



Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

Cathedral Precinct Redevelopment Project – Cathedral Square

Frequently Asked Questions

What is happening?

The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst has plans to develop the church-owned land at the corner of High and Short Streets, Bendigo.

This will include a new building and landscaping in keeping with the local aesthetic and complementary to the Cathedral with environmental sustainability at its core.

The development will include:

- Bishop's Office (Chancery)
- Catholic Education Sandhurst – Bendigo office
- New anchor tenant: Bendigo Chocolaterie and Ice Creamery
- Cathedral Parish Hall
- Other retail/office tenancy
- Staff car parking internal to the building
- Public belvedere terracing and landscaping
- Public lift access between High Street and Cathedral level.

The Diocese obtained a planning permit for the site in 2016. Without the complete funding required at the time, the project needed to be reconsidered.

Why is the Diocese planning to develop the site?

- To improve the public amenity of the land surrounding the Sacred Heart Cathedral by activating the public spaces and providing better connection to the crown land on the corner of Wattle Street and the Cathedral.
 - To consolidate Diocesan offices on the Cathedral site.
 - To improve the existing parish hall facilities and integration with the public open space.
 - Retaining the existing 1960s Parish Hall was considered, but advice from Council and our consultants confirm that it is of little heritage significance.
 - Instead, the site will encompass a contemporary pavilion hall building that adds to the vibrancy of the local landscape and community.
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- To respond to Council's planning scheme to develop the commercial zone, improve the boulevard entrance to the CBD, upgrade public open spaces, and respect the significance of the Cathedral.

What are the next steps in the process?

There are many moving parts in developments such as this – and we want people who live in the area to understand what we are planning.

Public meetings were held in February 2024 to share the plans with local residents, answer their questions, and obtain feedback.

Planning permit applications were submitted in March 2024.

A planning permit for demolition of the existing buildings was issued on 2 July 2024.

The planning permit for the building and use of the development is being processed through Council and will be advertised in mid-September 2024.

We expect site works to commence in late 2024 or early 2025.

How long will it take for this development to be completed?

The building and landscaping is planned to be completed by late 2026.

What other benefits will there be for the Bendigo community?

This development aims to deliver social and economic benefits to the Bendigo community. A new tourist offering will create new jobs and a gathering space. The construction of a new building will create employment for local tradespeople.

The development aims to create a thriving public space at the entrance to the CBD, giving the community access to parklands and the Cathedral.

It will also strengthen the Cathedral position as a substantial landmark and tourism attraction, boosting visitors to Bendigo through the Bendigo Chocolaterie and Ice Creamery.

What facilities will there be for the Chocolaterie?

The Bendigo Chocolaterie and Ice Creamery will offer a retail shop, café, viewing windows into the Chocolaterie kitchen and visitor experiences for all ages.

Who has been involved in the design of this new Cathedral Precinct?

The design of the precinct was developed with input from specialist architects and other consultants, the building occupants, a design reference group, and Council officers.

Lessons learnt from the previous proposal have been considered in the new design. Extensive consultation with Council's planning scheme and strategic plan requirements, as well as the Church's aspirations for good stewardship of environmental and indigenous elements have been incorporated in the design.



Is adequate parking included in the design of the new Precinct?

A development at the site was previously approved without any onsite carparking. The current plans have responded to resident feedback by the inclusion of 35 carparks onsite. This is supported by a traffic engineering assessment as well as a carparking survey of the neighbourhood.

The survey identified 560 public car spaces within 200m of the site. At the busiest time on a weekday, 136 (24%) of car parking spaces were available.

What other options are available to access the site?

Tourists to Bendigo will be encouraged to park at various points along the existing tram route and use the tram to access this site and other tourist attractions.

Two multi-storey carparks are within walking distance of the site.

The site is near public bus and train services.

A drop-off zone is proposed in front of the new building in High Street.

Bicycle racks will be provided for staff and visitors, as well as staff end-of-trip facilities.

What is the vehicle access to the new building?

VicRoads has advised that vehicle access is not acceptable from High Street. An internal 35-bay car park, loading dock and bin store is provided on Level 2 of the building. This is accessed by a secure entrance on Short Street, approximately in the location of the existing parish hall. Vehicles will enter and leave the building in a forward direction.

The new Parish Hall will have a drop-off facility onsite in the existing driveway near the Cathedral Sacristy.

Will the building be noisy?

Most air conditioning plant is located away from residential areas, facing the parkland. Other units will be screened out of view with acoustic panelling to reduce noise.

Planning permit conditions, as per the previous permit, will regulate times for functions in the parish hall.

What is the cost of the project and how is it being funded?

The estimated cost is \$30m. This cost is supported by the substantial commercial tenancies in the building.

How will you minimise building disruption for residents?

We will follow the requirements of the Construction Management Plan as approved by Council.

**Will the development improve security at the site?**

The activation of the site with a café, retail, offices and accessible public open spaces, and replacing the un-used parish hall and paint shop, will complement the activity generated by the numerous current Cathedral visitors, which will improve security and vibrancy of the location.

Has the Council been engaged already? How certain are you this will succeed in the permit application process?

To ensure appropriate design development, confidential briefings have been provided to key stakeholders, including Councillors and relevant Council officers.

As a planning permit for the previous development has been approved, and all issues and requirements have been addressed or improved in the current design, we are confident that this proposal will be adopted as a wonderful asset for the Bendigo community.

Where can I find out more information about this Project?

If you have further questions, please visit our website at www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au or email chancery@sandhurst.catholic.org.au.

Where can I provide feedback?

Please email chancery@sandhurst.catholic.org.au

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