

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL ACCESS STATEMENT

Welcome

We aim to provide a first-class visitor experience to all visitors and worshippers and are continuously looking to improve accessibility and facilities.

However, please remember that the Cathedral is a medieval building, much of it dating from the 12th and 13th centuries, and it is not always possible to provide the facilities we would like within its ancient fabric.

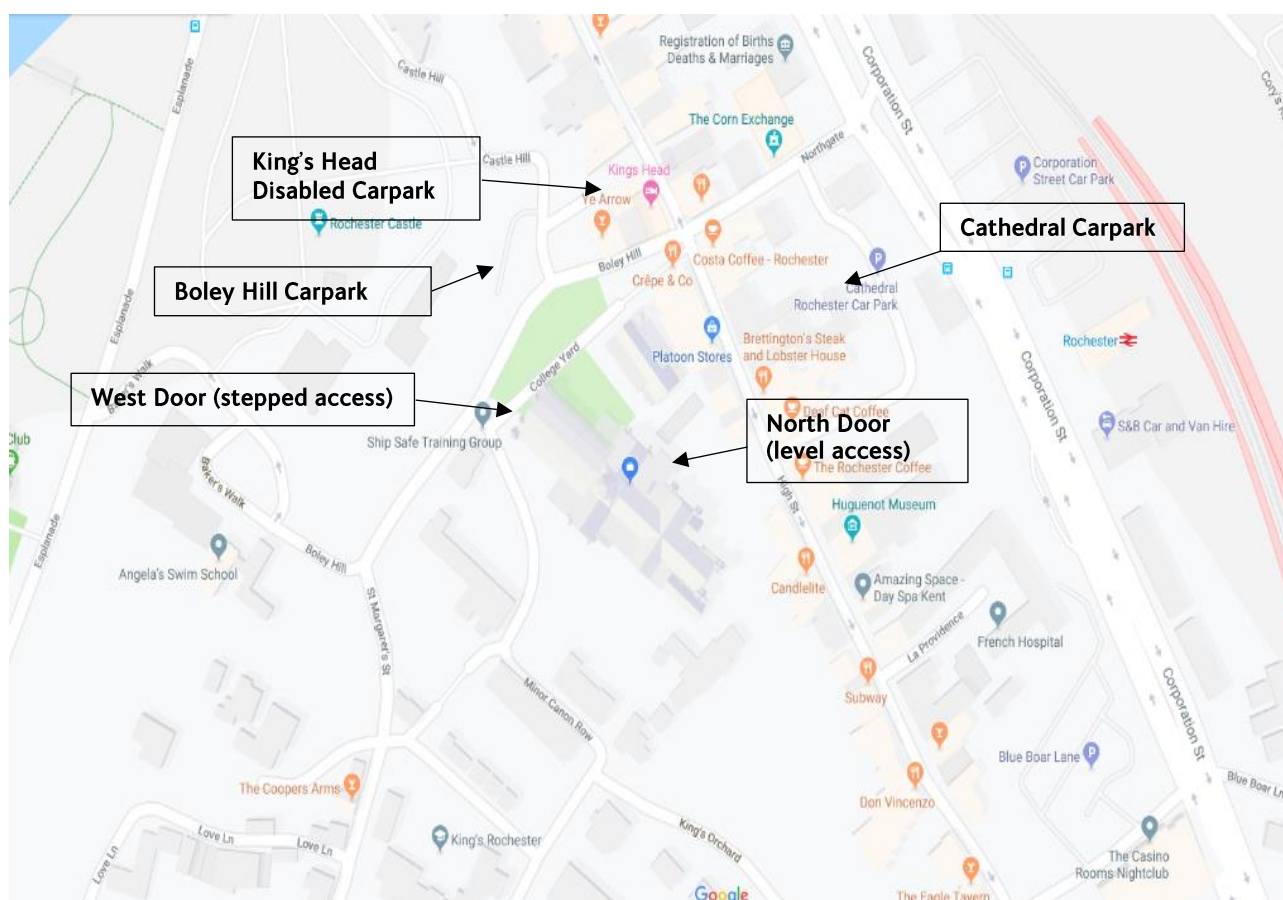
Getting Here

- Our staff can assist with all planning and enquiries and aim to provide a full and equal visitor experience to all visitors. Tel. +44 (0) 1634 843366, email info@rochestercathedral.org.
- For enquiries regarding groups or school visits please email bookings@rochestercathedral.org
- For assistance and advice specific to attending a Service, please contact dutyverger@rochestercathedral.org
- The Cathedral can provide wheelchairs for use within the building. To ensure availability, please book in advance.
- Visitor Guides in large print are available on request.
- For enquiries about attending a special event or concert please email info@rochestercathedral.org

Arrival & Car Parking Facilities

- The Cathedral is in the centre of Rochester. Rochester rail station is just five minutes' walk away. There are bus stops served by many local services on Corporation Street with most buses being accessible to wheelchair users. See:

https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/globalassets/documents/multi-journey-saver-tickets/kent-and-surrey/j12724-medway-network_co_update.pdf



- The nearest carpark are Boley Hill (ME1 1SN – one minute's walk away) and the Cathedral carpark (ME1 1LX – two minutes' walk away). Both are operated by Medway Council and are short stay carpark (up to five hours for £3.00). Boley Hill has 22 spaces but no disabled spaces; the Cathedral carpark has 85 spaces including three disabled spaces.
- The King's Head Disabled Car Park off Boley Hill is also one minute's walk from the Cathedral and has parking for six cars. Parking is free.
- For details of other nearby carpark visit

https://www.medway.gov.uk/directory/8/find_a_car_park/category/151

- Vehicles displaying a valid blue badge can use Rochester's pay and display car parks for free.

