King’s College is a registered charity, and the generosity of donors around the world supports our teaching, research and buildings, as well as the activities of our Chapel and Choir.

To discover more about the £100m King’s Campaign, and how you can help, please visit www.kings.cam.ac.uk/campaign

Lavatories
There are no public lavatories in the College. The nearest are at Grand Arcade.

Photography
You may take photographs of the College grounds, but we ask you not to use flash photography inside the Chapel. Views of the interior may be bought from the King’s College Visitor Centre.

The College and its Grounds

During the Easter Term (mid-April to mid-June), which is the examination period in Cambridge, the College grounds are closed to visitors, but the Chapel remains open.

Leave the Chapel by the South Porch (March to September). You are now in the Front Court. On your right is the Gibbs Building, begun in 1724 and completed in 1729, and named after its architect. The building’s restrained classical façade of Portland stone provides a brilliant foil to the flamboyant late Gothic of the Chapel. Its rooms are mostly used for teaching, study and administration.

Opposite the Gibbs Building you can see the delicate tracery of the Gatehouse and the Screen, designed in the neo-Gothic fashion of the 1820s by William Wilkins (who also designed the National Gallery in London). The construction of the Gatehouse and the Screen involved the controversial demolition of half of the buildings in King’s Parade, but they are now a much-admired landmark at the heart of the town.

Opposite you will see the Dining Hall, part of the south range of the Front Court, all of which was designed by Wilkins. The Dining Hall is used by the College Community, as well as providing a splendid setting for formal dinners. It remains an important focus for the College community.

Look across the Front Court at the Fountain surmounted by the Statue of Henry VI, the ‘boy king’, above the symbolic figures of Religion and Learning.

Turn right from the Chapel. To the left you will see the Library and Old Provost’s Lodge (both designed by Wilkins), and in front of you the Back Lawn, which extends down towards the river, with Clare College on the right hand side. The Bridge affords picturesque views of the River Cam, passing through Clare College to the north, and Queens’ College to the south. On the west side of the Bridge lies Scholars’ Piece, a glimpse of countryside in the heart of Cambridge.

If you wish, you may leave the College by proceeding along the curved path, designed in the spirit of early nineteenth century romanticism by the evangelical churchman, Charles Simeon. Pass the famous poet Xu Zhimo memorial stone and the Chinese Garden built in his memory

On your way through to the Back Gate.

History of the College and Chapel
Welcome to King's College, a community whose fellows live, for over 550 years, sworn on admission to promote learning and research.

The lay-out and adornment of the Chapel

The Chapel is 88 metres (289 feet) long, 12 metres (40 feet) in span between the piers, and the vault is 24 metres (80 feet) high. The fan vaulting, the undoubted glory of the building, was completed in three years between 1512 and 1515. After this the glaziers could get on with the task of installing the 26 sets of stained glass windows, which took around another 30 years.

Starting from the North Porch, visitors immediately sense the sublime spaciousness of the Chapel, with its fan-vaulted ceiling. The heraldic carvings are the heraldic emblems of the College and the English monarchs. On each side of the Chapel are thePortcullis, badges of the Beaufort family (Lady Margaret Beaufort, Foundress of Christ’s College and St John’s College, Cambridge, was the mother of Henry VII); the Greyhound is the emblems are: the Portcullis, badge of the Beaufort family (Lady Margaret Beaufort, Foundress of Christ’s College and St John’s College, Cambridge, was the mother of Henry VII); the Greyhound is the Royal Arms of England; the Dragon of Cadwallader (Wales) represents the Tudor family of Henry VII’s father. The York, emphatically symbolises the Tudors’ links with both Royal Houses.

Henry Vlll having married Elizabeth of York), the Palk of Ley is worth visiting as is the English monarchs of France (this claim was only reluctantly dropped by George III). The Coat of Arms is the Royal Arms of England; the Dragon of Cadwallader (Wales) represents the Tudor family of Henry VII’s father. The York, emphatically symbolises the Tudors’ links with both Royal Houses.

From here proceed to the St Edward’s Chapel, where you may feel that a little of private prayer or contemplation is appropriate. On the altar is a Madonna in the Rosary by the Westphalian painter Gert van Lon done between 1512 and 1520.

On leaving this Chapel, enter the Chapel Exhibition, housed in various side chapels. The accompanying signs are self-explanatory.

Henry also commissioned the magnificent stained glass windows on the north, south and east sides of the Chapel (upper windows - Old Testament, lower - New Testament).

If you want more information than is possible in this leaflet, you will find greater depth of analysis in the booklet, King’s College Chapel, with a large Deposition of Christ by Girogio Siciarlete of Sermontina painted circa 1568 and 73 and a splendid Antwerp Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi by the Master of Von Grote Adoration (c. 1526) given by P. K. Pal his family to the college in 2010. Finally, visit the Whitchurch Chapel, which has interesting stained glass and a painting by Carlo Maratta and his workshop from the beginning of the eighteenth century. This chapel is used for baptism for members of the College.

Other changes to the original design are not obvious. For example John Wastell, the master mason responsible for finishing the stonework of the building, discarded the plans for a conventional lierne vault, and replaced it with the breath-taking fan vault - the largest vault of its kind in the world.

Chapel Services

During the academic year (approximately early October to early December; mid January to mid March; mid April to mid June; late June to mid-July), you are welcome to attend choral services in the Chapel. These are held at 17.30 on Mondays and Thursdays. For more detailed information, contact the Chapel, just inside the Gatehouse B.

Wheelchair Access

If you require assistance, please ask a member of staff.