

BLACKBURN
CATHEDRAL



Gathering around the Table

A Liturgical Plan

October 2023

Introduction

At the heart of this Liturgical plan is the vision of the people of God gathered around the Table.

Theologically this means that all aspects of our liturgical and corporate life have to be rooted in a vision of the body of Christ, gathered around the Table.

This theological vision is reflected in the defining liturgical feature of the current building – the placement of the main Table¹ under the Lantern Tower. Square in shape, which means that it does not have a front or back, the Table can be seen not only from the Nave but the North and South Transepts as well as the choir stalls.

Covid-19 had a huge impact on all societies and the churches within them. In England it resulted in the closure of Church buildings and the suspension of in-person worship. In Blackburn Cathedral, the pandemic provided an opportunity to explore the theology of the people of God in the liturgical context of the building's most striking architectural feature. The changes made represented a significant and courageous leap of faith by the Cathedral Chapter.

In September 2020, the Director of Music suggested that the organ console be temporarily moved to a space under the Lantern Tower. The result was, and is, outstanding because perhaps for the very first time since it was re-located to the Nave floor, the person playing can hear what the instrument is doing without the previous auditory delay.

A second significant change in late 2020 was the removal of choir stalls (apart from the back row) in order to make socially distanced singing possible for the six carol services running up to Christmas. At the beginning of Lent 2021 the stalls which had been removed were placed behind the main Table to see what that did for the singing. Again, the results were outstanding, combining the proximity of singers, console, received sound from the organ pipes, and conductor.

This is a musical success story.

The third change flowed from the spatial implications of moving The Cathedral Choir. The back row of the choir stalls were removed creating space for the canons' stalls to be on the west side of the Table. This has re-established a wonderful East to West sight line whereby it is now possible to look from the Temple Gallery to the North Transept in an uninterrupted view – a vista which had long existed but was blocked by the choir stalls during the late 1970s reordering.

The space under the Lantern has now become a very real focus for our worship and the square table now has a significant number of people on its east side – the Choir.

The following three sections of the Liturgical plan retells the story of our heritage, describes the life of the Cathedral as it approaches its centenary and looks confidently forwards, exploring the needs, opportunities, and aspirations of future decades.

¹ There is a long Anglican habit of naming the communion table an altar. No where in the *Book of Common Prayer* or in *Common Worship* is the term used. The discipline of using the term Table is a constant reminder that all of those gathered around are the people of God. As a Cathedral ministering to a whole diocese the term avoids a theology that some would deem unacceptable and encourages unity in Christ.

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Related sources

This plan should be read in conjunction with:

- the 1971 guidebook
- the 2010 guidebook
- 2018 Conservation Management Plan
- the 2023 Quinquennial Inspection (QI).

In addition to the plans in the appendix on page 38 Google maps provides an excellent view of the Cathedral especially the 3D version here: [Google Maps](https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@53.7461995,-2.4836338,214a,35y,62.54h,36.49t/data=!3m1!1e3?entry=ttu) use Ctrl + mouse drag for full 3D.

[\[https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@53.7461995,-2.4836338,214a,35y,62.54h,36.49t/data=!3m1!1e3?entry=ttu\]](https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@53.7461995,-2.4836338,214a,35y,62.54h,36.49t/data=!3m1!1e3?entry=ttu)

Section one: our heritage

History Timeline

- 1042–66 Church in Blackburn dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin.
- 1086 Domesday Book entry for the parish Church of Blackburn.
- 1066–1087 Patronage claimed by William the Conqueror.
- 12th cent Patronage passed to the de Lacey family who sponsored the Cistercian Abbey at Whalley, when the church in Blackburn became subservient to the monastery – Norman church on the Saxon site 14th century – two chantries on the site (Walmsley and Osbaldeston families).
- 1509 Thomas, Second Earl of Derby, establishes a chantry school adjacent to the Parish Church.
- 15th cent Pax – a small gilt tablet engraved with Madonna and Child kissed by the priest and congregation – buried and later re-found (1820).
- 1547 Chantries abolished.
- 1567 School granted Royal Charter from Elizabeth I and becomes Free Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth in Blackburn in the County of Lancashire.
- 1648 English Civil War, Battle of Preston.
- 1819 A special act of parliament 14 June gives power to replace the Norman Church. John Palmer designs one of the first churches in the Gothic Revival style; a Georgian church, now the nave.
- 1831 The large fire at Blackburn Parish Church.
- 1875 Organ by Aristide Cavallé-Coll set on a gallery on the West wall.
- 1884 Blackburn Grammar School as it was then known, moves to new site in the town.
- 1926 Bishop of Manchester, William Temple, established the Diocese of Blackburn and designated Blackburn as the location of the Cathedral.
- 1933 W. A. Forsyth appointed architect.
- 1933 Money raised to build extensions to the existing church for a large Cathedral in modern gothic with a huge central tower, large transepts and a long chancel, with the old parish church as the nave.
- 1938 Foundation stone laid on 7 October by the Princess Royal.
- 1938–50 Work stopped during WWII. Rising costs led to simplification of design.
- 1950–61 Sufficient funds raised and the North Transept, the central crossing and the present uncompleted east end erected.
- 1950 South Transept, the intended main entrance, built.
- 1950s North Transept, central crossing completed and incomplete east end.
- 1953 West end organ moved temporarily to subsequently unsafe organ bridge at east end of the Cathedral. Bishop announces to Diocesan conference that the Forsyth plans need to be modified.
- 1961 Lawrence King appointed as architect.

- 1961–64 The Lantern Tower design replaced the central tower, and the sanctuary was placed directly below it (the previously planned central crossing). Dark Victorian windows removed; Derbyshire limestone floor installed.
- John Hayward designed the Corona – a crown of suffering and of glory; also the angel Pendentives and Worker Christ on the west wall.
- The Advent Hunston rood put in place.
- John Hayward furniture for clergy and Bishop.
- 1964 Organ removed.
- 1965 Nave re-hallowed in presence of HRH Princess Margaret.
- 1969 Central Table consecrated on 20 December.
- The Walker & Sons organ dedicated, and first recital given. The three-manual console positioned in what is now the Jesus chapel against the memorial chapel screen.
- 1971 Guidebook photos show layout of the Cathedral²
- 1975 Palm Sunday new choir stall completed and used in new sanctuary area.
- 1976 Screen completed which houses new cathedra and seats for suffragans and archdeacons.
- 1977 Final consecration on Friday 18 November in the presence of HRH Princess Alexandra of Kent.
- 1998–9 Lantern Tower rebuilt with Linda Walton glass.
- 2002 Organ refurbished and new four-manual console added.
- 2005 Penny Warden's 15 life-sized paintings *The Journey* installed.
- 2016 Cathedral Court, a large redevelopment of the site is completed and dedicated.

The Cathedral Precincts

The two principal focal points of the early town, the crossing of the Blakewater at Salford Bridge at the eastern end of Church Street and the marketplace at the corner with Darwen Street at the western end, form two corners of the area that now define the Cathedral Precinct. Both these streets follow early medieval alignments though much altered in their widths and frontages.

This early settlement was bounded on its east and south by the Blakewater. The medieval church lay to the south of Church Street and there was no significant building across the river. Until 1820 the Blakewater ran with a loop on the site of the present east end of the Cathedral. This loop was removed just before the new parish church was built. The map of 1822 shows the topography after this loop had been straightened to extend the site for the new parish church and its burial ground. This work established the line of The Boulevard which later became an important thoroughfare after the culverting of the river. In the 1820s there was no crossing of the river between Salford Bridge to the east and the Darwen Street Bridge to the south.

In the early 19th century development began to the east of Salford Bridge, largely because of the impact of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at Eanam. The low-lying ground immediately east of the parish church and river took its present shape after the construction of the railway and Blackburn

² See Appendix page 32.

Station, opened in 1844, when Railway Road became the important approach to the town and the triangle of land between the river and the station became Railway Square. The character of this area was again affected when the Blakewater, which runs under the northern end of Railway Road, was culverted.

The topography to the south of the Cathedral is more the result of private development in historic times. Dandy Walk seems to be an historic property boundary, with church land (partly the site of the former vicarage) to the north and the site of the former Jubilee Mill to the south. It was at this mill that the new patent Dandy loom was introduced.

The Old Church

The site of the early church lay to the northwest of the present Cathedral. It is shown in early maps and both the old and new churches are marked on the 1822 map. The site is now part of the open space in the Cathedral precinct. The appearance of the church is known from an illustration in Abram's History of Blackburn, 1877, which was based on sketches taken when the church still existed. The plan is known from a survey of the pews in the old church and broadly confirms the form of the former church. Some items from the old church were recovered and remain in the Cathedral.

The old church was closed in 1819 when an Act of Parliament provided for a new building. The Act states that a new church was needed because the old church was 'very ancient and now ruinous' and because it was not sufficiently large for a growing town. The Act also provided for the enlargement of the burial ground. Pending a new church, services were held in St John's. Joseph and John Feilden, lay impropiators of the rectory, were responsible for the chancel of the church, an obligation they met being generous benefactors of the new church.

The only part of the old church not to be demolished in the early 1820s was the west tower. The 1819 Act had clearly anticipated that this might remain, but not perhaps that it would remain as a detached structure with a new church on a different site. It was kept until 1870, serving as a vestry room for which in 1834 a hearth and chimney had been provided (see maps page 38).

The New Church

The Nave of the present Cathedral is the Nave of the St Mary's church; the architect was John Palmer of Manchester. In November 1819 he had been instructed to prepare plans for rebuilding the old church but by April 1820 the proposal was for a new church in a different part of the extended churchyard.

That the church took six years to build is an indication of both its ambitious design and the contractual problems experienced.

The Commissioners records give some detail about the finishing of the church. Oak benches from the old church were to be 'reduced to proper size' and put in the middle aisle and a copper frame was to be made to hold coloured glass from the old church. The painters were to colour the nave and gallery ceilings, 'jointing and shading the same', and paint the bosses. The colour (of the ceilings) was to be 'a little fainter' than the spandrels. In August 1824 an organ from John Gray of London was ordered at a cost of 810 guineas.

The new church was consecrated on 13 September 1826, but it was not quite finished. In the autumn of 1826 the Commissioners allocated pews in the new church on award made by Mr Roper (Robert Roper, architect) of Preston and drew up rules that all pew linings should be in crimson and that none should be raised, screened, or joined together. As late as December 1826 the Commissioners decided that the new font should be smaller, to allow more free space around it and room for a small desk and kneeling form for the minister, and that it should be in Burnley stone, not marble.

The new church was damaged by fire which broke out during a service on 6 January 1831. A flue concealed in the stonework overheated and ignited a roof timber; the fire spread rapidly. Damage was detailed by the vicar in his letter to the Incorporated Church Building Society asking for a grant towards repair. "The Nave roof and ceiling completely demolished. The pews of the Nave considerably damaged. The organ reduced to a mere wreck of the detached materials; all the more delicate parts of the mechanism being destroyed. But the most serious and expensive part of the damage is in the tower, which, having a large door opening into the roof of the nave, acted like a chimney to the burning mass and increased the violence of the flames. All the woodwork of the tower was consumed and the masonry so much shaken and decayed that it will be necessary to take one half of that part of the building down."



The Nave after the fire

Perhaps because of their earlier problems with Palmer and perhaps because the parish decided that the fire was the result of a design fault the original architect was not consulted about repair. Estimates were provided by Thomas Stones, a local builder and timber merchant. He took the leading role in the rebuilding, acting as clerk of works and providing drawings.

In 1872 the parish agreed to remove the seats in the body of the church and in 1875 there were major works to the church interior. Abram's History of Blackburn says that it was 'wholly renovated and rebenched'. How extensive the removal of pews was at this date is unclear, for after the works only half of the 1450 sittings were free. These works seem to have been supervised by Frederick J. Robinson of Derby who was also responsible for the schools and to whom payments were still being made in the late 1870s.

The Making of a Cathedral

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Blackburn was part of the Diocese of Manchester, which had been formed from part of the Diocese of Chester in 1847. The Manchester diocese was divided into two, later three, archdeaconries: Manchester itself, Lancaster and Blackburn. Manchester was a very populous diocese with a large industrial population, which was expanding steadily during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1847 the diocese had 284 churches, by 1925 that number had risen to 620.

The twentieth century saw the creation of 14 new dioceses. Of the seven created after the First World War, Blackburn was the second in 1926³. The driving force behind the formation of the new

³ The others were Bradford (1919), Derby (1927), Leicester (1927), Guildford (1927), Guildford (1927), Portsmouth (1927) and Peel 1980. The other parish Cathedrals were Liverpool (1904), Birmingham (1905), Southwark (1905), Bury St Edmunds (1914), Chelmsford (1914), Sheffield (1914) and Coventry (1918).

diocese of Blackburn was William Temple, at that time Bishop of Manchester, three years later Archbishop of York and translated to Canterbury in 1942.

In the first few years after the formation of the new diocese, services were continued in the parish church, which was of substantial size. There were in any case no immediately available funds for any new building works. In the early 1930s a programme of fundraising was begun and moves made towards enlarging the existing church. It does not appear that there was any kind of architectural competition. Instead, the architect William Forsyth, who was already architect to Salisbury, Rochester and Southwark cathedrals and had an established reputation as a restorer of old churches was asked to prepare a design. His first drawings are dated June 1934 and he was formally appointed in that month, although his contract of employment is dated 6 November 1935.

The style adopted by Forsyth was, as reported by the Building Committee, a Modern Gothic. A fairly plain exterior was faced with local Longridge stone in a vaguely 14th century style, incorporating Gothic mouldings, external buttresses and tracery windows. Both the tower and the principal apse were remarkably austere, relying on their volumes for architectural effect.



Historic drawing of the original proposal

As with so many early twentieth century English Gothic churches, the interior was more successful than the exterior and Forsyth's handling of space and of the decorative elements of Gothic was assured. In particular, the transition between Palmer's Nave and the crossing seems wholly natural. If it had been completed to his design, Blackburn would have been a worthy and functional building with sufficient length in the main axis and sufficient height in the octagonal tower to provide both architectural drama and authority.

In October 1938 the foundation stone was laid by the Princess Royal and in June 1939 it was announced that the full funding necessary had been raised. Two months later war began and in October 1939 the part-finished crypt was in use as air raid shelter. By the middle of 1940 the stub chancel had been demolished and the east end of the Nave was boarded over. The shell of the crypt was complete, but the arches of the crossing had only reached a height of about twenty feet. In October 1941 building work stopped completely.

After the war, work recommenced in the late 1940s initially under Forsyth's supervision until his death in 1951. A start was made on the building of the choir and other eastern parts of the building, but work had to be stopped for lack of money. A writer in the Church Times for March 1953 put it succinctly, 'The state of the building fund is such as to cause very serious anxiety. There is not enough money to finish off adequately what has been built'. During the later 1950s the chancel was finished in a truncated form and further work effectively suspended until fresh funds could be raised.

The appointment of Laurence King as Cathedral architect in March 1962 marked the beginning of a new and vital phase in the construction of the new Cathedral, albeit within a restricted framework. In the same month, the Provost told the Chapter that it must be accepted that for the time being the present size of the Cathedral would not be increased.

