

Lichfield Cathedral: Rewiring and essential lighting repairs (1 of 2 projects funded)

Awarded £800,000 in March 2015 towards a £1.3 million project.

The need

Lichfield Cathedral's electrical cabling was in an unsafe condition: the deterioration was so severe that the cathedral's insurers had said its decommissioning or replacement was a condition for continued cover. Without these works being completed there was a real risk that the cathedral would have to shut down its electrical systems and thus close the cathedral to the public.

Outcomes

As a result of the electrical repairs, Lichfield was able to secure insurance, improve fire safety and remain safe and open. In the absence of the funding, repairs would not have been carried out and the cathedral would have had to close its doors.

Economic and social impact

Lichfield Cathedral was also able to lever in £500,000 of additional funding to the electrical repair and lighting project as a result of the First World War award. This complemented the award as it could cover elements such as event and architectural lighting that were not eligible for this fund. The cathedral's energy consumption is 75% less as a result of the modernisation. Eight scaffolding jobs were as part of Lichfield's overall funded repair works.

The improved lighting has increased the scope of events the cathedral will be able to host in the future, both for worship and wider community events, as it resulted in "phenomenal control over levels of light in the cathedral". The cathedral had a full programme of First World War commemoration events, services, and exhibitions already planned, running 11 in total. Although these were planned prior to the funding award, they depended upon the cathedral remaining safe and open with functioning electrical systems.

Works completed and timescale

The works were completed between April 2015 and March 2016. Permissions had already been gained for the works in advance of the funding application, with the new scheme intending to improve lighting in the nave and aisles for reading, provide better visibility, include event and architectural lighting, enable energy and maintenance savings, result in simplified operation, and secure overall electrical safety.

The Cathedral

Lichfield Cathedral is a site for worship and learning, welcoming 200,000 visitors each year. It originated with St Chad's arrival in the 7th century. The Diocese of Lichfield was created in 1660, by which time the



A demonstration of the new lighting system to the congregation. Photo credit: Lichfield Cathedral.



A switched socket outlet in the north aisle that had to be isolated due to failure of the cable. Photo credit: Robert Kilgour, architect.

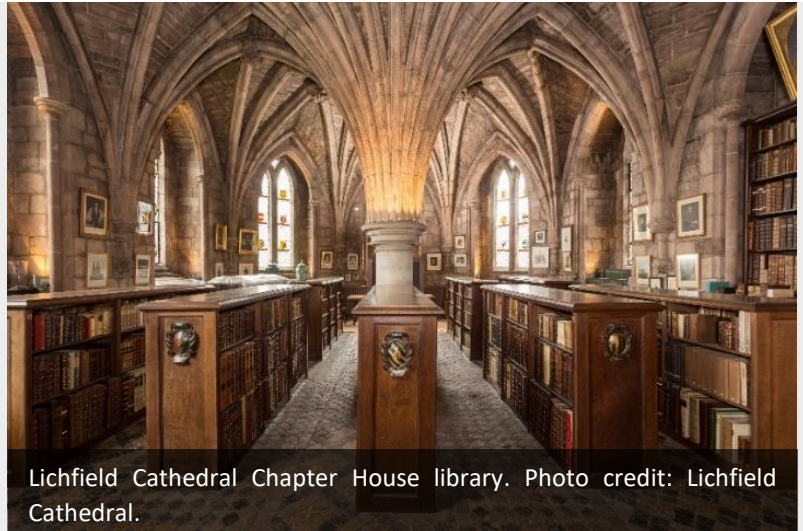
church was over 400 years old. Architecturally the church is a mixture of styles, which much re-building is evidence. The Lichfield Angel, a Saxon carving (possibly a shrine chest lid) was discovered under the nave floor in 2003. The west front of the cathedral and its distinctive three spires were completed in 1320. The existing Chapter House is one of the earliest remaining elements, dating from around 1195. After much destruction in the English Civil War, the Restoration saw Charles II grant money for re-building. Later still a set of sixteenth-century Flemish painted glass from Herkenrode was donated and installed in the Lady Chapel.

Lichfield Cathedral: Chapter House Repairs (2 of 2 funded projects)

Awarded £690,000 in July 2016 towards a £722,000 project

The need

The two-tiered Chapter House is one of the earliest parts of the cathedral, dating from around 1195. It has a medieval encaustic tiled floor of around 1300 and houses a unique historic library collection, primarily made up of a bequest of over 1,000 volumes from the Duchess of Somerset, who had safeguarded the 8th-century St Chad Gospels during the English Civil War and returned them to the cathedral afterwards. The collection is of national and global importance, containing rare books and manuscripts of high value both financially and historically. Repairs to the Chapter House had been identified as necessary in the past three Quinquennial Inspections (i.e. over 15 years), as water ingress and dust and debris from masonry damage were threatening the fabric of the floor as well as the collection.



Lichfield Cathedral Chapter House library. Photo credit: Lichfield Cathedral.

Outcomes

The library and chapter space are watertight and secure, thus safeguarding the library collection. The Chapter House below remains home to a long-term exhibition that focuses on the Anglo-Saxon history of the Cathedral. It includes the St Chad Gospels, the Lichfield Angel, and associated Christian items from the Staffordshire Hoard. Longevity of repairs was considered in the overall repair works, with a hatch built in to allow regular maintenance and conservation. The balance of the funding was met by donations to a special appeal. In the absence of the fund, the repairs would not have been carried out and the overall Chapter House condition would have deteriorated. Short-term measures would have been taken, such as rehousing the library collection, sealing off the room, and protecting the floor, but this would have prevented or restricted public access and detached the historic collection from a space it had been associated with for centuries.

Economic and social impact

Local contractors (within 10-30 miles) were contracted to undertake the repairs. Traditional skills in lead work, carpentry and masonry were supported by the project: jobs included two leadworkers; ten stonemasons; and one glazier. Eight scaffolders were also contracted as part of Lichfield's overall funded repair works.

Lichfield has used the repair project as an opportunity to conduct outreach activity. The cathedral worked with an Education Officer and developed opportunities for school age children to observe the masons and leadworkers and to find out more about what they do. This activity aimed to raise awareness of craft skills and to "encourage the future masons".



Stonemason at work carving a figurehead. Photo credit: Lichfield Cathedral.

Works completed and timescale

Works were scheduled to be completed between May 2016 and February 2018. Repairs involved replacement of leadwork, roofs and masonry, as well as improvements to guttering. As initial quotes came in below the original estimate, the fund's Expert Panel agreed that the scope of the works could be increased to cover additional areas of masonry.

The Cathedral

See previous project summary.