



CHESTER
CATHEDRAL

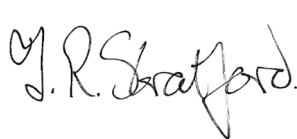
CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT/ SURVEYOR OF THE FABRIC

Tender Pack

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Chester Cathedral is one of the nation's great cathedrals with over a thousand years of architectural richness and complexity, comprising a former monastic complex and wider estate of remarkable historic and cultural significance.

The Cathedral is seeking to appoint an Architect or Surveyor of the Fabric to support the Chapter and its Cathedral officers in the conservation, repair and considered development of its fabric. The appointment reflects the evolving nature of the Cathedral's workload, the growth of its in-house capacity, and the importance of a close professional relationship based on collaboration and good judgement.



Very Revd Dr Tim Stratford
Dean



Ted Comer
Director of Heritage and Fabric



ABOUT CHESTER CATHEDRAL

Historical Significance

Chester Cathedral stands on a site of unbroken ecclesiastical significance which long predates the Norman Conquest. There is evidence that the relics of St Werburgh were brought to Chester in the 9th century, and that an Anglo-Saxon minster occupied the north-east corner of the site in the 10th century. The minster was re-founded in 1092 as a Benedictine monastery, followed immediately by the construction of a new church and claustral buildings, parts of which survive in the present fabric, most notably the North Transept and North-West Tower.

St Werburgh's Abbey was a rich and important foundation, and its abbots invested in continuous development and reconstruction from its foundation until the Reformation. The abbey was dissolved in 1540 and re-founded as a cathedral in 1541. In the centuries that followed, investment shifted from

the principal church to the precinct, including the laying out of a fine Georgian square on the foundations of the former monastic buildings.

By the 19th century the Cathedral fabric had suffered from underinvestment and dilapidation, but the efforts of a succession of deans and their architects, most notably Sir George Gilbert Scott, brought about a period of extensive and at times controversial restoration which largely shaped the fabric as it is now encountered. The Cathedral is not a finished monument but living heritage, still shaped by daily use and renewal. Notable additions in the 21st century include the Song School, designed by Ronald Sims and Andrew Arrol and completed in 2005, and the re-ordering of the west steps with the new Pilgrim Porch, designed by artist Stephen Broadbent and architect Tony Barton.



ABOUT CHESTER CATHEDRAL

Scale and complexity of Cathedral and Estate

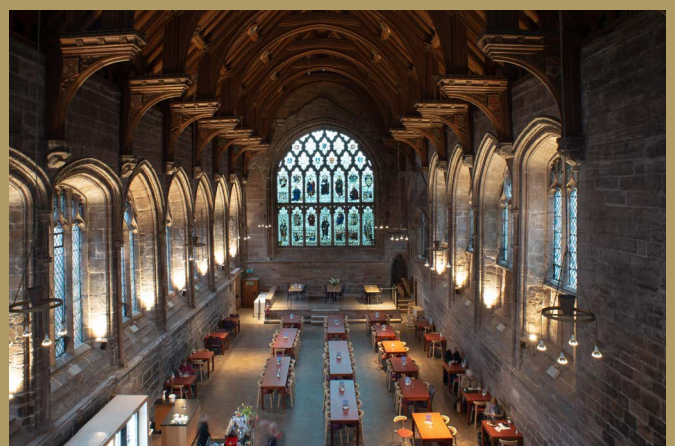
Chester Cathedral retains one of the best-preserved groups of former monastic buildings in the country. These include a fine Norman Undercroft, a substantial Refectory with its complete pre-Reformation reading pulpit, and an architecturally distinguished Early English Chapter House and Vestibule.

The Cathedral church itself contains the largest and widest South Transept of any English cathedral. All of these areas remain in regular and varied use in the life of the Cathedral, serving both worship and regular events.

The jewel in Chester's crown is the 14th-century Quire stalls with their surviving misericords, arguably among the finest medieval stallwork to be found anywhere. The Cathedral is also furnished with the unique survival of a 17th-century

Consistory Court in the south-west tower, together with many other elements which demonstrate the full thousand years of use and care embodied in the site.

