



## **Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst**

### **Cathedral Precinct Redevelopment Project – Cathedral Square**

# ***Frequently Asked Questions***

November 2025

### **What is happening?**

The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst is developing 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 Bendigo Chocolaterie and Ice Creamery (commercial tenant)
- Cathedral Parish Hall
- Other commercial retail/office tenancy
- Staff car parking internal to the building
- Public belvedere terracing
- Public lift access between High Street and Cathedral levels.

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

A new planning permit for the current development was issued in November 2024.

### **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 parish hall facilities and integration with the public open space.
- 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 consultation has occurred?**

Numerous meetings with stakeholders including Bendigo City Councillors and Officers, parishioners, tenants, community specialists and various consultants resulted in the proposed development.

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

Planning permit applications for demolition and development were submitted in March 2024. No objections were received. Planning permits were issued in November 2024.

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

The building and landscaping is planned to take approximately two years with site works commencing in November 2025.

### **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, cafe, 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.

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 car parks 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.

### **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 will be accessed by a secure entrance on Short Street. 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.

### **When complete, will the new building generate noise?**

Airconditioning units are located away from residential areas and/or are screened with acoustic panelling.

The loading dock for deliveries is inside Level 2 of the building, accessed via a driveway halfway up Short Street. Vehicles will enter and depart in a forward direction.

Planning permit conditions regulate times for functions in the parish hall.

### **How will you minimise building construction disruption for residents?**

The builder will follow 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 cafe, 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 Cathedral visitors, which will improve security and vibrancy of the location.

### **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](http://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au) or email [chancery@sandhurst.catholic.org.au](mailto:chancery@sandhurst.catholic.org.au).

### **Where can I provide feedback?**

Please email [chancery@sandhurst.catholic.org.au](mailto:chancery@sandhurst.catholic.org.au)