

LCR Project Director Updates 2023



20 December 2023

Christmas Celebrations

For my final update of the year, I am sharing some photos showing the re-opened Cathedral and completed internal works.

The new floor, lighting and redecoration look stunning and the level, open interior space allows much more flexibility for seating arrangements and general configuration. Feedback, comment and reaction from visitors and users has been overwhelmingly positive, which is very encouraging.

It is wonderful to have the Cathedral open once again and in full use for carol services and concerts.

Construction work will continue in 2024 on the new Heritage & Learning Centre extension and this is due to open in late summer.

Simon Bentley
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8 December 2023

External Stonework at Leicester Cathedral

Local film maker Alex Wright has been engaged to make four short films on different elements of the building work for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*.

This film shows the making of four new stone grotesques that now reside on the south side of the Cathedral.

[External stonework at Leicester Cathedral](#) from [Alex J. Wright](#) on [Vimeo](#).

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1 December 2023

Inside Leicester Cathedral

Local film maker Alex Wright has been engaged to make four short films on different elements of the building work for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*.

This film shows various stages of some of the various repair, restoration and renewal work undertaken inside the Cathedral.

[Inside Leicester Cathedral](#) from [Alex J. Wright](#) on [Vimeo](#).

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27 November 2023

Archaeological discoveries at Leicester Cathedral

Local film maker Alex Wright has been engaged to make four short films on different elements of the building work for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*.

Alex knows the Cathedral well having undertaken various projects for us over recent years, including the reinternment of King Richard III.

This film shows the process of undertaking the archaeological excavation to enable construction of the new Heritage & Learning Centre, and a glimpse of what was discovered.

[Archaeological discoveries at Leicester Cathedral](#) from [Alex J. Wright](#) on [Vimeo](#).

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10 November 2023

Updated time lapse video shows progress during October

Updated video from the time lapse cameras outside the Cathedral show work to complete the reinforced concrete frame for our new Heritage & Learning Centre and to install the ground floor concrete slab in between this and the cathedral building.



The videos can be seen here:

[External
Birds Eye View](#)

Updated video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral shows grouting and final snagging work on the new limestone floor, getting the new pendant lighting operational, and re-installing wooden panelling and screens.

The video can be seen [here](#).

The repair, restoration and renewal work to the existing Cathedral building is nearing completion and the Cathedral will re-open on Sunday 26 November 2023 for services, events and general visiting, including the Tomb of King Richard III.

Access to the Cathedral will be via the North Porch from Guildhall Lane until work on the new Heritage & Learning Centre is completed in late summer 2024 and the whole site including Cathedral Gardens will be open and accessible.

Sunday 26 November

10.30am Eucharist

12.30pm Open for general visiting

3.30pm Choral Evensong

Daily opening times (including services)

Monday – Friday: 8.00am-6.00pm

Saturday: 9.00am-6.00pm

Sunday: 10.00am-4.30pm

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26 October 2023

Creating a new floor in St Dunstan's Chapel

Work is underway to lay a new floor in St Dunstan's Chapel that will be formed using historic ledger stones, discovered in 2014 during re-ordering of the Chancel in readiness for the reinterment of Richard III.

These ledger stones, fashioned from slate and green Purbeck marble and dating from 1698 to 1802, commemorate local people in characterful lettering that ranges from crude to fine. The stones have been selected for their aesthetic appearance and historic significance and carefully restored and cleaned. This is not only an important physical conservation project for the Cathedral but also provides and a wonderful visual restoration opportunity – providing a link to the past of Leicester, its people and craftsmanship.

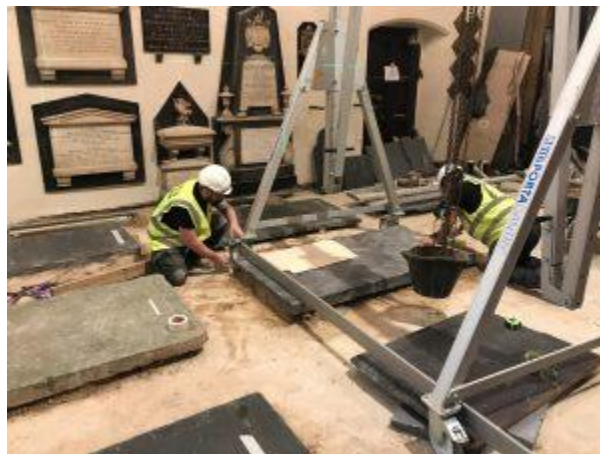


As with the wider flooring works in the Cathedral, there will be level access and underfloor heating.