The Cathedral precinct occupies the north-eastern quarter of the walled city of Chester. The wider estate includes a substantial number of properties, the majority listed, together with the Grade I listed Abbey Gateway and other designated heritage assets. Although there has been sustained investment and improvement over more than a decade, there remains significant scope across the estate both to strengthen the performance and presentation of existing assets and to bring forward carefully judged new proposals.



Scale and range of activities

Chester Cathedral is a lively and outward-facing institution, with a substantial rhythm of worship, a major visitor economy, and a significant cultural presence. It sustains 21 regular services each week, alongside the major festivals of the Church's year and a full programme of civic worship. It welcomes around 800,000 visitors annually, hosts around 125 major events each year, and maintains outreach across the city and wider region.

Regular worship, attended by around 50,000 people each year, is supported by the Cathedral Choir and Grand Organ. The organ, housed within Gilbert Scott's casework, is one of the defining features of the building and a central part of the Cathedral's musical and liturgical life; the case itself may fairly be regarded as a pinnacle of Gothic Revival design. Its full refurbishment is due to begin after Easter 2027 and will be one of the Cathedral's major projects in the next phase of its development.

CURRENT CONTEXT & STRATEGIC PLAN

Summary of current condition

The Cathedral fabric is generally in good condition, as successive Quinquennial Inspections have recognised over several decades. That overall position depends, however, on careful and regular maintenance, and it has long been understood that the condition of the building cannot be sustained without continuing investment in repair and preventative care.

Since at least the 2005 Quinquennial Inspection, particular concern has been expressed about the widespread historic use of cementitious mortar, both internally and externally, and the accelerated decay this has caused to the soft red sandstone. In the past five years the Cathedral has begun a programme of remedial work to address this issue. The roofs are broadly sound, though ongoing attention to flashings, local repairs, and routine maintenance remains necessary. The rainwater goods are in reasonable condition, but, as with many historic buildings, can struggle in periods of intense rainfall. In the past five years, significant improvements have also been made to elements of the building services and safety infrastructure, including the fire alarm system, lightning protection, and emergency lighting. There is, however, likely to be further work required to a number of the clerestory windows, some of which show signs of sagging and cracking.

The Estate has likewise received sustained attention over the past decade. Vacancy levels are now very low and the external envelope of the properties is generally in reasonable condition, supported by regular maintenance and decoration. Internally, the properties are well managed and compliance is overseen by the Cathedral's Estate Manager. As elsewhere across the Cathedral estate, the position is sound but depends on the continuation of active management and timely investment.





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STATEMENT OF NEED

Heritage Skills

The long-term care of Chester Cathedral and its estate depends on access to people with the right technical skill and conservation understanding to maintain historic fabric properly, and to avoid the kind of inappropriate intervention which has contributed to present challenges, including the legacy of cementitious mortars and the accelerated decay of soft red sandstone. In that context, the skills required to care for the Cathedral well have become a necessary part its response to the existing maintenance need of its determination to do this in a financially responsible and resilient way.

The Cathedral has therefore begun to develop a heritage skills training programme with regional and national partners, intended to respond to evidenced employer demand and to become financially sustainable over time. The programme is initially focused on short courses, continuing professional development, and early-level vocational routes in traditional craft, conservation, and heritage retrofit skills.

This work also reflects a wider ambition. The Cathedral is well placed to act not only as a client and custodian, but

as a place of training, and professional development. The purpose is not solely to create routes into employment, but also to strengthen the long-term capacity of the sector, to support our planned preventative maintenance and net zero objectives, to reduce dependence on fragile external labour markets, and to open up heritage careers for people who have too often been excluded from them.

The Cathedral is particularly concerned to create pathways in which younger professionals, trainees, craftspeople and those from non-traditional backgrounds are taken seriously and enabled to grow in confidence and skill.

This has direct relevance to the present appointment. The Cathedral is seeking an Architect or Surveyor of the Fabric who will work constructively within this culture and who values the development of in-house capability, respects practical and emerging expertise, and is willing to contribute to a setting in which learning, mentorship and good conservation practice are part of the Cathedral's business as usual.

