

PROJECT



PROJECT TEAM

Client:
The Dean & Chapter of the
Cathedral Church of St Peter &
St Paul, Sheffield

Architects:
Thomas Ford & Partners

Project Manager:
Paul Cleworth Project
Management

Quantity Surveyor:
Brundell Woolley

Structural Engineer:
The Morton Partnership Ltd

M & E Consultants:
EngDesign Limited

Lighting Designer:
Light Perceptions Limited

Interpretation Designer:
Ronayne Design

CDM Coordinator:
Auburn Ainsley

Approved Building Inspector:
JHAI Ltd

Main Contractor:
William Anelay Ltd

External Glazing Subcontractor:
Arkoni

Internal Glazing Subcontractor:
GDS

Seating supplies:
Luke Hughes

SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RE-ORDERING

Thomas Ford & Partner's re-ordering of the interior and precinct at Sheffield Cathedral promotes greater flexibility of use as well as re-establishing the historic relationship with the city centre

Development of the Cathedral Building

There has been a church on the site of Sheffield Cathedral for over a 1000 years, and there is evidence of earlier Roman and Saxon activity. A parish church was built on the site around 1110 and re-built sometime after 1266. In the early 15th century, parts of the church were demolished and replaced with a new structure of cruciform shape by the 1st Earl of Shrewsbury. The Shrewsbury Chapel and Crypt were constructed c.1520 and the monuments in the Shrewsbury Chapel are amongst the greatest artistic treasures of the Cathedral. The Nave was partially re-built between 1797 and 1805 and a large scale restoration and re-building took place 1878-80, resulting in the extension of the Nave and Transepts, and the addition of Porches to the west, north and south.



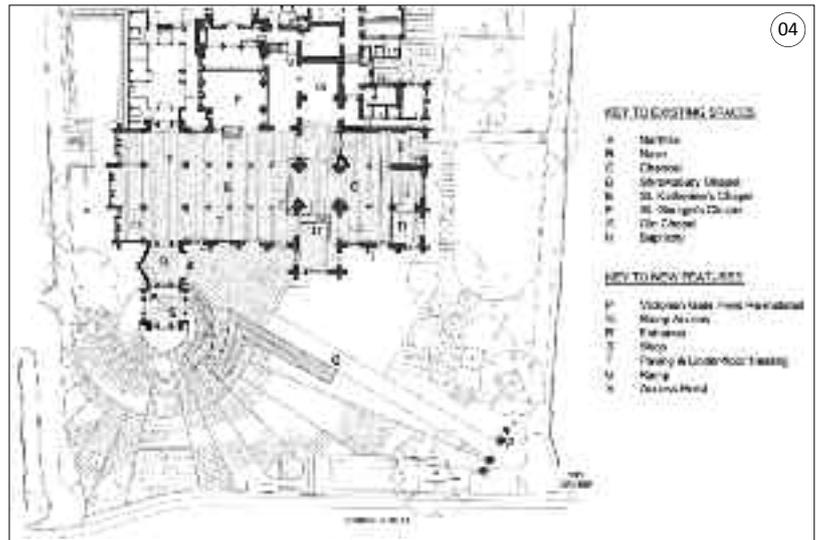
SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL



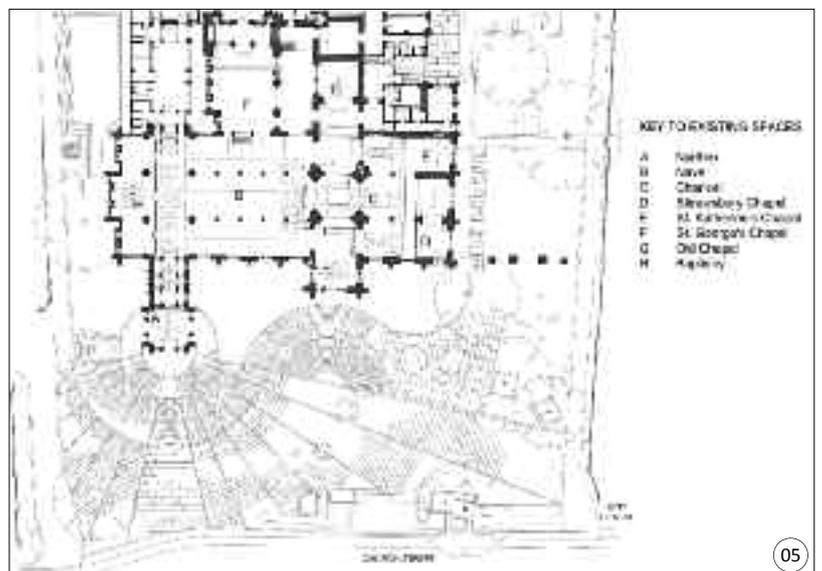
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The parish church became a cathedral in 1914, leading to a series of projects which fundamentally altered the simple cruciform plan. In 1937 an ambitious project, designed by Charles Nicholson, proposed the re-orientation of the cathedral. In this scheme the Nave would become the Transepts of a greatly enlarged building, with a new Nave to the south. The project was abandoned in 1949, with only work on the north side of the original Nave completed: the Vestry Wing and Chapter House; the Choir and Sanctuary (now known as St George's Chapel); the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, and a Chapel (originally known as St Georges' Chapel, from which an unused pipe organ was recently removed). The new Nave was abandoned, with only the foundations built, and work on Nicholson's projected second Tower and Spire, and the west end, was never started.