Work was to proceed in a parallel with fundraising and the first stage was the building of the new lantern and spire which was completed by the end of 1967. The lantern was built largely of concrete

and reconstituted stone and contained panels of stained glass by John Hayward.

Fortunately, the appointment of the Rev Jackson as Provost in 1973 led to an improvement in relations with the architect, and the later 1970s saw the completion of the works. The difficulties over the lantern probably influenced discussions in 1973 about the treatment of the east end of the Cathedral. In January 1974 Laurence King made a report on the completion of the Cathedral church in which he accepted that no further structural additions would be made to the Cathedral beyond the truncated version of Forsyth's design which was already in place.

By 1977 the fabric was substantially completed; the interior was redecorated by Messrs Campbell-Smith and the formal consecration of the Cathedral took place in November 1977. The Lantern Tower was rebuilt in 1988 and 1989 as the original glass was no longer safe. The central boss with the dove was retained and Linda Walton's glass was inserted.

Cathedral Court and other works in the 21st century

James W G Sanderson architect was appointed as Cathedral architect in 2001. His work at the Cathedral has included the following:

- The installation of a smoke detection system and fire alarm system 2005.
- Choir School internal fit out and remodelling 2012.
- Re-decorating and gilding of the Nave ceiling 2014.
- The WWI memorial installed in 1920 by the Bromsgrove Guild of Applied Arts, subsequently damaged and restored in 1965, was rededicated on 3 August 2013.
- The design and delivery of Cathedral Court 2016 (see page 53).
- High level external masonry and roof repair works to the North and South Transepts, clerestories and aisles 2016.
- High level external masonry and roof works to the west tower 2017.

In 2022 Louise Priestman was appointed as the new Cathedral architect and a new Quinquennial Inspection (QI) was completed in early 2023. Since the completion of the QI work has already begun to prepare the Cathedral for the next phase of its life. This has included:

- An updated EICR electrical certificate and report completed in 2023 with the resulting C2s (potentially dangerous) and C3s (improvement recommended) resolved within several months.
- A series of studies are being undertaken to review accessibility improvements.
- Localised repairs are being completed.
- Various rooms in the undercoft and crypt have been tidied, cleared and redecorated. Several still need attention.
- A report has been commissioned and completed on the condition of the pinnacles to the tower crossing.

In 2023 a final agreement was made concerning defects in the 2016 Cathedral Court project. This key element of the Cathedral will require a full architectural survey in 2024 and a similar survey conducted on the old Church House building once its future use has been determined.

Architectural policy and building significance

The architectural policies in place are the 2018 Conservation Management Plan which should be read in-conjunction with the Liturgical Plan.

As part of the Conservation Plan significance is given to aspects of the Cathedral based on Historic England's Conservation Principles which uses a scale ranging from High to Intrusive:

- High: A theme, feature, building or space which is important at national or international level, with high cultural value and important contribution towards the character and appearance of the heritage asset and its setting.
- Medium: Themes, features, buildings or spaces which are important at regional level or sometimes higher, with some cultural importance and some contribution towards the character and appearance of the heritage asset and its setting.
- Low: Themes, features, buildings or spaces which are usually of local value only but possibly of regional significance for a group or their values. Minor cultural importance and contribution to the character or appearance of the heritage asset and its setting.
- Neutral: These themes, spaces, buildings or features have little or no cultural value but do not detract from the character or appearance of the heritage asset and its setting.
- Intrusive: Themes, features, buildings or spaces which detract from the values of the heritage asset, its setting, character and appearance. Efforts should be made to remove or enhance these features.

The key points of significance relevant to determining implications of change are:

Evidential Value

High significance	northwest corner of precinct
Medium significance	footprint of existing Cathedral
Medium significance	archaeology
Low significance	building

Historic Value

High significance	the site
Medium significance	the crypt

Aesthetic Value

High significance	Architecture and the designers
High significance	Arrangement of interior
High significance	The quality of artwork in the building – see page 25.
Low – Neutral significance	Interior finishes

Communal Value

High significance	Worship and mission
High significance	The Lantern Tower contribution to the skyline
High significance	Columbarium

Section two: the present

Chapter Strategy

Purpose

Blackburn Cathedral is open to all.

In telling the story of Jesus Christ, we seek to help people encounter God through worship and service to the community.

We will focus on:

Being Witnesses of Jesus Christ

- Mission and Engagement
- Welcome and Hospitality
- Buildings and Heritage

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ

- Worship and Prayer
- Finance and Stewardship

Growing Leaders for Jesus Christ

- Our Bishop and Diocese
- Growth in Faith

The Liturgy of the Word

This document has deliberately adopted a title, *Gathering around the Table*, rather than Liturgical Plan, in order to encourage the heart and mind of the reader to envision what is at the heart of these proposals, the people of God gathering. of the two main acts of worship which take place daily in the Cathedral, Choral Evensong is essentially an Office of Readings, and in the world-wide Anglican tradition the Eucharist is a rite with two main elements: *The Liturgy of the Word* and the *Liturgy of the Sacrament*. The emphasis on Gathering around the Table, does not seek to lessen the importance of the Word in the worship of the Cathedral, and as can be seen in the discussion below (see page 37) the location and prominence of the Pulpit could be an ongoing issue to creatively explore for some time.

In the Cathedral Eucharistic celebration, The Liturgy of the Word is not limited to the sermon, and also includes an Old Testament Reading, Psalm, New Testament Reading, Gospel and Prayers of Intercession. In some places of worship it is now deemed desirable for all six of these elements to be seen as emanating from the same physical space – the focus for The Word.

Theological and Liturgical context

The grand Forsyth project of the 1930s suffered two major cutbacks.

The first came in 1953 when Bishop announces to a Diocesan conference that the Forsyth plans need to be modified⁴. However, even when Laurence King modifies the design of the tower, making it much more modern in look and feel, the intended building is still grand as can be seen from the model which went on display during the second half of the 1960s in supermarkets and cinemas to raise funds.



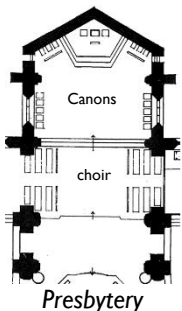
The Laurence King 1964 model

But by the early 1970s this design is also perceived to be too costly.

In his confidential report to Chapter of 15 January 1974 Laurence King states:

For reason of economy it must be assumed that the finishing of the Cathedral as a structure must be contained within the walls of the existing and no extensions beyond these walls as envisaged in the 1963 scheme, can be entertained for the present.

This meant that the new architect was always going to be overseeing the development of an inherited space, one which had been intended for a much bigger project.



What was to have been Forsyth's crossing (see picture on page 41) was to become under Laurence King the sanctuary space and the area to the west of this new sanctuary, originally envisaged as the front rows of the Nave, in effect became a chancel. It was here that King at first placed the Dean, Bishop and canons' stalls (see page 44). In this plan the presbytery is retained consisting of choir, college of canons and cathedra (see page 42 and page 2 of 1971 Guidebook).

The first decade of Laurence King's tenure sees a great deal of change, brought about in part by his own conceptual explorations of the space, and in part by the effect the ongoing building projects have on the liturgical space, as they require different parts of the building to be unavailable for liturgical use and the existing organ moved several times. The existing choir stalls for example are employed in a variety of settings: North of the sanctuary in what is now the Jesus Chapel; in the South Transept; in the Nave and eventually where the new stalls were placed in 1975, replacing the canons stalls. This arrangement is captured in the 1971 guidebook (see photos on page 43).

All of this is taking place against a backdrop of a post war energetic ecumenical liturgical movement which eventually shapes the liturgical landscape of England. Coventry Cathedral (consecrated 1962), though modern in materials, artwork and 60s architectural feel, was none the less still looking backwards, reflecting a BCP theology of Eastward facing, priest led, linear, imperial⁵ and hierarchical

⁴ Williams, G. A (1993) *Viewed from the Water Tank: History of the Diocese of Blackburn*.

⁵ Although the use of the term imperial in this context is common in academic circles, to some readers this may seem odd. It refers to the practice of using tools to build empire, in this case the BCP. In the 1951 earlier prayer book as published in Dublin for example, there was a prayer to bring peace to the 'devilishe sediciousns' of the Irish. Source: Cummings, Brian (2018) *Empire and prayer book from The Book of Common Prayer: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, online edn, Oxford Academic <https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780198803928.003.0006>, accessed 4 Sept. 2023.

theology – when the Lord comes again from above, he will do so from the East. Liverpool Roman Catholic cathedral, on the other hand, was forward looking, embracing the liturgical wind of change, and reflecting an incarnational, corporate church, where the people of God (not the priest) celebrate and reflecting a democratic society where, for example, children would eventually cease to be taught in rows, but in sets around a table.

The denominations of the second half of the twentieth century are powerfully unanimous in their theological approach to liturgical worship:

Perhaps the most significant principle to emerge is that the celebration of the liturgy is the shared activity of the assembled people. *Weil (2002, 7)*⁶

Holy Communion is celebrated by the whole people of God gathered for worship. *Common Worship (2000, 158)*

Laurence King's redesign of crossing to be sanctuary and square table looks forward (gathered around the Table) and yet because he originally envisaged that the Cathedra, Presbytery, and Choir would be behind the Table, he looks backwards to the theology described above. This may be because he considered the era of liturgical change had already run its course.

In the 1974 report to Chapter, while acknowledging that

... liturgy is constantly changing over the years with the result that Churches have periodically to be adapted to suit the needs of the worshipping community ...”

he concludes that

... there has been no further change in the way of Anglican worship, nor is there any anticipated in the foreseeable future ... the building has perhaps a greater use as a centre for the regular weekly and daily worship of the people of Blackburn ...

The energy of Laurence King's creative partnership with John Hayward in producing *Corona*, *Christ the Worker* and contemporary furniture made the Cathedral feel very modern. However, this dampened liturgically based architectural development for the next fifty years.⁷ This architecturally modern sanctuary combined with a more conservative liturgical approach is very similar to that of Coventry cathedral.

The current arrangement of the sanctuary area seeks to take the obvious step (given the liturgical and theological environment of the 1970s) that the people should be as near to the Table as possible and not separated by a choir. The cover photo of this document shows an aerial view of the area with the sanctuary laid out for Choral Evensong and the photograph on this page shows the position of the president's chair for the Cathedral Eucharist. The proposal to formalise this arrangement is outlined on page 28.



Sanctuary set for Cathedral Eucharist

⁶ Weil, L. (2002). *A Theology of Worship*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley Publications.

⁷ Set against a national backdrop of *Series Three* in 1973, the *Alternative Service Book (ASB)* in 1980, and *Common Worship* in 2000.

Rooms

Liturgists and architects often refer to a building as having a number of 'rooms'. Ideally rooms are physically and acoustically separate from each other such that different activities can take place at the same time without mutual disruption. On the whole large Cathedrals may have a number of rooms and small buildings may only have one.

In a foundational, historic English cathedral there are usually two basic rooms: the Quire and the Nave. Traditionally Choral Evensong and the Cathedral Eucharist were both celebrated in the Quire, in front of the High Altar but in recent decades it is far more common for Choral Evensong still to be sung in the Quire (often behind a screen) but with the Cathedral Eucharist celebrated in the Nave with table and choir stall west of the screen.

Blackburn is one of the few Cathedrals where for nearly a century both have been celebrated in the same room with the choir inhabiting the same stalls.⁸ For this reason there have been a number of different layouts explored.

Although the Cathedral does have transepts and a Jesus Chapel, in practice only one activity can take place at any one time.

The Laurence King arrangement employed until 2020, (see above and page 46) with the Canons behind the Table, made them appear very distant from the congregation at Evensong, while the only effective place from which to preside at the Eucharist, immediately in front of the Table, distanced the president from the people.

Archaeology

It would be understandable to treat the Cathedral as a purely modern building. It took major changes to convert the late Georgian parish church into an early(ish) 20th-century cathedral, and that process continued after WWII. Even such apparently ephemeral things as use of the crypt as a Covid vaccination centre became part of the building's memory and witness to Blackburn's life and, its specific role as a beacon of Christian mission in a multi-faith location. As a relatively recent building and cathedral, it might be tempted to gloss over or ignore its much longer heritage.

The Cathedral is an exceptional modern liturgical space. A respect for its heritage seeks where possible to work with / around the existing fabric. If this isn't possible, and new physical arrangements are agreed to be desirable, appropriate and acceptable, the story of its development can be maintained by documenting the 'status ante'. More often than not photography will be adequate for this, but as will be seen below (see page 21) the regular use of live streaming in the Cathedral will provide an invaluable liturgical and social history of the use of the building.

⁸ Others include Birmingham, Coventry, Leicester and Peel.

Current Liturgical life

Pattern of services

The standard regular pattern of services in the Cathedral is:

Sunday	9.00am	Parish Eucharist
	10.30am	Cathedral Eucharist
	4.00pm	Choral Evensong
Monday	8.30am	Morning prayer
	5.00pm	Evening prayer
Tuesday	8.30am	Morning prayer and Eucharist
	5.00pm	Choral Evensong
Wednesday	8.30am	Morning prayer
	11.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	5.00pm	Choral Evensong
Thursday	8.30am	Morning prayer and Eucharist
	5.00pm	Choral Evensong
Friday	8.30am	Morning prayer
	12.30pm	Eucharist
	5.00pm	Evening prayer
Saturday	9.00am	Morning prayer and Eucharist
	4.00pm	Evening prayer

All services are *Common Worship* (Order One contemporary language⁹ for Eucharists) apart from the Holy Communion service on Wednesday which is *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) and Choral Evensong which is BCP commencing at the opening preces. All services follow the *Common Worship Calendar and Lectionary* including the provision for psalmody, with the full provision of lections used in the Cathedral Eucharist.

Choral Evensong is sung by The Cathedral Choir on Sundays and midweek during schools' term time, and occasionally a visiting choir will sing Choral Evensong on a Saturday.

The Cathedral Eucharist which includes a choral mass setting, Coverdale psalm of the day sung to Anglican Chant and a motet during communion, is sung by The Cathedral Choir.

The Parish Eucharist is led by the Cathedral Youth Choir which includes a congregational setting of the eucharist and a motet from the choir during communion. The service uses limited lections and is designed to be celebrated in under fifty minutes.

⁹ On 18 February 2018 the Cathedral Eucharist changed. Until that time as different rites were authorized (1980 *Alternative Service Book* and 2000 *Common Worship*) the service had always adopted a traditional language option. e.g. in the twentieth century *Common Worship Order One in Traditional Language*.

Seasons

Calendar

The Cathedral makes full use of the Common Worship Calendar and a recent innovation has been to celebrate feasts which fall on a weekday, on the actual day (and usually at 7.30pm not the normal Choral Evensong time of 5.00pm) rather than transferring them to the nearest Sunday. These include *Epiphany*, *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple*



Palm Sunday Procession

[Candlemas], *Ash Wednesday*, *Maundy Thursday*, *The Easter Vigil*, *Ascension Day*. The festival of *St Michael and All Angels* is kept in the same way because of the temporal distance in the calendar to the next event. The exception is *All Saints Day* which is kept on a Sunday so that *The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed* can also be celebrated in an evening. All these congregations have grown and these service are occasions when other parishes and communities may be invited because the cathedral is not competing with their own celebrations. These celebrations are also much more accessible for those in full time employment.



