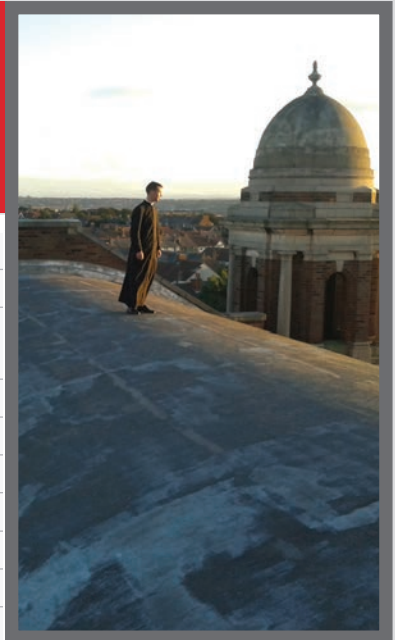




Case STUDY

REPAIR GRANT SS Peter, Paul and Philomena, Merseyside



Address:	New Brighton, Wallasey, Merseyside CH45 9LT
Designation:	Roman Catholic (Grade II)
NCT grants awarded:	Two Repair Grants totalling £30,000 awarded, December 2013 and June 2015. Work completed November 2015
Setting:	Index of Multiple Deprivation 34%
Architect:	Adrian Swain Architect BArchHons RIBA AABC
Contractors:	William Anelay
Project cost:	Approximately £295,000 for phase 1 and £355,000 for phase 2
Opening hours:	8am until 8pm every day
Visitors in 2015:	19,016 including for worship
Website:	www.domeofhome.org

With a majestic dome visible from afar, the basilica-like 1930s church is a major Wirral landmark. It was built during the depression with money raised by Fr Thomas Mullins for the fashionable New Brighton seaside resort with a growing Catholic population. It was designed by E. Bower Norris and was nick-named 'The Dome of Home' by sailors returning from Atlantic convoys during WWII.

The church closed in 2008 due to the cost of repairs, and was listed on English Heritage's (now Historic England) At Risk Register as being of immediate risk of further deterioration. A local campaign saw the church reopen in 2012 when it was established as a national Shrine Church, cared for by the Institute of Christ the King. A small and dedicated group set about fundraising to kick-start the landmark's transformation.

A major two part project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and with grants from the National Churches Trust at both stages, was started to deal with water ingress and its resultant damage and deterioration, whilst also expanding the facilities of the church for heritage engagement and community use.

The church is now enjoying increased visitor interest, has a team of volunteer guides, a heritage trail and a Facebook following, and will be featuring in a BBC television programme.

A third phase to address further water ingress in the side chapels is now being considered.

"Gaining National Churches Trust support has been instrumental in allowing the project to proceed. We were able to raise all match funding and restore the worst affected areas quickly, preventing further deterioration."

Anne Archer, Project Co-ordinator

Project challenges: One contractor went into administration at the beginning of the project. The problem was overcome by appointing the contractor who had come second in the tender process and the contracts with the grant bodies were adjusted accordingly. Further delays were incurred due to adverse weather conditions and the discovery of further problems with concrete.

Impact:

- The condition of the building has improved and it is now watertight where work has been carried out.
- There is increased public engagement with heritage, architecture and history.
- There is a visitor information point and a film with oral histories.
- The project has benefited the congregation, facilitating wider engagement and fundraising initiatives, and enhancing a place of worship.
- More visitors and more online interest.

Key lessons learnt: Allow for time and money at the end of the project for publicity and tying up loose ends such as evaluation and communicating with funders. Take advantage of other nearby events to harness interest, and make the most of social media which draws a great deal of interest.

New uses: Heritage information point with book shop

New users: Online – webcam on the roof viewed 5,600 times by January 2016. In person-visitor groups are increasingly popular.