



ELY CATHEDRAL

Ely Cathedral



Through Cracks and Colour: Conserving the Clerestory Windows and Telling the Tales Held in Glass

Architect

Tendering Brief



Architect Brief

Role: Architect to support a Development Phase and potential Delivery Phase project funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund at Ely Cathedral.

Location: Home or Company based; ability to travel to Ely Cathedral as required

Reporting to: Vicki Roulinson (Director of Conservation & Works)

Time frame for Development Phase work: October 2026 – August 2027

Time frame for potential Delivery Phase work: December 2027 – July 2029

1.0 Introduction

This document provides tender information and a brief for the appointment of an architect to progress plans for architectural elements up to and including RIBA Work Stage 6 and to act as Contract Administrator for Ely Cathedral's 'Through Cracks and Colour' project funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund (Heritage Fund). This project forms part of the Development Phase of a wider conservation initiative, which was awarded by the Heritage Fund in March 2026.

We would expect the successful Architect to work for us in the Delivery Phase as well, subject to a successful Delivery Phase application to the Heritage Fund and a successful consultancy performance review at the end of the Development Phase.

The appointed Architect must be suitably qualified and have Accreditation with AABC or RIBA Conservation Register.

2.0 About Ely Cathedral

Highly regarded by historians and architects from all over the world for its beauty and size, Ely Cathedral is widely acknowledged as 'one of the wonders of the Medieval World'. Visible for miles around, the Cathedral is often referred to as 'The Ship of the Fens'. A monastery was first founded on the site in 673 by St. Etheldreda, a Saxon Queen, however, the present building dates from 1081 and was granted Cathedral status in 1109. It is a remarkable example of both Gothic and Norman architecture and has the third-longest nave of any UK Cathedral. Today, the Grade I listed Cathedral offers a glimpse into centuries of English heritage alongside stunningly beautiful art and architecture.

Ely Cathedral currently welcomes in the region of 200,000 visitors and pilgrims every year. As well as being a major visitor attraction, the Cathedral serves as a cultural focal point for East Anglia by providing a unique venue for the arts & music, exhibitions, concerts, and theatre. Despite these more recent adaptations into a living, vibrant community resource, Ely continues to exude spirituality and remains a sacred space for the benefit of all.

3.0 About the Project

The clerestory windows in the east end choir were designed to be a focal point of the Cathedral, welcoming light into the building and visually transforming the space. Situated in the upper stone storey raised above the level of the aisles, these windows represent a vital link to Victorian art and 19th century English history. However, the Cathedral's 2021 Quinquennial Report revealed serious issues with several clerestory windows, including mortar failure, gaps and breaks, structural instability, and bowing. The natural deterioration of these windows means that without specialist timely intervention, these historic features and the Cathedral's ability to serve as a cultural focal point for East Anglia is at risk.

Following a successful Development Phase application to the Heritage Fund, the funding has enabled us to develop a wider heritage initiative that extends beyond the capital works to engage a more diverse audience in our shared heritage. In partnership with the Stained-Glass Museum, we will use the development phase to pilot a programme of activities and introduce new community and educational initiatives, as well as create the Activity and Interpretation Plan(s) required for our Delivery Phase submission.

If our Delivery Phase application is successful, our proposed capital works programme will see ICON- accredited stained-glass conservators undertake urgent conservation work, delicately repairing the clerestory windows both in-situ, where possible, and in their specialist workshop. Their work on all of the windows will require scaffolding internally and externally, protecting, recording, re-leading and re-cementing, conserving individual panes and fragments, replacing tie bars in phosphor bronze, and preparing and redecorating of ferramenta. To finally complete the transformation, all of the windows will be cleaned internally and externally, bringing the vivid colours and intricate details back to life. We hope that our Activity and Interpretation Plan(s) will deliver deeper public understanding and appreciation of the Cathedral's rich heritage, broadening participation across a wider range of audiences, and highlighting the historical and artistic significance of stained glass, a craft that is now listed as endangered in the UK.

