

Guildford Cathedral: Tower & Transept roof repairs (1 of 2 projects funded)

Awarded £500,000 in March 2015 towards a £570,000 project

The need

Due to its structure and exposed location, Guildford Cathedral is subject to the effects of the weather to a disproportionate degree. The copper roofs which were installed during construction (1930s to 1960s) had never been replaced. Water coming through the roofing presented a threat to the structural integrity of the building through loosening external brick and through causing corrosion to the steel reinforcements to concrete elements of the building, leading to expansion and cracking of the concrete. Leaks were also endangering the electrical systems, as well as damaging interior fabric and fittings, including the asbestos-containing acoustic plaster lining the interior ceiling vaults. The costs of the urgent asbestos removal were being largely covered by a £4.6 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, but water ingress and exterior brickwork fell outside the HLF project, which was concerned primarily with the interior, access and interpretation.



Work in progress on the Transept Roof. Photo credit: Bob Ellison.

Outcomes

The repairs have improved the overall integrity of the external fabric and prevented the water ingress which was causing damage to the interior. The building is drier and more comfortable and the HLF investment in the interior has been protected. Working on the project encouraged the cathedral staff to improve their financial procedures and project management. The work complemented the HLF funding, and approximately £5,000 was raised from individual donors for extra work whilst the contractors were on site. Potential donors find investment in the cathedral more appealing now the major works are complete.

Economic and social impact

This project supported approximately eight jobs in traditional copper roofing methods and carpentry.

The refurbishment has provided an opportunity to attract more people to the cathedral and it has developed a more dedicated marketing team for this purpose. A sculpture competition run as part of the project and carved by a recent City and Guilds graduate generated considerable media attention and community interest.



The First World War project commemorative sculpture. Photo credit: Bob Ellison.

Works completed

The works consisted of the replacement of the tower roof and repair work to the lower tower, plus replacement of failing copper on the transept roofs and repair to brickworks in these areas. It included the replacement of pointing, which had eroded significantly, replacement or repair of the copper roofing sheets, including their fixing points, and work to enlarge and improve gutters and drainage arrangements.

The Cathedral

Guildford Cathedral, known as "The People's Cathedral", was designed by Edward Maufe and built between 1936 and 1965. In the 1950s a "buy a brick" scheme, which entitled the buyer to sign their name on the brick, was used to raise funds for construction and was supported by some 200,000 people.

Guildford Cathedral: Quire and Presbytery Roof (2 of 2 projects funded)

Awarded £499,000 in July 2016

The need

The application was for the replacement of the quire and presbytery copper roofs, which displayed the same problems of water ingress as those on the tower and transept roofs replaced with funding by the previous First World War grant. This project also covered re-pointing on the south aisle wall, and the removal of asbestos in aisle roof voids, an unexpected cost not provided for by the parallel Heritage Lottery Fund project, which was concerned primarily with the interior, access, engagement and interpretation.



Work in progress on the quire roof. Photo credit: Bob Ellison

Outcomes

The removal of the asbestos from the roof voids prevented the closure of the Cathedral. The repaired roofs mean that the newly decorated interior, as well as many expensive new fittings and valuable heritage items, are safe from water damage. Working on the project encouraged the cathedral staff to improve their management of simultaneous building projects along with associated financial procedures and cash flow. They are currently planning to approach more donors as investment in the cathedral is deemed more appealing now the major works are complete.

Economic and social impact

This project supported approximately eight jobs in traditional copper roofing methods, carpentry and masonry. The cathedral has seen the refurbishment as an opportunity to attract more visitors and has developed a dedicated marketing team for this purpose. The architect and cathedral have organised activities to engage the wider community, including lectures, gathering film footage and getting local schools involved.

Works completed and timescale

The works began in July 2017 and consisted of the replacement of the quire and presbytery roof, and repointing and grouting on the south aisle wall. There were also repairs to the internal plaster affected by damp penetration and the removal of the remaining asbestos residue in roof voids. The works were completed in January 2018.

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The completed quire roof. Photo credit: Bob Ellison.