Nicholson's unfinished work was eventually resolved and completed between 1961 and



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All photos © Paul Barker.

- 01 The entrance from the south east.
- 02 & 03 The new entrance replaces the windowless 1960s.
- 04 Proposed plan.
- 05 Existing plan.

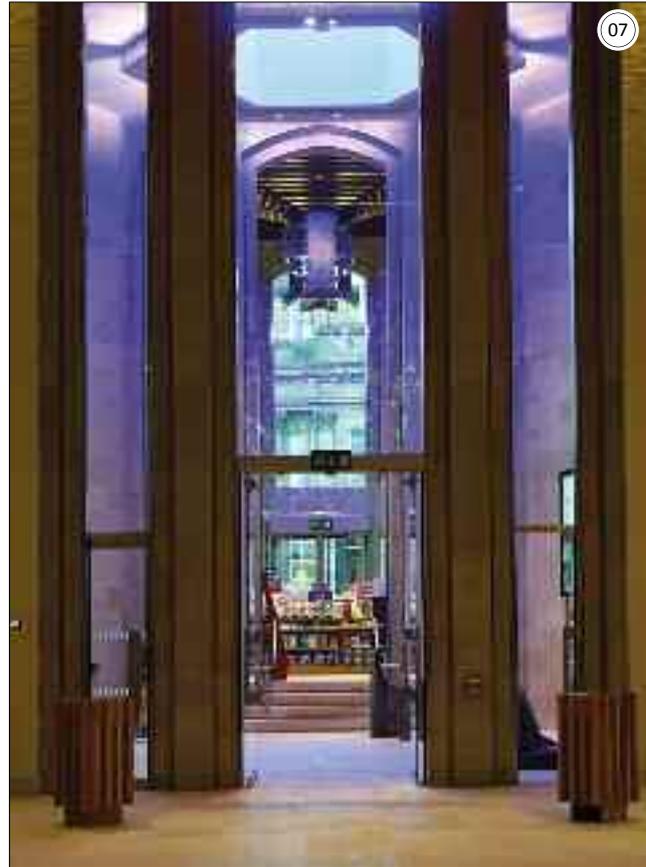
1966 (Ansell & Bailey), retaining the original east-west orientation. This work resulted in a westward extension of the Nave, with a new west crossing and lantern roof light and a bold projecting entrance at the south-west corner, which consisted of a substantial tower (known as the Narthex Tower) whose open base was connected to the main building by a windowless link. In 2007, the Cathedral

'We are in this for permanence, for eternity, so our furnishings, while being flexible, have to signal something of that as well... Luke Hughes' designs provide that noble look and effect of permanence.'

Bishop of London, June 2012.

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06 The new entrance, looking north east.

07 View from the nave, through the new entrance towards the cathedral shop.

08 The nave, pre-contract. The floor, fixed pews and lighting were all in poor condition.

09 The interior, including the nave as it looks after contract work.

10 The new entrance is light, airy and welcoming.

11 & 12 (see page 22).

11 A new platform lift was part of a wide strategy to improve accessibility.

12 A new ramp provides access between the south aisle and east end. The South Transept houses monuments and brasses relocated during the work.