The overall project is closely aligned with the Heritage Fund's Investment Principles: [1] Saving Heritage, [2] Protecting the Environment, [3] Inclusion, Access, and Participation, and [4] Organisational Sustainability. These themes also align with our wider vision for the Cathedral.

4.0 Timetable

The Development Phase of the project began in May 2026. We expect this phase to last 14 months with the Project Team aiming to submit a Delivery Phase application to the Heritage Fund for the August 2027 deadline. Subject to the award of the Delivery Phase application, this second phase would commence in December 2027 with a planned end date of July 2029.

Proposed Development Phase key milestones:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| • Development Phase awarded | March 2026 |
| • Permission to Start completed | May 2026 |
| • Appointment of Project Manager | August 2026 |
| • Appointment of other project consultants | November 2026 |
| • Development Phase review | June 2027 |
| • Final drafts of all documents | July 2027 |
| • Delivery Phase application submission | August 2027 |

- Development Phase final report

September 2027

Proposed Delivery Phase key milestones (subject to a successful application and award):

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • Delivery Phase awarded | December 2027 |
| • Permission to Start completed | January 2028 |
| • Scaffolding erected | March – July 2028 |
| • Activity and Interpretation programme begins | March 2028 |
| • Building repair works begin | July 2028 |
| • Scaffolding dismantled | February 2029 |
| • Capital works completed | March 2029 |
| • Activity and Interpretation programme complete | March 2029 |
| • Final project report | June 2029 |
| • Project signed off | July 2029 |

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The Architect will progress plans for architectural elements up to and including RIBA Work Stage 6 and to act as Contract Administrator for Ely Cathedral throughout the ‘Through Cracks and Colour’ project.

Responsibilities across the Development *and* Delivery Phase of this project:

- Lead the design and delivery of all architectural elements of the ‘Through Cracks and Colour’ project, progressing design work up to and including RIBA work stage 6
- Coordinate with specialist contractors, including ICON-accredited stained-glass conservators, scaffolders, and other heritage professionals, for planning and delivery of the conservation and repair works
- Ensure compliance with statutory and heritage requirements, including permissions, building regulations, and conservation best practice
- Ensure that CDM 2015 responsibilities are fulfilled throughout both phases of the project (a Principal Designer is separately budgeted for)
- Site inspections and progress meetings with the stained glass conservator and Director of Conservation & Works during the construction phase as necessary to administer the contract
- Attend monthly online project meetings with the wider project team
- Contribute to risk management, identifying and mitigating architectural risks, especially those related to working at height, structural integrity, and material conservation
- Support the Heritage Fund reporting process, support project evaluation, providing timely updates, cost information, and progress reports as required
- Be on site as required by the project/agreed with the project team

The Heritage Fund process requires as a minimum that design work is developed to RIBA work stage 3 ahead of the project’s Development Phase mid-term review in June 2027, however, we are interested in exploring whether design might be developed to RIBA work stage 4 within the project’s Development Phase. If this was possible it would have the advantage of de-risking the

project in the subsequent Delivery Phase. As such our preferred outputs for each phase are as follows:

5.1 Outputs

Development Phase:

- RIBA work stage 2-3 design reports, with supporting appendices to support the Heritage Fund Delivery Phase application
- Production of a cost envelope for the capital works for inclusion with the Heritage Fund Delivery Phase budget and to support project planning
- Production of a top level Delivery Phase programme for inclusion with the Heritage Fund Delivery Phase budget and to support project planning
- Support for the Director of Conservation & Works to apply for the necessary approvals through the Fabric Advisory Committee (FAC) allowing for their meeting cycles within the programme
- Support the Director of Conservation & Works and Cathedral team with input as required for the production of the Management and Maintenance Plan
- Support Activity Plan delivery by identifying opportunities, such as scaffolding tours and traineeship opportunities, with the wider project team
- Attend the Development Phase mid-term review meeting with the Heritage Fund

