

Salford Catholic Cathedral: High level Repairs and Roof Access

(1 of 2 projects funded)

Awarded £373,000 in July 2016

The need

The cathedral had serious problems of water penetrating through the walls at high level, with saturated ceiling plasterwork and numerous buckets having to be put out to catch drips. There was concern about damage to timbers in concealed roof spaces. A survey from a newly appointed conservation architect showed that significant repairs were urgently required to the roofs, parapet gutters, downpipes and drains. There were problems with asphalt aisle roofs and parapet gutters, especially where they faced south or west and were easily damaged by solar gain. Leadwork to flashings and gutters also needed replacing. The aim of the project was to eliminate all current water ingress and then to provide physical access across all roofs and gutters for the purposes of future regular maintenance.

Outcomes

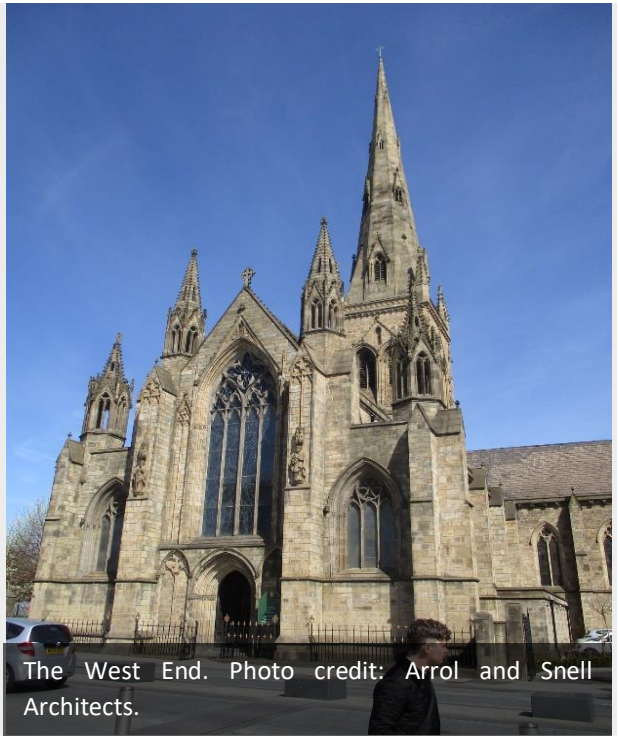
The cathedral is gradually eliminating the leaks from the building. Access to the roofs and gutters means that gutter clearance and other important maintenance work can be carried out regularly, reducing risk of further damage. The works are also an important step in the process of refurbishing the cathedral and working on the projects has increased the cathedral's capacity for applying for and receiving grant funding for major projects.

Economic and social impact

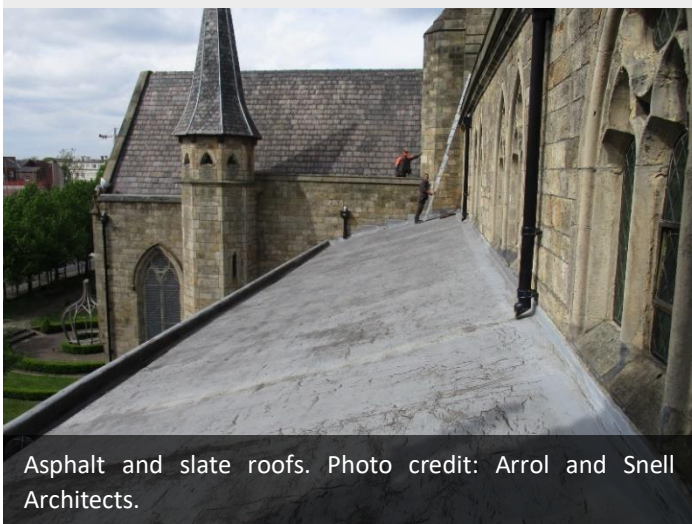
A local company were employed to carry out the work and at least one trainee was involved. The project produces challenges for the stonemasons and extends their knowledge and skills. The projects are sustaining traditional skills and encouraging church authorities to look after buildings. The congregation at the cathedral has grown significantly in recent years. It intends to complete a long-term project for a reordering more sympathetic to the original architecture and improved access and provision for worshippers and visitors. Ensuring that the roof is watertight is the first step in this journey as only once the building is able to dry out can internal refurbishment and redecoration, also much needed, be addressed.

Works completed

The work was for significant repairs to the cathedral roofs, parapet gutters, downpipes and drains. Leadwork to flashings and gutters also required replacing.



The West End. Photo credit: Arrol and Snell Architects.



Asphalt and slate roofs. Photo credit: Arrol and Snell Architects.

The Cathedral

St. John's, Salford, was built between 1844 and 1848 and was the first cruciform Catholic church to be built in England since the Reformation, closely modelled on a number of noted medieval churches: the tower and spire, the latter the tallest in Lancashire at the time of building, are derived from the church of St Mary Magdalene, Newark-on-Trent. Close to Manchester's busy city centre, the area around the cathedral is experiencing regeneration; the repaired cathedral is well placed to play a part in this.

Salford Catholic Cathedral: North Porch access and drainage (2 of 2 projects funded)

Awarded £180,000 in November 2016

The need

Safe and level access to the cathedral was urgently needed. The main west entrance was inaccessible to wheelchair users as it had three steps, and the recent introduction of level surface treatments to the public road and pavement beyond had reduced the distinction between them, which meant that people leaving the cathedral were walking out directly towards the bus lane. This was considered a real hazard, especially after a major event, and the cathedral was keen to open up the north porch as a new principal entrance. It was barely used, opening onto an unattractive area of modern concrete paving, and its rainwater downpipes discharged directly into the ground, creating damp problems in the surrounding area and the cathedral interior.



The west entrance, with a narrow pavement and three steps to the doorway. Photo credit: Arrol and Snell Architects.

Outcomes and social impact

The main outcome is that people of all abilities will be able to enter the church when it is unattended. Those using wheelchairs previously could not do this as there was only a portable ramp. The work also reduces the risk to the public from exiting the building straight onto a busy road when leaving the cathedral. The new entrance provides a pleasant and sociable area for the public to enjoy after mass and events such as weddings. The congregation has been growing at Salford Cathedral, so having a safe and accessible main entrance was increasingly important.

The application also included development of an integrated west end suite with WCs, exhibition area, bookshop and welcome space. This was beyond the scope of the First World War fund, but would provide a basis for a future application to other funders.

Works completed and timescale

The North Porch and yard are being made into wheelchair-friendly areas and also providing a main entrance and gathering area which is safe for the public. The drainage defects are being rectified at the same time.

Cathedral quote

Ensuring that our wonderful cathedral is dry and secure from the weather is the first essential step in our mission to see St John's brought back into good repair and playing a major role in the regeneration of the historic centre of Salford (Fr. Michael Jones, Dean, September 2016)

The Cathedral

See previous project summary.



North Porch work in progress. Photo credit: Arrol and Snell Architects.