

Blackburn Cathedral: High Level Repairs (1 of 2 projects funded)

Awarded £314,251 in November 2014; additional allocation gave total funding of £387,701

The need

Water penetration through the north and south transept roofs was highlighted as a priority repair in a 2014 inspection. The north and south transepts and high and low-level roof gutters on the east and west face of the Cathedral required significant repair and replacement work, and external masonry needed repointing.

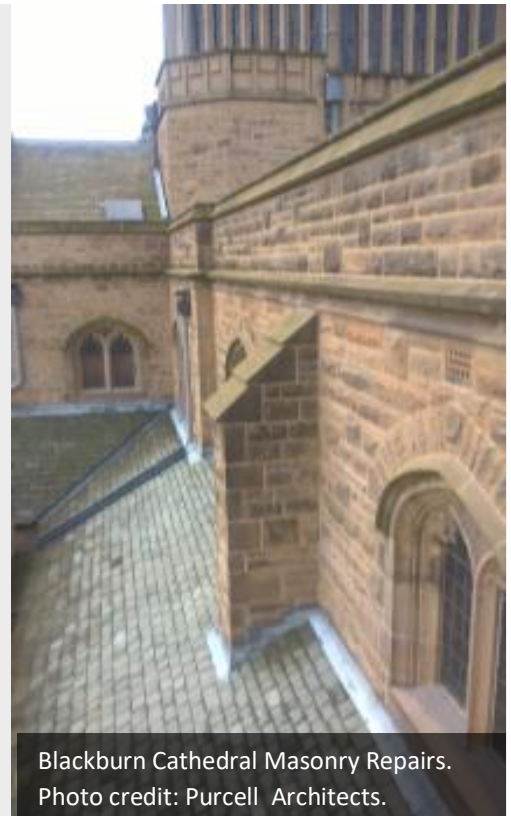
Outcomes

The restoration of the lead guttering and roofs has resolved leaking within the cathedral, ensuring a drier, warmer and safer environment for visitors and preventing damage to the structure and furnishings. As a result of the works the building is in a much better condition for future generations. The works have encouraged further funds to be donated for future restoration projects as they demonstrated that the cathedral is dedicated to maintaining its heritage.

Economic and social impact

Approximately 12-14 full time equivalent jobs were supported via the two projects at Blackburn Cathedral. These jobs included those in traditional building methods such as stonemasonry, lead works and joinery. The works have also encouraged more donations to the cathedral, which will be used to help fund future restoration projects.

Receiving the grant meant that the cathedral could allocate more of its own funds into community projects. It increased the number of events that were held, including the number of First World War Commemoration services. There has been increased community interest following the works and the heritage site is secured for generations to come.



Blackburn Cathedral Masonry Repairs.
Photo credit: Purcell Architects.



Extensive scaffolding was required.
Photo credit: Purcell Architects.

Works completed and timescale

Heritage Conservation Restoration Ltd were commissioned to carry out roofing and lead work repairs to the cathedrals lead gutters, flat roofs and eave gutters to the North and South Transept roofs. The project commenced in September 2015 and was completed in June 2016.

The Cathedral

Built by John Palmer in 1826, the church of St Mary the Virgin was designated a cathedral in 1926 with the creation of the Diocese of Blackburn. The building combines the original 1820s structure with 1950s and 60s modernist additions, including the distinctive aluminium spire by the architect Laurence King. It stands on a site reputedly associated with early Christianity, a foundation is believed to date from the year 596. The earliest documented evidence of Blackburn is in the Domesday Book which was compiled in 1086.

Blackburn Cathedral: Roof and Transept Repairs (2 of 2 projects funded)

Awarded £200,000 in November 2016 towards a project cost of £435,000

The need

Rainwater had been penetrating the cathedral fabric through the roof, pointing and glazing on the Georgian west tower: on extremely rainy days water streamed down the tower stairs and onto the bell frame. In addition the repointing of the window tracery and lower walls of the transepts, following on from the previous First World War grant-aided project, was urgently needed.

The cathedral had secured a grant for £36,000 from the Headley Trust towards the tower repairs and requested £408,000 from the First World War fund. The aim was to address the outstanding problems and continue to maintain the cathedral fabric in good repair, ensuring wind and weather tightness into the next decade and beyond. The First World War funding was awarded to complete a second phase of repairs to the west tower roof, and for transept repointing as far as the partial funding permitted.

Outcomes

The repair to the tower roof has prevented further leaking and water damage from occurring. The replacement of the old roof with a new lead one has resulted in the cathedral being much drier and prevents further water damage. The repairs to the stonemasonry of the building and the re-gilding of the clock have provided the cathedral with a more aesthetically pleasing exterior.



Re-gilded Tower clock. Photo credit: Purcell Architects.

Economic and social impact

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Works completed and timescale

Heritage Conservation Restoration Ltd were again commissioned to carry out repair works to the cathedrals masonry work as well as new lime pointing to the transept elevations. Works commenced in June 2017 and were complete by February 2018.

The Cathedral Quarter project

In 2016 the Cathedral, working in partnership with the local Borough Council and the Homes and Communities Agency, completed the £33m Cathedral Quarter regeneration project, including a newly landscaped and developed Cathedral Square. The Cathedral raised £6m to construct a new building on its south side, to provide a refectory, meeting rooms, offices, and library. On-going repairs and improvements continued alongside this major scheme, including a nave ceiling redecoration project as well as the First World War grant-aided projects.

With its greatly improved setting, repaired building and high-quality public facilities the cathedral is much better placed than previously to deliver its wide programme of community outreach work.