

Newcastle Catholic Cathedral: External stonework (project 1 of 1 funded)

Awarded £185,000 in July 2014

The need

The external walls of the cathedral dated to the 1840s and were repaired in the 1980s in accordance with practices of the time. By the time of the application the mortar facings and renderings, whilst largely still intact, were failing around the windows. Visible cracks had appeared in the mullions, and some sections of tracery has broken down.

Outcomes

The stonework repairs to the tracery windows have provided much-needed protection which will prevent further damage and weathering. The repairs to the stained-glass windows and corbel heads have improved the aesthetics of the cathedral.

Works completed and timescale

The works commenced in March 2015 and were complete in December 2015. The works included repairs to tracery and ground-level stonework and repairs of the corbel springing blocks which had become eroded. Additional works included replacing defective hood moulds to the windows and stained-glass work repairs. In accordance with the grant offer, the existing stonework and the work carried out was professional recorded.

An underspend of c.£17,000 was returned to the fund for reallocation.

The Cathedral

St Mary's cathedral church was designed by AW Pugin and completed in 1844. The cathedral displays fine examples of gothic revival architecture and is a grade 1 listed building. St Mary's was the first of the two cathedrals within the city of Newcastle to be consecrated, being granted cathedral status in 1850. The prominent spire was added in 1872. A series of extensions, additions and changes have taken place in the intervening years. These included expanding the sanctuary and re-ordering the Lady Chapel in the 1980s in response to new Catholic liturgy. The church was redecorated and re-lit in 2004, had a café and bookshop added to the 'cloister' courtyard in 2005, a new floor in 2010 and a new organ in 2013. Recent major internal refurbishment includes wall and floor tile-work in neo-Gothic style in accord with Pugin's original intentions, several new stained-glass windows and a new choir gallery.



Restored tracery window stonework. Photo credit: Kevin Doonan, Architect.



Newcastle Catholic Cathedral. Photo credit: Simon Howard.