Pedestrian Access

- The pedestrian entrance into the Cathedral is via the West Door, accessed from Boley Hill. Although flat, many of the roads and access routes into the Cathedral are cobbled with kerbed pavements with dropped kerbs in most places.
- Access to the nave is via four steps down from the West door.

Wheelchair access

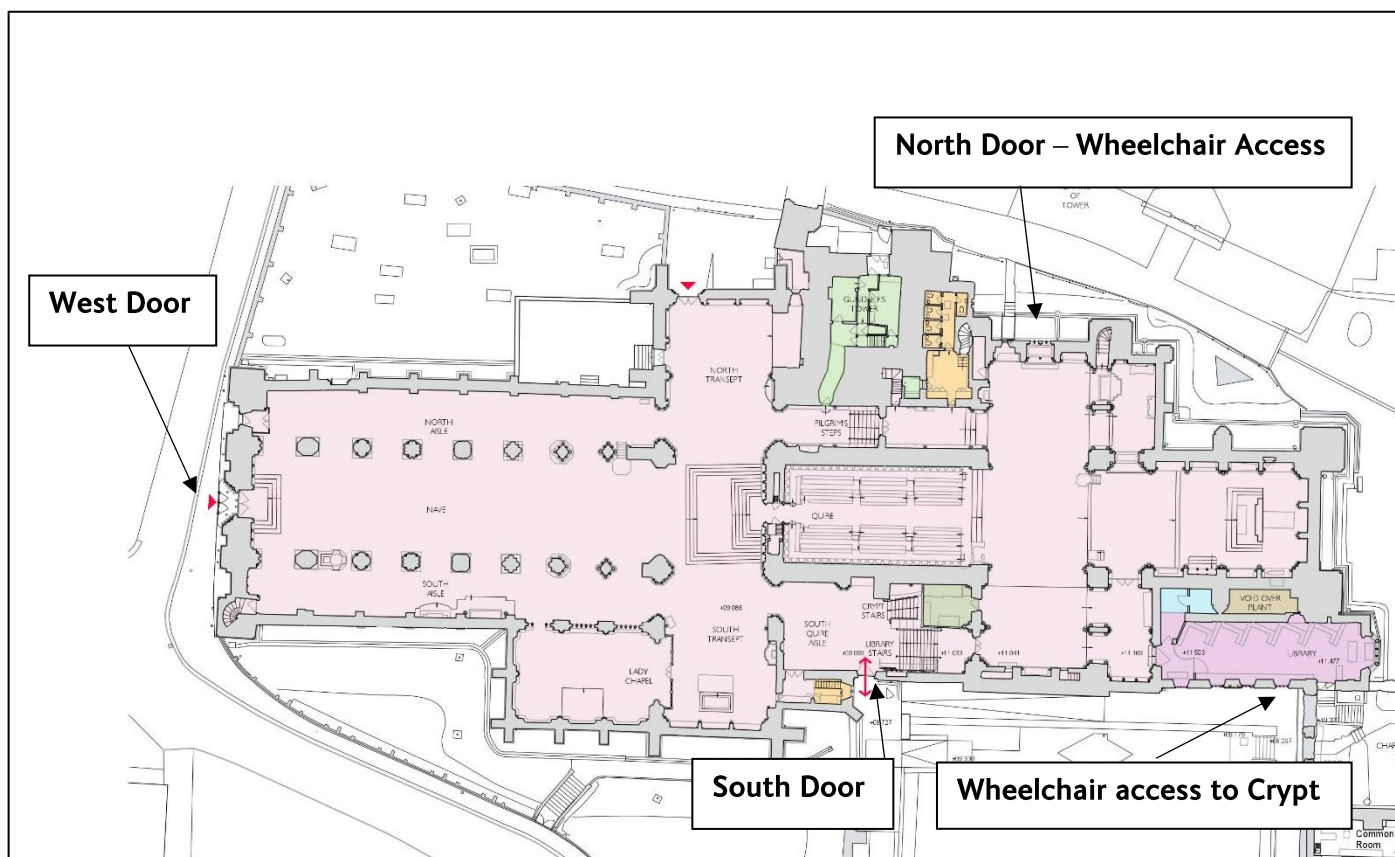
- Wheelchair access into the Cathedral Precincts is through the North Door. This is accessible from Rochester High Street along Pilgrims Passage (also called Black Boy Alley) or from Boley Hill along St Nicholas Walk. The path surfaces are cobbled and in places uneven.

