Williams

Catholic liturgical practice was transformed by the Second Vatican Council of 1962–5. As a consequence, significant alterations were made to the sanctuary at Leeds Cathedral. With hindsight some of these were found to have serious practical limitations; they also spoiled the integrity of the interior. A programme of cleaning, restoration and re-ordering has greatly enhanced the character of the entire building. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to make a number of major improvements.

The new confessionals are an example of this. Some people want face-to-face contact with their priest during the Sacrament of Penance; they benefit from having time to talk. At the same time, both priest and penitent need to feel free of any danger of assault, or accusations thereof: these can be real concerns in a city-centre church. The resulting combination of privacy, accessibility and security starts to suggest something different from the traditional wooden-box-with-a-grille.

The innovative confessionals installed at Leeds in 2006 are a response to this. They are primarily boxes of glass, steel and black iron, acoustically separate from the church and with easy routes for entrance and exit on both the priest's and the penitent's sides. An abstract pattern applied to the glass ensures the anonymity of those within. An internal fin wall avoids completely dissecting the confessional, while allowing penitents to preserve their anonymity, should they so desire.

This very modern response to the requirements of the sacrament is in an explicitly contemporary stylistic idiom. Other changes at Leeds are pieces of commissioned art; one such is the font insert, by silversmith Rod Kelly.

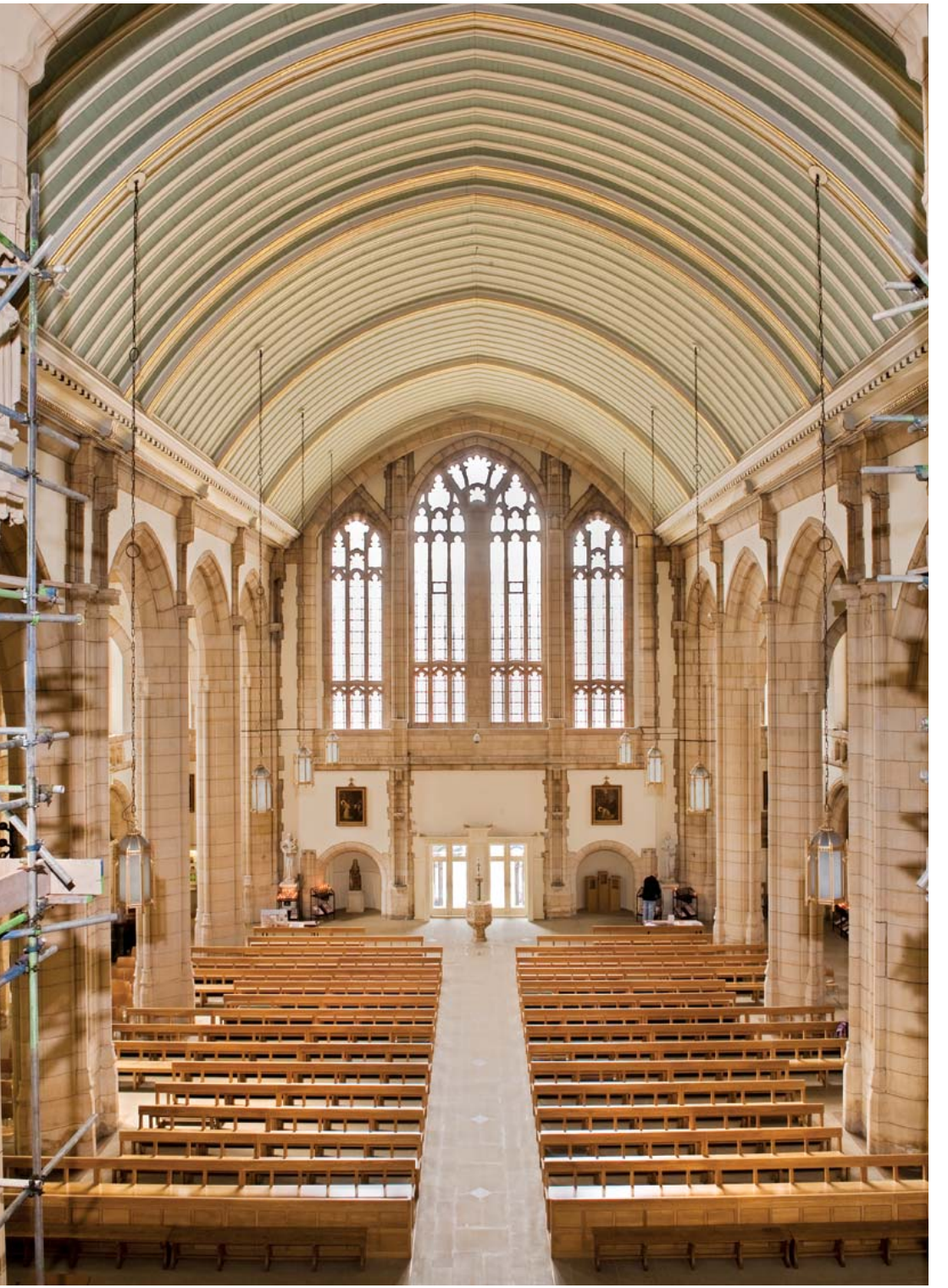
The font has been moved to a central location by the west door, in keeping with its role as the sacramental gateway to the Church. The font itself is believed to be a design of the 1830s, a survivor from Leeds's first Catholic cathedral. But the insert transforms it. Not only does it give the font a striking visual allure; it also hides the plumbing that ensures the waters held within never stop flowing.

