

# Leicester Cathedral: North Side Project (1 of 2 projects funded)

*Awarded £140,000 in July 2014*

## The need

A package of urgent repairs was needed on the north side of the cathedral. These included high-level masonry and window repairs, refurbishment of rainwater goods and timber conservation and pargetting repairs to the north porch. The most substantial stonework repairs were needed to the spirelet above the octagonal turret, particularly the top ten courses which were suffering from the failure of earlier repairs and weathering. The condition of the north porch, a unique and predominantly medieval timber structure, was deteriorating through condensation due to lack of ventilation in the roof space, and cracking and breaking of the render of the decorated exterior panels.



Leicester Cathedral. Photo credit: Beth Walsh.

## Outcomes

The works have ensured that the cathedral is in a better state of repair, providing a safer environment for visitors, and the external appearance of the cathedral has also vastly improved. The works have also helped to leverage additional funding from outside donors. Receiving the grant has provided capacity for the cathedral to focus its attention on its development projects, including a heritage learning centre. The north porch is one of the access points to the cathedral and has been put in a fit state for regular use.

## Economic and social impact

The works helped to support several jobs in traditional building techniques including stonemasonry and leadwork. There has been an increase in community interest and public confidence in the Cathedral since the repair works have been carried out. A series of commemorative lectures on the First World War as well as several additional services were held in response to winning the funding.

## Works completed and timescale

These works were carried out by Midland Stonemasonry Ltd under the supervision of the cathedral architect. The works included masonry repairs to the high level north transept, timber repairs to the north porch, replacing corroded saddle bars to the north window of the north transept with bronze, refurbishment of rainwater goods,

window cleaning and securing of the sacristy roof.

Economies of scale were achieved through using the same scaffolding for the high-level elements.

The works were completed in November 2015.

## The Cathedral

Leicester Cathedral was originally a parish church that became a cathedral in 1927 after the new Diocese of Leicester was established. Much altered, most of the fabric is Victorian or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a notable interior by Charles Nicholson. In 2012 the remains of Richard III were discovered beneath a car park nearby; they were re-interred in the cathedral in 2015.



North Porch before repairs. Photo credit: Ian Salisbury, Cathedral Architect.



## Leicester Cathedral: South Face Stonework (2 of 2 projects funded)

*Awarded £300,000 in July 2016 with a further £15,000 reallocated in April 2018*

### The need

The 2016 Quinquennial Inspection identified an urgent need for significant external stone repairs on the south side of the building, to address risks of falling stone in public areas and of inadequate support for the roof. The walls consisted of a very shallow layer of ashlar, with much face-bedding and spalling, and with no useful ties to the rubble behind. The sandstone in places appeared to have lost nearly all of its strength; it was easily broken into powder between the fingers. A particular feature of the deterioration of this stone is that it turns to powder behind a deceptively hard but thin crust. When the crust falls off, all that remains is the powdery material. The weakness was in the poor quality of the facing stone, the thinness of the external layer and inadequate tying-in.



### Outcomes

The works addressed the issues with the stone defects and weathered stonemasonry and improved safety for the public. In the course of the work two further high-level areas were found to require urgent attention, tracery repairs in the west window of St George's Chapel, and rebuilding the high-level parapet stonework of the west face of the south aisle. Neither were included in the original scope of works but it made economic sense to carry them out while scaffolding was in place. The cathedral obtained a grant of £35,000 from the Headley Trust towards this additional work and was reallocated a further £15,000 from underspend on other projects by the First World War fund's Expert Panel in April 2018.

### Economic and social impact

Jobs have been supported in traditional building techniques. Leicester Cathedral has also managed to leverage further funding through other sources as a result of the works being carried out and this has proved to be useful in developing a heritage learning centre. A series of commemorative lectures on the First World War as well as several additional services were held in response to winning the funding. Greater visitor numbers are expected once the works are complete.

### Works completed and timescale

Works commencing in January 2018, carried out by Midland Stonemasonry Ltd under the supervision of Van Heyningen & Haward Architects, and included major repairs to the great south aisle wall and the south nave clerestory. The repairs were due for completion in June 2018. The repair works included the replacement of two badly deteriorated stone gargoyles with new grotesques in the forms of a Fox and a Tiger.

### The Cathedral

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