

Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Stone Town World Heritage Site, Zanzibar



Restoration and Development Project

Launched October 2013

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Zanzibar Cathedral Restoration and Development Project

In October 2013, Zanzibar Anglican Cathedral launched its long awaited Restoration and Development Project, including the creation of a Heritage Education and Visitor Centre. The launch was attended by European and Zanzibar politicians including the Minister for Tourism, as well as classes from two Schools, one being the Cathedral's own St Monica's very successful Nursery & Primary School . After the recent troubles it was a very positive event. Rt Rev Douglas and Mrs Pat Cameron also attended from Scotland. Douglas is a former Bishop of Argyll & The Isles which is linked with Zanzibar, and he and Pat visit the island on an annual basis to continue giving support. The launch had been enabled by the generous support of the **World Monuments Fund** and the **European Union**, who are underwriting a large part of the basic cost, which is estimated at £800,000.

Zanzibar Cathedral rises from the slave trade

The slave trade is surely one of the most shameful aspects of European expansion in the 17th to 19th centuries. When the transatlantic trade from West Africa was disrupted by the British Navy in the 19th century, more slaves than ever were taken through Zanzibar, adding to the numbers already being taken to the East. The abolitionist movement gained momentum from David Livingstone's descriptions of the decimation of African populations as slavers raped and murdered their way through the African interior. As many as 50,000 slaves were passing through the city annually in the 19th century and up to 90% of the local population was enslaved. Livingstone estimated that 80,000 people died each year before ever reaching Zanzibar. When the slave market was finally closed in 1873 this was considered a great victory for the abolitionist movement. Bishop Steere of the Universities Mission to Central Africa managed to acquire the site and that year laid the foundation stone for Christ Church Cathedral. They planned to develop the site with schools and a dispensary for the local people.

Cathedral Buildings Construction History - from 1873 to date

The Cathedral itself was designed by the London architect C.F. Hayward in a mixture of Gothic and Arabic styles. The walls were built of coral laid in lime mortar; it is one of the tallest coral buildings on the island. The roof was to be something special. Steere was keen to have a roof that would stand the test of time. Although structural concrete design was not well understood until the 20th century, Steere decided to span the 28.5 foot roof with concrete formed over a framework that was moved along as work progressed. People were amazed when the support was removed from the first section; it stayed up!

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The Cathedral lies within the UN World Heritage Site of Stone Town (the historical centre of Zanzibar). As well as being a place of worship for Christians in the town, the Cathedral with its history is a significant attraction for visitors to the island, and a large part of its income comes from these visitors. It was very apparent that the buildings required a large amount of restoration to maintain them and the flow of visitors. In 1999 the Diocesan Architect of Argyll & The Isles visited the Cathedral and prepared a condition report. However, it proved difficult to progress further action, due to lack of funding.

First Aid: Crisis occurred a couple of years later. Although the original roof had lasted, around ten years ago there was structural movement and the concrete started to crack. At present a serious crack runs the height of the West gable and cracking continues along the length of the roof. Christian Engineers in Development (a very active UK Charitable Organisation) were asked to assist and they became the Project Managers. To keep abreast of the current condition, CED have been sending out an engineer and an architect to monitor the faults, and to design solutions for the desperately urgent remedial structural works. CED is overseeing this engineering work which is due to commence very shortly. The plan is to prevent further movement of the North and South walls by inserting ties across the roof at the base of the arch and to repair the crack in the gable.

Restoration and Development

Restoration: £450,000 of the basic cost will be spent on repairs at the cathedral itself so that it is not in danger of collapse. **Further funding** estimated at **£250,000** is needed to bring the building back into a reasonable state of repair and ultimately to return it to being the showcase example of Swahili architecture that it once was. Tourists, academics and worshippers should be able to experience and enjoy this unique space with its turn of the 20th century art work.

Development: With the rest of the £800,000, **WMF** will help the cathedral develop a Heritage Education and Visitor Centre, marking the abolition of slavery and in so doing, help secure long term the future of the building fabric. The vision is that telling the story of slavery in an open way will help to bridge the social and ethnic divisions of the island and promote tolerance, reconciliation and an inclusive society. There will be a section devoted to modern day slavery. Local school children will learn about their history and visiting tourists will create jobs and wealth.

The Cathedral hopes to accomplish the conservation work in part by establishing a Cathedral Workshop Trade School to train apprentices in traditional skills, expert specialist artisans being brought in for the purpose. In time the school would start to become self-supporting as its craftsmen would carry out work for other organisations in Stone Town World Heritage Site. Once the Cathedral Heritage Centre opens, entrance fees will also be used to fund further repair and ongoing maintenance.

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Support

Local: In 2009, a large group from Zanzibar Cathedral and Diocese climbed Mt Kilimanjaro in aid of the Cathedral. The total raised was in the region of \$36,000. The Diocese has ideas of repeating this creditable effort.

Organisational: To raise the public profile, **UNESCO** gave the Restoration its blessing, and to help raise the necessary funds the Cathedral invited **World Monuments Fund** to take an interest. **WMF** have received support from the **European Union** to make emergency repairs to the building and stabilize the roof. The total WMF budget for the project is £800,000. 80% of this is a grant from the **European Development Fund** with the balance to be made up by the **Anglican Diocese of Zanzibar** together with the **Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation**, the **Government of Zanzibar** and funds donated for the project to **Christian Engineers in Development**. It is hoped to attract funding from other organisations interested in the buildings, the slave trade history, and the development of a better future for the people, through education, craftsmanship training and paid work.