Top: cathedral and high altar

Opposite: interior, recently cleaned, with new western doors and seating

'THE AMENITY SOCIETIES, ETC MADE A REAL CONTRIBUTION'

David Damant,
PROPERTY ADMINISTRATOR,
LEEDS CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL



Top left: new insert brings moving water to Victorian font

Top right: detail of confessional

Bottom: new confessionals

These are just two examples of the range of works undertaken at Leeds. The restoration process began as early as 1987 with the cleaning of the exterior. The 2005 cleaning of the interior of the cathedral has transformed the building from grimy and dark to appealing and light-filled, and revealed the quality of its detailing. For Leeds Cathedral, built in 1902–4 by the London architect J H Eastwood, assisted by S K Greenslade, is one of England's best ecclesiastical buildings of the Arts and Crafts era, and has a major presence in the city centre.

A refit followed the cleaning, filling the church with new fittings, employing a simple palette of stone, oak and steel that falls gently into the building's stylistic spirit while also remaining subtly modern. The west doors, facing onto busy Cookridge Street, are now filled with glass, making the cathedral far more open and visible. The building has been relit, with light fittings placed in the empty niches that stretch between the nave arcade and the timber roof. The floor has been replaced, returning it to the original pattern of York stone slabs wherever possible, and underfloor heating has been installed, freeing the interior of pipework. New seating has been put in throughout, greatly assisting a church that attracts weekly congregations of up to 1,000.

In addition, the choir has been entirely reconfigured. The choir stalls have now been moved behind the high altar and the cathedra, making both of these more visible to the congregation. The high altar, cathedra and ambo have all been renewed. On a more practical note, development of an adjacent shopping centre in 2003 made planning gain available, enabling the construction, to the east, of Wheeler Hall (by architects Damond Locke Grabowski) at a cost of £1.4 million. This new city centre venue is used for a range of pastoral and catechetical events. It is also available for external bookings and community use.

All these changes, which cost a total of £2.4 million – 25 per cent of which was achieved by fundraising within a relatively small and not particularly wealthy diocese – are part of a continuing programme that has cost £4.0 million over some 20 years. This is still in progress: the organ has been rebuilt and a new aumbry for the Holy Oils is being commissioned; funds are being sought to conserve the fine wall paintings in the Lady Chapel, uncovered in the course of cleaning the building. By carrying out the works in phases, and with community support, Leeds illustrates brilliantly what can be achieved by good design in response to a careful liturgical and pastoral focus.