STATEMENT OF NEED



Strategic Plan

The Cathedral's wider strategic plan for 2025–2030 provides the context for this appointment. It is built around seven areas of activity and is to be delivered through a combination of improvements to business as usual and a series of significant projects intended to increase the Cathedral's capacity and impact over time. Within that framework, particular emphasis is placed on revitalising heritage and environment, sharing the Cathedral's story, growing resources sustainably, and cultivating partnerships with the diocese and wider community. The plan makes clear that historic fabric is to be well maintained, that heritage is understood as something living rather than static, and that the Cathedral's buildings and spaces must continue to serve worship, visitors, learning, and community life in relevant and well-supported ways.

Two strands of the plan are especially relevant to the present appointment. The first is Project Discovery, which is an umbrella programme of smaller projects intended to increase the Cathedral's impact within the city and improve visitor experience. Its longer-term aspiration is to make the Cathedral more porous and welcoming, improve access to its stories, strengthen connectivity across the site, and deepen partnerships with the wider community; the plan anticipates that this will require physical changes to the buildings as well as continued development of external relationships. The second is the refurbishment of Estate properties, including consideration of whether one long-unusable property and several linked buildings might support overnight accommodation as a way of making repair and renewal financially viable.

ROLE & WORKING RELATIONSHIP

The Cathedral is seeking an Architect or Surveyor of the Fabric who is willing to work as a close professional partner to the Cathedral team and to engage regularly in the life of the institution. The role requires early involvement in discussions about fabric issues and potential projects, including at the formative stage when options are still being explored and before proposals have been fully defined. The Cathedral is looking for an appointee who is comfortable offering informal professional advice, contributing to the development of ideas, and remaining closely engaged over time, rather than operating at a distance as an external consultant.

A core expectation of the role is the ability to work constructively with a wide range of people involved in the care of the Cathedral, including staff and craftspeople at different stages of their careers and from a variety of professional and non-professional backgrounds. The Cathedral places particular importance on a working culture in which early-career professionals are taken seriously, practical experience is recognised as a form of expertise in its own right, and differences in background or training are understood as strengths. The successful candidate will therefore need to demonstrate not only professional expertise, but also the patience, judgement, and courtesy required to exercise that expertise well, creating space for others to contribute and supporting the development of in-house capability over time.

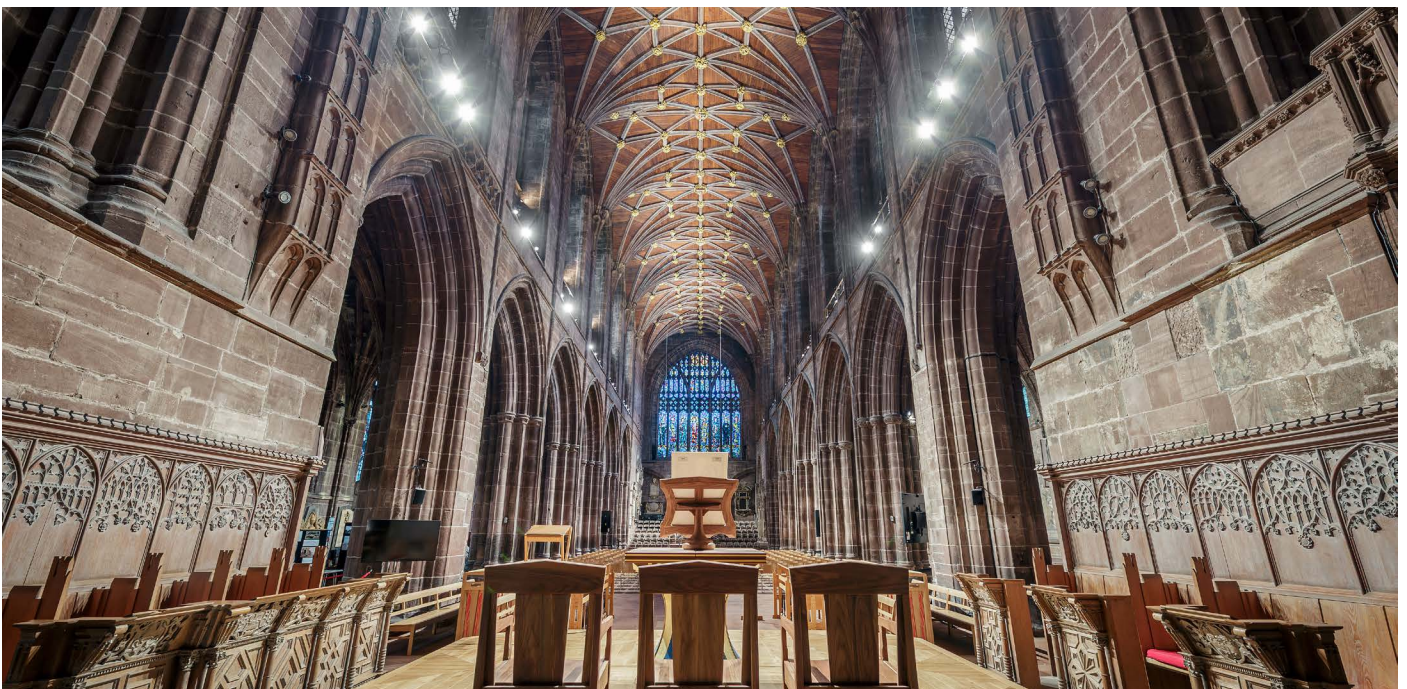
The Architect or Surveyor of the Fabric is appointed to advise and support the Cathedral in the discharge of its responsibilities for the care of the fabric. The role is accountable to the Cathedral through its established governance and management structures, and day-to-day professional engagement will be through Cathedral staff responsible for the fabric. Professional advice is intended to inform decision-making, but responsibility for priorities, instructions, and outcomes rests with the Cathedral. The successful candidate will need to be comfortable working within that framework and to understand the role as one that supports the Cathedral's officers, strengthens its professional team, and contributes to a culture in which learning, mentorship, and good conservation practice form part of business as usual.