Christmas Day

Space

Every opportunity is taken to use the inherited space available for liturgical celebrations. The Crypt and Undercroft are employed for assembling of processions (see page 26 about future crypt development) and an area on the south east of the cathedral (outside the Cathedral café *Checks & Greys*) is used as the gathering rite on Palm Sunday before the ministers, congregation and choir process around the East of the grounds, entering the cathedral by the West door.

The area outside the West door is used both before and after worship to greet people and also for the lighting of the new fire at the *Easter Vigil* before the assembly enters the Nave lit only at first by the light of the Paschal candle. In this same liturgy and at any baptism or confirmation full use is made of the South Transept which on these occasions becomes a baptistery capable of holding over 200 people standing to witness rites of initiation. The Cathedral Choir claim the best vantage point by assembling on the steps on the south side of the sanctuary.



The Nave ready for the Easter Vigil



Cathedral Eucharist Baptism

The Cathedral Choir claim the best vantage point by assembling on the steps on the south side of the sanctuary.

The Cathedral Nave lends itself to any liturgy which may be celebrated with the assembly seated in a collegiate style and the large space at the west end of the sanctuary between the canons' stalls ensures that all Christmas, Epiphany and Candlemas services are celebrated with crib figures as a central focus, around which processions navigate.

Music

The Cathedral's music exists to help us pray, bring joy, communicate, transform lives, and educate. The Cathedral's music draws people from all faiths and none to its excellence and is a frontline tool for evangelism.

The Cathedral's music acts as a resource to our parishes as a model for effective and all-embracing music ministry in a small Cathedral, on a low budget.

Who sings our Cathedral Music?

The Cathedral choirs include a place for anyone who wants to sing. There is an all-volunteer adult choir; a choir for young people aged fourteen to twenty-two; and The Cathedral Choir of boys (up to voice change), girls (up to sixteen) paid adults, Junior Choral Scholars and professional-standard volunteers.

Recognising the strengths of each of these groups and our role as educators, we use them according to both our needs as a Cathedral and what will help each group flourish.



The Cathedral Choir

Boys and Girls

Our boys and girls have different and evolving educational and spiritual needs, and their experiences differ because of age and societal gender-expectations. In December 2022 the decision was taken to permanently mix the boys and girls, in the face of both post-pandemic recruitment challenges, and the quality that was achieved by a mixed treble line in the two live BBC TV Christmas broadcasts. Since then, the boys and girls have shown themselves to be extremely complementary and collegial. Both boys and girls have been able to sing more challenging and rewarding music together than they would have apart.

Adult volunteers

St. Paul's Voices is a volunteer choir, aspiring to high standards, comprising adult men and women. They sing six times each year. Entry is by conversation with the Director of Music, and a trial period of one Sunday. The level of sight-singing is high, many members having previously served in The Cathedral Choir. The choir sings twice on Sundays.

For adults able to offer professional-level singing in terms of vocal health, musical cognition and sight-singing, volunteer places are available in The Cathedral Choir ATB.

Cathedral Youth Choir

This choir is open to any singers aged fourteen to twenty-two, with any level of experience. Entry is by conversation with the choir's director, and a trial period of two weeks. The choir helps give children who missed



The Cathedral Youth Choir

the chorister programme the chance to sing later on, whilst the ex-choristers bring their experience to bear in keeping standards of singing high. The choir was originally founded to offer a place for all the teenage boys (for whom there was no longer room in The Cathedral Choir) to find their voice. The Cathedral Youth Choir undertakes a different ministry to The Cathedral Choir, which is reflected in the liturgy they support with more informal and unusual repertoire choices.

Recruitment

We seek actively to recruit a diverse musical community for Blackburn Cathedral, and we try to reflect the vibrant variety of the town's broader community. True excellence is diverse and explains our high level of success. The Cathedral helps run *Choir Church*, which is a network of new congregations set up around children's choirs in Church of England primary schools. It is hoped that *Choir Church* will yield fruit in the form of children who already enjoy singing in church. At the same time, the Director of Music also runs open events for potential choristers and makes visits on behalf of the Cathedral to help spread the word about opportunities in the Cathedral's choirs.

Selecting music for liturgy

Decisions about selecting appropriate choral music, hymns, and organ voluntaries are nuanced and multi-faceted. Such decisions comprise practicality and idealism, and they should reflect and enlarge the enthusiasms of the congregation in question, as we seek both to meet people, and to lead them to new appreciations.

Detailed below are some considerations which influence our music choices. Still, perhaps first and foremost must come the practical concern of 'what is possible.' Music is a two-edged sword, and poor performances of otherwise excellent music often foster neither prayer nor joy. Poor performances lead to less-confident singing or playing in the longer term, and do not do justice to the works in question. In short, poor performances do not help build the kind of musical culture we want to offer in worship.

Each service has themes which relate to the Liturgical Calendar and lectionary. There are numerous satisfactory approaches to this, which can include the use of music of close thematic relation to the liturgy in question (e.g., 'This is the Record of John' for June 24th). As well as communicating text, music can act emotionally and atmospherically, and connect ideas and themes subliminally. Great composers show their craft in reaching something emotional behind the words of prayers and biblical texts. With this in mind, choral music can do more than simply 'tell the story' of a given liturgical celebration. So perhaps, returning to the feast of St. John the Baptist, a slightly more oblique approach might include the Benedictus, and thus Organ works inspired by that canticle, or even renderings of music connected with St. John in secular culture, such as Strauss' opera 'Salomé' if that seems to be something that could resonate with those present. The Cathedral Choir broke new ground on Christmas Day with what the Dean described as a 'Eucharistic Carol Service,'¹⁰ to national acclaim.

Blackburn Cathedral aims to offer a programme of excellent music-making to enrich the spiritual life of all who visit. The music department seeks to select practical, imaginative, and effective works of high quality, especially if for historic and cultural reasons, they have been under-represented.

¹⁰ The Liturgy of the Word consisted of a number of short reflections by the Dean, interspersed with musical items from the choir – a TV 'magazine' approach rather than readings followed by a sermon.

The Organ

Blackburn Cathedral's 1969 Walker Organ is an iconic, visionary instrument, admired the world over. It is 'at one' with the radical architectural vision for the Cathedral and is very much itself a radical statement in organ design, taking the baton from Coventry Cathedral, which was built 7 years earlier. The organ is designed to communicate all organ repertoire, with a distinct accent. It is viscerally exciting to play, and not just a work of 'High Art' but also a tremendous vehicle for more populist approaches to the organ, such as 'Silent Film' Improvisations, and Transcriptions of other music. The organ collaborates well with other ensembles, be they Brass groups, Worship Bands, or full Symphony Orchestras. In short, the organ goes far beyond its basic role in accompanying Cathedral services and is an asset of which we are very proud. The cathedral is indebted to the work of Dr John Bertalot who was involved in not only the building of the Organ but its promotion and development over the years and to the *Friends of Blackburn Cathedral* who have provided so much financial support in this and many other areas of the Cathedral's life.

The baton for endowing the future health of the Cathedral's musical life in all its aspects has now been taken up by *The Lantern Music Trust*, a newly formed charitable trust.



Audio visual

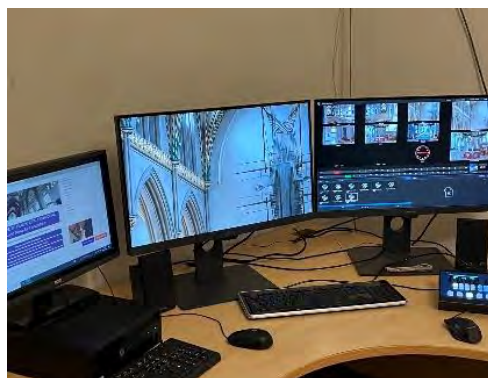
Temporary exploration

With the support of the Fabric Advisory Committee (FAC) cameras were installed on a temporary basis in December 2021 with a view to experiencing a minimum of 18 months and full liturgical year to explore the best options for siting cameras, microphones and control desk.

Background

A live streaming system was first demonstrated in June 2021 by an outside contractor for the ordination services and subsequently installed in December 2021.

The installation is based upon IP network topology, meaning that a data network carries both audio and video signals around the building. It is a system employing POE (power over ethernet) which removes the necessity for power sources near cameras and mikes. The original installation necessitated running cables around the edge of the Nave and transepts with some cabling crossing the Nave north



*The Dean's vestry repurposed
as the AV room*

aisles and sanctuary. These have now all been replaced using existing conduits via the crypt and undercroft. The FAC has also given permission for the temporary siting of two cameras on the west wall and a Nave pillar, done in such a way as not to impinge on the fabric.

Cameras

The current position of cameras is still part of the period of exploration to determine the optimum location for various camera combinations – see page 51. There are five existing PTZ (pan, tilt and zoom) cameras and one fixed zoom camera. The whole system is supported by a Tricaster situated in the undercroft which is planned as a new AV room. The Tricaster and Skaarhoj PTZ controller have capacity for up to eight cameras.

Currently only two ambient microphones are used for choir, organ and congregation. Future plans include increasing these two to at least four for both choir and organ and two for the congregation. Current livestream views of Sundays are double the number of those in physical participation.

Bell Tower

Bells are first mentioned in 1552 in a reference to the Vicar and Churchwardens buying five bells and in 1690 what had been a peal of six was reduced because of damage. In 1737 the remaining five were melted down and a new peal of six cast by Abel Rudhall of Gloucester. In 1832 they were taken to the new church (the present tower). In 1851 four more bells were added to make a peal of ten. The bells were removed in 1948 and new bells arrived from Loughborough in 1949 – a ring in the key of D natural and heavier than any previous set, worthy of a Cathedral.

The striking clock is a town centre feature.



The Tenor Bell



Bells Clock Mechanism

Education and Pilgrimage

Department

The Education department in its present form was initiated in 2012 by Canon Ian Stockton, with the appointment of Joanna Booth as Education officer.

A visitor trail was created which sought to introduce visitors (mostly school pupils) to the features and unique aspects of Blackburn Cathedral, covering many liturgical and architectural features of interest and symbolic nature.

Today, (2023), Sian Howell-Jones leads the Education department which is growing in numbers and in its reputation around the Diocese and wider community. Sian leads a team of education volunteers, (mostly retired but informed and competent teachers) some who contribute on a weekly basis and others who join for larger events on an occasional basis.

Schools, young people, adults, Scout, and other groups enjoy visits to the Cathedral, ably led and directed by one of the Education team. They are introduced to the significance of the space that is Blackburn Cathedral, its importance to the town, the history of the building and its people; mostly the story of Christian faith that is told through word, image and experience, putting Blackburn Cathedral at the heart of inspiring places to visit in Lancashire.

Visits will incorporate the significance of Christ the Worker, the shape of the boat, echoed from the Nave to the imagery around the building. The Blackburn Pax and Saxon hammer are thrilling stories to share with visitors; their secure display in the building would be a powerful visitor attraction. The Cathedra seats are explained so that visitors have an understanding of what a Cathedral is and why.

Programmes:

- Blackburn Cathedral Trail encompassing the above features and other parts of the building.
- Workshops on specific themes relating to the Christian message or aspects of what the building stands for.
- Language student visits which incorporate small group introduction to the main features of the space with discussion afterwards as well as Q&A with member of the clergy team.
- GCSE conference annually – in its 3rd year as an on-line event – catering for up to 250 pupils with Keynote speaker and workshops.
- Inter-faith programme with the Mosque Cathedral days – full day visit with Mosque visit in local mosque, arranged by us and led by local Imam, followed by afternoon Cathedral trail.
- Summer family trails with stations around the building and an activity worksheet giving clues of things to find and activities to complete.
- Exhibitions which can be incorporated into education programmes e.g. Lent 2024 hosting *Threads through Creation*, textile panels which chart the Genesis story.

The Journey

The series of paintings completed by Penny Warden in 2005 are deliberately introduced to visitors as *The Journey at Blackburn Cathedral*.

The accompanying booklet for *The Journey* suggests the paintings are thought of as ‘Stages’ on the final journey of Christ.

“Each stage tells a story of God amidst the confusion, pain and sometimes evil of the world which resonates with the story of lives today. We can learn much from the last journey of Christ that can help us understand the journey that we are on. So, really, this is an invitation to go on a spiritual journey with him.”

The journey takes the visitor along both sides of the Nave and around three sides of each of the two transepts.

Inter-faith

Given the location of the Cathedral there are many opportunities for inter-faith work though over the previous decades it has waxed and waned.

Anjum Anwar was appointed in 2007 to Blackburn Cathedral as a dialogue development officer to work with local communities on multi-faith issues. Awarded an MBE for community service in Lancashire, she was the first Muslim to be appointed to a Church of England position. She worked closely with Canon Chris Chivers over the next two years.

The Dean is currently convening and working with a small number of ministers from *Presence and Engagement*¹¹ parishes in the Diocese.



Anjum Anwar with The Archbishop of Canterbury in 2009

Inclusive Heritage¹²

To date no clear and obvious connections have been made in Blackburn to the country’s commercial benefits from slavery, though the proximity of both Liverpool¹³ and Manchester where extensive research has been undertaken, suggests some links are likely. While the Cathedral is reliant upon the resources of other partners to undertake in depth research, it could begin by exploring the background of some of its historical benefactors. Taking inspiration from *Inclusive Heritage* it could initiate a series of invited visitors to the Cathedral by the people of Blackburn and Lancashire, with the primary purpose of listening to their stories and how they interact with the Cathedral.

¹¹ *Presence & Engagement* was a project set up in 2005 to encourage the Church of England to think about the reality of religious diversity and how it might shape mission and ministry.

¹² The term comes from the article by Renie Chow Choy *Inclusive Heritage: Implications for the Church of England*. *Religions* 14.3 (2023): 360.

¹³ *International Slavery Museum*. Royal Albert Dock, Liverpool L3 4AG and *Cotton Capital* an academic research project commissioned by *The Scott Trust*.

Artwork

Blackburn Cathedral has relatively little artwork compared to many cathedrals, but each piece has its own significance in the historical life of the Cathedral.

Glass

Lantern Tower	Original John Hayward glass replaced in 1998 and 99 by Linda Walton's abstract blues, oranges, reds and yellows. The glass creates a wonderful Lumiere on the pillars and arches of the building (see page 45).
North Transept	18 th century Flemish glass purchased from a convent in Belgium.
South Transept	The Tree of Life window by John Hayward. West side fragments of medieval glass, possibly from the Norman Church. High up on East and West sides Sir Edward Burne-Jones: Moses, Abraham, David and Elijah.
The crypt steps	From the parish church Sir Edward Burne-Jones: Enoch, Paul and Elijah.
Jesus Chapel	Looking into the memorial chapel, etched glass by John Hayward.
Memorial Chapel	Abstract window by John Hayward. On the south window ledge "Looking for Peace" by Katherine Monks commissioned in 2008 for all asylum seekers and refugees in Blackburn with Darwen.

Painting

The Journey	Fifteen paintings by Penny Warden.
Jesus Chapel	Large Scale icon by John Hayward.