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13 October 2023

Updated time lapse video shows progress during September

Updated video from the time lapse cameras outside the Cathedral show the specialist groundworkers continuing construction of the ground floor and first floor structure of the new visitor and learning centre extension.



The videos can be seen here:

Birds Eye View External

Updated video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral shows snagging work on the new limestone floor in preparation for grouting, cleaning, and sealing. If you look closely, you may be able to spot ongoing stonework restoration on the south-western and then the north-western arch of the Sanctuary, and work on the floor of the Great South Aisle to prepare for the arrival of a new base plinth for the font that will relocate from the west end of the cathedral. The new plinth will be made from dark Kilkenny limestone and inscribed.

The video can be seen [here](#).

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6 October 2023

Landscaping work to improve access

External landscaping works at the northwest end of the Cathedral are progressing well. This involves constructing new steps to Guildhall Lane as well as creating a new sloped access to improve accessibility via the north door. The floor finishes in the North Porch are also being renewed and there will be new external gates.

The North Porch will serve as the main entrance to the Cathedral when the building re-opens on 26 November. Once all building works are completed in summer 2024 then the main entrance will revert to the Vaughan Porch, on the south side of the cathedral, accessed through Cathedral Gardens.

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21 September 2023

Updated time lapse video shows progress during August

Updated video from the time lapse cameras outside the Cathedral show the specialist groundworkers continuing construction of the new visitor and learning centre extension. The footage shows work to complete the basement and then the ground-floor slab and ground-floor walls, followed by the first-floor slab.



The videos can be seen here:

[**Birds Eye View**](#)
[**External**](#)

Updated video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral shows further work installing the new limestone floor and, if you look closely, work to re-install the wooden panelling on the wall of the Great South Aisle and restore stonework on the south-western arch of the Sanctuary.

The video can be seen [here](#).

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10 September 2023

Community Outreach and Activities

With the Cathedral closed for building work, Rebecca Hale, the Cathedral's Volunteer Manager, has developed a community outreach programme to ensure local people can learn at first-hand about the archaeological programme necessary to enable the construction of the new learning and visitor centre.

With support from Cathedral volunteers, Rebecca is visiting different venues in Leicester with pop-up displays providing information on the archaeology and a finds table displaying a variety of artefacts discovered during the recent excavation work.

Places visited to date include Bishop Street Methodist Church, Belgrave, Bishop Street, New Parks and Rushy Mead libraries and Leicester Prison. Some visits are drop-in events while others include a talk. The programme will continue through the autumn.

We also participated in the recent Festival Of Archaeology, with Mathew Morris from University of Leicester Archaeological Services (who undertook the archaeological excavations) delivering a well-attended talk followed by finds session.

On Saturday 19 August we ran a Family Archaeology Day with the LCR team, supported by Mathew, delivering family-friendly activities in St Martins House. These included finding out about the recent archaeological excavations, a dig box for exploring, designing your own Roman altar, making a Roman mosaic and trying on Roman armour.

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18 August 2023

Updated time lapse video shows progress during July

Updated video from the time lapse cameras outside the Cathedral show the specialist groundworkers continuing construction of the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension. The footage shows work to complete the upper basement walls, including waterproofing, insulation and concrete. The lift shaft is clearly visible in the top centre of the site. The videos can be seen here: [Birds Eye View](#)
[External](#)



Updated video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral shows the use of a special lift to hang the pendant lighting in the nave and side aisles, and installation of the new limestone floor in a striking chevron pattern. The video can be seen [here](#).

Simon Bentley
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3 August 2023

Latest film snippets of building works

Local film maker Alex Wright has been engaged to make four short films on different elements of the building works. Alex knows the Cathedral well having undertaken various projects for us over recent years, including the reinterment of King Richard III.

