



# FEILDEN FOWLES

**PRESS ENQUIRIES**

Claire Curtice Publicists  
claire@clairecurtice.co.uk  
+ 44 (0) 7775 562 264

**PRESS RELEASE**

## THE FRATRY, CARLISLE CATHEDRAL

**09/2020**

Feilden Fowles has completed the transformation of the Grade I-listed medieval Fraternity at Carlisle Cathedral - the most significant physical intervention on the cathedral site for more than 150 years. A new entrance to the refurbished Fraternity hall and undercroft has been created, reached through a newly built red sandstone entrance pavilion and link structure connecting old and new. The project, completed following a long gestation (the cathedral has been working on it for 15 years, and the architects for the last six), gives the Fraternity renewed purpose and welcomes the public for the first time, enriching the cathedral's benefits to the wider community.

It is the seat of the Anglican Bishop of Carlisle, Cumbria, north west of England. Built in 1122 in a Norman architectural style, and extended in the 13th and 14th centuries, the cathedral precinct's solid masonry is of local red St Bees sandstone, which has darkened over time. Feilden Fowles' new entrance pavilion is made from Dumfries red sandstone, Lochaberbriggs, cut and installed by local stonemasons. The Fraternity was built in the 1500s as the priory refectory, and houses one of the finest cathedral library collections of books in the country.

The pavilion is located to the north west of the Fraternity, on the site of the former west range of the original Augustinian priory cloister, destroyed during the Reformation; the lot had become dead, windswept land, serving only as a thoroughfare. Positioned 90 degrees from the Fraternity, the pavilion and its green fringe delineate a new space and aim to create the atmosphere of the cloister that inspired the design. The pavilion reintroduces a reflective and sheltered public space at the heart of the cathedral precinct and city.

The project balances high-tech innovation (CNC-cut stone, 3D and 2D modelling, complex geometries) with low-tech solutions (specialist hand carving) to enhance the historic precinct and create a pleasant space to dwell. The solidity of the pavilion's CNC-cut stonework and contrasting transparency of the glazed bays formed by the arches provide visitors clear views to the cathedral and the surrounding listed buildings. A new welcome area and public café have been created, providing dedicated space for the clergy to greet visitors and school groups, and allowing the cathedral to engage with more people in new ways and transform its teaching and learning activities. Education work will benefit from the newly refurbished undercroft beneath the Fraternity hall, which has become an open, uncluttered space able to accommodate 80.

The elevations of the pavilion are inspired by Gothic arches found across the cathedral precinct, and in particular, the western window of the Fraternity. Designed following extensive public consultation in 2016, this dropped arch profile fans out to a simple rectilinear leading edge, which has a refinement reminiscent of the Perpendicular Gothic tracery found in the east window of the cathedral. The resolution of the curved and perpendicular forms creates a subtle play of light and shadow across the sandstone elevations. Internally, it is a clear, bright space: walls are rendered in lime plaster to mimic the stone columns internally; the ceiling is lined with acoustic felt panels; generous natural light sweeps across the exposed stone and

timber surfaces; and the polished concrete floor extends to the undercroft, all of which bring a level of comfort to the Fraternity.

Entry to the Fraternity is now through a lightweight, fully-glazed bronze structure accessed via stairs or lift at the southern end of the pavilion. The tall and slender link was designed in collaboration with engineers Structure Workshop. Looking up to the bronze lattice overhead, the stanchions divide into a diagrid roof inspired by the stone ceiling motifs in the Fraternity pulpit. Contrasting with the heavy sandstone of the pavilion and Fraternity, the lightweight link connects the pavilion to the half levels of the refurbished Fraternity building, where new entrance openings have been formed. The late 19th century porch entry to the Fraternity has been removed, and the original Robert Smirke doorway - which had been reversed and lowered when the porch was built - has been returned to its original orientation and position, and restored with new hand carving. By doing this, the reliefs and carvings around the doorway are now framed by the new link entrance. Creating the new entrance to the undercroft from the link proved an interesting engineering challenge, as a culvert was found crossing the location of the opening during the preliminary investigation works. The new opening is set centrally on the undercroft arch.

Internally, a rich palette of materials aims to give a sumptuous and historic feel, resonating with the quality of the original craftsmanship and materials. Bronze, sandstone, steel and lime plasters all have rich textures, tones and patinas.

The Fraternity project marks the opening of the hall to all for the first time - to visit the building and library, and attend events. The Fraternity has now been equipped to host exhibitions, performances and events. Flexible lighting and new AV systems have been discreetly integrated, and the hall's adaptability will provide the cathedral with novel income streams. Both the Fraternity hall and undercroft have been de-cluttered and opened up by removing partitions and barriers subdividing the spaces. The refurbished undercroft opens up views down its full length, and the space can now be used for teaching and learning activities with local schools and communities.