Preferably in the Development Phase, subject to budget, otherwise to be completed in Delivery Phase:

- Detailed design to RIBA work stage 4
- A detailed specification for the works and associated tender pack for the appointment of the lead contractor, including preliminaries, materials and methods (the lead contractor will be directly appointed by the Cathedral)
- Oversee the tendering and procurement of the project's lead contractor following Heritage Fund procurement guidelines
- Provide detailed costs and programme for inclusion with Heritage Fund Delivery Phase application

Delivery Phase:

- Oversee RIBA work stage 5-6
- Oversee quality assurance of the capital works programme, ensuring that all works meet the required standards for heritage conservation and public safety
- Act as Contract Administrator for Ely Cathedral, ensuring that all capital works are delivered in accordance with the agreed specifications, budget, and timeline
- Monitor variations and change control reporting these to the project team through the Director of Conservation & Works
- Provide post-completion support, including defects resolution and input into maintenance planning for architectural elements.

6.0 Specification of experience and skills requirement

The following table defines the experience and skill set which the Cathedral is looking for and how they will be assessed (method of assessment MOA) by tender submission (TS).

Criteria	Essential	M.O.A
Experience (Demonstrated by relevant previous commissions)	1. Demonstrated experience in conservation architecture, especially within Grade I listed buildings	TS
	2. Experience and approach to acting as Contract Administrator, including managing capital works, timelines, budgets and complying with CDM regulations	TS
	3. Experience of developing architectural works up to RIBA Stage 6	TS
	4. Knowledge of traditional glazing and stone conservation techniques.	TS
	5. Experience of working collaboratively with a wider project team	TS
Skills and Abilities (Demonstrated by relevant previous commissions and quality of methodology)	1. Demonstratable understanding of Heritage Fund capital project requirements, including procurement, reporting, and conservation standards	TS
	2. Ability to integrate conservation and repair works into broader project planning and delivery	TS
	3. Exceptional interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate effectively	TS
	4. An understanding of the limiting factors involved with architectural work in Listed historic buildings	TS
	5. Ability to work in sympathy with the ethos of the Church of England and the worship function of the Cathedral	TS
	6. Ability to use Microsoft Office	TS
	7. Exceptional presentation skills, both orally and written	TS

The successful Architect would also be expected to adhere to the Cathedral's safeguarding policy and procedures.

We will agree a contract and payment schedule with the successful Architect at the time of appointment.

7.0 Reporting and Management

The Architect would report to Vicki Roulinson (Director of Conservation & Works).

8.0 Deadline

Completed tenders should be returned by 5pm on 06/11/2026 to vicki.roulinson@elycathedral.org and to Dale Copley and Megan Williams, Lode Heritage, Project Managers hello@lodeheritage.com and megan@lodeheritage.com

No questions will be accepted after 5pm on 02/11/2026. It is the Tenderer's responsibility to ensure that they are received on time.

9.0 Fee

There is an indicative budget for this work of £45,470 based on 12% of the construction value, including disbursements but excluding VAT across the two phases of this project, subject to funding.

The estimated construction value for the project is £378,916 excluding VAT.

£13,640 is secured for Development Phase activity which must as a minimum meet RIBA work stage 3. The Cathedral's preference would be for RIBA work stage 4 to be achieved within the Development Phase of the project and have secured additional funding to support this.

An additional budget of £10,000 is included across the two phases of the project for other professional fees associated with capital works programme (Structural Engineer, M&E, Principal CDM Designer, QS, Archaeologist etc). This budget is inclusive of disbursements but excludes VAT.

