

St John's

Catholic Cathedral Portsmouth



Cathedral Architect/Surveyor to the Fabric

The Cathedral Church of St John the Evangelist, Portsmouth

"My house will be a house for all people." (Isaiah 56:7)

Introduction

The Cathedral Church of St John the Evangelist, Portsmouth wishes to appoint a Cathedral Architect/Surveyor to the Fabric (hereafter referred to as Cathedral Architect) to support and guide those responsible for the Cathedral in its care for, and development of, the fabric of the Cathedral itself and associated buildings over the coming years. A suitably qualified individual is sought who is in sympathy with the aims and objectives of the Cathedral and its role as the Mother Church for the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth, which covers Hampshire, Berkshire, that part of Oxfordshire south of the Thames, the Isle of Wight, the Channel Islands and that part of Dorset around Bournemouth. The Cathedral occupies a central position in the City of Portsmouth and is the seat of the Catholic Bishop of Portsmouth, currently Bishop Philip Egan.

The appointment comes at a pivotal moment in the Cathedral's life. Opened in 1882 and consecrated in 1887, the Cathedral will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2032. It suffered serious damage in an air raid in January 1941, which destroyed the adjacent Bishop's House, and it was extensively renovated in the late 1940s. Much of the stained glass dates from this period. Further renovation and major reorderings took place in 1970, 1982 and 2001.

As with all places of worship, St John's Cathedral was hit hard by the pandemic and suffered a serious loss of income. Recent major work has included the repair of the West Window (2023), which was in imminent danger of collapse, and the repair of serious leaks in the roofs of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel (2022) and St Patrick's Chapel (2025). The last Quinquennial Inspection Report (QIR) was undertaken in autumn 2023. It identified work required to the Cathedral's west end (possible underpinning due to structural movement), the main roofs and the nave clerestory windows. The Cathedral's services (heating and electrics) also require upgrading. Funds permitting, desirable works to the interior of the Cathedral include redecoration including, if possible and subject to funding, the recovery of decorative wall painting and stencilling (covered over in 1970) and possible improvements to the sanctuary area. A suggestion that a new organ might be installed at the west end also needs to be explored.

The long-term sustainability of the wider site is also an important consideration, recognising that the Cathedral itself is the principal focus. The wider site encompasses St John's Cathedral, Bishop's House (including Cathedral House) and the Aula Maxima (a large Victoria era meeting room adjacent to Bishop's House). The former school on the site, which adjoins the Cathedral, now houses the Curial Offices of the Diocese (St Edmund House) as well as the parish hall and meeting rooms. The successful candidate will need to operate in a way that recognises and responds to the individual operational needs of these distinct but interdependent entities.

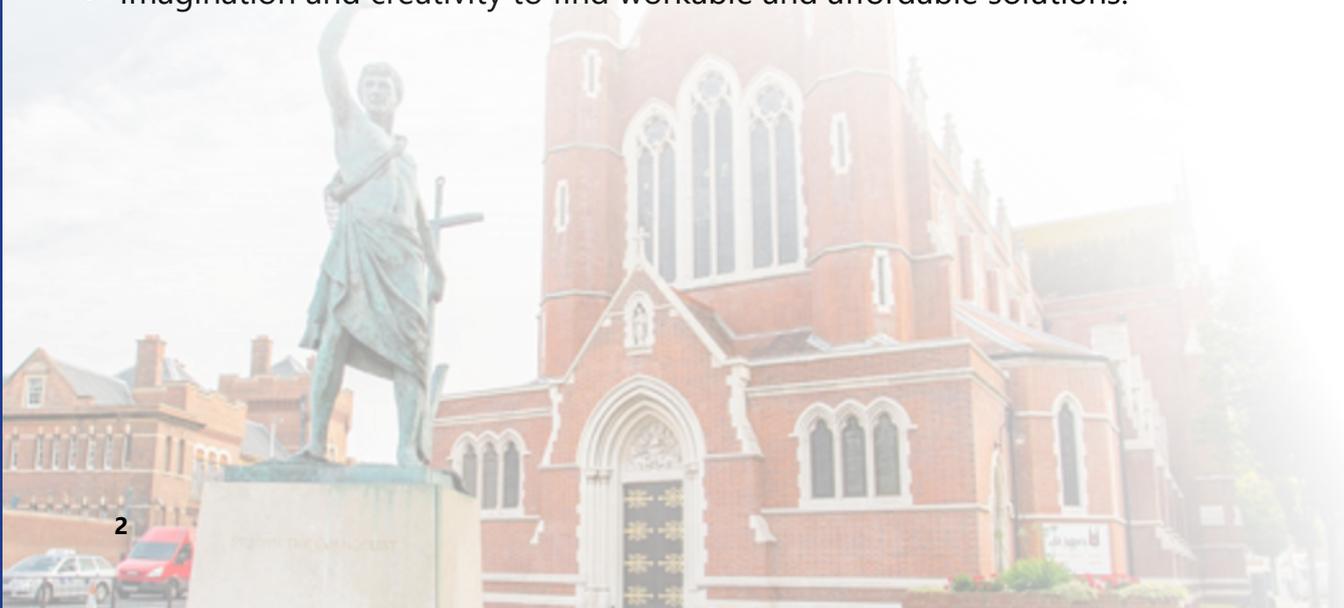
The Cathedral will continue to have severe financial constraints over the next few years. It is therefore vital that wise and informed decisions are made about priorities.