'AS THE PROJECT PROGRESSED, THE HCC BECAME INCREASINGLY WELL-INFORMED ABOUT THE BUILDING, AND THE PROCESS WORKED VERY WELL INDEED'

Richard Williams, ARCHITECT

YORK MINSTER / YORK GLAZIERS' TRUST

Bedern Glaziers' Studio

11

PROJECT ARCHITECT:
Andrew Arrol
Arrol & Snell Architects

SURVEYOR OF THE FABRIC:
Andrew Arrol

The Bedern Chapel project is not aesthetically spectacular; it has cost no more than might the average house extension. Yet behind it lies a real vision, providing access to a precious and fascinating craft skill, and bringing to life a part of the Minster Close that had almost been forgotten.

The chapel is a fourteenth-century building, once the place of worship of the vicars choral of the Minster. Its history in subsequent centuries has not been a happy one: during the 1960s it was close to ruin and acquired a concrete roof and supporting piers. It was until recently a stone store for the Minster's masons.

Then, in 2006, in anticipation of the conservation of the Minster's great east window, the York Glaziers' Trust won a Heritage Lottery Fund bid that would, amongst other things, create an open-access space in which members of the public could watch the stained glass conservation process unfold. This has brought life back to the Bedern Chapel. Match funding came from the Dean and Chapter of the Minster.

The building, opened in January 2009, has been made watertight, and fitted out with up-to-date equipment. A suspended ceiling and new flooring have been inserted. With help from local exhibition company EPS, a low screen of glass and aluminium separates staff from visiting tour groups; internal CCTV allows members of the public to watch the work at close hand. All these interventions are reversible, but they have brought life and significance to an overlooked corner of the city centre and an intriguing and ancient structure. They have also created a pleasant and attractive working space and adjacent viewing area. The total conversion cost £70,000, of which just £31,000 was architectural; the overall project, known as 'In the Beginning', depends on a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £390,000.

Top and opposite: conservators working on medieval stained glass

Bottom: viewing screen for visitors

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

Architectural sculpture

12

WORKS MANAGER:
Carol Heidschuster

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Nicholas Rank,
Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams

Cathedrals depend on a range of traditional crafts skills. Indeed, they play a major role in keeping such skills alive. For them the running of stonemason's yards, for example, is a matter of basic maintenance. That does not stop these workshops being centres of excellence. They use methods largely unchanged since medieval times, ensuring delicate carved work is done without resorting to mechanical stonecutting aids. Without such support, there would be a significant loss of high-end skills, with implications for many historic buildings.

Eight cathedrals run stonemason's yards. Lincoln alone employs eight masons and an apprentice. It is exacting work, with a four-year training period before anyone is permitted to carve mouldings unaided. But more creative interventions than this are often needed, especially where gargoyles and other grotesques have become badly corroded.

Design of replacement carvings involves a delicate balancing act. Too historicist an approach, and one runs the risk of making the new indistinguishable from the old; too contemporary, and the carving sticks out inappropriately. At Lincoln, the policy is to ensure designs reflect the architectural period of the surrounding masonry and draw inspiration from Christian symbolism, while also drawing on contemporary idioms.

Such details are among the aspects of church architecture which visitors find most attractive. At Lincoln, the popularity of the Lincoln Imp, a thirteenth-century incidental carving in the Angel Choir, is considerable. Hundreds of imp souvenirs are sold every year in the cathedral shop.

Now the imp has a competitor, in the shape of a twenty-first century dragon. This is one of a series of carvings by Michael Thacker of the Lincoln stonemason's yard, replacing near-illegible stumps on the outside of the cathedral's south-east transept. Taking its cue from the outline of the previous stonework, the dragon's form curls around the gabled top of an early Gothic buttress with satisfying energy.