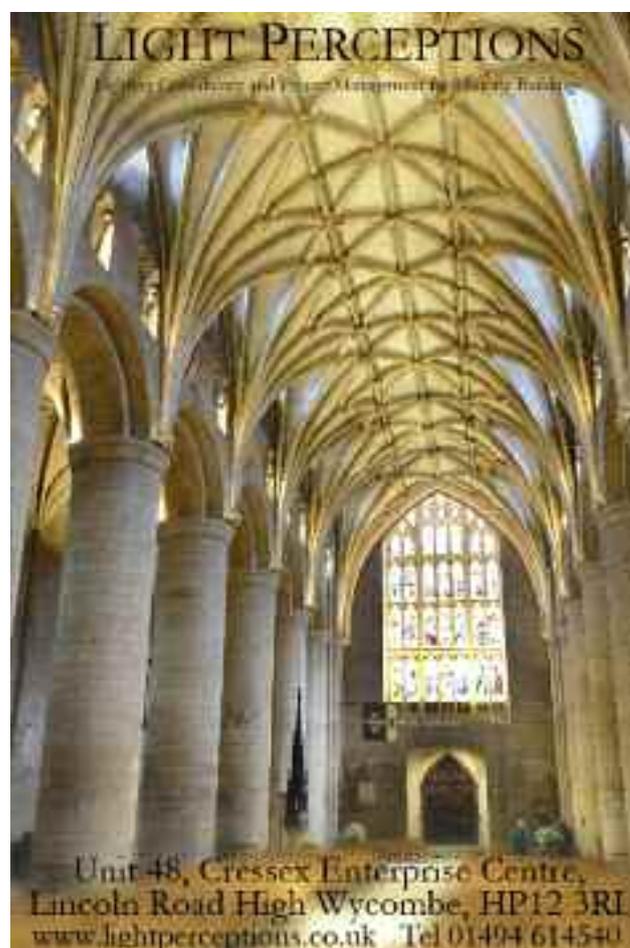


Resources Centre was constructed at the north-west corner of the building (Apec Architects).

The Gateway Project

The *Gateway Project* was conceived as a means of addressing a wide range of issues relating to the life and use of the cathedral. These included an unwelcoming main entrance, a lack of equal access at the main door and a dilapidated and inflexible Nave. The heating system was in urgent need of replacement as was the antiquated lighting system. The 1960s nave floor was in poor condition, and the fixed seating had reached the end of its useful life. However, at the heart of the project was a desire on the part of the cathedral authorities to create a fully-accessible and welcoming main entrance, neither of which were provided by the existing arrangement. Although architecturally imposing, Ansell & Bailey's design for the entrance was far from welcoming. Changes in the ground level across the site meant that all visitors were obliged to descend a flight of steps from the Narthex, entering the cathedral via a tall, windowless, space dominated by four bulky columns. This arrangement, combined with poor lighting, made the entrance an uncongenial place, particularly at night. A flight of six steps precluded wheelchair access, and those with impaired mobility were obliged to use a small door in the South Transept. A significant issue was the north-south orientation of the entrance, which related poorly to the city centre, to the south east of the site.

Initially internal ramps were considered, but discounted because they would have occupied almost the entire floor space, failing to create either a welcoming environment or a positive relationship between the entrance and the city



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centre – fundamental requirements of the brief. The solution was to create a step-free route from the city centre leading to a new entrance on the site of the 1960s Narthex link. This entrance is hexagonal in plan, a tall and well-lit space, with extensive glazing to the east, and a large roof light. The design reinstates the historic visual link and pedestrian route between the city centre and the cathedral entrance (the main entrance was formerly via a porch in the same approximate location). This is emphasised by the reinstatement of four Victorian gateposts at the south east corner of the forecourt, from where they had been removed in the 1960s. The open base of the existing Narthex has been enclosed with glazing, creating an appropriate space for a cathedral shop, which is closely associated with the entrance both architecturally and functionally.

Demolition of the Narthex link building was undertaken carefully to enable the Yorkstone to be recovered. The original link was of solid construction, allowing a reduction in the thickness of the blocks and their re-use to form the outer leaf of the new west wall of the entrance. The inner face of the west wall and the new columns framing the entrance screen to the east were all constructed in matching new stone. The palette of materials was intentionally simple, using only stone, stainless steel and glass, with oak for the new joinery. The tall glass screens above the entrance doors are fitted externally with stainless steel fins. The line of the fins is extended downwards by the full-height stainless steel door handles, emphasising the entrance.

Around half of the cathedral forecourt was re-modelled to accommodate the lowered ground level around the new entrance doors. Lighting to either side of the entrance path emphasises the link between the gateposts and the main entrance at night. Falls across the site to both north and east required the introduction of a series of tapered steps which continue the theme of the 1960s landscape.

Internally, the project included the replacement of the Nave floor in Ancaster stone over a new, insulated slab, and the introduction of new underfloor heating powered by energy-efficient boilers. Sophisticated lighting and sound systems, along with new wiring, were integrated into the design. Replacement of fixed pews with oak bench seating has facilitated flexible use of the Nave. Other new joinery included oak cupboards which provide storage but also conceal convectors and heating manifolds. At the east end, the convector casing incorporates substantial parts of the old carved pew fronts. Access for those with impaired mobility has been greatly improved by the introduction of a new ramp at the east end, and platform and stair lifts which provide access to almost the whole of the northern part of the building. An interpretation area has been created in the northwest corner of the nave.

The cathedral reopened in 2014, in time for the Easter Sunday service. The £2.8 million *Gateway Project* was composed of two subsidiary projects, almost equal in size: *The Place for All People Project* and the *Centenary Project*. The former received generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the latter from the Sheffield Church Burgesses Trust. ■



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