Due to the complexity of the site and the inter-related uses that are – and will continue to be – accommodated, an estate wide Master Planning process has begun guided by Geoff Rich of Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios. Part of this process is to build links with organisations within Portsmouth so that the Cathedral can play a more integrated role in the City of Portsmouth. This work is at a very early stage. The conservation and improvement of the fabric of St John's Cathedral will be the primary focus of the Cathedral Architect.

The Cathedral Architect will be a gifted communicator and advocate, internally and externally, who enjoys working as part of the Cathedral team.

The person we are looking for will bring:

- A strong technical skill set with experience in conservation and repair of historic buildings.
- Experience of cathedral or major church repairs.
- Professional conservation accreditation.
- An understanding of the liturgical, missional and other purposes of the Cathedral.
- Imagination and creativity to find workable and affordable solutions.



Primary Responsibility

The role of the Cathedral Architect is primarily intended to give continuous attention to the conservation, repair needs and maintenance of the Cathedral's fabric, fixtures, and fittings. In addition, a key output will be the formulation of a conservation strategy that will provide a long-term framework for managing the fabric of the Cathedral and associated listed buildings.

The Architect will report to the Cathedral Dean, currently Canon James McAuley, who was appointed Dean in September 2022.

The Cathedral Site Manager and the Diocesan Estates Department are responsible for ensuring that any work does not unduly disrupt the operations of the Cathedral or breach the separate security arrangements of the Cathedral, Bishop's House or the diocesan offices in St Edmund House. In conjunction with the Architect, they will develop the implementation plan for any works. The Cathedral Site Manager and Estates Department act as the day-to-day point of contact when major works are taking place on the site and a close and positive relationship with them is essential.



Role and Duties

The specific expectations of the role of Cathedral Architect include:

- Building on the 2023 QIR, the preparation, oversight and management of an agreed programme of works to repair and to improve the fabric of the Cathedral, together with its services, bearing in mind the need to improve environmental sustainability.
- Preparation of the 2028 QIR.
- Specialist advice on conservation and listed building matters and management of Faculty applications to the Southern Historic Churches Committee and other authorities as necessary.
- Oversight of Fire Audit, Disaster Planning, and Health and Safety matters, including management of potential asbestos issues, relating to the Cathedral.
- Maintenance of a full and accurate record of any building works overseen and sharing of the same in a fully accessible format with the Cathedral and Diocese so that they can be added to the relevant archive.

The Cathedral Architect has a key professional role which relates to all matters concerning the fabric of the Cathedral: its structure, contents, furnishings, and setting. He/she will not necessarily have professional expertise to advise in detail on every aspect, but will understand when and how to involve expert advice, when necessary consulting with others. Matters such as the care of monuments, historic floors, furniture and fittings are amongst those which the Cathedral Architect should advise, in consultation with a qualified conservator as appropriate. He/she should be consulted on all proposals affecting the building including ventilation, lighting, heating, security, fire precautions, public address systems, organs, and other installations. He/she should advise upon and approve the appointment of independent consultants and on specialist matters such as the measurement of structural movements, on environmental monitoring, and on anything involving excavations or recording, if necessary. He/she should be responsible for the co-ordination and integration of these activities.