Sculpture

Sanctuary	The Corona by John Hayward.
North Transept	Virgin and Child by Josefina Vasconcellos.
South Transept	Large reproduction of a hand-held Pax portraying the Madonna and Child. Font and cover by John Hayward.
The crypt steps	Madonna of the Boulevard by William Attwood.
Jesus Chapel	Aumbry by Laurence King and John Hayward and Rood by Advent Hunston. African Madonna – gifted from St Andrew & St Michael, Bloemfontein.
Memorial Chapel	St Martin statuette by Yves le Pape.
West End	Christ the Worker by John Hayward.
East exterior	The Healing of the Nations by Mark Jalland.

Furniture

North Transept	The Gothic style Cathedra carved by Advent Hunston. Installed in 1953. Eight Misericords whose origin is uncertain. Medieval wooden bench from pre 1820s church.
Jesus Chapel	Frontal by Jacquelin James.
Sanctuary	Dean's stall, Bishop's stall and four canons' stalls by John Hayward. Cathedra, originally part of the screen designed by Laurence King, relocated in 2023 for the Installation of the 10 th Bishop of Blackburn. Pulpit a gift from Dr Ramsey and family in 1950s. Table frontal by Dorothy Anderson.

Fabric

The floors of Nave and transepts are fossilised Derbyshire limestone. The Nave has slender columns, (all but two are monoliths – carved in one piece) and the ceilings are works of art in themselves.

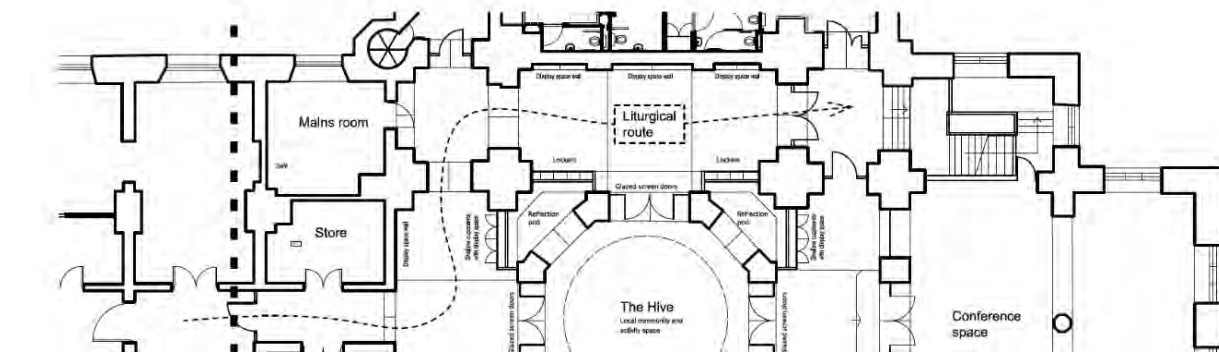
The Crypt and Undercroft

A longstanding habit in the Cathedral community is to refer to the space under the Nave as the Undercroft (the older part of the building) and the remaining space as the Crypt¹⁴.

There have been two large and ambitious plans in the past for the crypt. Before the limitations of economy were recognised in the 1970, Laurence King had impressive plans for the crypts in 1965 (see page 52). Similar problems stymied plans for the crypt more than 50 years later in project of 2018 (see page 52).

Plans to update the appearance of the crypt to make it suitable for commercial hire include refurbishment of the canteen and kitchen areas, acoustic dampening, LED lighting, internal door replacement to improve security and general decoration. The natural free-flowing and flexible space is an advantage and seen as highly suitable for a wide variety of events, exhibitions and meetings

From a liturgical standpoint any developments to the crypt require two important elements: a) that the worship space of the Nave is acoustically separate from the crypt and b) that a liturgical route for processions and the support of services is created as for example in the 2018 project.



¹⁴ QI plan on page 52 – the Undercroft area is in blue. *Example of a liturgical route.*

Section three: the future

Existing challenges of the site relevant to the building and mission

Blackburn Cathedral has a uniqueness in its build with its constant ability to embrace change. This includes the evolution from a parish church to a grand cathedral, and the first cloister building in a Cathedral for hundreds of years.

It has been well maintained over its lifetime and the Quinquennial Inspection completed in early 2023 recognises the hard work undertaken to maintain such a large structure. All the roofs and stonework is largely in good condition with only a handful of recommendations to be completed within the next 12 months.

This ability to embrace change and continue to work to be an open place for all is one its greatest strengths. The building has undergone extensive works in its lifetime and some of the primary alterations for access improvements include:

- Accessible toilets to the crypt, café, Nave and offices.
- Lift access to from the café to the nave.
- Lift access and level access to the crypt.
- Hearing loops.
- Street level parking.
- Level access to the west entrance doors.

The Cathedral has many activities and events. These welcome and encourage people to enjoy and use the multiple spaces within the Cathedral be it prayer, concerts or enjoying the café. The Cathedral engages with those of other faiths, local schools, universities, the local police force, local businesses and charities, all of which capture the essence of accessibility and inclusivity.

However, there remain some areas of the Cathedral which are yet to truly be discovered by the public or still present physical and psychological barriers which could be considered as part of any future developments. These include:

- A lack of Changing Places facilities (see page 31).
- No history readily available on the history of the precincts and the old parish church and surrounding buildings.
- Physical restrictions to the Table and the two chapels (stepped access).
- Difficult to open doors to the west front and impossible for many people to do so unaided.
- Insufficient seating for the sanctuary to seat the College of Canons as well as Residentiary Canons and Bishop.
- Existing lighting is restrictive and static.
- Accessible book/ information on the Cathedral and its people and history.
- Environmental performance.

The case for formally adopting the current reordering

There are sound reasons for the integrity for the present arrangement.

- Given it is the people of God who celebrate, proximity, access and sight line to Table should be a very high priority at all times.
- The musical benefits are substantial both visually and audibly – the choir can now be seen from all three arms of the Cathedral and no longer sing at each other.
- The ‘best’ seats are no longer at the front of the Nave, since the transept seats are several metres nearer to the action around the Table than the front row of the Nave.
- The arrangement is conducive for both Choral Evensong and Cathedral Eucharist.
- The arrangement suits a Cathedral full of 1,000 people in all three ‘arms’ of the worship space and a service with up to 500 people in the Nave only.
- At a Eucharist with a Nave congregation, presiding from near the Cathedra position (Northwest end of sanctuary) enables the president to see both choir and people.
- At a Eucharist with the transepts full, presiding in front of the Table gives sight lines to those in transepts and Nave but not the Choir, though the physical proximity of the president more than makes up for that deficiency.
- Some of the sight line issues to president and preacher may now be resolved by the addition of moveable TV screens linked to the camera network – this has been trialled with great success.
- The sightlines should, wherever possible, not be blocked either by furniture or people or both.
- The current arrangement has been used for over two years, encompassing the full range of annual liturgical service at least twice and employed for several occasions with a full Cathedral e.g. Platinum Jubilee, marking the death of Queen Elizabeth II, ordinations and the installation of a new Bishop. The very successful Christmas BBC TV broadcasts would have been much less creative employing the previous arrangement of the sanctuary area, and the BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensongs demonstrated its musical benefits.

In a building which has experienced two major interventions from the original plan, first in the 1960s and then in the 1970s, any future reordering will potentially involve compromises. As can be seen from the cover photo, the space between the choir stall and the Table is cramped. In addition the footprint of newly sighted organ console takes up valuable space. This is not ideal but it is tolerable at the moment. When an overall plan of the sanctuary area is drawn up, these limitations may be addressed, as discussed for example on page 33.

Opportunities and Aspirations

Improving access to the sanctuary, Table and chapels

Access to the main Table is via a series of steps. There has been a temporary ramp built which is currently stored behind some screens in the North Transept which is brought out for events where access is needed. Ideally access to the Table should be as easy as possible for those less able and for any musicians or singers accessing the choir stalls.

The stepped access to the chapels also remains a challenge for ambulant users, those with prams or using a wheelchair; there is currently no ramp or lift access and both the chapels have more steps in order to access the tables. These chapel spaces feel private which is of merit, although that in turn presents challenges for people to feel safe and secure in them.

Due to safety concerns, with a lack of handrails, signage and wiring from the organ visitors are not allowed to access the crossing and can only appreciate the space from the Nave or Transepts. One of the most significant and inspiring spaces is the crossing with the Table centred beneath and it is unfortunate that this space remains inaccessible.

The phrase Open Table is a relatively new term which explores who has access to receiving communion. Whilst not engaging in that debate, *Gathering around the Table* employs the Chapter Strategy that the Cathedral is open to all and has the aspiration that access to the physical Table should not be limited to only able-bodied people.

There will be multiple ways to resolve access issues. Some possible options include:

- Levelling the Table space completely to provide access through the crossing.
- Ensuring all areas are safe.
- New permanent ramp / lift.
- Repositioning the height of the Table.

There also needs to be consideration for the welcoming nature of the spaces and to encourage visitors and the congregation to enjoy and experience all of the Cathedral. This may include better signage, information and improved lighting.

Creating permanent changes would have an impact on the historic fabric, its setting and how the mission is undertaken in these spaces but with careful consideration they have the potential to enhance the experience.

Improving West Door entrance

The existing west doors were intended as draught proofing between the external west entrance and the Nave however the doors are old, heavy, difficult to operate and actually contribute to the draughts in the building. Many cathedrals and churches have embraced improved draught proofing to their primary entrances which often include automated doors. Many have been done in such a way that the original doors are retained, ensuring the heritage significance of the building fabric is not negatively impacted.

The Cathedral has the benefit of a West Tower thus it already has a lobby space which could be greatly enhanced in terms of feeling welcome and thermal performance.

Seating in the sanctuary area

The new location for the choir behind the Table provides a large space to the west of the Table for clergy and ministers. The current siting of the Residential Canons' stalls is almost identical to that as envisioned by Laurence King (see pages 44 and 50) and the position of the Cathedra worked well for the recent Installation Service. The screens behind its current location match that of its previous position as a section of the larger screen.



The 2023 Cathedra



The Bishop in 2023



The Bishop receiving the Pastoral Staff

What is lacking is suitable seating for the College of Canons which can be up to 40 people.

One possible solution to this might be to commission a new simple chair which in design is related to the canons' stalls and at the same time clearly different.

At services when only the Nave is used it would then be possible to seat the whole College of Canons in the sanctuary area (when sight lines to the transepts are not an issue). When the transepts are in use, the chairs would form the front two rows of both transepts as at the installation service in 2023.



College of Canons in a transept

Without prejudicing what might be the eventual outcome of the reordering of the Jesus Chapel, these 40 chairs could be used in that space thereby having a double function and removing any storage issues.

Although this suggestion by the Precentor has merit it transpires that nothing is new under the sun. The restriction of the size of the building imposed in 1974 meant that what was lost from the Forsyth plan, and still contained in Laurence King's plans during the 1960s (see page 42) was what he called the Presbytery, the location for the College of Canons. In an addendum to his 1974 report, which Chapter criticised he proposed creating 22 moveable stalls, ten of which would be permanently set in the sanctuary area, with a further 12 placed in the Jesus Chapel and moved into the sanctuary when needed. These extra stalls were never completed.

A comprehensive single plan is required which resolves all of the issues around, Table, accessible routes to all areas under and around the Lantern Tower sanctuary area – the hub of the building. Ideally the plan would also incorporate the conservation of the misericords, 1970s Cathedra, and showcase them in a way that visitors can understand the importance of the ancient and new furniture.

Enhancing the lighting and the experience of the Cathedral

During the Christmas period the BBC filmed two services, Midnight Mass including carols and seasonal music for the first Mass of Christmas, the Dean presiding and the Bishop of Burnley preaching. The second was a family Eucharist celebrated on Christmas Day exploring the wonder of the Nativity journey in a liturgy of seasonal music, readings and stories. The outcome of these two events showed the beauty of the Cathedral in a way never seen before helping to light up the both the building and the story of Jesus.

The existing lighting within the Cathedral is a mixture of LED and halogen lights with many halogens within the nave, crossing, transepts and chapels. The halogen lights have met the end of their serviceable life and are now in a condition where they need to be replaced.

The existing lighting in the Cathedral is very static and very much of its time. Now with newer technologies available including low energy LEDs, the need to replace the lighting is more important than ever.

As well as improving the energy requirements there is also the opportunity to improve the lighting and experience both of religious services and community events.

Any new lighting should look at achieving the following:

- Improved energy efficiency.
- Ensuring all areas of the church are lit in a welcoming and inviting way.
- Lighting levels to be in accordance with accessibility requirements.
- Having the adaptability to light different elements depending on the circumstances.
- To be able to celebrate the church and the mission.
- All cabling routes and new fixings to be as minimally invasive to the building fabric.
- All light fixtures and fittings to be unintrusive.

Accessible information on the Cathedral, its people and history

There is a great deal of history on the site and the building, but the only available guidebook does not incorporate all the works over the past 15 years. A simple booklet which provides information on past to present would be of great benefit for those to understand the building and its mission.

Any information booklet should also include accessibility information and a floor plan of the Cathedral to help people understand the layout and areas which can be visited. The best solution for this may be app or web based.

Many cathedrals have multiple books written about their past and present and this is something that Blackburn Cathedral is currently lacking.

The Cathedral is in the process of co-ordinating the archives and inventory and this may lead to a good opportunity to combine this work together with a detailed document / record of the building and site's history both in terms of architecture and mission.

Enhance story telling of the history of the old church / history

There is an opportunity to enhance the story telling and signage across the site of the old parish church and the site itself. This could include telling the history of the old parish church and its development into a Cathedral, the history and theological implications of the multiple artifacts within the Cathedral, the impact that religion has played on the centre of Blackburn and the development of external signage which could identify the medieval history of the site.

The historic maps of the area (see page 38) show a variety of changes on the site with a parish church recorded in Blackburn as early as the 11th century. Since then there has been several iterations of the old church and subsequent buildings in and around the precinct square including The Bull Hotel now demolished.

It could be an excellent opportunity to engage with the local community by engaging in activities such as archaeological digs to map the remains of the ancient foundations.

New signage inside the building could be developed and modern forms of communication should be considered, including the use of QR codes which directed pilgrims to a web-app or a 3D model of the interior and exterior of the building. Booklets could also be available to make sure the information is accessible to everyone. As Blackburn Cathedral enhances the storytelling of the Christian faith on this site, it could take the opportunity to also retell the Gospel through the presence of the buildings and heritage that has developed here over centuries.

The process for developing a new scheme would be to research a Visitor Engagement Plan.¹⁵

Install Changing Places¹⁶ facilities

The lack of changing place facilities means that there are restrictions for some who may wish to visit the Cathedral.

Changing place facilities are a larger more developed version of an accessible toilet and include a separate hoist, shower, bed, toilet, sink and drying facilities. These spaces are at a minimum of 4 metres by 3 metres to accommodate all the facilities meaning they are often difficult to retrofit into a space.

However, Blackburn Cathedral does have some opportunity particularly within the crypt where a changing places facility may be able to be installed.

As a welcoming building at the heart of Blackburn it would be a suitable place to install such facilities.