Conduct, Collaboration and Culture

It is expected that the successful candidate will work respectfully and inclusively with younger professionals, with women in the workforce, including within construction and craft settings, and with those whose expertise comes through craft practice or other non-traditional routes as well as through professional qualification. The Cathedral places real value on practical knowledge and expects it to be treated seriously.

The successful candidate will be expected to exercise professional authority with care and good judgement. The Cathedral is not seeking someone who dominates discussion, substitutes status for argument, or makes it harder for others to contribute with confidence.

The successful candidate will be expected to listen carefully, engage openly, and contribute to a working culture in which discussion is constructive, expertise is shared, and others are given space to think, question, and develop.



Commitment & professional prioritisation

The successful candidate will be expected to treat this role as a central and sustaining professional commitment, not as a peripheral appointment among a wider portfolio of interests.

The successful candidate will be expected to show that they have the capacity and inclination to give the Cathedral consistent attention, including responding to emerging issues and remaining properly engaged over time.

The successful candidate will be expected to invest time in understanding the Cathedral's fabric, history, estate, and working context in depth, and to demonstrate a genuine commitment to its long-term care and development.

Scope of Role

The successful candidate will be required to discharge the customary statutory duties of the role, including the Quinquennial Inspection, an annual written report to Chapter, attendance at the Fabric Advisory Committee, and consultation with the Cathedral Archaeologist, where required. They will also be expected to advise on works requiring approval under the Care of Cathedrals Measure and, where required, to prepare the supporting material for FAC or CFCE consideration.

The Architect or Surveyor of the Fabric is appointed to advise and support the Cathedral's officers and clergy in the discharge of their responsibilities for the fabric. The Cathedral is seeking someone who can bring expert external judgement while working closely enough with the team to become a trusted and well-integrated part of its professional life.

Decisions remain those of the Cathedral, but they should be informed by thoughtful and well-grounded advice. The greater part of the role will be to support the Cathedral's internal team in the planning, prioritisation and delivery of ongoing maintenance and repair, bringing professional judgement to the scheduling of works and the long-term care of the fabric. The role will also support the Cathedral's wider strategic development by advising on emerging projects, helping to shape briefs and options at an early stage, and, where appropriate, contributing to design work; although the Cathedral does not expect the Architect or Surveyor of the Fabric to necessarily lead or design every intervention.