The Cathedral Architect has a contribution to make on every proposal for signage and interpretation (as these affect the appearance of the Cathedral) together with furnishings, memorials, liturgical rearrangements, or alterations that might affect the architectural character of the building and should be brought into discussions from the outset. The Cathedral Architect should consult fully with and then make formal applications to the Art, Architecture and Patrimony Committee of the Diocese of Portsmouth and the Southern Historic Churches Committee for any work requiring appropriate permissions.

Accountability

The Cathedral Architect will report regularly to the Cathedral Dean. An annual report to the Diocesan Trustees will be required. This annual report will give clear recommendations on future priorities, along with a report on progress.

The Cathedral Architect will also be expected to support the Cathedral when reporting to the Southern Historic Churches Committee or to the local planning authority. The primary working relationships will be with the Dean of the Cathedral, the Chief Operating Officer of the Diocese, and the Cathedral Site Manager/Diocesan Estates Department.

Meeting attendance

Over and above contract meetings for specific projects, the Cathedral Architect may be expected to attend meetings of the Cathedral Fabric Advisory Committee, the Diocesan Art, Architecture and Patrimony Committee and the Southern Historic Churches Committee as necessary, and also meetings of the Trustee Board of the Diocese as necessary.

Office accommodation is not provided, but with sufficient notice, a meeting room can be made available if required.



Fees

Please indicate the monthly retainer to cover attendance at the meetings identified above, prompt ad hoc support and enquiries, and brief papers on the early stages of project development, where requested. The retainer fee implies that work for the Fabric Advisory Committee is given priority and that the cathedral and its staff may seek and receive advice without incurring additional fees or expenses. We anticipate the time commitment for the above to be an average of two days per month.

Additionally, please provide indicative fees for the following items, which will fall beyond the scope of the retainer:

- 2028 QIR.
- A table of indicative fees for potential 'defined projects' with a budget (excluding VAT) of (i) up to £50,000; (ii) £50,000 to £250,000 and (iii) more than £250,000.
- A schedule of hourly rates for relevant practice staff for projects.

Appointment

The appointment will be for five years, subject to a probationary period of twelve months, with review and possible renewal in 2031.



Application process

To apply, applicants should write to the Dean, Canon James McAuley, explaining:

- Why they are interested in the post of Cathedral Architect.
- The skills and experience they would bring to the role.
- Their approach to the care and conservation of historic buildings, recognising the tight financial circumstances which constrain the Cathedral's ambitions.
- Their experience of developing proposals for complex and interconnected sites.
- Their philosophy with regard to the requirement of a holistic approach, encompassing the engagement of all relevant stakeholders.

Please include:

- A Curriculum Vitae.
- Information about your practice and its structure.
- Relevant portfolio information.
- A fee proposal.
- The names of two referees.
- Details of professional indemnity cover.

Your application should be submitted to the Cathedral Dean:
jmcauley@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 24th April 2026**.

Shortlisted candidates will be notified as soon as possible. Interviews will take place in the Cathedral parish meeting rooms (PO1 3QA) on Tuesday 2nd June 2026.

The Cathedral is open every day from 7.30am until 6pm. To view parts of the Cathedral not open to the public, together with the adjoining Bishop's House, Aula Maxima and the former cathedral school (St Edmund House and cathedral hall and meeting rooms), please contact the Cathedral Site Manager:

Zdravko (Zee) Panalov, sitemanager@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.

Mobile: 07878 313656

Please contact Caroline Virgo (cvirgo@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) if you have any pre tender enquiries or to obtain a link to a folder containing the 2023 Quinquennial Inspection Report (QIR), 2025 Cathedral Heritage Report and 2026 Heritage Assessment for the Cathedral site.



St John's

Catholic Cathedral Portsmouth



portsmouthcatholiccathedral.org.uk