Click the [link](#) to see a short section of his latest daily rushes that give a good taste of the various works currently underway:

- Construction of the double basement for the new visitor and learning centre
- Fitting and positioning of the pendant lighting
- Internal stonework repair and restoration
- Installation of the new limestone floor

[Leicester Cathedral Revealed | 11.07.2023](#) from [Alex J. Wright](#) on [Vimeo](#).

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20 July 2023

New stone floor

Work is now underway on installing the new limestone floor in the Cathedral, with a skilled team from ABM Tiling laying a chevron pattern designed to accentuate the sense of nave, aisles and transepts as a single liturgical space, gathered around the Sanctuary and highlighting the font and pulpit as key liturgical features.

Several different types of limestone are being used:

Pale limestone for main floor areas

- Hopton Wood from Derbyshire
- Ancaster Weatherbed Buff from Lincolnshire
- Purbeck Beige from Dorset

Mid-dark limestone for arcade strips, thresholds, and pulpit foot surround

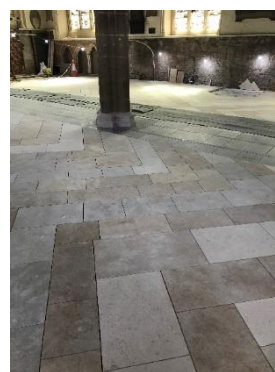
- Purbeck Grub from Dorset

The new limestone floor is intended to be durable and functional and improve the internal character of the Cathedral. It will be level throughout so facilitating better access.

Simon Bentley

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4 July 2023

Updated time lapse video shows progress during June



Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the specialist groundworkers continuing construction of the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension. Having completed the lower basement areas, the footage shows work to form the upper basement floor and walls. The stairwell is visible in the top left.

The video can be seen here:

<https://vimeo.com/841858718/1bbdf81197?share=copy>

Updated video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral doesn't appear to show a great deal to start with! There is work on the floor boxes providing power and data connections and restoration work to the column bases. It is difficult to see the works in the Great South Aisle to install a template setting out the new position of the font and to break through the wall at the east end to form the internal entrance to new visitor and learning centre, as the views are obscured by the nave columns. Towards the end of the video you can see the use of a special lift to install the pendant lighting in the nave.

The video can be seen here:

<https://vimeo.com/841854696/28c4e12055?share=copy>

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19 June 2023

Updated time lapse video shows progress during May



Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the specialist groundwork subcontractors constructing, in stages, the double basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension. The lift shaft is clearly visible.

The video can be seen [here](#).

Updated video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral shows continued work on the floor boxes providing power and data connections and installation of a limecrete screed to cover the underfloor heating coils. This will need to dry and cure for a few weeks before work can begin to lay a new limestone floor. The footage also shows stonework repair and restoration to the southwest columns (see Project Director Update 9 June 2023) and removal of internal scaffolding in the Sanctuary.

The video can be seen [here](#).

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9 June 2023

Internal stonework repair and restoration

Leicester Cathedral Revealed project elements vary in scale and one of the smaller scale elements is stonework repair and restoration to the southwest piers or columns inside the cathedral that define the sanctuary.

Sections of stone mouldings and carvings were removed in 1926/27 when a new chancel screen designed by Sir Charles Nicholson was installed. The screen was relocated in 2015 to the eastern arch of the crossing as part of the re-ordering works for the reinternment of Richard III, thereby exposing the cut backs into the stonework where the screen had been located and fixed. So, it is satisfying to see these made good as part of the project works.

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26 May 2023

Duke of Edinburgh visits Leicester Cathedral

The Cathedral was delighted to welcome His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh who visited Leicester on Tuesday 16th May, where he toured four venues which showcase the city's diversity and rich history.

The Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire, Mike Kapur, accompanied The Duke of Edinburgh during his visit, which included the Shama Women's Centre in Sparkenhoe Street, the African Caribbean Centre in Maidstone Road and the King Richard III Visitor Centre.

The final stop of the day was the Cathedral, where His Royal Highness was shown progress of the work of the *Leicester Cathedral Revealed* project and learned more about the discoveries made during the recent archaeological excavations. The day closed with a visit to the tomb of King Richard III, which has been protected and closed to the public during construction work at the Cathedral.