¹⁵ See <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/developing-visitor-engagement-in-cathedrals.pdf>

¹⁶ Changing Places toilets are larger accessible toilets for severely disabled people, with equipment such as hoists, privacy screens, adult-sized changing benches, peninsula toilets and space for carers. The government wants to see a step change in the number of Changing Places toilets across the country. This is why at Budget 2021, the Chancellor announced a fund of up to £30.5 million Changing Places Fund to accelerate the provision in existing buildings in England. [source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/changing-places-toilets-fund> retrieved 3 September 2023.]

Improving the environmental performance

The Church of England has set guidance to be Zero Carbon by 2030. In 2022 a report was commissioned by the Church Commissioners in respect of Net Zero 2030, produced by QODA. The report identified key issues and possible opportunities but recognised that achieving zero carbon would be extremely difficult.

The Cathedral is already utilising some of these technologies with photovoltaic panels installed to Cathedral Court and new boiler systems. Cathedral Court is also well insulated and built to modern standards.

At present, finding ways to make churches and cathedrals zero carbon without permanent and often extensive harm to the building fabric with huge costs for equipment are not available.

It is also important to be aware of the condition issues that are occurring with modern interventions in historic fabric – many of the systems require the building to be less permeable and this can cause damp and high levels of humidity.

There are many solutions to mitigating energy use which could be considered at Blackburn Cathedral and which other cathedrals are in the process of implementing. Some examples include:

- Installation of Photovoltaic Panels to existing roofs.
- Secondary glazing in appropriate areas.
- HVAC system to manage humidity and temperature.
- Replacing halogen lights with LEDs.
- Ensuring all electrical and heating equipment is regularly maintained and in good repair.
- Carbon offsetting working in partnership with a local wood/ farmland/ landowner.
- Air source / ground source heat pumps .
- Insulation in certain loft spaces.

The Cathedral is considering commissioning a detailed assessment of possible appropriate options basing the assessment on the QODA report, working with the Cathedral architect and an environmental specialist to understand the costs, impact and associated requirements.

Liturgical and music development and aspirations

These are several areas which the Director of Music and Precentor are exploring.

- When discussions take place about the seating and accessibility to Table and choir, there would be an opportunity to consider moving the screen back slightly, to give more space around the table and also filling the screen with Perspex or glass (like the Jesus Chapel screen) to produce a more solid surface backdrop to singers voices, which would increase volume in the Nave.
- 2025 is the year *Common Worship* has been in use for 25 years. How do we revitalise it and make it more culturally and socially relevant in Blackburn? There are issues of gender, empire, sexuality, patriarchy, hierarchy, status, class, theology, disability to name a few!

- How do we celebrate the difference between the 9.00am and 10.30 celebrations? Which directions should they be setting their sights on?
- How do we live into, celebrate and disseminate our Patron? The Dean insightfully points out that our constitution says we are the Cathedral Church of Mary *and* Paul.
- How has the report *God's Unfailing Word: Christian-Jewish Relations* changed our liturgical practice? What should it change?
- Language is slippery and tricky but how we use it is important. We continue to 'weed out' references to men, he, mankind etc in our hymns and prayers in response to the Chapter policy on "*Written, spoken and sung texts for public worship (except BCP) will aspire to use inclusive language, where possible.*"
- The power and importance of Lay led Intercession. For example, how has the report *Setting God's People Free* changed our liturgical practice? What should it change?
- How do we move on from only using music and hymns which are part of our English or European cultural heritage?
- The same process will take place with choir music, but we have to respect the composer's creativity and not undermine the music, so some texts will not change.
- We will explore language about God. *Common Worship* addressed language about humanity but not about God. There are similar issues with the concept of Kingdom.

Diversity, Ethnicity and Inclusivity in our Music

Much music in the Anglican Choral Tradition was composed by those constrained by the social and theological mores of the day, principles at odds with the more fully realised belief that all people are created in God's image and are equal in dignity. We seek to expand this tradition to include excellent music by women and men from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and identities.

The Anglican Choral tradition has produced many of the worlds' greatest choirs, and, pragmatically, we seek to cherish and refresh familiar and well-wrought repertoire that has inspired excellent liturgical musicianship; we will use this firm foundation as the basis of choral formation from which we can expand the 'canon' with skill and discernment. Our current stage of development as a choir allows us to seek simple and effective choral music by a broader range of composers representative of the diversity of the Anglican Communion. The Director of Music is always happy to hear from anybody with specific musical ideas to share. Our goal is to participate joyfully in a culture that helps everyone to find their voice as singers, composers, and Church music leaders.

Cultural Appropriation

The journey towards a more harmonious and equitable musical culture (and society) requires an ongoing willingness to learn and develop in sensitivity and nuance. In previous decades, aspirations towards inclusivity and equity have been expressed by borrowing musical idioms as an expression of solidarity with their originating communities. It is becoming clearer that such practices are problematic when music is appropriated for use in a way that is not adequately informed, and which fails to recognize wrongs in use of power and privilege. Our hope, in seeking to broaden the Cathedral's musical expression, is that all will feel included and valued, and will have opportunities to hear music which recognizes the dignity of their many identities.

Contemporary Christian Composition

To connect with people from a range of musical experiences, we will support congregational music-making in a variety of styles. We hope to include, uplift and to attract a wider range of people to participate in worship in a way that feels meaningful and relevant. We believe that the best way to achieve this is to offer well-crafted opportunities for participative singing to edify and to build collective musical confidence.

Contemporary song-based worship

The Cathedral still aspires to be able to host a more contemporary based style of worship. The future may hold some possibilities as new staff are appointed.

Storage

There are many unresolved issues in the Cathedral at the moment around the capacity of the choir music library, the archive for all manuscripts, documents, items of significant importance as well as over a thousand tables and chairs.

Ongoing issues

As indicated above the completion or reordering of an inherited building is always going to grapple tensions created by more than one architectural or liturgical approach and movements do come and go.

Two such issues over the last century have been the Cathedra and the Pulpit.

Cathedra

The first two Bishops in 1927 and 1942 were probably installed in the Bishop's chair which came from the parish church. It can be seen in a picture taken during the ongoing building work.

That chair now is currently located on the east wall of the South Transept and has been used frequently for ordination services.



The first Cathedra?



Chair in South Transept

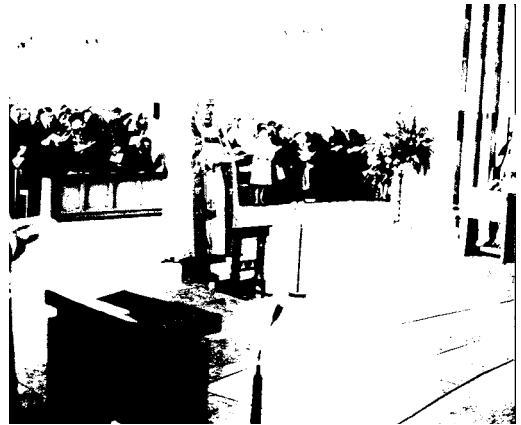


Chair detail

The next three Bishops were installed in the Advent Hunston Cathedra. In these pictures from 1972, Robert Martineau, the Cathedra is on the East wall of what is now the Jesus Chapel, the canons' stalls can be clearly seen (see page 30), the Table is in place as in the Bishop's stall.



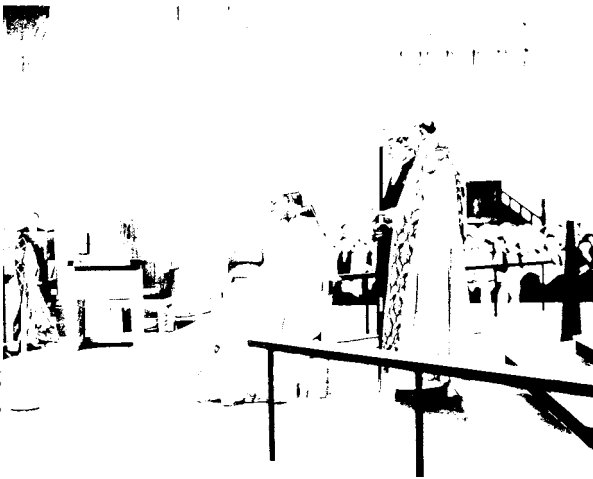
Seated in the Cathedra



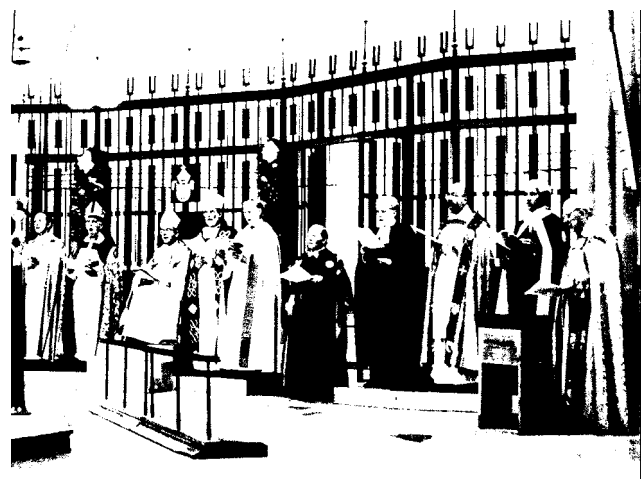
Standing between canons' stalls



At the Table



Stuart Cross – Bishop's seat to the left and chair (?) to the right



Alan Chesters in 1989

The John Hayward Cathedra, part of the screen, is used for the next four Bishops and the layout is clearly shown in the installation of Alan Chester in 1989. The Blackburn anomaly of having more than one place to sit is illustrated in the Order of Service for Stuart Cross in 1982. At the Installation the Bishop is placed in the Bishop's seat in the sanctuary. At the Enthronement he sits in the Cathedra. Before the Greetings he takes his place before the Table, with those giving the greetings standing, presumably in the same position as in the 1972 picture of Stewart Cross above.

At the Installation of Philip North in 2023 a fourth seat is introduced in the sense that he is Installed in the Cathedra now in its new temporary place (see page 30) and after being welcomed proceeds to a seat to the West of the Table (very similar to the chair of Richard Martineau) because in the Bishop's mind he was then presiding at the Eucharist i.e. this is now the president's chair.



Presidential chair position

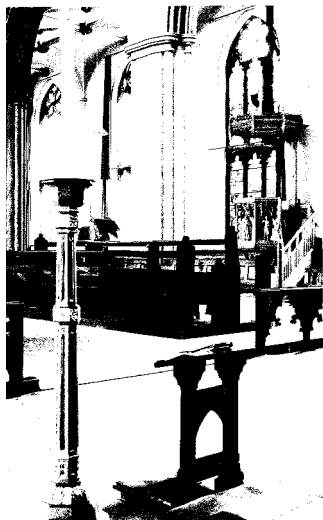
A very Blackburn historical anomaly: Bishop's chair in the sanctuary; a Cathedra; and a president's chair. The simple solution is to only retain Cathedra and president's chair.

When a final decision is made about the ordering of the sanctuary due consideration must be given to resolving this issue so that the purpose of any seat is clear both by its appearance and use.

Proclaiming the Word

Photographic evidence, correspondence and architectural drawings show that not only was there much debate about the pulpit (Laurence King wanted a new moveable one that he had designed) there was also exploration as to where it should be located.

At various times it was in its current position, at the eastern respond of the Nave north aisle (see below) against the wall of the North Transept (see bottom left of the previous page) and the pillar northeast of where the Table is now located.



Pulpit in North aisle

When the pulpit in the current position is used for large services where every seat is taken, approximately 100 people have no sight line to the pulpit even if seated in the Nave, because many of the pillars create restricted views.

This may be easier to solve than the Cathedra in that one solution available is the recent technology of large flat screens at various points in the building connected to the video which is being sent to the live stream.

In 2023 five screens were used to good effect in this way for two large service with screens in both the transepts and a quarter of the way down the south aisle of the Nave. More screens would make this solution even more attractive. The position of the lectern should be kept under continual review when exploring a focus for The Word (see page 13).