Carlisle Cathedral is part of the city's historic quarter, which includes Tullie House and Carlisle Castle. The project has been made possible by funding from the Friends of Carlisle Cathedral, grant-making trusts, generous donations by members of the public, cathedral activity and a major contribution of £2m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Dean of Carlisle, The Very Reverend Mark Boyling, said:

*"We are thrilled to have the Fraternity brought back to life. We now have wonderful spaces in which to tell the cathedral's stories of faith, hope and love, as we serve the city, the county and our visitors."*

*"This has not been a project for the fainthearted; it has been a tremendous team effort. The result is a building worthy of this site, which in every way meets the brief the Chapter first gave to the architects to make the Fraternity an asset to the cathedral."*

Ingrid Petit, Associate, Feilden Fowles, said:

*"It has been a real privilege to deliver this project after six years in the making. It's been a truly rewarding process to work closely with so many from the cathedral community, the design team consultants and the artisans, to enhance the Cathedral Precinct with this carefully-crafted addition and improve the visitor experience."*

Peter Laidler, Director, Structure Workshop, said:

*"Archaeological excavations magnified the sense of history associated with this site, as well as our responsibility for finding appropriate solutions to the challenges posed by the ambitious proposals."*

*The technical challenges culminated at the junction between the new and the old, where the slender bronze link abuts the medieval structure, where a Roman culvert runs under the wall and where the most significant alterations to the hall and undercroft were required."*

**Press enquiries and image requests:**

Claire Curtice Publicists  
 mail@clairecurtice.co.uk  
 + 44 (0)7775 562264

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

<b>Address:</b>	Carlisle Cathedral, The Abbey, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8TZ
<b>Appointment:</b>	April/May 2014
<b>Start on site:</b>	December 2018
<b>Completion:</b>	June 2020
<b>Site area:</b>	1,500m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Existing gross internal area:</b>	650m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Additional gross internal area:</b>	185m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Construction value:</b>	£2,490,300
<b>Funding:</b>	The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Friends of Carlisle Cathedral, other grant making trusts and many individual donors
<b>Commissioning client:</b>	Carlisle Cathedral
<b>Architect:</b>	Feilden Fowles
<b>Project architects:</b>	Ingrid Petit (project architect), Fergus Feilden
<b>Surveyor of the Fabric:</b>	Buttress Architects, Nicholas Rank
<b>Structural engineer:</b>	Structure Workshop, Peter Laidler and Cameron Bailey
<b>Conservation structural engineer:</b>	Stand Engineers, Stuart Tappin
<b>Services engineer:</b>	BCA, Bob Costello and Dan Mullineux
<b>Concept landscape architect:</b>	Petherick, Urquhart and Hunt, Adam Hunt
<b>Project manager/QS:</b>	FWP, Kate Shuttleworth and Sam Shuttleworth
<b>Archaeology:</b>	Cumbria Archaeology, Gerry Martin
<b>Main contractor:</b>	Cubby Construction, Colin Graham and David Bell (site manager)
<b>Joinery:</b>	Cubby Joinery
<b>Stonecutting:</b>	Cumbrian Stone
<b>Stone installation:</b>	Askins + Little
<b>M&amp;E installations:</b>	JJ Group
<b>Windows, doors, curtain walling:</b>	Martec Engineering
<b>Bronze structure:</b>	Victoria John of London
<b>Zinc roofing:</b>	Hempstock
<b>Lift:</b>	Premier Lifts
<b>Floors:</b>	Set in Stone Flooring
<b>Photographers:</b>	© David Grandorge, © Peter Cook



**Feilden Fowles** is an award-winning London-based architecture practice, founded in 2009 by Fergus Feilden and Edmund Fowles. The practice specialises in delivering socially and environmentally sustainable buildings across a variety of sectors, and aims to make architecture that is rich in character and distinct in identity. The projects often interpret historic, cultural or vernacular references to generate clear concepts with a legible diagram. Structural integrity and tectonic expression drive the detailed design process to deliver buildings that are at once robust and well-built.

Current commissions include the ongoing strategic masterplan for Ralph Allen School, Bath; student accommodation at Green Templeton College, Oxford; and a new dining hall at Homerton College, University of Cambridge. Built works to date include arts and cultural buildings, educational projects, heritage, workplace and residential. Examples include 2019 Stirling Prize finalist The Weston visitor centre and gallery at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield; Charlie Bigham's Food Production Campus, Somerset; The Lee Centre, an Applied Learning Centre at Ralph Allen School in Bath; the Fitzjames Centre, Hazlegrove School; and Waterloo City Farm, where the practice's new, award-winning studio is located. The practice recently won an international competition for the design of a new entrance hall and gallery at the National Railway Museum in York. Feilden Fowles is also leading a multidisciplinary design team on the Urban Nature Project, which will reimagine the gardens surrounding the Natural History Museum in London.

The work of the practice has been recognised with a number of awards, including: 2019 RIBA National Award, RIBA Yorkshire Client of the Year and RIBA Yorkshire Building of the Year for The Weston, Yorkshire Sculpture Park; 2018 RIBA South West Building of the Year for Charlie Bigham's Food Production Campus; 2018 RIBA London Award and a Commendation in the New London Awards Mayor's Prize 2018 for Waterloo City Farm; 2017 RIBA London Awards and 2017 Wood Awards for Feilden Fowles' Studio; 2014 RIBA National Awards and 2015 Civic Trust Awards for The Lee Centre, Ralph Allen School. The practice received the inaugural Young Architect Award in the American Institute of Architects (AIA) UK Excellence in Design Awards in 2015 and Building Design's Young Architect of the Year Award 2016.

[feildenfowles.co.uk](http://feildenfowles.co.uk)



Photo © David Grandorge