

RIPON CATHEDRAL RENEWED FOR CATHEDRAL AND FOR CITY



CGI of proposed development

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

CREATING A CATHEDRAL CITY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Ripon Cathedral attracts 100,000 visitors per year in addition to pilgrims, worshippers and, with regular large-scale events, thousands of concertgoers. Providing 21st century facilities, including a Changing Places toilet, is not only essential but will also help attract more visitors to the cathedral and to the city.

Of paramount importance is the safeguarding of more than 60 choristers in the flourishing choir, with access to appropriate rehearsal space as close as possible to the cathedral. The close proximity of accessible facilities and practical storage is also vital.

The project has the support of the regulatory body, Historic England, Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England (the ultimate authority on the care of England's cathedrals and their estates), the cathedral's own planning authority, the independent Fabric Advisory Committee, plus a host of organisations, including Ripon Together CIC.

It is hoped that a pause in the planning application to allow for additional consultation will prompt a genuine exchange of views, the sharing of informed ideas and the constructive discussion of concerns raised. We continue to work with planners and other key stakeholders in order to deliver the amenities so desperately needed to benefit the city and region.



IMPROVE SAFEGUARDING

The cathedral choir provides a first-class musical education for children drawn from across the city and the surrounding area. The music attracts global audiences and visitors and is at the heart of cathedral and city life. These children must have a safe rehearsal space away from the public eye with the appropriate changing facilities as close as possible.



TRANSFORM ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility is a key element of the new building with level access to public toilets and a community meeting space. Further plans will see an improved visitor experience in the cathedral with the installation of a lift, vital for all those with reduced mobility, and the opening up of historically significant areas currently used for storage.



SUSTAIN THE BUILDING'S FABRIC AND ENRICH THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Adequate, practical storage very close to the cathedral is essential to safeguard the building's priceless fabric and to open up spaces to the public which are presently used for storage. The North West Tower, North Quire Aisle and Cathedral Library are just three of the outstanding spaces which will attract more visitors to the cathedral and city.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

1. What are the key needs?

- Accessible public toilets
- Safe and secure space for choristers
- Rehearsal and changing space for choristers
- Storage space – current use in the cathedral is damaging ancient stonework
- Communal meeting space for school parties, visiting groups, staff and 400+ cathedral volunteers
- A refectory – enabling the cathedral to offer hospitality and encouraging large coach parties and groups to the city with its many other cafés, bars and restaurants
- Better space for the cathedral shop

2. Why does the cathedral need these?

It does not have any of the above. There are no cathedral toilets, there is no safe private rehearsal space for the choir and there is no gathering place for large groups to meet, eat and keep their belongings safe. The cathedral lacks facilities to prepare food and serve large groups.

The cathedral's future is by no means safe. There are huge financial responsibilities to sustain the building. These proposals are needed to attract more visitors with more events and provide facilities suitable for the 21st century. See the full *Justification Report* on the planning portal.

3. What are the benefits for the city?

- An economic boost – increased visitor numbers of 35% over 5 years (Jura Consultants 2016) is good news for the local economy. 47% of people said their driver for visiting Ripon was the cathedral (Ecorys 2021). More coach parties coming and staying in the city; tour operators tell us they won't come here without adequate facilities
- New toilets – use of maintained accessible public toilets with an adult changing room for those with disabilities
- Community space – the creation of a modern accessible community meeting space for local groups
- A new green lung for the city with 42% more publicly accessible green space, more trees, and greater biodiversity:
 - 14 large, broad-leaved trees in the southern cathedral grounds
 - 7 smaller trees planted around the proposed building
- A commitment by the Chapter to plant up to 300 trees outside the city with a 40-year management plan in place



4. Will the new building adversely affect local businesses?

The cathedral exists to serve the city, the diocese and the wider region. In no way would it seek to do anything to damage that which it serves. Independent research by Jura Consultants commissioned by the cathedral states, 'The project is expected to increase visitor numbers at the cathedral by approximately 35% over the five years post completion'. The cathedral is a major events venue for the city, the only one of its size able to host world-class musicians, but for reasons already stated, it is inadequate. By growing the potential for the cathedral, we are growing the potential for the city. The refectory is categorically not designed to compete with the personal service of smaller cafés and restaurants.

5. Is the cathedral planning to build on the current Minster Gardens?

The building will cover the tarmac driveway and the site of the current public toilets along with 21% of the current gardens. However, the cathedral is landscaping the Stonemason's Yard, resulting in a 42% increase in the amount of public open green space.