Pulpit in Northeast



Readers at the Lectern



Screen at an Ordination



Bishop Philip in the Pulpit

Appendix

Maps



1847 map



1892 map



1822 map



1844 map



1939 map



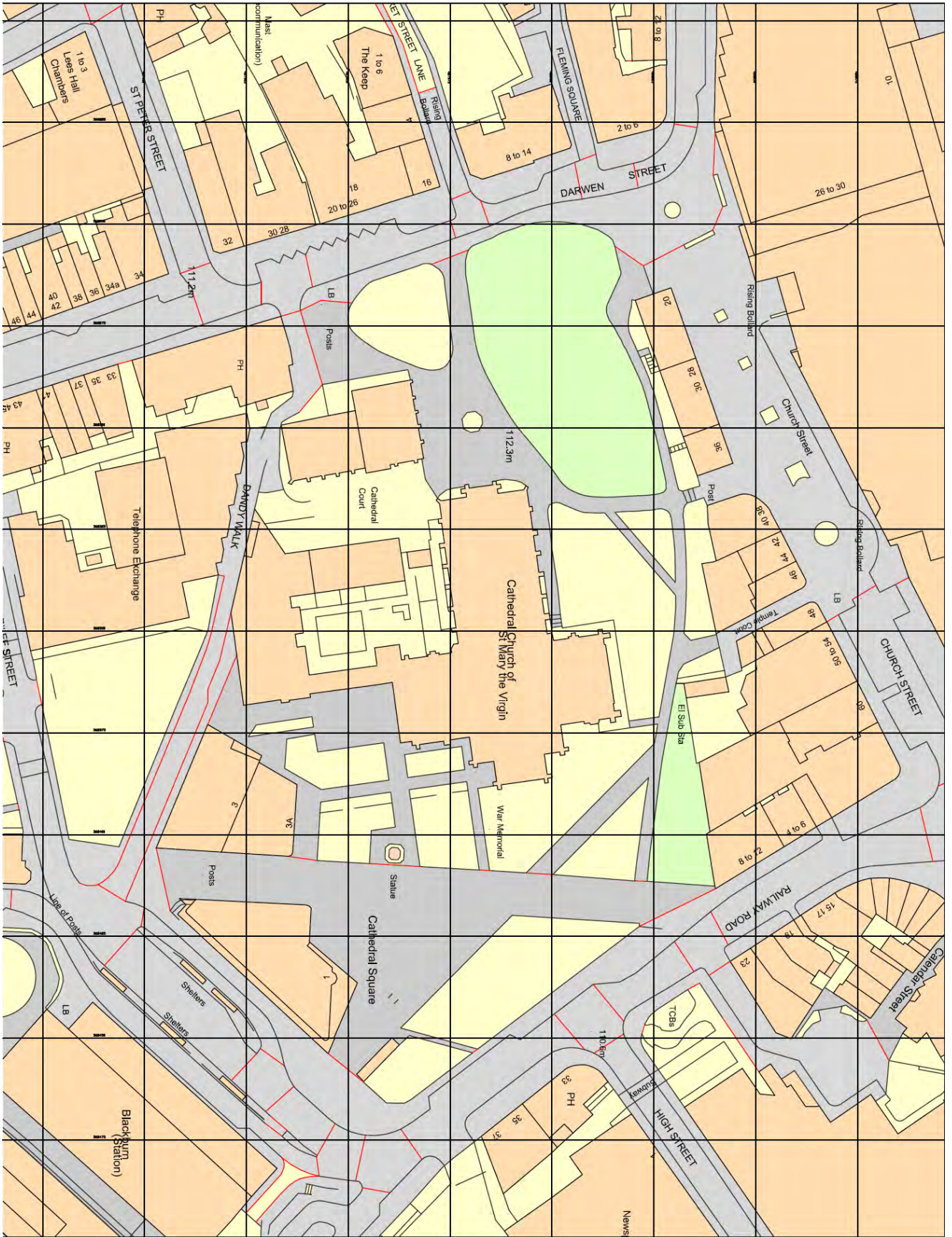
2022 google earth



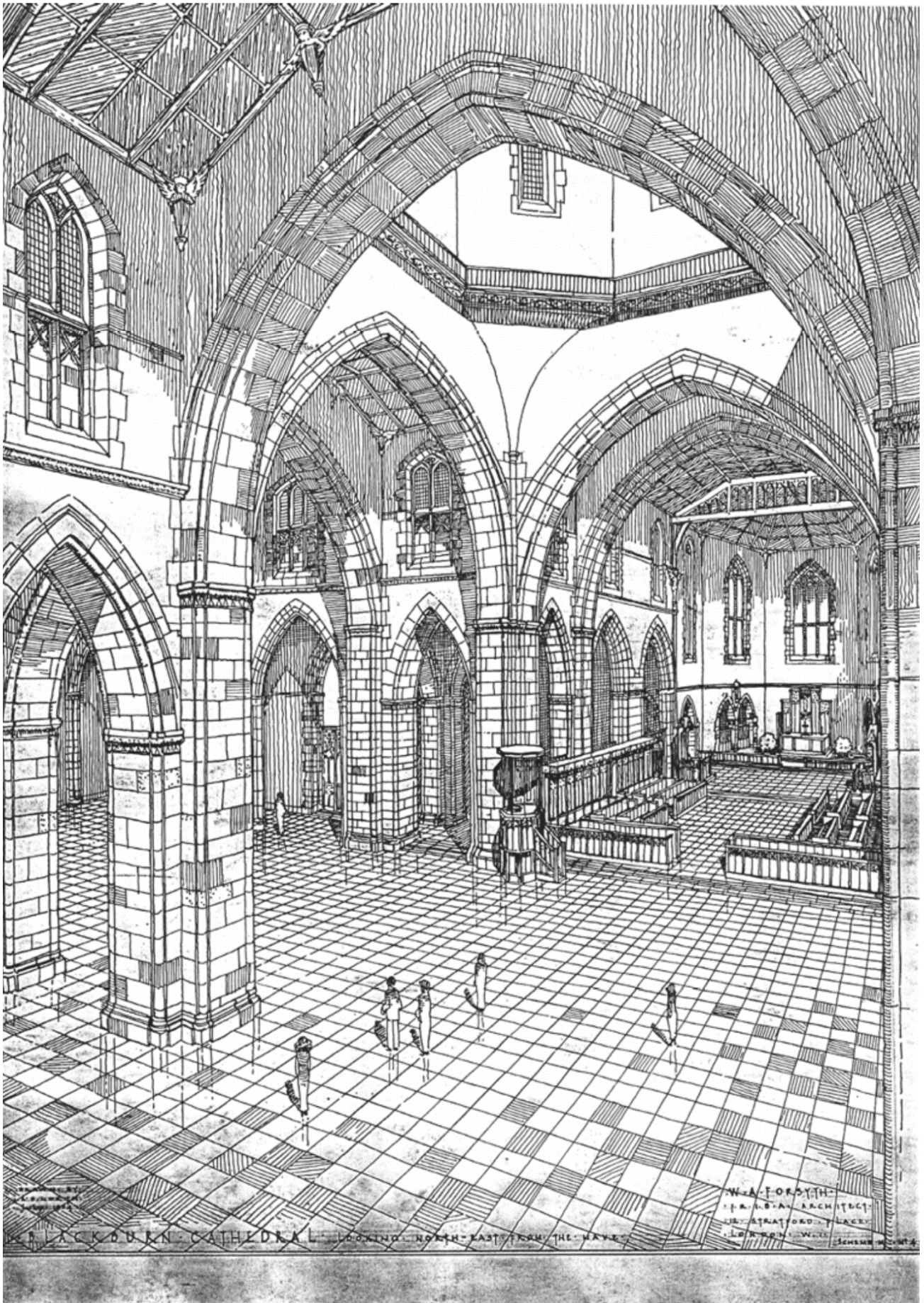
1910 map



1965 map



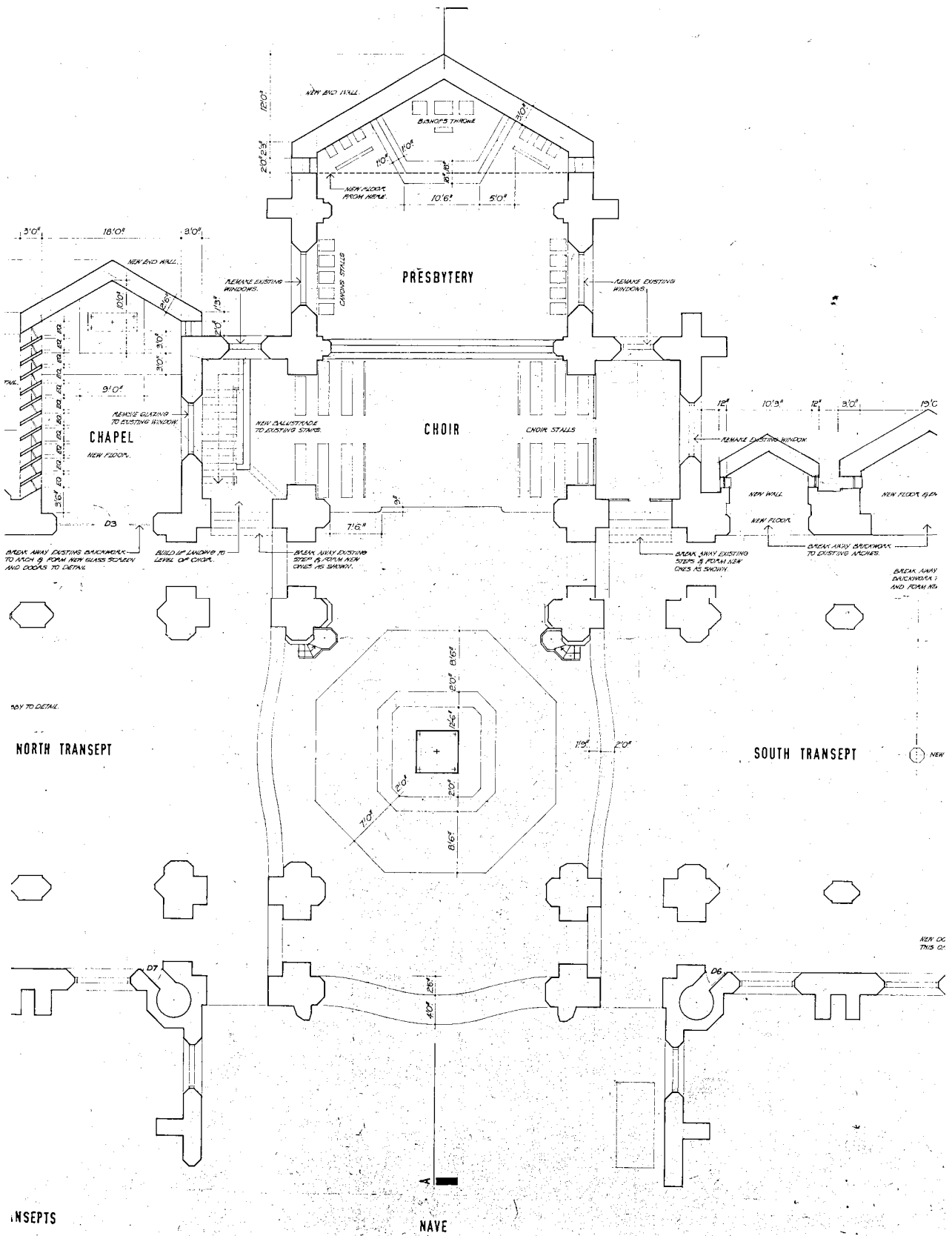
The Forsyth Vision



Forsyth's plan showing the crossing.

The Laurence King era

King 1964



Laurence King 16 December 1964

From the 1971 guidebook¹⁷



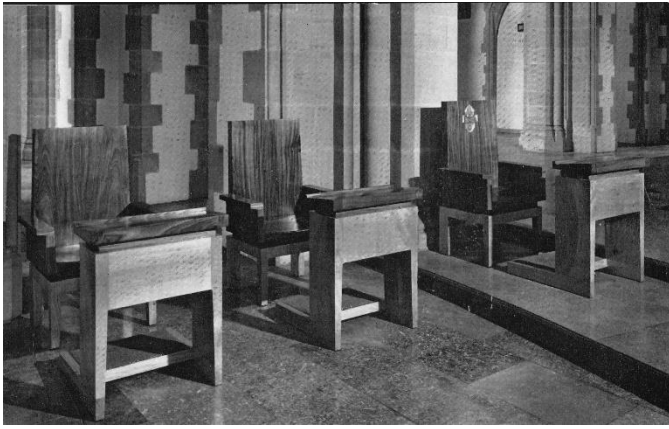
Looking East



Looking West



¹⁷ All 1971 guidebook photographs by Sydney W. Newbury



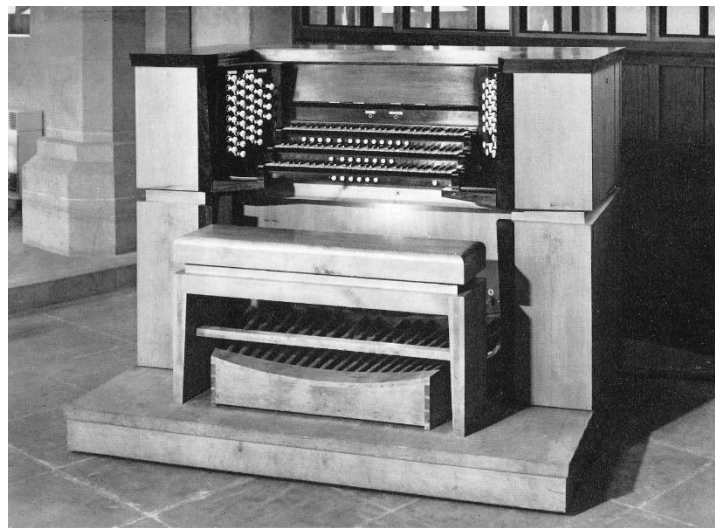
Canon stalls west of Table



Memorial chapel before gates

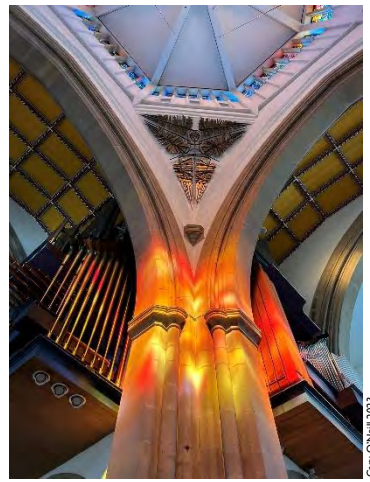


View into North Transept with Rood figure



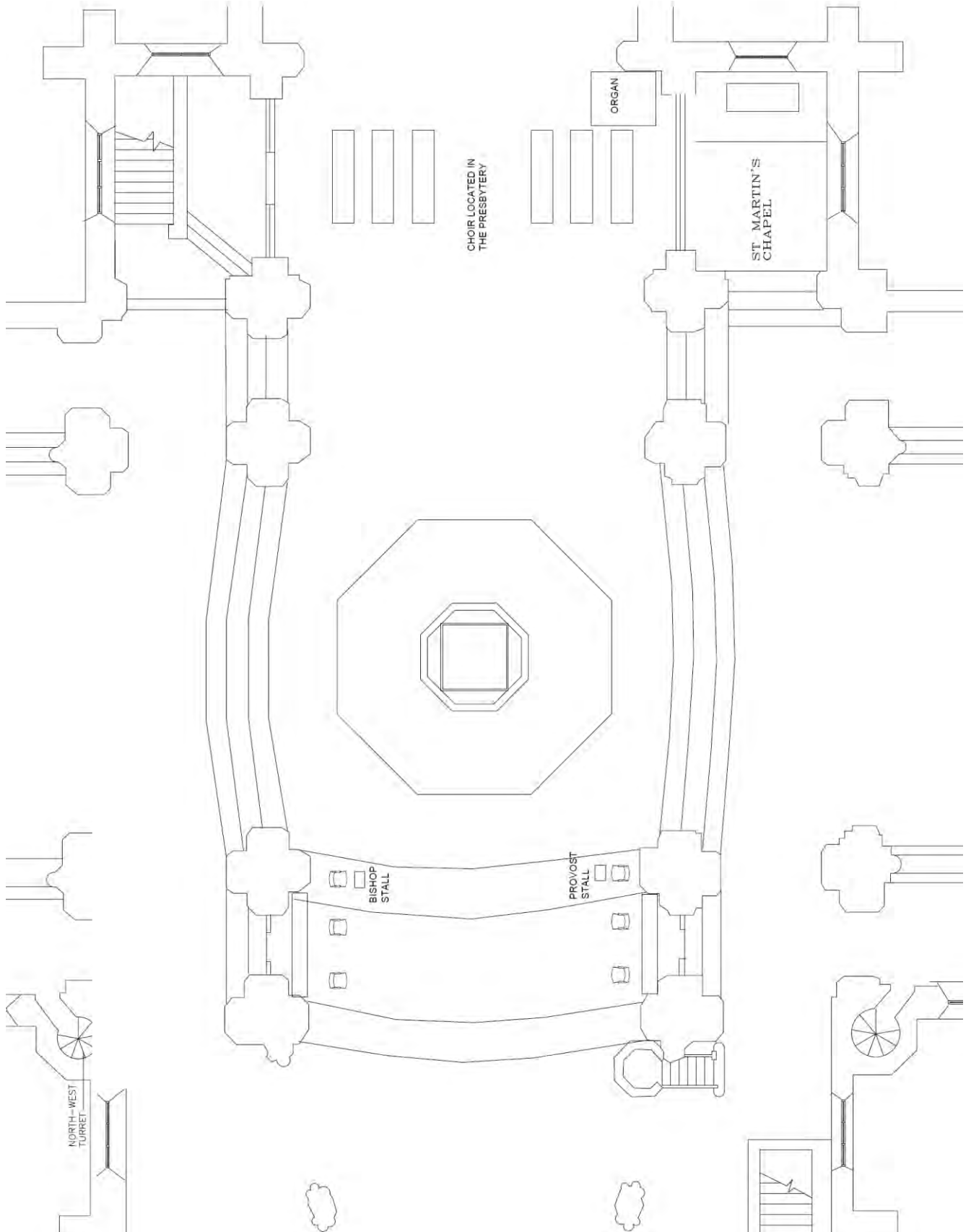
Old console in current Jesus Chapel space

