

Canterbury Cathedral: repairs to the North West Transept (1 of 2 projects funded)

Awarded £150,000 in November 2014 towards a £1,006,500 project

The need

The North West Transept is, internally, one of the most visited and historically significant areas of Canterbury Cathedral, providing the main access to the Crypt and up towards the High Altar. Externally there was a need for emergency repair and stabilisation of previous failing repairs from the 19th and early 20th century to the Vice Turret Spirelet, in order to keep the area weather-tight and safe. New movement was recorded in the 2012 Quinquennial Inspection: cracks were evident through stones in addition to visible separation of stone joints. Failed cement-rich render had fallen on the roofs of the Cloister below. If the work had not taken place the cathedral would have had to close the site of the Martyrdom, where Archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered, which is the most visited part of the building.

Outcomes

The repair needs were urgent prior to the work taking place but will now require only routine maintenance, with no major work needed for the next 70 to 100 years. The improved condition of the stonework inspires confidence in the public and potential donors that the cathedral is being looked after.

Economic and social impact

During the project, the contractor had two stonemason apprentices and a leadworker apprentice. Two others were mature students doing a Foundation degree in Applied Historic Building Conservation and Repair, making five full-time equivalent apprentices. The contractors used for the project were all local and the project supported traditional masonry skills.

Works completed and timescale

Works were completed to stabilise the spirelet and its flanking pinnacles along with works to re-lead the North West Transept roof. This involved the conservation repair of the western gable copings and the conservation of the north-eastern pinnacle, a heavily weathered and open-jointed construction.

The Cathedral

England's oldest cathedral, Canterbury has been a major site of pilgrimage for centuries. It has one of the finest Norman crypts in England, as well as large cloisters and the remains of many monastic buildings in the precinct. Canterbury receives over one million visitors a year and is in the top ten most visited tourist attractions in England. It needs to spend several million pounds a year on routine upkeep of the cathedral and precincts, in addition to special projects such as 'The Canterbury Journey', a £24.7 million scheme to carry out vital restoration work and to open up the Cathedral and its historic collections to as many people as possible. In September 2016 the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarded the Cathedral a total grant of £13.8 million, to which is being added £10.9 million raised by the Cathedral's fundraising charity, the Canterbury Cathedral Trust, through private and charitable sources in the UK and the USA.



Detail of the spirelet pinnacles. Photo Credit: Purcell Architects.

Canterbury Cathedral: repairs to Library Corridor Roof (2 of 2 projects funded)

Awarded £250,000 in July 2016 towards a £253,600 project

The need

The roof of Canterbury Cathedral's much-used Library Corridor was in a deteriorated state and required urgent repair and re-leading to become weather-tight, safe and remain open to the public. The Library Corridor is a key access route allowing wheelchair users access to the Quire, and will be used as a public exhibition space when the 'Canterbury Journey' project is complete.



Photo Credit: Purcell Architects

Outcomes

The repair needs were urgent prior to the work taking place and will now require only routine items of maintenance with no major work needed for the next 70 to 100 years. Without the funding the work could not have gone ahead for a long time and the roof's condition would have deteriorated. The improvements to the rainwater goods carried out alongside the re-leading of the roof enable it to deal adequately with the higher-intensity rainfall experienced in recent years.

Economic and social impact

The contractors used for the project were all local and the fund supported good-quality carpentry skills and leadworkers. The contractor had two apprentices, one carpenter and three leadworkers.

Works completed and timescale

The work ran from July 2017 until December 2017. It took advantage of existing scaffolding in place for the repairs to the North Transept part-funded by the previous First World War grant. The discovery of lead corrosion meant that the repair needs were more urgent than was originally thought. Gutters were also installed in the East, South and West eaves, protecting the lower walls from water run-off. The First World War grant is acknowledged in the design of the new lead hoppers, which read 'WW1 2018'.



Photo Credit: Purcell Architects

The Cathedral

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