The Memorial Garden will remain, and the Silver Jubilee Fountain will be repositioned within the garden, in the green space in front of the courthouse museum. This will be done in discussion with the Royal British Legion, Ripon Civic Society and Ripon City Council. We will also enter into a Section 106



agreement with the council that sets out the biodiversity management plan both during the building work and for many years beyond.

6. Why can't the proposed building be located further back into the Stonemason's Yard without using any public land?

This would result in a smaller building that wouldn't meet the needs as outlined above. Building further away not only fails to meet the essential need of being as close as possible to the cathedral but also risks the loss of other trees.

7. Why is an extra path being laid directly to the proposed building and new green space from the car park?

The planning process requires that we demonstrate accessibility for key groups to any proposed new build. This is also consistent with the desire of the City Plan for the development of a 'Cathedral Quarter'.

8. Why can't the cathedral space be reconfigured to make way for these new facilities?

Considerable time was spent on reviewing the existing space inside the cathedral. The plan is to remove storage and open up space, not reduce space which is essential for large congregations and concerts. There simply isn't enough space for what is required; there would be a conflict between functional and liturgical uses and changes would cause substantial harm to the building's heritage.

9. Why can't the cathedral use buildings or land it already owns?

As this is an historic and religious heritage site, any plans to develop must adhere to the strictest of rules with severe constraints. Other locations have been extensively explored and are fully addressed in the *Options Appraisal* available on the planning portal. These have been rejected due to distance from the cathedral, steepness of the land, heritage aspects of the cathedral and disturbance of historic burials.

- A. The cathedral hall is not appropriate for storage or visitor accessibility because of the steps. Even if a second storey were provided, there would be a long, steep slope to the South Transept and the burials of recent decades would have to be disturbed.

- B. The initial plan to build in the south churchyard with a connection to the cathedral was deemed inadequate:
- Historic England, who has regulatory powers in this project, vetoed this proposal as it impacted the historic fabric of the cathedral and would alter the view of the cathedral's West Front from Kirkgate
 - The location did not bring the advantages of the proposed north-side development to the creation of a 'Cathedral Quarter', with the advantage of the cathedral's facilities being open to the city
- C. The Dean's Residence, Minster House, is a Grade 2* heritage property which could not provide the spaces required; it is both too far and not accessible for people with disabilities, safeguarding requirements and the practicalities of storage. Its garden, at the level of Bondgate, is even more unfeasible. The coachhouse, also a listed property, would be limited in its uses. It could only provide useful space by being extended significantly in ways which would be unlikely to attract permission, and still has disadvantages in terms of level access. Minster House works very well as two dwellings, the dean's office and meeting spaces for the cathedral; its coachhouse already provides valuable storage space which is factored into the cathedral's needs for the new building.

10. Could the building be redesigned to save T14 - the beech tree most disputed over?

Although challenging, this question remains open for further exploration in collaboration with the planners. A full assessment including construction methodology, architectural design and biodiversity was carried out by experts for the cathedral (see *Investigative Due Process Exercise into the Retention of Key Trees* and the summary in *The Case for the Loss of the Veteran Tree*, both on the planning portal).

11. What is the mitigation for the removal of 11 existing trees?

The proposal includes compensatory planting, with 21 substantial new trees around the cathedral – 14 large, broad-leaved trees in the southern cathedral grounds and 7 smaller trees planted around the proposed building – plus a

commitment by the Chapter to plant up to 300 trees outside the city with a 40-year management plan in place. This has increased since the original proposal of 60+ trees in one acre of land. Additional offers are also being made by supporters of the cathedral's plans.

For the full impact assessment please see the *Landscape Vision and an Assessment of its Impacts* on the planning portal. This report demonstrates clearly that, overall, there will be a significant enhancement of both the setting of the cathedral and the wider conservation area.

12. What groundwork has been done to date to confirm the area is safe for development?

A detailed site inspection, including archaeological investigations, was carried out in January 2023. No significant signs of ground instability have been recorded across or in close vicinity of the site.

13. How will the city be impacted during the construction works?

Construction work is estimated to take 18 months. The contractors will be registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme which will ensure they follow best practice and consider their impact on the public to minimise disruption.