His appealing design has become something of a money-spinner in its own right. The dragon was on display inside the cathedral for several months before installation, and the opportunity was taken to make a high-quality cast of it. Composite stone copies were then advertised for sale, a limited edition artwork almost a metre tall and priced at £700. Each cast is numbered and authenticated. Within three months of the dragons going on sale in March 2009, no less than 20 of the intended 30 had already been ordered.

Meanwhile, efforts are underway to promote traditional stonemasonry. Through the Cathedrals Workshop Fellowship, founded in 2006, the eight stonemason's yards promote apprenticeships and are developing a new accreditation programme for young carvers, including, it is hoped, a Foundation degree. Such initiatives are vital if the range of crafts skills on which cathedrals depend is to be sustained into the future.

Top: one new carving in place

Bottom: Michael Thacker, stonemason

Opposite: dragon before installation on south-east transept

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL
Mosaics

13

ARTISTS:
Christopher Hobbs, Leonard McComb, Tom Phillips

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Michael Drury, St Ann's Gate architects

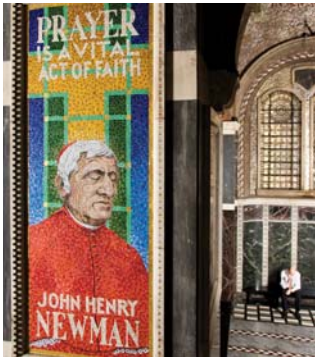
John Francis Bentley's great Byzantine cathedral of 1895 was never meant to have a severe, darkened interior. His inheritors remain determined to complete his plans: to fill, over time, every upper space in the building with mosaics. It is an ambitious project, not least for the extraordinary craftsmanship involved, and several significant steps forward have taken place in the last few years.

The most recent images are those of Cardinal Newman and St Francis. The Newman mosaic, funded by a £20,000 donation and designed by Tom Phillips, was installed in 2008; Newman has since become a candidate for beatification. It is adjacent to a calligraphic mosaic on the theme of the *Dream of Gerontius*, designed by the same artist and installed in 2003. The *Dream* is based on a poem by Newman; a performance of it, with Elgar himself conducting, took place in the cathedral in 1903. These images therefore celebrate one of the most significant of modern English Catholics, and mark the role of the cathedral, with its famous choir school, as a patron and promoter of music.

A more personal story underlies the mosaic of St Francis, by Leonard McComb. It is one of a pair – the other is St Anthony – at the west end of the church. These mosaics commemorate two brothers, Anthony and Mgr Francis Bartlett, both closely associated with the cathedral; the mosaics were paid for through their own bequest. Other recent installations include the impressive £300,000 redecoration of the Chapel of St Joseph and the Holy Family, by Christopher Hobbs in 2006.

£500,000 is currently being sought to complete the decoration of St George's Chapel with scenes of the English Martyrs, and a donor is awaited for decoration of St Patrick's Chapel: designs for both, approved by the cathedral's Art and Architecture Committee, the Archbishop of Westminster, and the Historic Churches Committee, have been worked up.

This remarkable series of architectural artworks displays a respect for the Byzantine-cum-Arts and Crafts traditions of the cathedral itself. Within this it has proved possible to develop a range of stylistic approaches. At Westminster, the project of completion constitutes a continuing programme of art commissioning; indeed, in the process, a miniature history of the craft of mosaic in Britain is being created.



Top: St Francis greets visitors

Bottom: Newman mosaic and Chapel of Holy Souls

Opposite: detail of mosaic in Chapel of St Joseph and the Holy Family

ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL

Disabled access to Saint's Chapel and associated stairway

14

PROJECT ARCHITECT:
Richard Griffiths,
Richard Griffiths Architects

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Richard Griffiths

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and the pastoral desire to welcome all visitors, present something of a challenge to historic places of worship, as several projects described in this publication illustrate. The need to provide access has to be set against the difficulty of achieving this in an ancient building.

