

York Minster installs new anti-terrorism barriers



By [Oscar Bentley](#), Editor (2018)
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Image: Oscar Bentley

New anti-terrorism barriers have been installed around the front of York Minster. The barrier, which takes the form of 12 concrete blocks made from a reconstituted natural stone mix, was installed after recommendations from the Counter Terrorism Unit.

The decision to install the barrier was taken by the Chapter of York, which is the governing body of the cathedral, to strengthen security measures in light of the national terror threat level being at “severe”.

Following the “appalling” attacks in Manchester and London earlier this year, the Dean of York, the Very Reverend Dr Vivienne Faull, stated that it was important to reassess, review, and refine arrangements for keeping the public safe for all those who are responsible for the security of public spaces, and buildings and monuments which are of national importance.

Work to install the barrier commenced the week beginning Monday 6 November, and was completed last week. The Chapter was also keen to stress that the blocks are a only temporary security measure in response to the current climate, and that the blocks can and will be removed in future if the security situation improves.

The blocks, which have been tested by the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure and approved by the Home Office, will be “substantial”. None of the archaeology of the Minster, which dates back as far as 1220 and was built over a period of 250 years up to 1472, will be disturbed, while new flagstones will be cut and set around each of the blocks. The blocks are already used as a security barrier around many high-profile locations across the UK, including the Tower of London.

Commenting on the Minster’s new security measures, Faull said: “The national terror threat level has been at ‘SEVERE’ for many months and is likely to remain so for some time to come. Some experts within

the UK's security community believe that we are facing a generational problem which may last for 20 or 30 years.

"Chapter has been concerned about the potential vulnerability of the area around the Minster's West End for some time. The clear recommendation from the Counter Terrorism Unit required us to take urgent and decisive action to protect the area. The protective barrier will provide a physical defence and will be a visible deterrent at the front of the Minster."

Faull concluded: "We have a clear duty of care to everyone who visits York Minster and we will do everything we can to ensure that our worshippers and visitors feel safe and secure when they are here."

On Monday 6 November the Chapter of York lodged an application for temporary planning permission for a period of six months, which, while the Chapter took advice from the local authority before construction, is still yet to be approved. The application states that the blocks have been "manufactured to appear similar to Yorkstone with similar weathering qualities to quarried stone products."

A council spokeswoman told *York Press* it was likely the application will be considered by officers acting under delegated powers, rather than councillors.



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