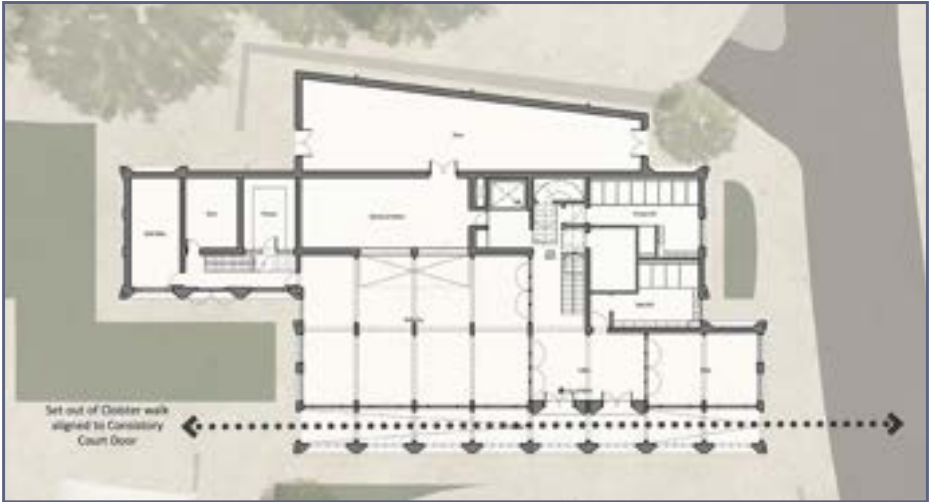
14. How much money will the project cost and where is the funding coming from?

The total cost was last estimated at £8m which needs to be raised through a public appeal.

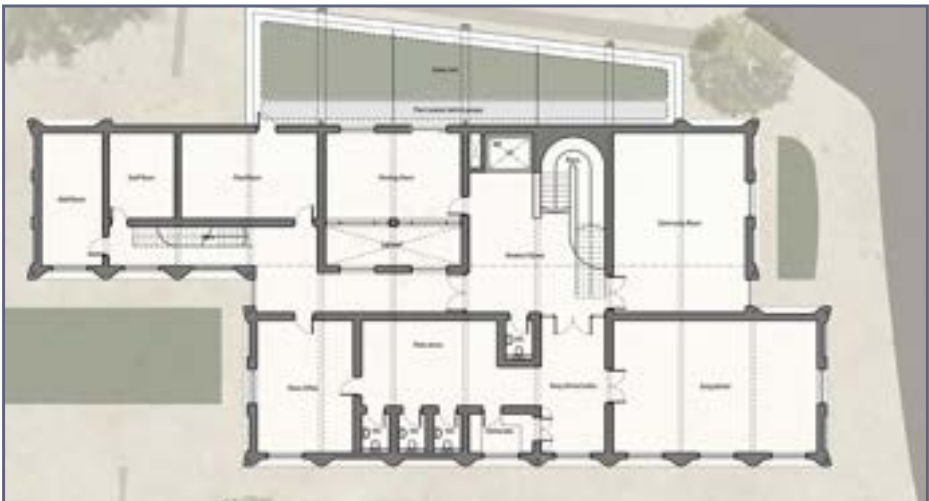
PLAN FOR THE PROPOSED ANNEX

The annex measures 1100sqm and will house a song school, meeting/ education room, refectory and kitchen, shop, exhibition/interpretation space, public WCs, changing places WC, storage, staff and volunteers' room, and associated plant, stores and staff facilities.

See *Design and Access Statement* on the planning portal.



Ground floor plan



First floor plan

THE NEXT STEPS

During February and March, there will be numerous opportunities for further consultation:

1. Join us at either the cathedral or the town hall for one of the upcoming stakeholder drop-in sessions. These sessions are open to everyone and cathedral members will be on hand to address any questions you may have.
2. Add your feedback on the comments form in the cathedral or online.

The schedule of drop-in sessions and comments form are both available online: www.riponcathedral.org.uk/ripon-cathedral-renewed/

With this leaflet and the above activities, it's the cathedral's aim to engage further with as many people as possible, to raise awareness of the benefits of the building, to answer your questions, dispel any myths and identify areas for creative thinking.

After the two months, we will need further time to reflect on these discussions and feedback to ascertain whether amendments can be submitted to the existing planning application.

Planning permission will need to be followed by permission being granted for the land in question to be used by the cathedral for its new building. The details of the lease or transfer are still to be discussed with North Yorkshire Council.

All the funds will need to be raised. The campaign will begin as and when planning permission is granted.

The hope is that within just a few years, Ripon Cathedral will have those facilities which have been accepted as an essential need for decades.

The cathedral continues to be open every day, entry is free and the display will be there to view in your own time.

For further details:

www.riponcathedral.org.uk/ripon-cathedral-renewed

<https://uniformonline.harrogate.gov.uk/online-applications/>
Application reference: 22/04808/FULMAJ

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