At St Albans the issues are particularly sensitive. For example, the Saint's Chapel, site of the great fourteenth-century shrine of St Alban, has until recently only been accessible by climbing one of three flights of steps. This is the heart of the building, its historic *raison d'être*.

The shrine was carefully rebuilt in 1992, and has begun to attract a stream of visitors, many seeking healing, often as much spiritual as physical. It is a phenomenon the cathedral wants to encourage, and liturgical celebrations at the shrine have likewise increased in significance, culminating in the annual diocese-wide St Alban's Pilgrimage, which in 2007 attracted some 5,000 people.

So the installation of a wheelchair lift here was at once essential and highly sensitive; the result rises to this not inconsiderable challenge. The key to it is the existence of a nineteenth-century flight of steps on the central axis of the cathedral, linking the retroquire to the Lady Chapel to its east.

This flight of steps was entirely rebuilt in 2006. The new design creates an impressive approach to the Saint's Chapel, helping to frame and enhance its processional use. Low, wing-like walls now frame the stairway. On either side of these stand nineteenth-century candlesticks by George Pace, relocated from the previous steps.

These wings have another function, however: they act as screens, hiding further stairs, for ambulant disabled visitors on one side and for wheelchair users on the other. This, too has been rethought from the ground up, the architect working closely with the supplier so as to produce an elegant and understated design in glass and black iron. The wheelchair platform has a depth of just 20 centimetres, leaving it clear of the highly sensitive archaeological areas not far below. The site was carefully excavated by Martin Biddle, cathedral archaeologist, before construction went ahead. The lift motor is housed silently beneath the stone steps, with a removable stone in the landing giving access for maintenance.

Everything new here avoids direct contact with the ancient walls supporting the chapel itself; yet there is a dignity, a solidity and a permanence to the result. The overall cost of the project was £65,000. For a wheelchair lift to hold its own in this ancient setting, sacred for some, is an achievement indeed. The result has formed a model for further installations in other parts of this venerable abbey church; it provides access both spiritual and physical.

Top: stairway, with wheelchair lift on right

Opposite: enhanced processional access to Saint's Chapel

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL
Fire doors

15

PROJECT ARCHITECT:
Peter Bird,
Caroe and Partners

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Peter Bird

As far as fire is concerned, roof spaces are the Achilles' heel of large churches. They are often the sites of hidden visual glories, with long vistas of ancient woodwork stretching before the visitor. But if sparks get a grip, fire can spread rapidly, wreaking untold damage on the building below.

There are many historic examples of the devastating effects of this, from Canterbury Cathedral in 1170 to York Minster in 1984. Yet a visit to these great roofs is a highlight of the 'tower tours' now offered by many such buildings. Nowhere more so than at Winchester, where the longest nave roof in Europe is an unforgettable sight.

Luckily, there are potential sources of strength in such a building. The crossing, for example, forms a built-in potential fire barrier, as do any openings to newel stairs. Combined with effective electronic detection systems, the installation of robust fire doors at these points provides a prevention system, cutting airflow to a minimum and limiting the spread of any flames.

This is what has been done at Winchester. Between 1991 and 2008, 13 fire doors have been installed in a range of openings leading into the roof spaces of the cathedral. The choice of locations means the roof space is not divided up by unsightly fire-safe partitions; but it sets a visual challenge for the design of the doors themselves. As part of the same programme, dry risers have been plumbed into two locations in upper parts of the church, and walkways and access routes strengthened and upgraded in various upper parts of the building.

The resulting doors have softwood frames, clad on one side with a 6mm non-combustible board, and finished on both sides with lipped 19mm oak boarding. The doors are hung in oak frames that have on the reveal a smoke seal and a strip that will expand if subjected to heat. Each costs about £2,500; by contrast it cost some £2.25 million to repair the damage to York Minster after fire destroyed the south transept roof there in 1984. The doors fit a wide range of openings, some as old as the eleventh century, and each has been custom designed to fit. A neat solution to a very basic problem.