Lantern Tower Patterns

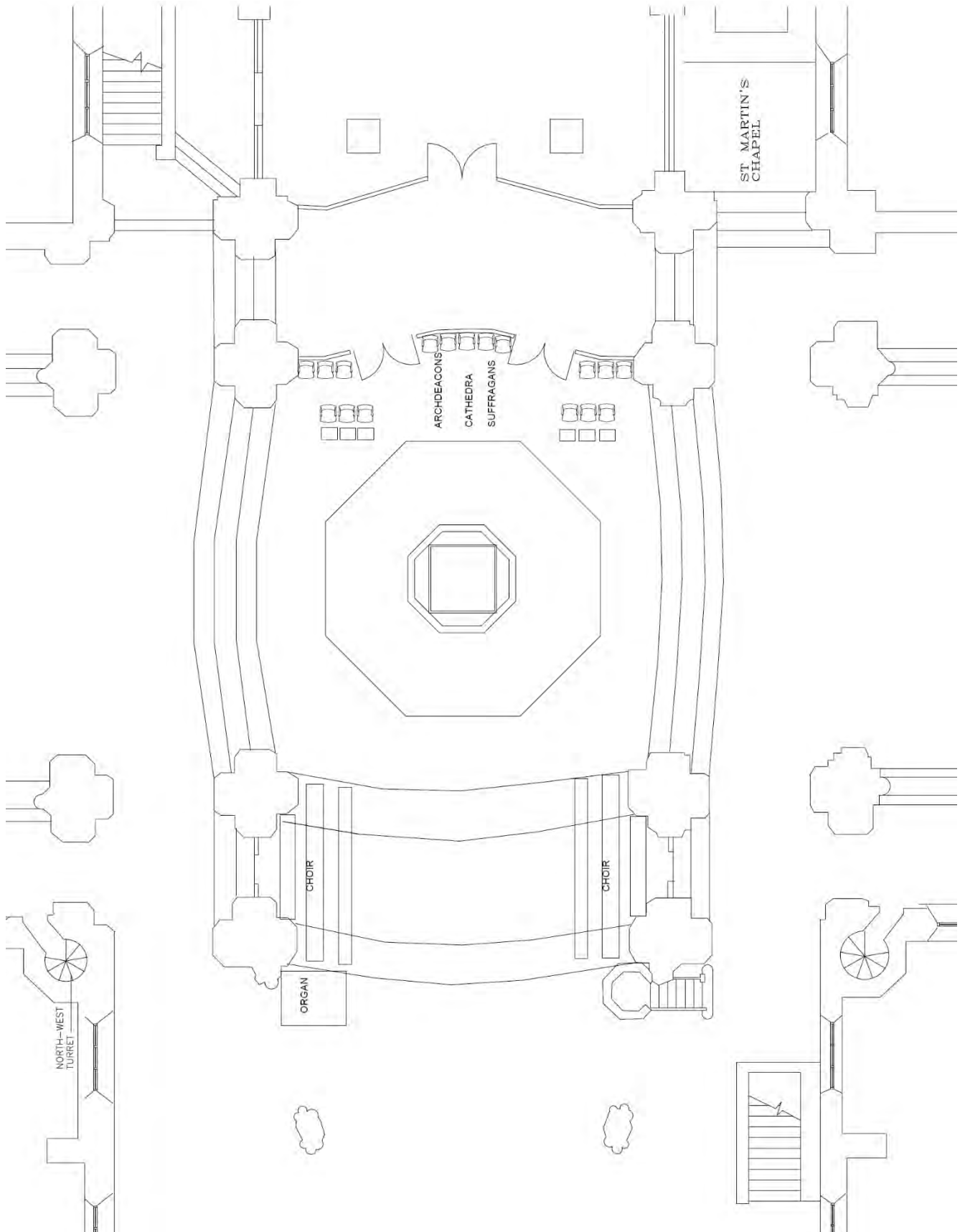


Seating Plans

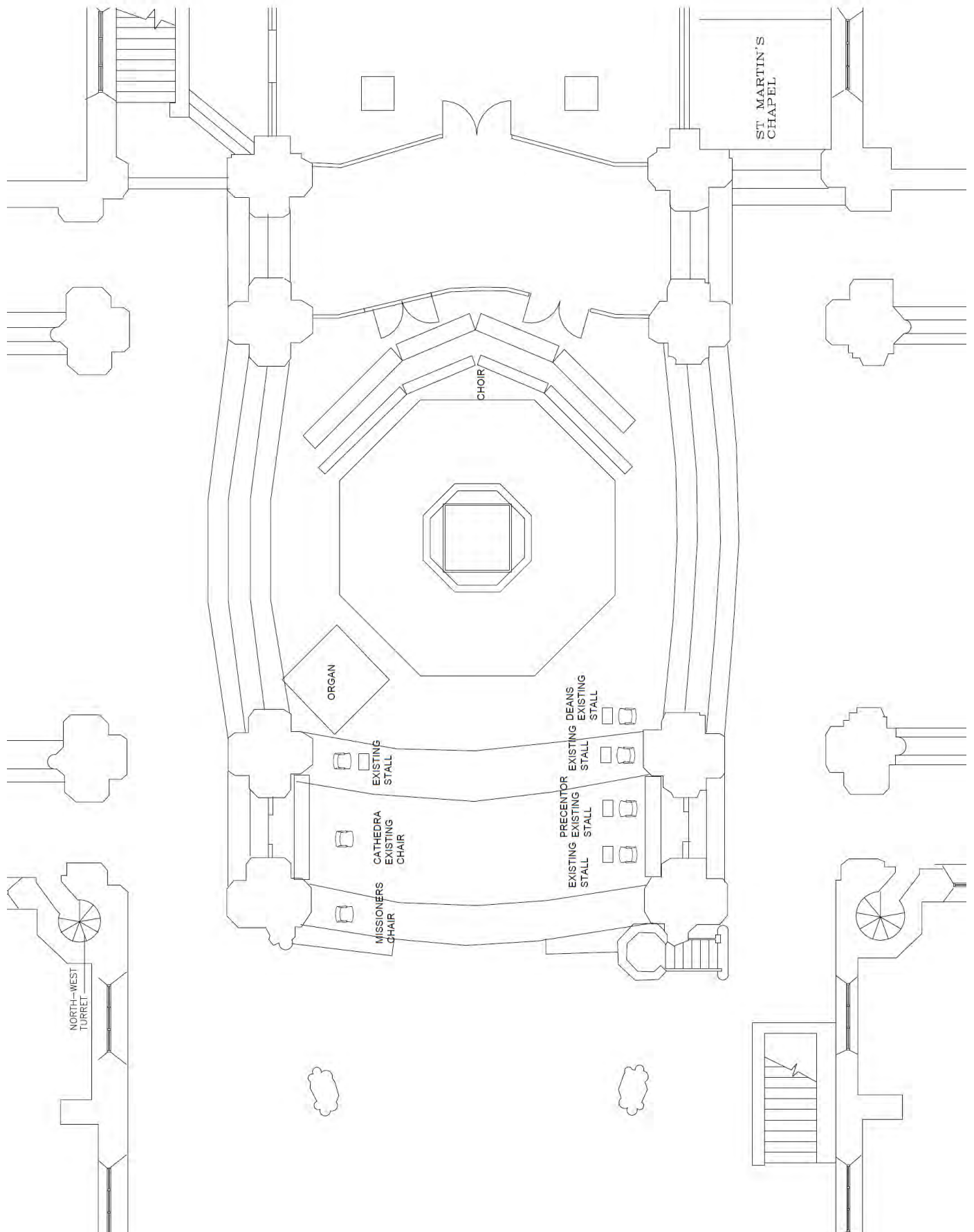
The 1960s



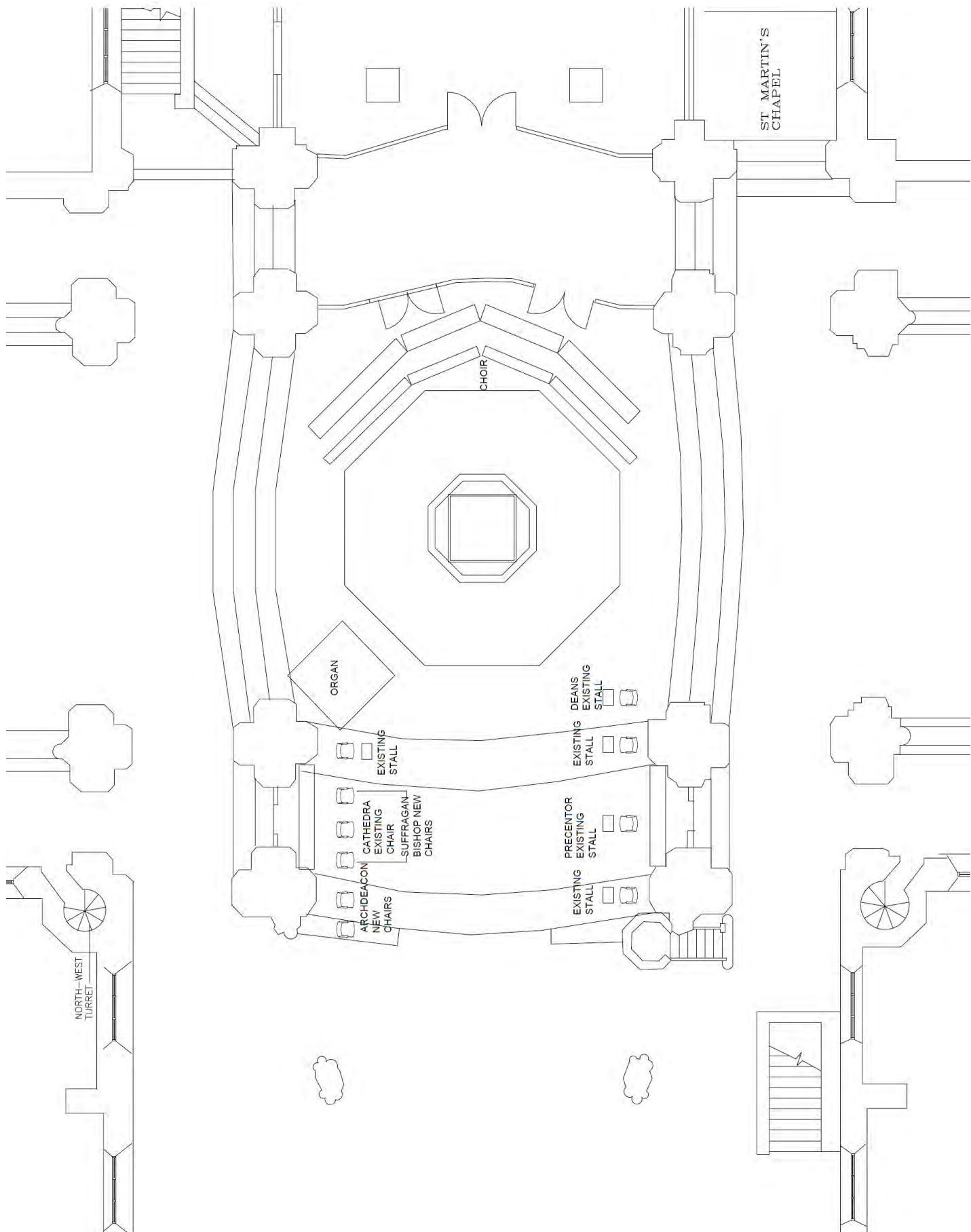
From 1976 to 2020



Current arrangement



Suggested seating for future



Current Sanctuary photos



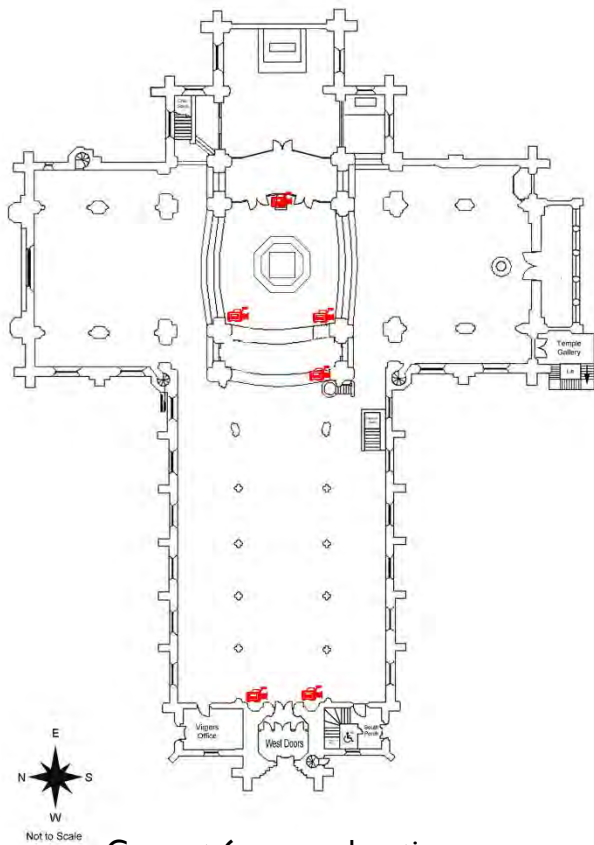
Gary O'Neill 2023



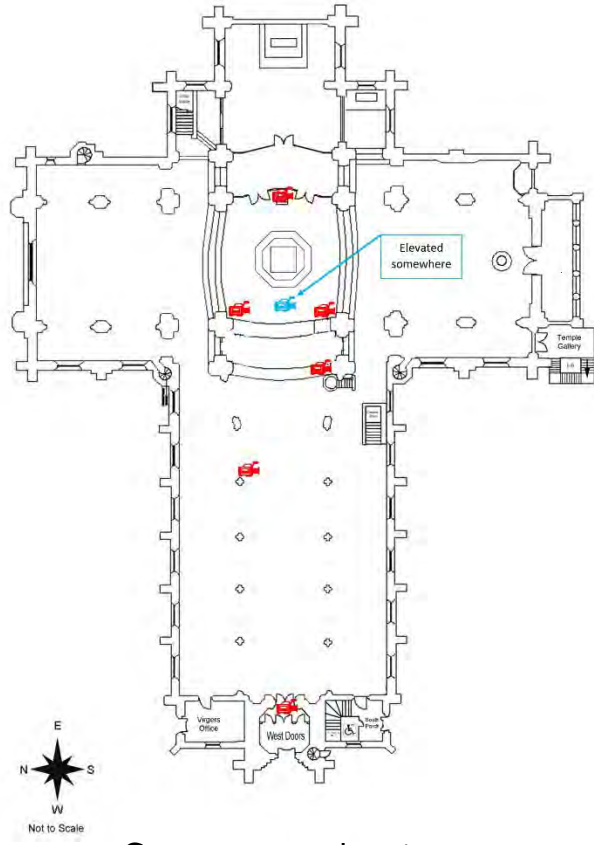
Gary O'Neill 2023

Cathedra and screen

Cameras

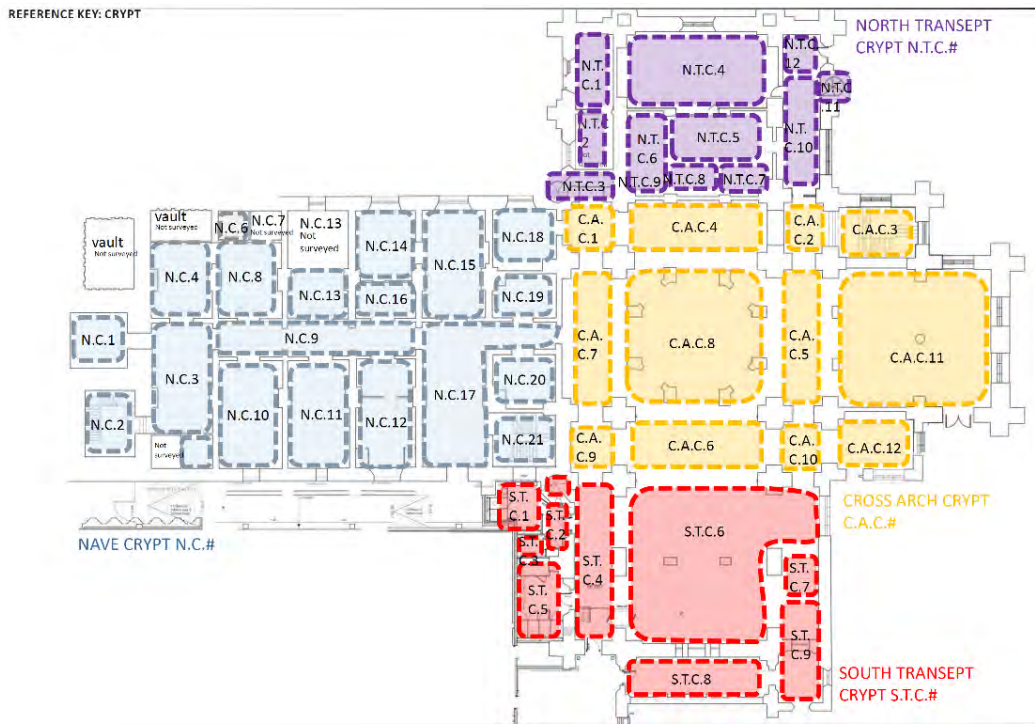


Current 6 camera locations

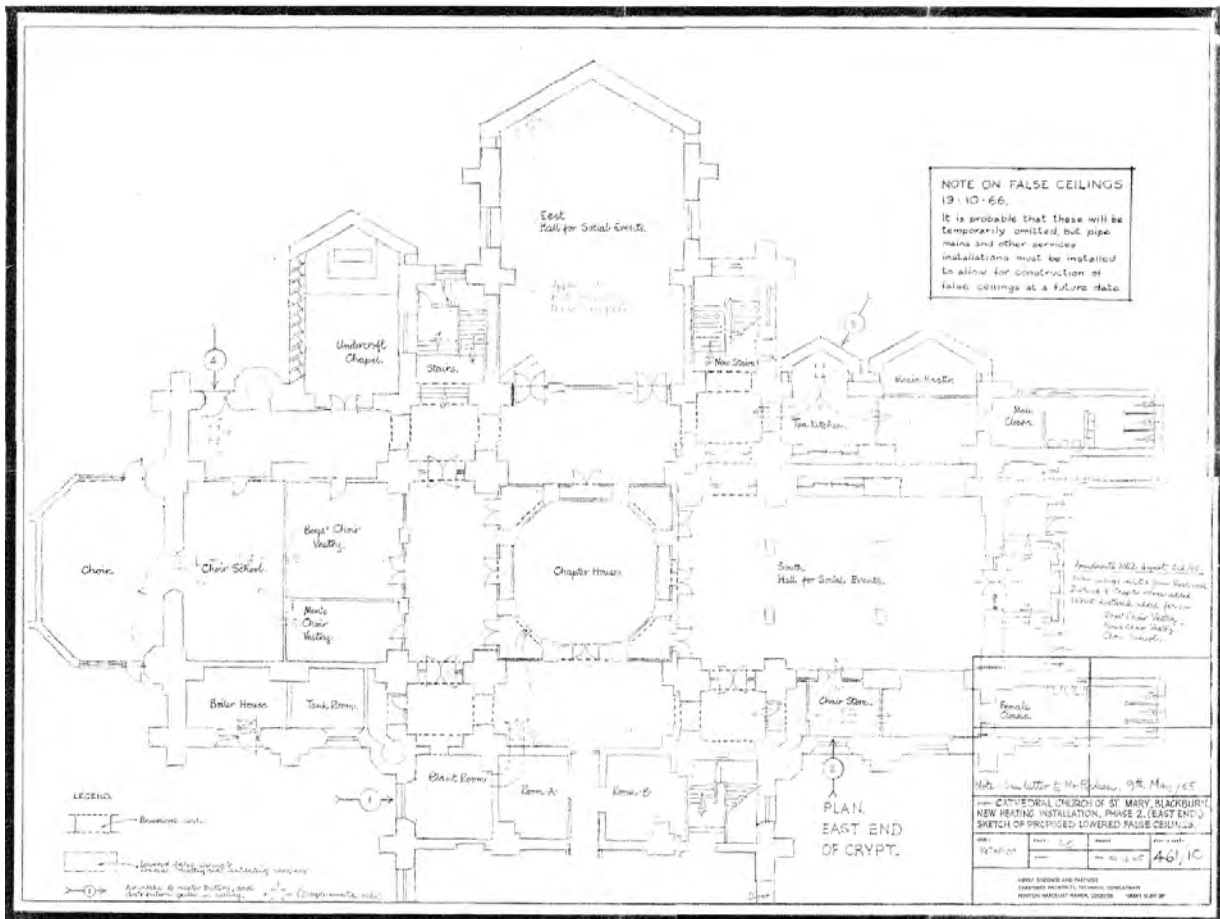


Current camera locations

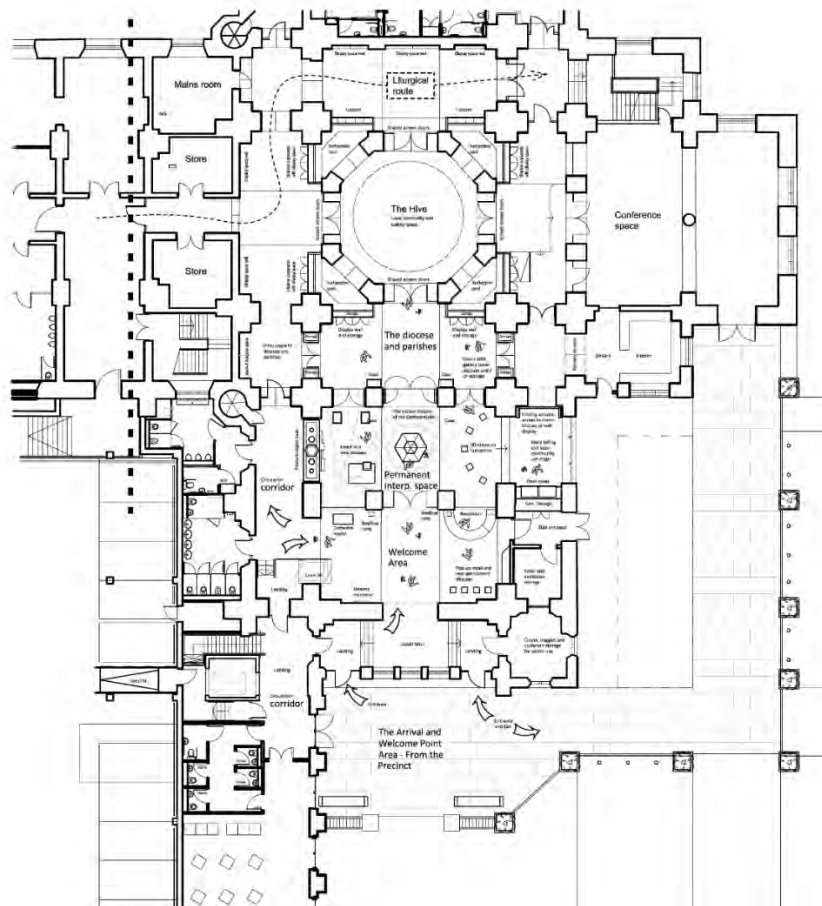
Crypt and Undercroft plans



Crypt plan from Q1 2023

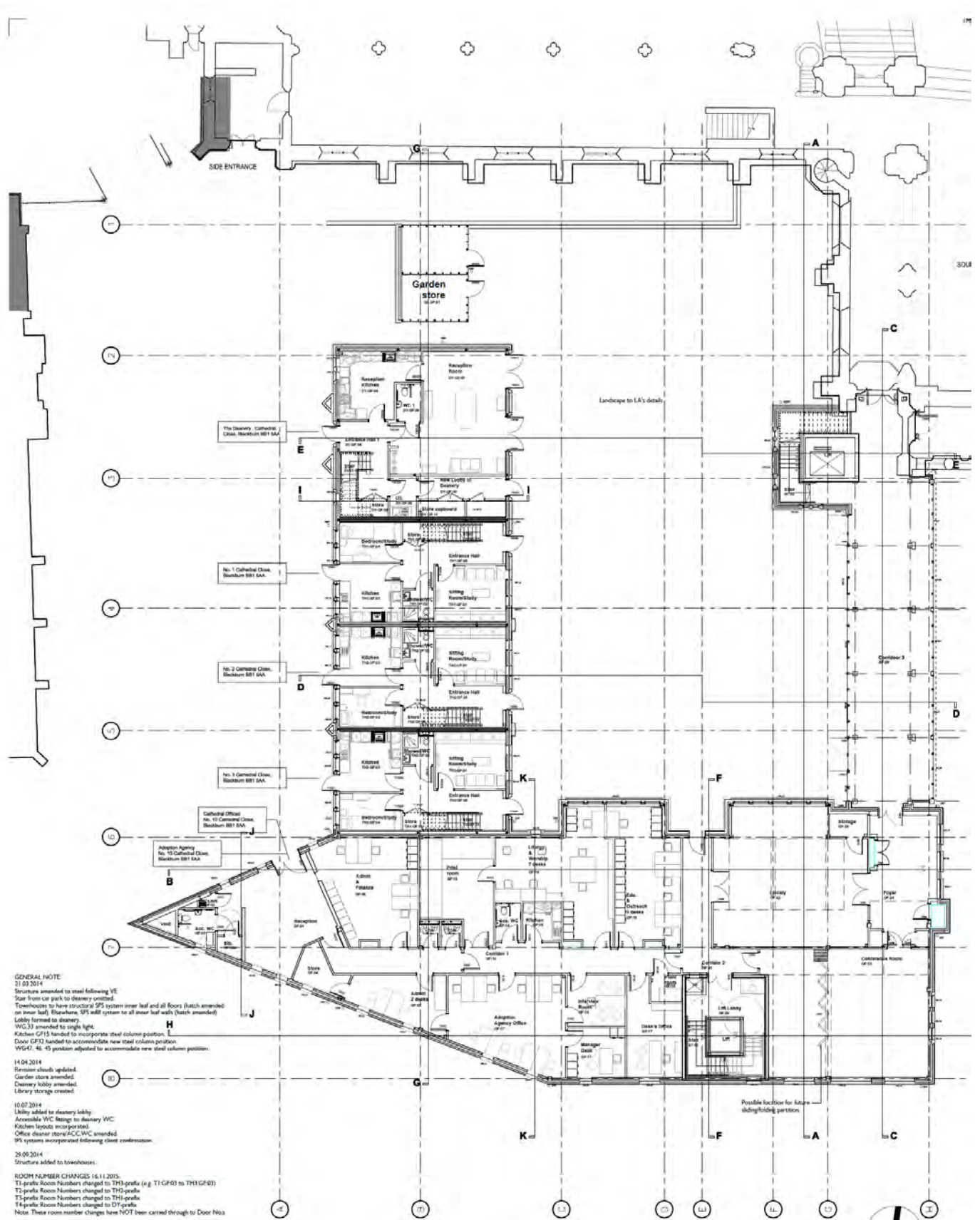


Laurence King Crypt plan 1965



Crypt plan from Q1 2023

Cathedral Court



GENERAL NOTE
 21.03.2014
 Structure amended to steel following VE
 Stair from car park to library omitted.
 Townhouses to have structural SFS system inner leaf and all floors (hatch amended on inner leaf). Storehouse SFS slab system to all inner leaf walls (hatch amended).
 Lobby formed to disney.
 WC.3 amended to single light.
 Kitchen CFS handed to incorporate steel column position.
 Door CF12 handed to accommodate new steel column position.
 WGF.7, 46-45 position adjusted to accommodate new steel column position.

H
 14.04.2014
 Rooms divide updated.
 Garden store amended.
 Disney lobby amended.
 Library storage created.

I
 15.07.2014
 Utility added to library lobby.
 Accessible WC fittings to disney WC.
 Kitchen layout incorporated.
 Office cleaner store/ACC.WC amended.
 BPS systems incorporated following client confirmation.

J
 29.09.2014
 Structure added to townhouses.

K
ROOM NUMBER CHANGES 16.11.2015
 T1-prefix Room Numbers changed to TH3-prefix (e.g. TH3 GF-03)
 T2-prefix Room Numbers changed to TH2-prefix
 T3-prefix Room Numbers changed to TH1-prefix
 T4-prefix Room Numbers changed to D1-prefix
