OLIVER ARCHITECTURE

LAUREL COURT
22 MINSTER PRECINCTS
PETERBOROUGH
PE1 1YA

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION FOR EMERGENCY REPAIRS AND INVESTIGATION

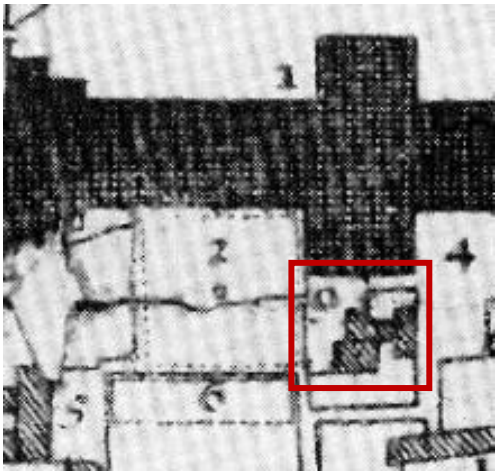
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

May 2025
Version v.1

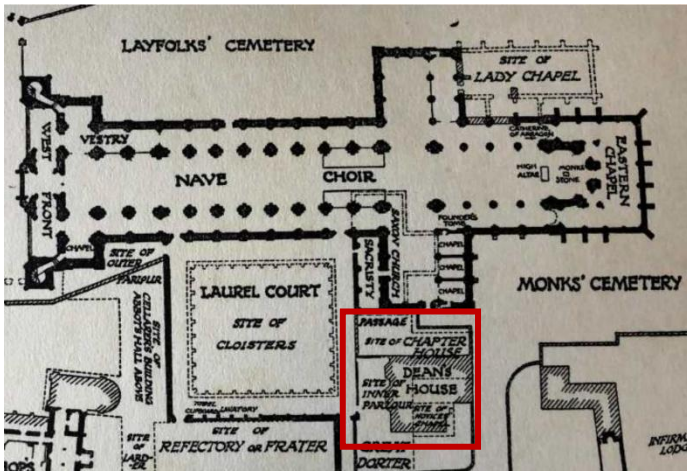
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design and Access and Heritage Statement accompanies a Listed Building Consent application on behalf of the Chapter of Peterborough Cathedral for emergency repairs and investigation at Laurel Court, 22 Minster Precincts, Peterborough PE1 1YA.

1.2 Laurel Court is an elegant three-storey stone building with sash windows and flat and Collyweston stone roofs. It is located directly south of the Cathedral's South Transept, on the eastern side of the former Cloisters. There are interesting internal features. The exact history remains to be discovered but several phases are evident, presumably originating c.1690 for Canon Francis Standish, with early 18th century extensions and 19th century additions such as the bay windows. The recent *Pevsner* dates the staircase to c.1720. The garden occupies the site of the monastic Chapter House, demolished in the mid 17th century. The building is currently vacant. To the east, Laurel Court Cottage dates from pre 1721. It has brick walls and a Welsh slate roof. It is currently mostly vacant or used as storage. From 1870 Laurel Court was a school and it has been used in the past as the choir school. The chimneys were rebuilt prior to 2014. The main flat roof was replaced in 2019.



Detail from 1721 Eyres Map



Detail from plan of Precinct showing Abbey buildings

1.3 **Statutory Status:** Laurel Court is listed grade I. The Cottage at the rear is separately listed grade I, and the mounting block grade II. It lies within the Conservation Area and the Registered Park & Garden but not the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

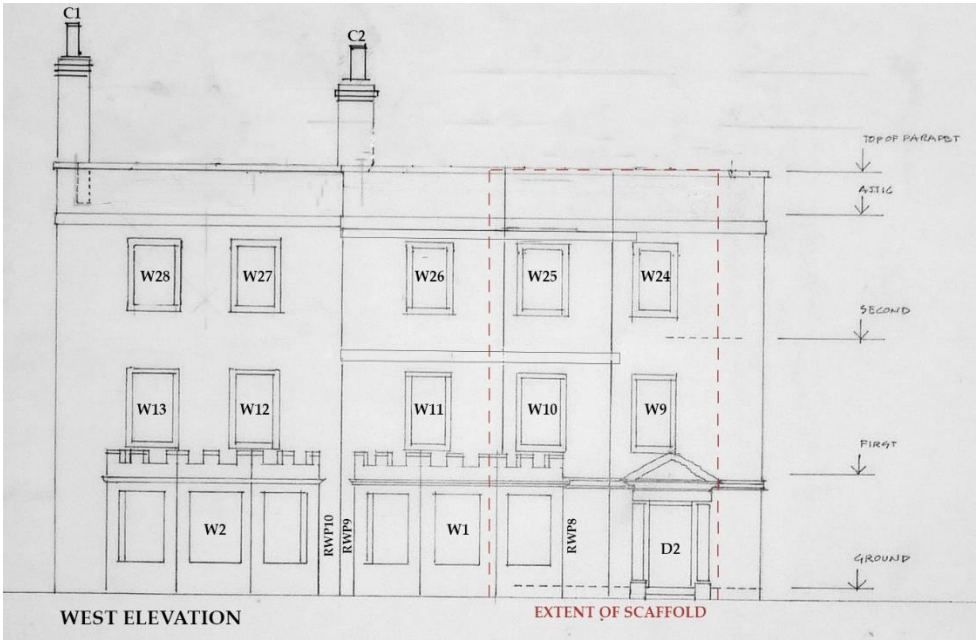
1.4 **Recent Works:** The hip beam between slopes R3 and R4 broke and was repaired in 2024. Bulging masonry at low level to elevation E3 was rebuilt in 2023.

