



**catholic diocese
of christchurch**
to sanctify - to teach - to care for



Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament - November 2011 Update

INTRODUCTION

This is the second of a regular series of updates from the Cathedral Management Board on the future of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.

The past two months have seen great progress with the deconstruction of the upper level of the rear of the building completed in mid-October. The two archways at the east and west of the rear of the Cathedral have been kept.

The engineers' assessment of the back end of the cathedral is that it is now in a relatively stable state with minimum possibility of partial collapse in the event of a 6.5 magnitude earthquake.

The focus now is on the interior of the building.

North Bell Tower

By Christmas the North Bell Tower should be down.



Sanctuary and Sacristy



- >> The rear of the building is moderately to seriously damaged.
- >> The engineers report there has been significant settlement of the arches with a noticeable difference in level between the external walls and four pillars. The four pillars, while cracked and damaged, appear to be reasonably undamaged through their core and remain capable of supporting the floor above. However, given the extent of settlement, repair is not considered feasible. Likewise, repair of the arches is not considered feasible.
- >> The internal sacristy walls are moderately damaged and displaced out-of-plane, which would make repair of this section of the walls difficult and costly.
- >> The external east wall is moderately damaged, the south wall has severe to moderate damage, and the north wall has had some minor damage.
- >> The first floor seems relatively intact and is believed to be not in risk of collapsing.
- >> Further investigation will be conducted to provide conclusive engineering and heritage assessments on these two areas.



Recovery of heritage items

The Stations of the Cross, and other heritage items are still in the building and hopefully can be removed while they are intact.

The recovery of heritage items has occurred under the supervision of OPUS Heritage consultant, Carole-Lynne Kerrigan. This is an on-going process which involves identification, recovery, cataloguing and storage.

Among the items recovered so far are:

- >> Pat Mulchay crucifix.
- >> Bronze tabernacle doors sculptured by Ria Bancroft from the Blessed Sacrament chapel.
- >> Tapestry by Ida Lough from the Blessed Sacrament chapel.
- >> Small cross, also by Ria Bancroft.
- >> Icon of Christ from the Chapel of Unity.
- >> Beaten metal doors from the Holy Oils cupboard, which was situated to the left of the altar near the Bishop's throne.
- >> Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.
- >> Several chalices including those gifted by Pope Leo XIII (1891), the mother of Bishop Brodie (1916), Arch Bishop McQuaid of Dublin (1960), the parishioners to commemorate the centennial of the Catholic church on this site (1964), the family of Fr Kevin O'Reilly (1983) and Pope John Paul II (1986).
- >> Two original oil paintings of the Sacred Heart and Christ on the Cross, both of which hung in the sacristy.



- Font Gamboult - Donated by Bishop Basil Meeking in memory of his parents

- >> Several monstrances and splendid altar candles
- >> Several processional crosses and bishops' croziers.

It is hoped to retrieve light fittings among other important items. As soon as the building is declared safe, Carole-Lynne Kerrigan of Opus intends to retrieve all heritage items.



- Bronzed Tabernacle Doors - Ria Bancroft



- Small Cross - Ria Bancroft

Nave and Transepts



- The Lady Chapel

Although the Nave has sustained relatively minor damage, the Transepts are in worse condition, but in the long term it is considered feasible to retain and strengthen these areas, depending on costs.

The north and south walls of the Nave have significant displacement and damage at ground level, and although the first floor wall is relatively undamaged, it has displaced by 20mm in-plane at sill level. The Nave's roof and columns show limited signs of damage and repair is considered feasible, costs allowing.

The south Transept is severely damaged with major cracks in the floor at first floor level, while the north Transept is unable to be seen and assessed, but is expected to require rebuilding. Cost will be a factor.

Future work

- >> Undertake a level survey of the interior.
- >> Confirm the plumbness of the walls.
- >> Record significant displacement damage to main structural elements.
- >> Make the building weather tight.