



The Cathedral of St John the Baptist: The South-West Range





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Introduction

The Diocese of East Anglia has acquired the site to the South-West of the Cathedral of St John the Baptist. We have big ambitions for it. But we are keen to engage with as many members of the community as possible, in the first instance in the Cathedral parish, among clergy and laity of the Diocese, and with our neighbours, before we develop our plans in detail.

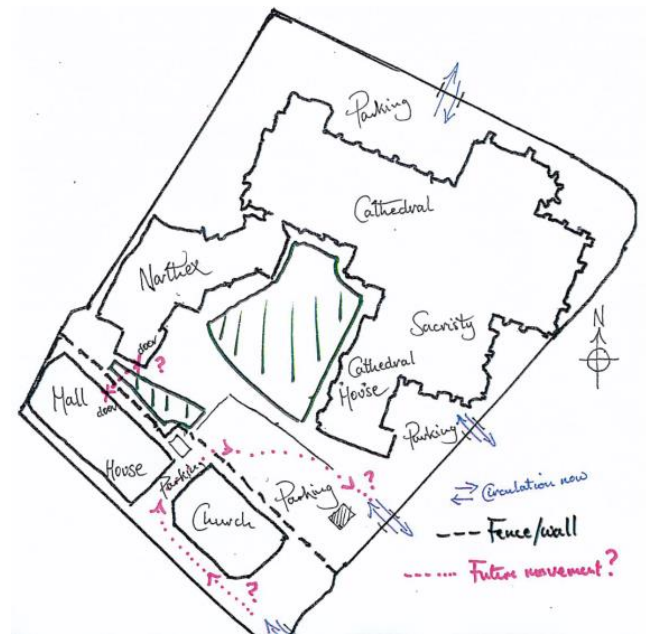


This will take place against the background of the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of the Diocese of East Anglia, during which we will be reflecting on our history, and on how our mission to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ should develop.

Please let us know what you think! (Feedback details at the end)

The new site: former Trinity URC and the Cathedral complex

The Grade II listed church on the new site was designed by the celebrated architect Sir Bernard Feilden, who was also the consultant architect of the University of East Anglia, and was built in 1956. The site also includes a hall and former schoolhouse which dates back to the late-19th century Baptist church formerly on the site, and a house. The church building's listing states that it has group architectural value with the Cathedral and, when integrated into the wider site, will complete the fourth side of the Cathedral's gardens making them a full cloister-style quadrangle.



The existing Cathedral complex of church, house and narthex form three sides of a square. The URC buildings make up the fourth side of a larger quadrangle. At the moment, there is rather cramped car parking on each side of the boundary fence between the SW range and the existing Cathedral area. The existing Cathedral also has mature gardens including a small memorial garden. There are numerous entrances but accessibility, especially for people with mobility issues, remains less than optimal.



Opportunities for Development

1. Worship



We have agreed with the Syro-Malabar Catholic community of Norwich, which currently shares Holy Apostles church, Earlham, that they should use the former Trinity church. This would give the community a permanent home base. The church would also be available for use for Latin-rite services.



To enable this, it might be necessary to reorder the sanctuary of the church, currently dominated by a pulpit which appears to be imposing excessive strain on the supporting wall, to provide a permanent altar.

2. Facilities & Offices

The lower storey of the church and the hall/former school building provide both large open areas, including a gymnasium-sized hall with a stage, and smaller offices and former classrooms. They are also equipped with kitchens and lavatories.

These areas give the opportunity to address a number of known needs for the Diocese and Cathedral community, including:

- More suitable and modern accommodation for the Diocesan Archive
- Space for events, music, performance, fairs
- Spaces for catechesis, choir practices, meetings (the Diocesan catechetical and youth teams currently have no fixed home space)
- Diocesan offices (the offices at Poringland currently accommodate less than half the employees)
- Temporary public exhibitions



We are also considering whether the availability of space could be maximised by extending the first-floor gallery in the large hall to put in place a mezzanine floor.



3. The House



The former caretaker's house is a two-bedroomed cottage and remains very suitable for residential use. It needs some updating and repair. It might serve as accommodation for clergy serving the site, or for retired priests.

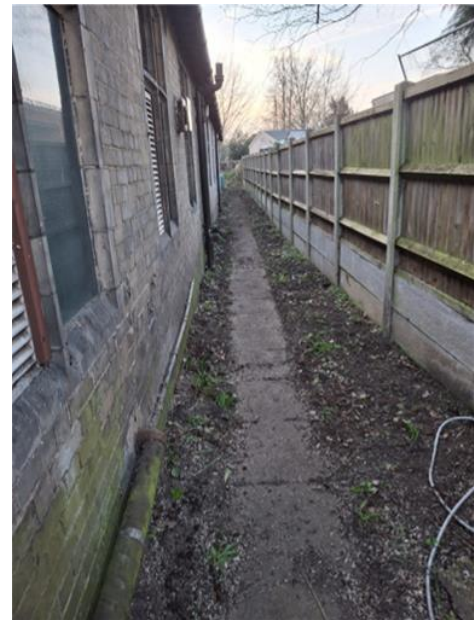


4. The Total Site and Landscape

We aim to develop a masterplan for the whole Cathedral site. This would consider the way people and vehicles could move around, the positioning of drainage and utilities, and the ways in which the uses of buildings can be seen as complementing each other and determining movement around the site.

If the boundary fence between the two elements of the site were removed, there is the potential to:

- Make a larger and more accessible car park
- Enlarge the gardens
- Free up views
- Use the opened-up space for movement between the two churches and the other buildings, and for open air events



To enable this, it might be necessary to remodel the way space is allocated to garden and car park areas and move the electricity substation in the current Cathedral car park.

Consideration will be given to making a welcoming entrance for the general public and a garden at the Unthank Road entrance to Trinity church; and to taking advantage of any car parking improvements to make the North side of the Cathedral on Earlham Road a more welcoming and accessible approach.

Accessibility needs to be considered across the whole site.



Other Plans for the Cathedral of St John the Baptist

At the same time as thinking about the former Trinity URC, we are making progress with our plans to repair historic water damage to the Cathedral roof and upgrade gutters and drains to cope with today's heavier rainfall. The work done so far has been funded by a grant from Historic England and we will pursue grant funding for follow-up work.

Thanks to generous donations, we have also restored and repaired stained glass windows in the Cathedral and will aim to maintain this progressive programme of glass repairs.

Next Steps & Timeline

This **consultation phase** will last until the end of May 2026.

The Diocesan team will review responses to this consultation during the summer.

An **outline masterplan** will be developed in the autumn.

Detailed plans will be published towards the end of the year, with main works possible in 2027.

In the meantime, minor works to make sure the buildings are safe, secure and watertight have been carried out, as well as surveys to inform future detailed plans.

Funding future improvements

The Diocese has earmarked some funds to support repairs and improvements to the South-West range. We will also begin fundraising in the near future, when our plans are confirmed.



Let us have your views

Please let us have your views on the proposed uses of the site, and your own suggestions.

Email views to property@rcdea.org.uk with the subject *Cathedral South-West Consultation*.

We will use your email address solely to process and respond to your submission. Your details will be handled in accordance with applicable data protection laws and will not be shared with third parties without your consent.