

Goulburn's Saint Saviour's Cathedral embarks on Great East Window work

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MAJOR WORK: Bishop Carol Wagner, Mayor Peter Walker, heritage architect Michael Fox and Saint Saviour's Dean Phillip Saunders at Saturday's funding announcement for the Cathedral's Great East Window (behind). Photo: Louise Thrower.

Heritage architect Michael Fox is on a mission to understand what is causing movement in one of Saint Saviour's Cathedral's stunning stained glass windows.

The Pacific Palms based specialist is overseeing the Cathedral's wider \$10 million restoration program and is embarking on the next chapter – the Great East Window.

The work is being funded by a recently announced state government grant, matched by the Cathedral's National Trust Heritage Fund.

Some 35 people, including Goulburn Mulwaree Mayor Peter Walker, attended a launch and information session on Saturday.

Dean Phillip Saunders said the project involved excavation and stabilisation of the 1884 Cathedral's eastern facade's foundations. This would enable conservation of the window's stone tracery and glass.

The window, designed in 1885 by London-based Heaton, Butler and Bayne, depicts the story of Jesus' life. It was erected in memory of Goulburn pioneers, William and Elizabeth Bradley, by their four daughters.

The firm became one of the leading manufacturers of Gothic revival stained-glass. The Very Reverend Saunders said the Great East Window, was one of the earliest Australian examples of their work.



Saint Saviour's Cathedral's Great East Window was installed in 1885 and dedicated to William and Elizabeth Bradley. Photo: Louise Thrower.

But he said for several years there had been concern about the window's structural movement and settlement. This included cracks in the tracery, lancet windows and sandstone facade.

Local company, Jewell Builders are undertaking the underpinning, while Moss Vale based Heritage Decorative Glass will restore the glass. Sydney outfit, Stonemason and Artist have been enlisted to complete the stonework repairs.

Structural engineers and archaeologists are also advising on the project.

Mr Fox said the window was stunning and a crucial part of architect Edmund Blacket's design. Blacket was an ecclesiastical architect.



Saint Saviour's Anglican Church was designed by Edmund Blacket and constructed in 1884. It is a major Goulburn tourist attraction. Photo: Louise Thrower.

But it was important to understand what was causing the window's movement.

"It's a bit like being a heritage detective," he told *The Post*.

"We are trying to find out the extent of underpinning in the 1950s and 1980s (when the spire was built) so we know what is happening to the window.

"From our point of view it's a great project because it's about unravelling the layers of history..."

Core samples are being taken of the foundations to test their strength. Excavations six metres below ground level have turned up a few surprises, including brickwork below stone and concrete layers, which Cathedral historians have speculated could be part of the original 1839 church brickwork.

Another theory is that the building is shifting laterally, with the force pushing out buttresses and causing outward cracking.

The current investigations, expected to take about one month, will inform the way ahead.



Dean Phillip Saunders and heritage architect Michael Fox show the excavations underway on the Cathedral's eastern aspect. Photo: Louise Thrower.

At the same time, stormwater drains are being installed below the eastern aspect to address rising damp. This is a continuation of earlier work.

Mr Fox expected the window and underpinning project to be completed within budget and by next May.

The broader \$15m to \$20m restoration encompasses drainage, window and roofing repairs and, in time, a Spire.

"It's a lifetime project," The Very Reverend Saunders said.