Relationship to Cathedral Team

Chester Cathedral operates under the Cathedrals Measure (2021) and the Care of Cathedrals Measure (2011), its board of trustees is the Chapter to whom the Leadership is accountable.

Strategic direction will be shaped through a regular monthly Architect's Meeting which is attended by the Dean and COO and external consultants, which acts as a clear forum for discussion of strategic priorities, maintenance planning, and project development. The primary day-to-day point of contact for the Architect or Surveyor of the Fabric will be the Director of Heritage and Fabric for Cathedral matters and the Cathedral's Estate Manager for issues pertaining to the wider estate.

In practice, much of the day-to-day working relationship will be with the wider Fabric Team, both in the delivery of ongoing maintenance and repair and in the early development of projects. The Architect or Surveyor of the Fabric will also be expected, where requested, to support the Cathedral in its dealings with wider consultants and specialists, helping to represent the Cathedral's interests.

This is an appointment which offers the opportunity to work with an exceptional building and a highly engaged staff team. The Cathedral is ambitious about its future and is in a thriving and active phase of development and is fortunate to have an established and strong staff and governance to deliver this though a serious programme of fabric care, and an ongoing strategic plan. The Cathedral sees this as an opportunity for the successful candidate to become part of a close and effective team working together on a place of significance and potential.



Approach to fees and retainer

The Cathedral intends to appoint on the basis of an annual retainer in order to secure regular access to professional advice and support early in discussions and to maintain continuity of professional opinion over time. The purpose of the retainer is to ensure that the Architect or Surveyor of the Fabric is available to the Cathedral at the point when projects, problems and options are still being explored, rather than only once matters have become sufficiently developed to generate separate fee proposals.

This is particularly important to the Cathedral's way of working. The Cathedral needs latitude to test and refine ideas before committing itself to formal project expenditure, while still being able to draw on informed professional advice.

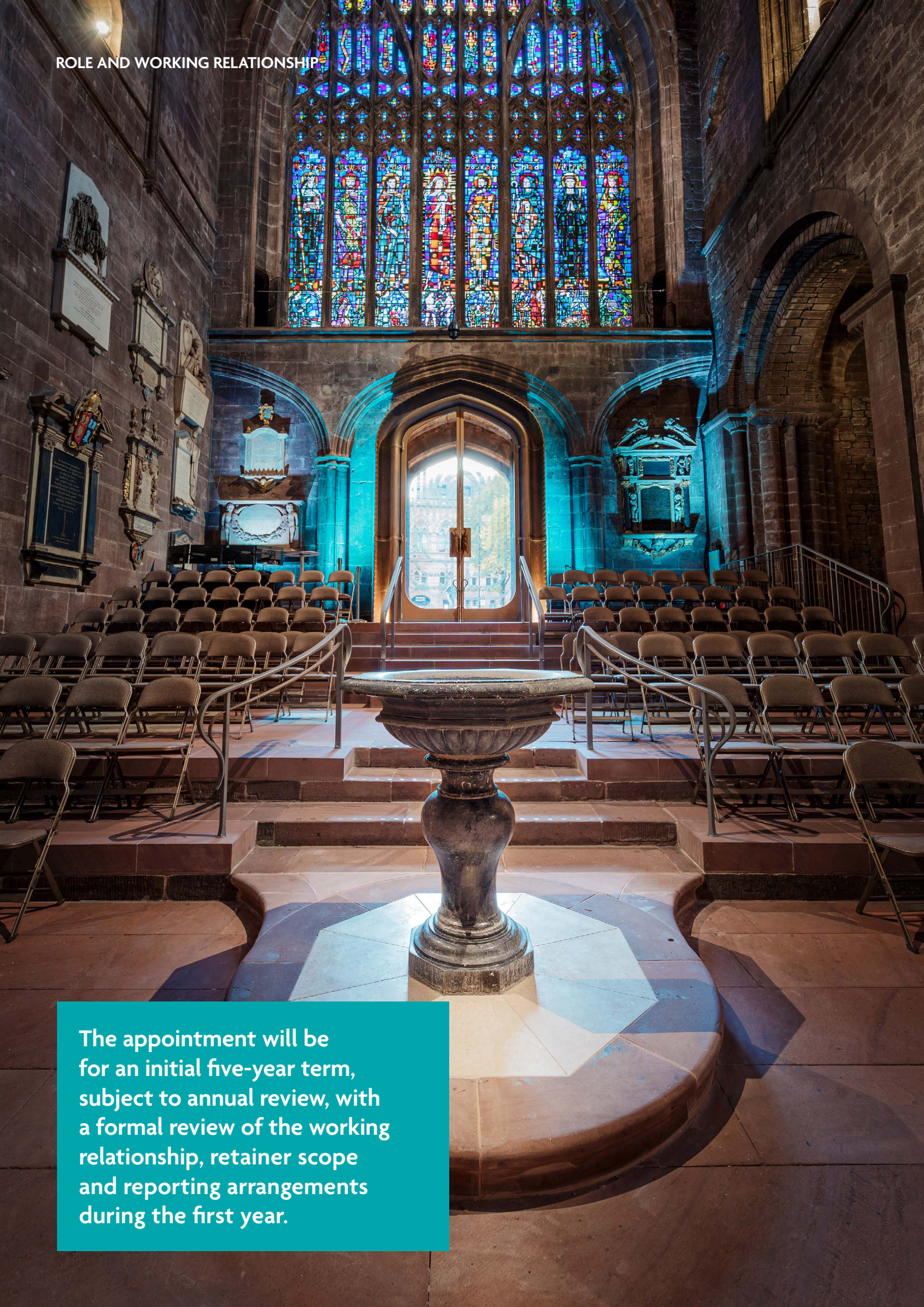
The retainer is intended to avoid a position in which the Cathedral is discouraged from seeking timely advice because the cost of doing so is prohibitive at the formative stage. The Cathedral recognises that substantial and discrete project