10.0 Tender Submissions

The purpose of the tender response is to enable the Cathedral to evaluate your understanding of our requirements, the suitability of your proposed approach, experience and skills of your team, and your ability to deliver to our timetable and budget. Your response should consist of the following:

1. How you will lead the project's Development Phase, including methodology, timetable, and milestones. Please indicate clearly if you will achieve RIBA work stage 3 or 4 as a result of your approach.
2. Details of relevant experience – two examples of recent and relevant work of similar size, scope and nature including two references from previous or existing clients.
3. A firm quote for the work including all relevant expenses but exclusive of VAT. This quote should be clearly itemised as follows:
 - a. RIBA work stage 2-3 and outputs associated with the project's Development Phase
 - b. RIBA work stage 4 and associated activity which we hope to be able to undertake in the Development Phase subject to budget
 - c. RIBA work stage 5-6 associated with the project's Delivery Phase (subject to successful Delivery Phase application)
4. You should also indicate where your quote is dependent on support from other design team professionals and how our provisional budget for this work might be allocated.
5. Details of public liability and professional indemnity insurance to a minimum of £10 million.

11.0 Evaluation Criteria

Tenders will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Methodology, understanding of the project brief, assessment of key issues, and how objectives will be met (60%)
- Relevant experience of designing and delivering architectural elements for similar projects in the heritage sector, and track record of working effectively with different kinds of organisations, substantiated by referees (30%)
- Price (10%). The tenderer submitting the lowest overall price will receive the full score available. Remaining bids will be scored proportionately: $\text{Score} = (\text{lowest bid received} / \text{bid price}) \times 10\%$.

The Cathedral will assess Tenderers' responses according to these criteria and will award points up to the maximum (5) shown against each heading in the Quality evaluation assessment table below. Failure to achieve a rating of satisfactory (i.e. a minimum unweighted score of 3 or above) in any one or more categories may result in the bid being disqualified at the Cathedral discretion.

The Cathedral reserves the right to interview but assessment will be based on tender.

Assessment Criteria	Score
Unacceptable: Either no answer is provided, or the answer fails to demonstrate that any of the Cathedral's key requirements in the area being measured will be delivered	0
Poor: Fails to demonstrate how the Cathedral's basic requirements in the area being measured will be addressed, giving rise to serious concerns that acceptable outcomes would not be delivered against the project brief.	1
Weak: Barely demonstrates how the Cathedral's basic requirements in the area being measured will be addressed, giving rise to concerns whether acceptable outcomes would be delivered against the project brief.	2
Satisfactory: Demonstrates how the Cathedral's basic requirements in the area being measured will be addressed so as to deliver acceptable outcomes against the project brief.	3
Good: Demonstrates how most of the Cathedral's requirements in the area being measured will be addressed so as to deliver good outcomes against the project brief.	4
Excellent: Demonstrates clearly how all of the Cathedral's requirements in the area being measured will be fully addressed so as to deliver excellent outcomes against the project brief.	5

12.0 Additional Information

For more information about Ely Cathedral, visit our website at:

[Ely Cathedral - Ely Cathedral](#)

1. We will provide the existing 2021 Quinquennial Inspection Report and Condition Survey completed by Holy Well Glass in October 2022.

We can also provide the following information on request:

2. The National Lottery Heritage Fund Development Phase application
3. The National Lottery Heritage Fund detailed budget breakdown

4. Project timetable

Please note the following:

Confidentiality

The Form of Tender, the Conditions of Contract, the Specification, and all other documentation or information issued by the Cathedral relating to the Tender shall be treated by the Tenderer as private and confidential for use only in connection with the Tender and any resulting contract and shall not be disclosed in whole or in part to any third party without the prior written consent of Cathedral.

The documents which constitute the project and all copies thereof are and shall remain the property of the Cathedral (whether or not the Cathedral shall have charged a fee for the supply of such documents) and must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part and must be returned to the Cathedral upon their request.

All information provided by tenderers as part of a tender return will be treated as confidential.

Intellectual Property

The successful appointed Architect is required to acknowledge that, where required by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, project outputs may need to be published under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. The Architect shall provide the Cathedral with sufficient rights to use, share and publish relevant project outputs to enable compliance with this requirement.