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**Press Release 09/03/22**

**National award success for Worcester Cathedral’s Undercroft Learning Centre**

Worcester Cathedral is celebrating scooping a national award for architectural excellence, as its Undercroft Learning Centre is awarded the 2022 Civic Trust AABC Conservation Award.

In collaboration with Acanthus Clews Architects, the conversion of the Cathedral’s former monastic storage rooms into the new Undercroft Learning Centre provides an innovative and versatile venue for learning and discovery for the whole community.

The Civic Trust Awards scheme was established in 1959 to recognise outstanding architecture, planning and design in the built environment.

In awarding the accolade, the Judges commented on the project: “A challenging and well resolved scheme, the project addressed complicated access to the vault, allowing it to be opened-up and appreciated by a wide audience. Technical challenges associated with archaeology, environmental conditions in the space and ensuring the former monastic refectory cellar maintained its integrity was a colossal task and one that has been expertly executed.”

Camilla Finlay, Director at Acanthus Clews Architects, said: “Receiving this award from the Civic Trust is so important because it is given to projects that demonstrate the highest level of building conservation - this is the level all involved in the project strove to deliver in the conversion of the scheduled Undercroft. The Civic Trust awards also celebrate accessibility and inclusivity which was at the heart of our work in creating a centre for learning in the Undercroft - to provide an invitation that we hope will reach new audiences to come and share the spaces and activities that take place within.”

Daniel Parnell, Director of Learning at Worcester Cathedral, added: “The aim of the Undercroft project was for the centre to play a decisive role in maintaining the education department’s existing status as a beacon of excellence in educational outreach and a model of best practice.

“We are hugely honoured to be given this award that recognises the uniqueness of the building and the excellence of our education programme coming together to offer a diverse space for use by the whole community.

“It is a brilliant achievement for all involved in the development and delivery of this project. Thanks to National Lottery Heritage Fund and other generous donors, a team of skilled crafts people have created a unique venue and we now have a space for inspiration and discovery, and we are keen to make sure everyone has the chance to use it.

“And thank you to the judging panel for their support in recognising the achievements in creating this space!”

As the longest standing built environment awards scheme in Europe, since 1959 The Civic Trust Awards scheme has recognised more than 7,000 projects and the scheme has continued in its objective to recognise projects that have made a positive contribution to the local communities they serve.

The aim of the Civic Trust Awards is to encourage the very best in architecture and environmental design, to improve the built environment for everyone through design, sustainability, inclusiveness and accessibility, and also to reward projects that offer a positive cultural, social, economic or environmental benefit to their local communities.

Established in 2014, winners in the Civic Trust AABC Conservation Awards demonstrate the highest standards of historic building conservation and make an outstanding contribution to the quality and appearance of the built environment.

For more information about the Undercroft Learning Centre, please visit [www.worcestercathedral.co.uk/undercroft](http://www.worcestercathedral.co.uk/undercroft)

**ENDS**

For press enquiries about Worcester Cathedral, please contact [sarahbowyer@worcestercathedral.org.uk](mailto:sarahbowyer@worcestercathedral.org.uk).

**Notes to editors**

Worcester Cathedral has been a place of Christian worship and prayer for fourteen centuries; the present building dates back to 1084 and is dedicated to Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Described as possibly the most interesting of all England's cathedrals, especially architecturally, Worcester Cathedral was founded in 680. Saint Oswald then built another cathedral in 983, and established a monastery attached to it. Saint Wulfstan began the present building in 1084 replacing the earlier cathedrals.

The Cathedral's attractions include King John's Tomb, Prince Arthur's Chantry, the early 12th Century Chapter House, St Wulfstan's Crypt, medieval cloisters, magnificent Victorian stained glass and spectacular views from the top of the Cathedral tower.