Opening Times

- The Cathedral is open;
 - Monday to Friday 07.30-18.00
 - Saturday 08.30-17.00
 - Sunday 07.30-17.00
- Opening times may occasionally vary depending on services and events when access may be restricted. Up-to-date information is available from the Cathedral's website: <https://www.rochestercathedral.org/>
- Large print visitor information leaflets and further assistance are available from the Welcome Desk by the North Door.
- The Crypt is open;
 - Monday to Saturday 10.00-16.00
 - Sunday 12.00-16.00
- The Shop and Café, both in the Crypt, are open;
 - Monday to Saturday 10.30-15.30 (April to October)
 - Monday to Saturday 11.00-15.00 (November to March)

Public Areas – General

- There are many steps and uneven surfaces throughout the building, and most are very old and uneven. Where possible - but not everywhere - steps have white markings and/or handrails are provided.
- Assistance is always available through our staff and volunteers on arrival and throughout the visit. They are identified by lanyards.
- A hearing loop has been installed in the Nave, Quire, Presbytery and Crypt for use during Services (not used for guided tours). Hearing aid users should adjust their aid to the 'T' setting.
- There are chairs throughout all areas of the Cathedral.
- There are no braille or tactile markings on signage in the Cathedral.
- A tactile display providing interpretation of the Cathedral's fresco is available near the north door.
- All Cathedral buildings are non-smoking areas.
- Assistance dogs and support dogs are welcome.
- A platform lift located at the Kent Steps by the South Door provides access into the Quire, but it cannot currently be used by the heaviest motorised wheelchairs (max capacity 130kg). Staff and volunteers are happy to assist.



Public Areas – School Groups

- School parties may book the lunchroom facilities in our Education Building. The lunchroom is on the first floor, accessed by a staircase of two flights and so is not accessible for wheelchair users
- Please inform staff in advance, so that assistance can be given.
- Our Education staff work with teachers to ensure that all specific needs are fully met and that all visiting school children receive an equality of experience.

Public Areas – Grounds and Gardens

- The Garth is accessible via the South Door
- Paths and walkways are partly levelled concrete and partly cobbled and slightly uneven surface.
- There are benches in the Garth.
- The Garth, which is mainly level grass, is available for picnics.

Public Areas – Toilets

- There are four unisex toilet cubicles inside the Cathedral on an intermediate level between the nave and the quire. There are eight steps leading up from the nave and there is an additional step at the threshold of the toilets. Note that these may be closed at particularly busy times such as Festivals when overuse causes malfunctions.
- There is an accessible toilet by the South Door. Access to it is on a level surface across the nave from the North Door. It is a unisex toilet and there is no need for a key.
- The door opens outwards and locks by a twist lock.
- The dimensions of the cubicle are 210cm x 150cm (6ft 11in x 4ft 11in).
- There is not enough space to the side of the toilet for a wheelchair and sideways transfer.
- There is a monitored pull cord distress alarm call system positioned next to the toilet.
- The hand-towel dispenser is 110 cm (3ft 8in) from the ground.

- The basin is 70 cm (2ft 4in) from the ground and has a single hot/cold lever tap.
- The toilet seat is 48cm (1ft 6in) above floor level.
- There are grab rails, wall-mounted and drop-down rails.
- There is a separate baby change facility in the accessible toilet.

Attendance at Services

- During services in the nave worshippers in wheelchairs can be accommodated in the main seating areas. Advanced notice is helpful.
- The morning eucharist is normally held in the Lady Chapel. This is situated to the southern side of the nave and has step free access to it via the north door.
- Choral Evensong is held in the Quire. Access for those in wheelchairs is via the platform lift at the Kent stairs (but see above for limitations on weight capacity)
- Large print copies of Orders of Service and Hymns are usually available; please ask the Vergers or Stewards on arrival.
- A hearing loop has been installed in the Nave, Quire, Presbytery and Crypt. Hearing aid users should adjust their aid to the 'T' setting.
- Occasionally services may be located to other areas of the Cathedral to accommodate other public events. Please see the website for information.
- <https://www.rochestercathedral.org/services-page>

Attendance at Events

- During concerts we can make special arrangements for reserved seating if required. This includes spaces for wheelchairs. Please email info@rochestercathedral.org in advance of the event if you would like to discuss this.
- Some events in the Cathedral are organised by external companies who will have different systems for organising seating. If you have any questions, please do get in touch with us directly.

Cathedral Shop and Cafe

- The shop and café are in the Crypt. There are eleven steps down to the Crypt from the nave level. The steps have a handrail on both sides. There is currently no disabled access from the nave level directly down to the Crypt though access is possible via the South door into the external Cloister and then back into the building via the external door into the Vestry. Wheelchair access from the Vestry to the Crypt is via a platform lift. Please ask for assistance if you require wheelchair access via this route.
- There are no toilets in the Crypt.
- There is level access throughout the crypt including ramped access into the Crypt Treasury exhibition area.
- Staff are available for assistance to show items for sale that may be out of reach.
- There may be times when the Crypt is closed for special events. Please check our website for details. <https://www.rochestercathedral.org/>