Public: Amongst others, various Cathedral and Church congregations in the UK are generously sending support to both the Cathedral and the Diocese. The project is appealing to the worldwide public to donate any sums, small or large, to be able to progress the restoration and development.

Your help is therefore much needed.

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The current project provides an opportunity to organise further work while experts are visiting Zanzibar regularly. If you would like to support the venture, please send any donation to:

The Treasurer  
Christian Engineers in Development      *[UK Charity No. 293734]*  
37 Kidmore End Road  
Emmer Green  
Reading RG4 8SN

Further information:      [www.zanzibarfriends.org](http://www.zanzibarfriends.org)  
                                         [www.ced.org.uk/zanzibar-cathedral/](http://www.ced.org.uk/zanzibar-cathedral/)

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### Pictures:

Crack on West gable

General view of cathedral (note the grey roof - the front page shows the roof covered with copper coloured tarpaulins to prevent rain leakage—an indication of the urgent need).

The concrete ceiling... crack is just visible

Slave memorial by Clara Sörnäs

Spire in Stone Town "Arts and Crafts" beaten copper panels in apse behind altar  
Project launch October 2013



Original article by Ian Rankin, Architect, Chairman CED, [chair@ced.org.uk](mailto:chair@ced.org.uk)

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Annexes/ WMF Press Release/UNESCO Letter of support

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## PRESS RELEASE

Stone Town, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013

**Launch of a three year project in Zanzibar to create a heritage centre on the site of the former slave market in Zanzibar, preserve the Christ Church Cathedral and support the Wakf Commission**

In a significant and tangible demonstration of partnership, the Government of Tanzania, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, the European Union and the United States of America have joined forces to support the preservation and promotion of a landmark historical site in Stone Town, Zanzibar. These organizations believe cultural heritage strengthens community identity and pride. Moreover, when the preservation of cultural heritage is integrated into a coherent development strategy, it can become a potent force for the community's socio-economic development.

This project will result in the creation of a heritage and education centre that will both commemorate the abolition of slavery and educate school children about the history of the abolition movement. The iconic Christ Church Cathedral will also receive urgently needed structural repairs and preservation works. The project will also provide heritage management training to the Wakf commission, which administers endowed property for all denominations of Islam in Zanzibar and is responsible for over 50% of its historic housing stock.

The project will be implemented by World Monuments Fund and its partners, the Anglican Church of Tanzania, the Zanzibar Stone Town Heritage Society and the UK charity Christian Engineers in Development.

*"Our hope is that the preservation and promotion of this historical site in Zanzibar will fuel a sense of common belonging for the Zanzibari people and of ownership of their cultural heritage; it should contribute to building national identity in the diversity, tolerance and solidarity between faiths, communities and peoples."* said the EU Ambassador to Tanzania, H.E. Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi.

According to Ms. Bonnie Burnham, President of World Monuments Fund, *"World Monuments Fund is delighted to be working with these government and international partners to conserve this important landmark. This cultural heritage site is significant for Zanzibaris as well as the world, and we hope that the project will serve as a catalyst for the development of a stronger sense of community identity."*

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For more information, please contact:

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The European Union has awarded a grant of EUR 743 000 to this project

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The European Commission is the EU's executive body.

"The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".

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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
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para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединённых Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للثربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

## Culture Sector

Ref.: WHC/74/URT/10/05/I.F

17 September 2010

## Subject: Zanzibar Anglican Cathedral restoration project 2010

### To Whom It May Concern:

The Anglican Cathedral in Zanzibar is an historic building and an important part of the country's heritage, being one of a handful of listed monuments in the Stone Town World Heritage property. Started in 1872 and consecrated in 1903, it stands on the site of the former slave market – the altar being on the location of the whipping post. Through the history preceding this place of worship, it is also a monument acknowledging the slave trade, as evidenced in the commemorative sculpture of a slave pit in the grounds. The Cathedral is adorned with a window dedicated to the memory of the anti-slave trade explorer David Livingstone, as well as a crucifix made from the wood of a tree beside his burial place near Lake Tanganyika. The Cathedral is also an important economic asset to the island's tourist industry, welcoming thousands of visitors each year.

The Cathedral has been, for some time, in dire need of restoration and repair. In particular, the most urgent repair concerns the pioneering solid roof, which has started to spread. This, paired with cracks beginning to appear in the walls is signaling that the roof needs significant upgrading with restoration efforts also placed on the surrounding walls. The coral render has fallen off in certain places, leaving soft mud/lime mortar exposed to the rain.

The project, which is being led by the UK Charity Christian Engineers in Development, involves not only the restoration, but also the formation of a school for artisans. The aim is to benefit the local community as to:

- Rescue an internationally recognized property inscribed on the World Heritage List and further protect its Outstanding Universal Value
- Secure for the future a valuable economic asset
- Build a community of artisans of all faiths, focused on developing excellence in the training of craftsmen and craftswomen
- Reduce poverty by providing training and work to the community
- Involve local people, expatriates, Muslims and Christians in a project that will foster understanding

The World Heritage Centre strongly approves of and supports the undertaking of this project, and has no hesitation in recommending it for international support from all Government, Commercial and Charitable Organizations and individuals alike.

Lazare Eloundou Assomo  
Chief of Africa Unit  
World Heritage Centre

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