Top, bottom, opposite: fire doors, crafted to fit openings of various eras


SOUTH TRANSEPT

NORWICH CATHEDRAL
Refectory and Hostry

16

ARCHITECT:
Hopkins Architects Ltd

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT:
Henry Freeland,
Freeland Rees Roberts

The Refectory and Hostry at Norwich are two of the most exciting and ambitious construction projects at an English cathedral in recent years. Their detailing is utterly contemporary, yet they rise within ancient walls. Each takes the historic function of a ruined medieval building and recasts it for the twenty-first century.

The project as a whole transforms the medieval cloister into the primary circulation route between the cathedral and the buildings adjacent to it, reflecting the role for which it was constructed. The location of the new buildings that have resulted is highly sensitive: they run alongside the cloister, and one of Europe's greatest Romanesque churches rises directly behind them.

Before the Reformation, this cathedral was home to a community of Benedictine monks. The twelfth-century ruins of their refectory, with battered flint walls and richly-articulated blank arcades, have long stood on the south side of the cloister. Now the new Refectory restaurant feeds cathedral visitors rather than resident monks. It also provides covered access to public toilets from inside the church, and has made it possible to improve and expand the theological library above the south cloister walk.

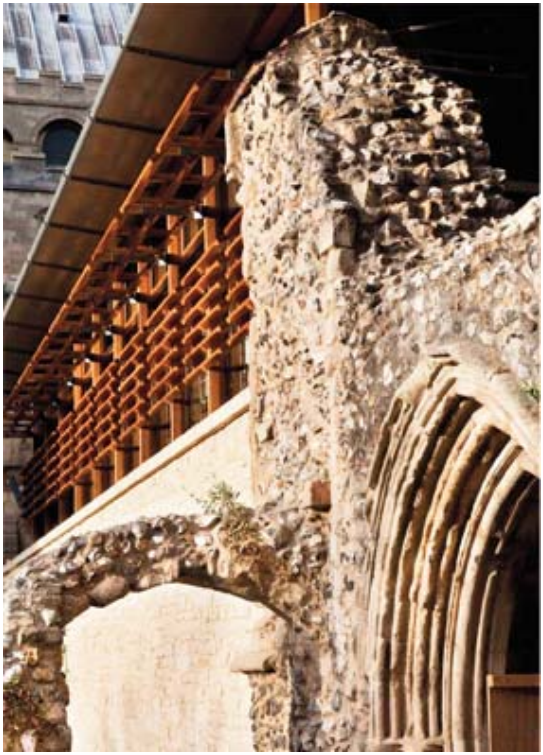
An attractive, airy structure, the restaurant sits within the ancient walls, while putting no additional burden on them. Its weight is transferred to the ground via two rows of slim columns of laminated oak, from each of which oak fingers rise to bear the weight of the wide, gabled roof. Along the line of these columns stretches a long timber-clad ground floor, containing the toilets, kitchens and service functions of the building. This in turn supports the bright open space of the Refectory restaurant. Stairwells and lifts rise at either end; the gaps between the oak columns and the ancient walls form convenient side-corridors.

The twelfth-century walls have been built up and levelled off, limestone rubble contrasting with flint to keep the phasing of the structure clear; oak louvred windows link the ancient walls to the modern roof. The new work has a palette of oak, stainless steel and painted mild steel.

A similar approach is taken at the Hostry, which lies alongside the west walk of the cloister, and was approaching completion in Autumn 2009. This, the site of the monk's 'hospitality wing', is being transformed into a space dedicated to education and interpretation, including a large area for community use and a new Song School. The adjacent upper level of the cloister has again been cleared and upgraded, containing toilets, rest areas for visiting groups, and vestries for clergy and members of the choir.