 Note: These room number changes have NOT been carried through to Door Nos.

I Ground Floor Plan
 202 1:100

NOTE: Floor level at 112.590 throughout, unless stated otherwise





Cathedral Court including Deanery



Temple Gallery – connecting the centuries

Gary O'Neill 2023

Schedule and Priorities

October 2023	The Liturgical Plan is filed with the <i>Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England (CFCE)</i> .
October 2023	The College of Canons, which includes Suffragans and Archdeacons, is formally consulted about the Liturgical Plan.
Autumn 2023	The new lighting scheme progresses through Chapter, and FAC to CFCE.
January 2024	Four new sanctuary chairs for senior clergy are commissioned and 40 chairs for the College of Canons.
February 2024	Work is begun on researching and writing a Visitor Engagement Plan.
March 2024	The Changing Places project is completed in order to meet the funding deadline.
Spring 2024	Initial plans are completed for the doors and entrance at the West End.
Spring 2024	The plans for the West end are shared with community groups in Blackburn, the Borough and County, and a consultation of access is undertaken. This includes not only physical access but possible aspects of the building and its use which these groups consider to be inaccessible. Plans are progressed for the Crypt.
Summer 2024	The cathedral Architect draws up an initial overall plan for the reordering of the Sanctuary and Jesus Chapel informed by the access consultation.
September 2024	Architectural survey of Church House completed.
September 2024	Architectural survey of Cathedral Court completed.
Spring 2025	The West Door project is completed.
Spring 2025	The new lighting scheme is completed.
2026	The Centenary of the Diocese and the Cathedral.
2027	The Liturgical Plan is updated.
2028	Quinquennial inspection of the Cathedral.

Compiled and edited on behalf of Chapter by Canon Gary O'Neill

Adopted by Chapter 18 October

St Luke the Evangelist