The Right Reverend Saju Muthalaly, Bishop of Loughborough, who welcomed His Royal Highness to Leicester Cathedral, said: "It was a great honour and privilege to welcome His Royal Highness to Leicester and to show him our historic Cathedral with its royal connections as the resting place of Richard III and the ancient heritage of this location, but also to give him a glimpse of its exciting future as the beating heart of worship and mission for the hundreds of Anglican communities and church schools in our diocese."

Simon Bentley, Project Director of *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*, said: "We are making good progress after the extended archaeological excavation, and we are excited by the many opportunities the finds will bring for engagement with our communities and visitors from farther afield."



19 May 2023

Continuing progress with building works

With the basement slab now in place for the new visitor and learning centre extension, the next stage involves constructing the basement sides.

Inside the Cathedral work continues on the floor with a limecrete screed being laid to cover the underfloor heating coils. This will need to dry and cure for a few weeks before work can begin to lay a new limestone floor.

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12 May 2023

Updated time lapse video shows progress during April

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the specialist groundwork subcontractors constructing the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension. A waterproof membrane is installed over the thin blinding concrete layer, followed by steel reinforcement for the basement slab and then the concrete pour.



The pit in the middle of the basement is for the lift shaft.

The video can be seen [here](#).

Update video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral shows the internal scaffolding being taken down following completion of high level mechanical & electrical and redecoration work, preparatory works to the floor surface including insulation, and installation of underfloor heating coils.

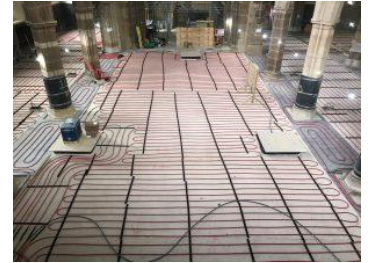
The video can be seen [here](#).

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27 April 2023

Latest progress with building works

Following fully digging out of the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension, the next stage has been construction of the basement slab, involving steel reinforcement and then the concrete pour. The next stage is to construct the basement sides working from bottom upwards.



Inside the Cathedral almost all the internal scaffolding has now been taken down revealing the completed redecoration works, including the refreshed green and red colour tones and new blue ceiling areas above the Sanctuary, Ambulatory and Chapel of Christ the King with silver stars in the form of cinquefoils - a symbol of Leicester and Leicestershire for centuries past.

With the scaffolding down, works have recommenced on the floor with underfloor heating coils installed. A limecrete screed will cover these and following curing for a few weeks, work will begin to lay a new limestone floor.

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14 April 2023

Updated time lapse video shows progress during March

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the specialist groundwork subcontractors fully digging out the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension.

Having thought that the archaeological excavations were complete, a mass burial pit was discovered a couple of days after digging out commenced – the pit is clearly visible at the centre of the top end of the site.

Following this discovery, University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) returned to site and excavated a further 123 burials, resulting in 1,237 burials excavated in total. The archaeologists think the mass burial pit dates from the 14th-century and was used during a mass casualty event, such as a pandemic like the Black Death. Post-excavation analysis including radiocarbon dating and DNA sequencing will be needed to establish this.

The subcontractors managed to mainly work around the archaeologists. At the very end of the video you can see the application of a thin blinding concrete layer over the base to seal in underlying material and provide a clean, level and dry working surface.

The video can be seen below:

<https://vimeo.com/815248823/1809978500>

Update video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral shows the internal scaffolding being taken down following completion of high level mechanical & electrical and redecoration work.

The video can be seen below:



<https://vimeo.com/814580589/f52e594896>

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3 April 2023

Latest film snippets of project works

Local film maker Alex Wright has been engaged to make four short films on different elements of the building works. Alex knows the Cathedral well having undertaken various project for us over recent years including the reburial of King Richard III.



Click the link <https://vimeo.com/812044809/eeaad26997> to see a short section of his latest daily rushes that give a good taste of the various works currently underway:

With archaeological excavations completed, specialist groundwork subcontractors are digging out the double storey basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension. Note the substantial temporary bracing in place to ensure the contiguous concrete piled wall don't move while the deep digging is underway.

Alex captured a nice shot of a new pair of Peregrine Falcons nesting on the spire, using the special platform on the east side. The pair have produced two eggs this week – see <http://leicesterperegrines.org.uk/streaming/>

Inside the Cathedral the internal scaffolding is now being removed in stages.