work will generate additional fees, but is seeking a structure in which those fees arise at the appropriate point, after early thinking and scoping have been properly supported.

Candidates are asked to submit an annual retainer proposal based on an anticipated pattern of regular professional involvement. This should include attendance at the monthly Architect's Meetings, Fabric Advisory Committee meetings, reasonable informal advice by telephone or email, early discussion of emerging maintenance issues and project ideas, and such site visits as are necessary to maintain familiarity with the Cathedral fabric and current priorities.

The retainer is not intended to remove the need for separate fee agreements for substantial or discrete project work. Candidates should therefore make clear what their retainer would include and what might fall outside it.





The appointment will be for an initial five-year term, subject to annual review, with a formal review of the working relationship, retainer scope and reporting arrangements during the first year.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Cathedral expects to appoint a named individual as Architect or Surveyor of the Fabric, and welcomes applications from sole practitioners, individuals within larger practices, or others who can demonstrate appropriate competence, availability, professional support and insurance arrangements.

Please include:

1. A CV with covering letter expressing why you wish to apply
2. Information about your practice structure
3. Relevant portfolio information
4. A case study of a project which involved intervention into a listed building
5. Name and contact details of a referee
6. Your approach to fees
7. Details of your current level of professional indemnity insurance

Supporting Information (available on request):

1. A copy of the current QI for the Cathedral
2. A floor plan of the Cathedral
3. A complete list of Cathedral Estate properties
4. Chester Cathedral's Constitution and Statutes
5. The Strategic Plan, Vision, and Values
6. Future workload pipeline
7. Governance Diagram

Other documents to be aware of:

8. The Care of Cathedral Measure 2011
9. Cathedrals Measure 2021
10. The Role and Duties of the Cathedral Architect (CFCE document)

Selection process:

Following shortlisting, selected candidates will be invited to a multi-stage interview process at Chester Cathedral. This will include engagement with members of Chapter, Cathedral officers, representatives of the Fabric Advisory Committee, including its Chair, and a representative of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England.

The process will be designed to assess candidates' professional experience, conservation judgement, approach to collaboration, and ability to work within the Cathedral's governance and staff structures. It will also give candidates the opportunity to understand the Cathedral's fabric, estate, current priorities, and working culture.



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