Top: cathedral rises behind site

Bottom and opposite: Refectory, within twelfth-century predecessor



Top left: medieval entrance to Hostry

Top right: oak fingers bear weight of Refectory roof

Bottom: Refectory interior

Unlike the Refectory, there were few upstanding ancient remains on the Hostry site. Excavations overseen by cathedral archaeologist Roland Harris located foundations, and the new structure rises directly from them, framing a single remaining medieval doorway. This will become (as it may originally have been) one of the main entrances into the cathedral complex.

As a result, the Hostry takes up the full width and length of its predecessor and is entered at the centre rather than at either end. The building's functional areas rise either side of this, while oak columns, finger posts and high-set louvred windows again bring light and quiet drama to the space. Level access from the Hostry into the church is provided via the adjacent locutory. This medieval building will be devoted to providing interpretation of the cathedral and its history; a 1970s toilet block has been demolished, revealing the building's ancient external wall.

As part of this process, and after some discussion, permission was granted to make three alterations to the medieval fabric of the building. Two new doors have been created, linking the ancient locutory and upper level of the cloister to the new Hostry and Song School. And a single column from the twelfth-century blank arcade which rings the cathedral interior has been removed, so as to widen a 1970s doorway through which the cathedral church itself can be reached from the locutory and the Hostry.

These decisions were not taken lightly: but it was clear that the changes were the best possible way of resolving the access problems created by a complex where the cloister, monastic buildings and church are on different levels. Without it, the effectiveness of the scheme as a whole would have been compromised, and there would be no level access to the cathedral interior from the Hostry.

The resulting project has cost £10 million, met by the cathedral itself, partly through a ten-year fundraising campaign; a £2.3-million Heritage Lottery Fund grant has aided construction of the Hostry. The underlying vision claims inspiration from Benedictine traditions of education and hospitality; certainly, these buildings build in a very modern way on the uses for which they were created some 800 years ago.

This development manages to be emphatically modern, while keeping its roots deep in the past. This is true of its function as well as of the stylistic approach taken. Originally, the monastic buildings, especially the refectory and much of the cloister, were largely the preserve of the monks. Their contemporary reinvention demonstrates that these ancient patterns work equally well for what has become a very outwardly-focused institution.

'I'VE FOUND IT A VERY POSITIVE PROCESS, WORKING WITH THE CFCE'

Tim Coleridge,
MICHAEL HOPKINS ARCHITECTS

POSTSCRIPT

'My memory of the consultation process is very good … it was efficient and timely … for projects large and small it is very, very useful to have these people on whom we can call,' says Trevor Dennis, Canon Chancellor and Vice Dean at Chester Cathedral. Or, as Tim Coleridge of Michael Hopkins Architects puts it, 'We found it a very positive process. … It was very good to engage with the CFCE from very early on. You have to know your stuff, basing your designs on sound research and investigation, but you get to be surrounded by experts in their respective fields – within the CFCE, EH and at the cathedral. It was a rewarding and mutually beneficial process.'

Such comments were repeated in many places, Catholic as well as Anglican, and by architects, members of chapter and cathedral staff alike. Positive experiences, then, of the unique permissions system that exists for cathedrals. This process, part of the system of Ecclesiastical Exemption from listed building, scheduled monument and conservation area consent, was defined by the Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 1994 (currently under revision, partly to take account of current reforms in heritage protection and management). This acknowledges that such buildings have unique continuities of function, and that this function is profoundly interconnected with their design and decoration.

But there are obligations, too. Churches of the exempt denominations must have systems in place that are equivalent to those which apply to secular buildings through the listed buildings consent system operated by local planning authorities. In the case of Anglican cathedrals these are defined in the Church of England's *Care of Cathedrals Measure* of 1990 and subsequent amendments; the Roman Catholic procedures are set out in the *Directory on the Ecclesiastical Exemption from Listed Building Control*. These regimes ensure that, in the Church of England, a Fabric Advisory Committee exists for each building, supported at national level by the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England. In the Roman Catholic Church, the work of diocesan Historic Churches Committees is co-ordinated by the Patrimony Committee of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Partnership with interested parties outside is also stressed, whether with the local planning authority, as representative of the wider local community, with English Heritage or with the national amenity societies.