Repairs have been carried out to the internal south wall in preparation for re-installing the wooden panelling.

Redecoration works to the walls is nearing completion and silver stars are being painted onto the new blue ceiling areas above the Sanctuary, Ambulatory and Chapel of Christ the King. These stars are in the form of a five-petalled flower ('cinquefoil'), a symbol of Leicester and Leicestershire for centuries past. The cinquefoil appears on the shield of the City of Leicester and is the City Council logo, on the flag of Leicestershire County Council, and on the civic arms of several towns across the county as well on the University of Leicester's coat of arms and logo.

As noted for previous videos and photos, the new paint finishes appear particularly bright under the harsh construction lights – the final appearance with the new, carefully designed lighting scheme will be much more muted!

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16 March 2023

Updated time lapse video shows progress during February

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the final phase of the archaeological excavations undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) to enable the construction of the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension.

The significant Roman features and finds described by Mathew Morris from ULAS in the previous update were uncovered in the upper left area of the excavations.

If you look very carefully at 12-14 seconds in (you may have to pause the video!) you can spot the bright pink hair and matching hard hat of Professor Alice Roberts, who visited with the BBC Digging for Britain team to film the excavations for the next series, to be broadcast in early 2024.

With archaeological excavations substantially complete, the internal ramp is removed and the camera is repositioned to show cover taken down and the specialist groundwork subcontractors beginning work to fully dig out the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension.

The video can be seen below:

[New Heritage Learning Centre - Leicester Cathedral - Feb 2023.mp4](#) from [Messenger Construction](#) on [Vimeo](#).
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6 March 2023

Basement digging underway

With archaeological excavations now almost complete, specialist groundwork subcontractors are on site to fully dig out the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension. This is being carried out within the contiguous piled concrete wall installed in the first half of 2022 that defines the basement area.



Inside the Cathedral redecoration work to the walls is underway and alternations are being made to column bases to accommodate the new floor.

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10 February 2023

Videos showing progress during January

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the ongoing archaeological excavations being undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) to enable the construction of the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension.

The excavations are now coming to an end with archaeologists having carefully unearthed more than 1,100 complete burials, and some significant Roman features and finds. Mathew Morris from ULAS will be telling us more in future blogs.

In areas of the site where the archaeologists are confident there are no more burials a mini digger has been used to excavate deeper layers.

The video can be seen below:

Inside the Cathedral the internal time lapse camera, located to the top of the scaffolding at the west end of the nave, shows high-level redecoration work underway.

The video can be seen below:

Local film maker Alex Wright has been engaged to make four short films on different elements of the building works. Alex knows the Cathedral well having undertaken various project for us over recent years including the reburial of King Richard III. See the link below for a short section of his daily rushes that give a good taste of the various works currently underway.



Please note that the new paint finishes appear particularly bright under the harsh construction lights - the final appearance with the new, carefully designed lighting scheme will be much more muted!

Link: <https://vimeo.com/791836997/eb9cda2028>

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Visual of landscape works adjacent to the North Porch
(growthindustry)

20 January 2023

Improving access via the North Porch

Work is underway to improve the cathedral's welcome, visitor experience and accessibility from Guildhall Lane via the North Porch.



A new waterproof concrete floor slab has been laid in the North Porch, and onto this a new inclined stone and ceramic tile floor will be formed removing the current step.

Landscaping works adjacent to the porch will include the construction of new steps to Guildhall Lane and a ramp with lit handrails to provide un-stepped access. Where possible the current paving finishes are being reused.

In the North Porch new full height gates will be installed to prevent unauthorised access and anti-social behaviour when the cathedral is closed.

The combination of these works will create an attractive and inclusive entrance from the north.

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4 January 2023

Updated time lapse video showing progress during December

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the ongoing archaeological excavations being

undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) to enable the construction of the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension.

Archaeologists have now carefully unearthed more than 970 complete burials, and the video show work excavation concentrating on the north area of the site, where several Anglo-Saxon burials have been discovered. Mathew Morris from ULAS will be telling us more about these in a future blog.

The video can be seen below:

Inside the Cathedral the internal time lapse camera, located to the top of the scaffolding at the west end of the nave, shows paint testing and preparation ahead of the full redecoration work that is about to get underway.

The video can be seen below:

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