# Southwark Catholic Cathedral: Energy Infrastructure (1 of 2 projects funded)

*Awarded £385,000 in July 2014*

## The need

Southwark Catholic Cathedral (St George's) needed to renew its obsolete heating and electrical systems, which were installed in the 1980s and were regularly failing. Only two out of twelve boilers were functioning, heating and hot water supplies were unreliable and the power supply would cut out if the organ was played with extra lights on.

New boiler flues. Photo credit: Jonathan Louth Architects.)

## Outcomes

The work has been completed successfully and it is unlikely that the boilers will need to be replaced for at least 15 years. Now that large parts of the cathedral have been re-cabled to cope with modern loadings, it can run at full capacity. Large events such as Midnight Mass (broadcast by the BBC at Christmas 2015) can now take place without risk of interruption.

## Economic and social impact

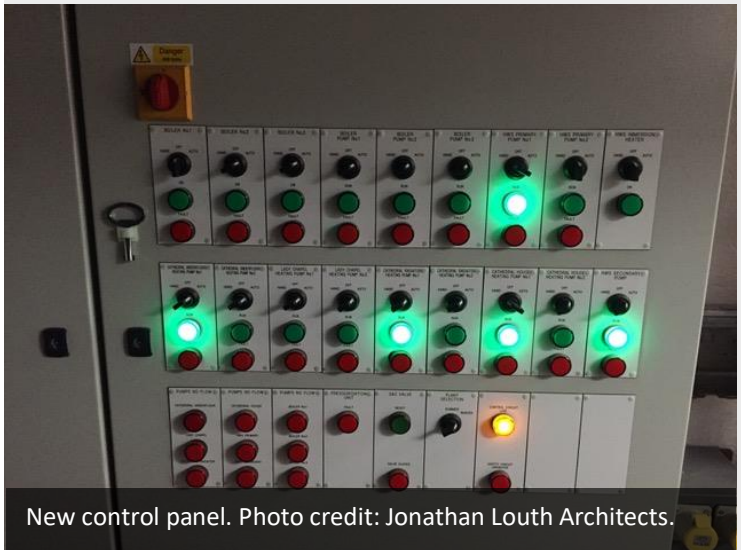
Relatively local contractors were used for the work and a trainee electrician worked on the project. The boilers were relocated into former fuel bunker space, freeing up areas for storage which facilitates use of the hall next to the cathedral for community activities.

## Works completed and timescale

The works covered the electricity mains intake and replacement of all boiler units. The work was completed in January 2016. Alongside the grant-approved works, the cathedral installed additional fire doors and fire stopping to protect the front entrance of Cathedral House and a spiral stone stairway dating from 1887 from the fire risks on lower ground level.

## The Cathedral

Southwark St George's stands facing the Imperial War Museum on the borders of Southwark and Lambeth in South London. The original building was designed and built by AW Pugin and opened in 1848. Ten years earlier he had designed a great 'minster-like' church, which would have had a six-bay nave and a vast central tower. However, cost constraints meant that the simplified, but still impressive church eventually built had an un-clerestoried nave, a deep chancel with two chapels, and aisles on both sides. In 1852 St George's became the first Roman Catholic Cathedral in London since the Reformation. On the night of 16 April 1941, the cathedral was hit by an incendiary bomb, starting a fire which destroyed the wooden roof and much else. It was repaired and enlarged in the 1950s, with a clerestory level and new arcades to support it. The work was paid for by War Damage Commission funds in addition to generous donations from Ireland, the USA, the people of South London and the diocese of Southwark.



New control panel. Photo credit: Jonathan Louth Architects.

# Southwark Catholic Cathedral: Repairs to Parapets (2 of 2 projects funded)

*Awarded £167,000 in November 2014 towards a £621,000 project*

## The need

The parapets and high-level masonry dating from the 1950s rebuilding were deteriorating badly through weathering and frost damage; this was causing further damage to the interior as continued crumbling of the mortar washing down into the drains was blocking numerous pipes, causing internal leaks and damage throughout the cathedral.

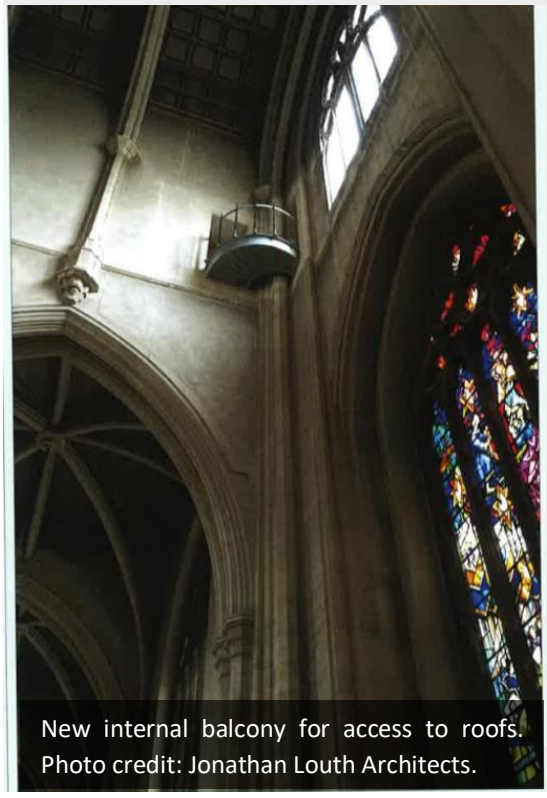
Parapet repairs in progress. Photo credit: Jonathan Louth Architects.

## Outcomes

The previously unknown cause of the crumbling mortar has been identified: sulphurous smog, acid atmosphere and rain pollution prior to the Clean Air Acts of the 1950s had substantially degraded the post-war mortar wherever the 1954 parapets were exposed on both sides, meaning that the stonework here was decaying faster than the purely 19th-century work. The damage has been repaired, access for maintenance improved and by March 2017 the Cathedral Architect confirmed that *due in large part to the WW1 funding received, the Trustees have been able to allocate further funds for us to undertake all remaining "Urgent/Necessary" works elsewhere in the cathedral church…which were identified in my 2014 Quinquennial Inspection.*

## Economic and social impact

Relatively local contractors were used for the work and the project used traditional lead, cast iron and roof slate repairs along with masonry. The grant enabled the Parish to husband its resources for other urgent projects including conservation of the interior, refurbishment of a derelict part of the Parish Centre, installation of sound control glazing and structural monitoring.



New internal balcony for access to roofs. Photo credit: Jonathan Louth Architects.

## Works completed and timescale

Diocesan and other funding bridged the gap between the grant and the total project cost. The work was completed successfully and included new access doors/metal balconies onto two otherwise inaccessible roofs: access for maintenance had previously required a cherry-picker crane and a road closure. Work was planned for completion by Easter 2018 so that the closing stages of the First World War Centenary commemorations in November 2018 could take place without scaffolding or hoarded areas in place. The Centenary coincides with some small celebrations planned around the Diamond Jubilee of the 1958 re-opening of the cathedral after the Second World War.

## The Cathedral

See previous project summary.