PROPOSALS FOR YORK MINSTER

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR HERITAGE CRAFT SKILLS & ESTATE MANAGEMENT

...A sustainable future for the Minster

The Minster has developed a Neighbourhood Plan to set out how the Precinct will evolve in the future to meet the changing needs of its community and visitors.

The York Minster Precinct Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to City of York Council in April 2021 for examination. When adopted, the plan will form part of the Development Plan for the City. The Plan provides the Minster with a clear strategy for the next fifteen years and will be used to secure funding for individual projects and has been developed working with the City of York Council, Historic England, a wide range of stakeholders and the community to get the best strategy in place.

...An internationally recognised Centre of Excellence

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan, there is a vision to establish the Precinct as an internationally recognised Centre of Excellence for heritage craft skills focused around a campus facility.

The Minster’s Stoneyard is responsible for the care of York Minster and its Precinct. Of the 42 Anglican Cathedrals in England, York is one of only ten which retain their own dedicated body of craftspeople. These ten cathedrals also form the foundation of the Cathedrals Workshop Fellowship (CWF) which have joined together to create a new generation of crafts men and women capable of caring for the nation’s cathedrals and heritage buildings in the 21st century.

Through the redevelopment of two sites, the proposals seek to address the requirement for new facilities for stonemasons and to create a technology and works hub in the existing Stoneyard. The project will harness modern technology to support and underpin the renowned craft skills within the Stoneyard which will enable their long-term sustainability and in turn, safeguard the care of York Minster.
...The Heritage Quad

The site of the Heritage Quad comprises part of the gardens of Minster Court (Grade II*) and the Deanery’s garages and workshops. It is set within an area of the Precinct which comprises a series of tightly knit streets and gardens, enclosed by the City Walls and visually dominated by the Minster.

The study site is visible from various viewpoints along the city walls including a key dynamic view identified within the York Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal and as a notable view in the York Minster Neighbourhood Plan. The proposals have been developed with the utmost care and understanding of the Precinct’s historic fabric, special qualities, landscape, use and views to and from the site.

...The Technology and Works Hub

The site of the proposed Technology Hub includes The Stoneyard and York Glaziers Trust, 4-6 Deangate. The site comprises a range of buildings dating from the 19th century to the late-20th century – some are re-purposed 19th century buildings, others are of 1913 and there is a medley of 20th century infill within the yard.

This study site lies in the southern portion of The Precinct, to the south of the Minster. The area comprises a network of narrow streets which surround the Minster but which are separated by a series of roads and modest, informal paved, setted, cobbled or tarmacked spaces.
The proposals create a communal relationship between the different users: masons, scaffolders, gardeners, new apprentices and local, national and international visitors. A green undulating roof invites views from visitors strolling past on the City Walls. For the users of the Heritage Quad, the roof lifts to provide views out, a covered outdoor working area, and the oculus frames views of York Minster.

From the City Walls, visitors gain views into the workshop and courtyard garden. The north facing window gives ideal work light for the masons, while creating a mutual benefit of a visual connection to the city wall to give pedestrians views of the traditional craft and roof structure.
The sustainability strategy is to use less and therefore waste less. Areas of high use and thermal comfort like the dormitories and office spaces will be provided with Air Source Heat pump heating and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR). Overarching architectural passive design elements such as north light, intensive green roof and solar shading combine for an efficient approach. Photovoltaics (PV) will be a necessary addition to the scheme as a key steppingstone in the achievement and route to operational net zero carbon.

The tradition of horticulture in York and York Minster will be researched for the green roof and the new lapidarium garden. Ecclesiastical traditions and local biodiversity will inform the choice of planting and vision for the garden. Stone fragments and artwork in progress will be placed amongst a gallery of immersive planting. Planting of varying density will bring respite and privacy for the dormitory rooms. New trees will add interest and create spaces to dwell.

Outside of the courtyard, the walls are clad in reclaimed tiles from the existing roof and similar to match.
The present Stoneyard, 4 Deangate, will be reordered to create space for a state of the art 5 axis CNC saw. This will be supported by a new band saw. The existing primary saw, built in 1920 and the largest saw in northern England will be restored and operated as an example of how the department has continually embraced technology.

New lifting systems will be installed and additional space created to reinforce our supply of stone on site. The Technology and Works Hub will also see a developed drawing office with improved IT and digital technology to support the functionality of the new equipment. Refurbished support workshops will be provided for the electricians, plumbers, joiners, heritage builders and department management.

A glimpse of the new workspace will be visible on Deangate - a mesh screen provides a place for the glaziers to display work and enhances the public knowledge of the craft within.

The Technology & Works Hub

The journey of stone from delivery, storage and machining is essential to the current and day-to-day work in the stoneyard. Within the courtyard, a rail system will collect the stone from deliveries on Deangate, which are stored on a racking system, then machined in the large wire saw or CNC machine.
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MULTI-USER GROUPS
The Technology Hub must accommodate various groups who will use the site in different ways. It will not only bring together a community of glaziers, masons, electricians, and joiners, but also allow visitor access. A new entrance using the existing gate on Deangate would separate visitors from craftspeople and machinery. A new viewing platform will be created providing excellent views of the Minster, while looking down at the technology machining the stones to maintain it. The lifted roof will accommodate the new cutting-edge technology for the hub, creating an open-plan space with generous northern light, natural cross-ventilation and daylight.

SUSTAINABILITY
The new roof provides an opportunity to capture and retain rainwater over the courtyard area of the site. The ambition is to improve and add climate consciousness into the site's overall water strategy; including retaining water and reusing where possible. The roof’s geometry has been developed to optimise structural efficiency alongside orientation to gather solar energy. Photovoltaic panels in solar arrays on the roof will provide electricity for the day-time use of the machines in the Technology Hub.

Accessible without entering the work space, a viewing gallery provides a prospect to look both at the Minster and the machinery that helps maintain it.
...Summary

The proposals will establish the Precinct as an internationally recognised Centre of Excellence for heritage craft skills and estate management, focused around a campus facility. They have been sensitively developed with careful consideration of the site and wider Precinct’s significance.

The proposals will bring significant social, economic and environmental benefits and will form the heritage of our future generations.

This project presents an opportunity to connect with the shared values of our past, present and future, in order to create a holistic entity that endures challenges and opportunities faced over time. The proposals are designed to be resilient and to sustain potential future growth and unknowns.

The proposals have been designed to bring communities of all age groups together, locally, nationally, and internationally. The project cares passionately about inspiring people of all generations, to preserve and catalyse our shared heritage.

Embodying the spirit of communities, it is hoped that these buildings will inspire local communities and those from further afield, to engage in the beauty and craft of architecture, as well as foster and share the skills required to care for a heritage estate of this nature, ensuring future generations can enjoy York Minster as we do today.

The Consultation

Whatever your reason for visiting the Precinct, we would encourage you to comment and help shape the future of this special place...

The consultation begins on 12th October and closes at midnight on 2nd November 2021.

We welcome and value all comments which will shape the final version of the proposals – please let us know what’s important to you.

All comments are to be made online and can be emailed to Alex McCallion at alexm@yorkminster.org

What Happens Next?

The views gathered as part of this public consultation are much valued. We will carefully consider all comments and integrate them into the final design where possible.

Following consultation, the design team will refine the detailed proposals which will form the basis of a Full Planning Application and Listed Building Consent which will be considered by City of York Council and its stakeholders.

If the proposal is approved, works will begin on site in 2022, with the new facilities operational and in use by 2023.

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