And the process is not a superficial one. The organisations involved will examine the proposals carefully, and make many suggestions. Each denomination will have its own definition of the boundary within which works require such permission. Buried archaeology, whether beneath the precinct or beneath the church, may require separate Scheduled Monument Consent from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Planning permission may be required from the secular authorities in the normal way. Proposed changes within cathedral precincts thus currently require a complex series of consultees and multiple consent procedures. The DCMS White Paper, *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century* (2007) proposes to simplify this. Heritage Partnership Agreements will allow cathedrals to focus on appropriate historical analysis, design and execution, rather than on paperwork. The system should help those involved in maintaining cathedrals to carry out their duties towards the buildings in their care, rather than having their energies diverted by complex statutory processes.

The process as it stands, as Fr Anthony O'Brien, Dean of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, puts it, 'involves a great deal of everyone's time'. However, he continues, 'I never felt the process was anti-development at all. English Heritage and others were really supportive.' Cathedral architect Martin Stancliffe agrees. 'English Heritage and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings had major concerns' about the scale of what was planned at Wells Cathedral, but 'we had a very friendly and formative conversation with all of them.'

In support of this it is vital to put the right team together. 'It was important to get good partnerships on board – with surveyors, engineers, architects,' as Fr O'Brien says. These relationships matter internally, too. For major projects, the cathedral's dean, administrator, architect and archaeologist will have to work together particularly effectively and closely.

And thorough preparation is crucial. 'Early consultation is very worthwhile,' says Martin Stancliffe, 'but it must be on the basis of something. Equally, you must be prepared for that something to change.' John Roberts, Administrator at Wells, agrees: 'It's important to have a structured approach and be very clear about what it is you want to achieve; and equally that for the best solution you must be ready to change. We had frequent, free and formative conversations with everyone involved.'

The Celebrating the Saints programme at Hereford, for example, involves new decorations and fittings, some deliberately medieval in style and some explicitly contemporary. 'Throughout, we have been helped by emphasizing to the CFCE that this is part of an overall scheme – and not just individual parts,' says Michael Tavinor, Dean of Hereford. 'We were able to present our case for a variety of styles in a way which might have been more difficult had each been presented separately over a long period. We might then have faced criticism that we were being driven by a pastiche approach. I think this helped the project's easy passage.'

The issue then, is about stylistic appropriateness and the need for new work to respect the old, whilst being distinctive in its own terms. 'We were very careful to have underpinned our proposal with solid archaeological research, and I think it was crucial that we were restoring something that was there before,' says Jane Kennedy, cathedral architect at Ely. Often, the best solution combines thorough analysis with a certain imaginative spark: 'You have to put your specialist knowledge together and come up with something – and that involves creativity,' says John Roberts.

Most cathedrals appoint cathedral architects and, in the case of the ancient Anglican cathedrals, archaeologists, on a term basis to encourage a good rapport with the building. These architects may design individual elements of a programme, or they may act as advisors when a separate contract is placed for a large construction project. This ensures the client has someone at hand with both specialist expertise and a deep knowledge of the conservation and construction history of the building. In this situation, 'good collaboration between designers, one bringing the inside knowledge and the other the external perspective,' can work very effectively, points out Martin Stancliffe.

Above all, the care, caution and creativity that characterises the process is a result of the significance of the cathedrals themselves. Often, permanent changes are being proposed to buildings that are almost by definition of national, and even international, significance. 'The process makes a lot of demands,' says Richard Griffiths, cathedral architect at St Albans. But, he points out, the result will have to stand the test of time. 'Changes, once they are done, are done for good. It is important to do such things as well as possible.'

Further information, including copies of this document and a range of other guidance, is available from:

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