1.5 The condition of Laurel Court has been a significant concern for several decades, and remains in extremely poor condition. It needs a major phase of complete repair, to deal with all of the external fabric and structural issues. Despite the recently installed flat roof (which is holding water so will not endure long), this work cannot be delayed indefinitely, and should be a fundraising priority, ideally to carry out repairs within 5 years. A great deal of work is required to progress the designs, including a structural analysis, measured survey and building recording.

1.6 Whilst funds are raised for a major phase of repair, it is necessary to address some of the most urgent repairs as identified in the 2024 Quinquennial Inspection, as well as commence some of the initial surveys.

2.0 SCOPE OF PROPOSALS

2.1 West Elevation (E01)



2.1.1 Erect an independent access scaffold, clad in 4m steel sheet at the base, with no fixings into the masonry, to the southern part of the elevation, encompassing windows W9, W10 (first floor) and W24, W25 (second floor).

2.1.2 **Window W10:** Carefully remove the two sashes and then remove the joinery frame. Allow for detailed survey by the architect and engineer of the stone surround, including the metal plate below the lintel. Provide suitable temporary support. Carefully remove the stone surround, salvaging damaged masonry. Remove the metal plate to the soffit. Structural engineer to specify remedial work to lintel. Architect to specify repairs to masonry surround, with new Ketton stone as required in lime mortar. Carry out joinery repairs to the frame and sashes, overhaul and redecorate and reinstate in position, ensuring correct operation. Fill the gap between the joinery and stonework surround in burnt sand mastic.

2.1.3 **Door D2:** Providing suitable temporary propping, cut out the rusting dog cramp in the cornice and replace with new stainless steel set in lead wool. Refix the large chunk of fallen cornice.

Window W10

Door D2 pediment

2.1.4 Using the scaffold access, architect and engineer to investigate the two steel plates on the elevation, and review the condition of the parapet stonework in detail.

2.2 **Roof Repairs**

2.2.1 It is envisaged that access onto the roofs would be undertaken without full scaffolding, to reduce costs. There is limited access for a cherrypicker, so it is envisaged that a portable access tower would be used, together with soft padding under roofers ladders to access the sloping roofs.

2.2.2 **Roofs R3-R7 (Collyweston slopes):** Carry out a programme of patch repairs

2.2.3 **Roof R17 (south bay window):** Remove Flashband repair to large sheet of lead. Apply a new lead patch, using hot work under controlled methodology.

Collyweston slopes

Roof R17

2.2.4 Check over all rainwater disposal goods, removing plants and debris.

2.3 **Investigative Works:** Carry out limited opening up as directed by the Conservation-Accredited Structural Engineer. This could encompass lifting floorboards in isolated rooms at second floor level, and removing panelling to expose lintels to the bay windows at ground floor level.

3.0 **DESIGN ELEMENT**

3.1 **Appraising the Context:** Laurel Court is a Grade I listed building, so any work needs to be carried out with great care. The purpose of the project is to commence a process to conserve this very significant historic building, by learning more about the structural concerns which effect the building.

3.2 **Amount:** No changes are proposed to the accommodation.

3.3 **Layout:** No changes are proposed.

3.4 **Scale:** The scale of the proposal is minor in relation to the building

3.5 **Landscaping:** No changes are proposed.

3.6 **Appearance:** The external appearance of the building will remain unchanged, on completion of the repairs.

3.7 **Use:** The building remains without a use at present but the project is the start of investigations and surveys to learn more about the major structural issues of the building, in the hope that a new use can be found.

3.8 **Sustainability:** No changes are proposed.

4.0 **ACCESS ELEMENT**

4.1 **Access:** Access to the building is not affected.

4.2 **Emergency Access:** Not affected.

4.3 **Maintenance Access:** Not affected.

5.0 **HERITAGE STATEMENT**

5.1 The building is of heritage significance, as set out in section 1 of this report. It is on the Heritage at Risk Register, due to the poor condition of the fabric and the lack of a beneficial use. The purpose of the project is to investigate some of the causes of the structural defects in order to understand how they can be addressed. This will assist in ascertaining the budgets required to fully repair the building. The work will be overseen by conservation-accredited professionals, the Cathedral architect and the structural engineer.

5.2 The scope of work, as described in section 2 of this report (which is taken verbatim from the Outline Schedule of Work for the proposals). Window W10 (at first floor level on the main façade, looking west onto the Cloister) has been selected as the focus of investigation, as a representative example of the many stone-framed sash windows exhibiting severe structural deformation, with a 20th century steel strap to the lintel. It is also close to door D02, which needs a large fragment of stone refixing (which has become detached due to a rusting iron cramp). The proposed scaffold will extend from here to the parapet, in order to explore the lead-covered steel straps on the façade as well as the face-bedded stonework to the parapet, to improve our knowledge of these features. Some internal opening up is proposed to explore

the condition of beams, floor joists, etc. All of this exploratory work will be reinstated on completion.

5.4 Some roof maintenance is included in the scope, all like-for-like.

5.5 It is therefore suggested that the proposal is acceptable in this sensitive context.