



Durham
University

Palace Green Library Restoration and Refurbishment



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1. Durham University

Durham has been a seat of learning for much longer than it has been a university city. The ecclesiastical foundation which developed on the peninsula, following the migration of monks from Lindisfarne, led to Durham becoming both a cultural centre and a political stronghold. The Venerable Bede, the greatest European scholar of his age, is buried in Durham Cathedral, itself a monumental testament to 11th-century architectural innovation.

Durham University, the third oldest in England, is a collegiate university with long traditions and modern values. Durham is historically regarded as the birthplace of English scholarship. It is at once a historic university with its heart in a small and beautiful city and a modern and vibrant university of and for the world. The historic heart of this internationally renowned University was inscribed in 1986 as a World Heritage Site. Durham Castle, one of the iconic buildings within the Site, is home to University College, the oldest of Durham's colleges and societies.

The sense of community and place, engendered by the people, buildings and environment, makes for an intimate relationship between staff and students, and across disciplines, which is hard to match elsewhere. Durham is equally proud to be

a community of international scholars, staff and students who reflect the values and ambitions of cultures across the globe. Since it was founded in 1832, Durham's commitment to excellence in all aspects of education and the transmission of knowledge has been unwavering.

The beginning of the 21st century sees Durham occupying a position of real strength, consistently featuring at the very highest level in independent measures compiled by respected commentators on higher education. Today's university exemplifies the best in higher education: a pre-eminent, research-intensive institution, home to some of the world's sharpest minds and committed to achieving the highest level of distinction in research, scholarship and education.



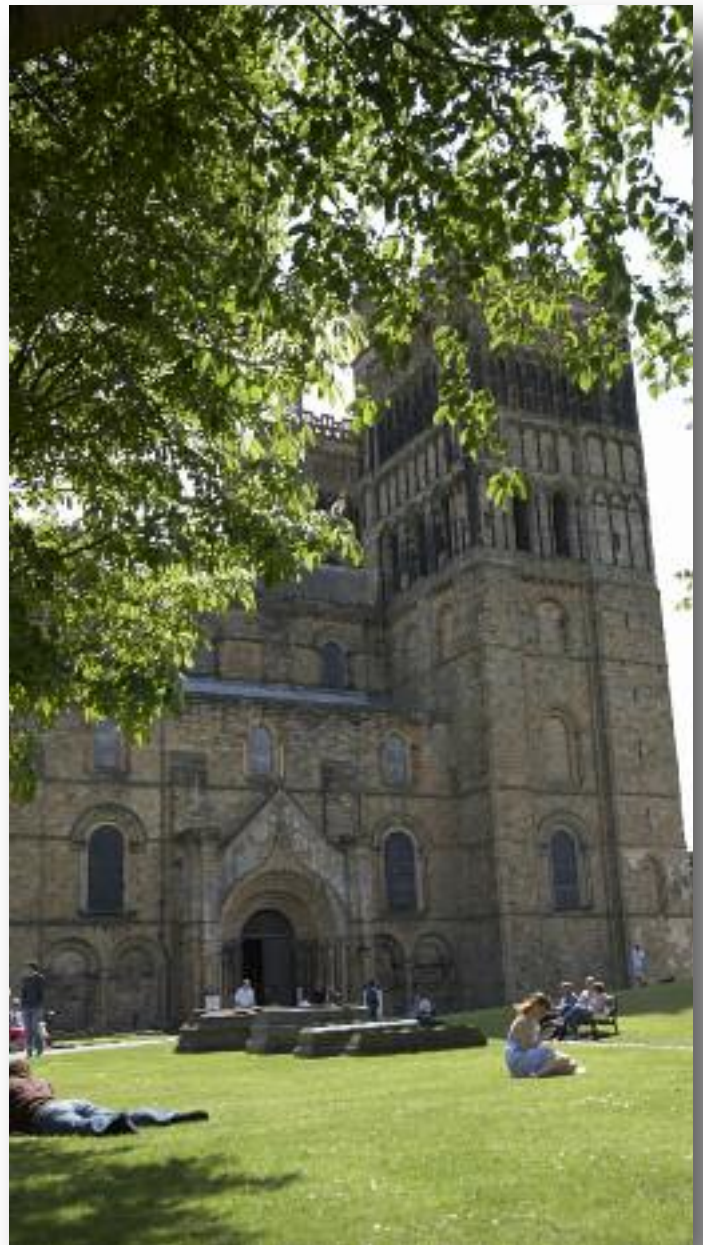
2. The UNESCO World Heritage Site

The UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) on Palace Green is defined by Durham Cathedral, the Castle and the buildings on Palace Green, some of which are home to Palace Green Library. Taken together, they embody timeless and intangible values of sanctuary, scholarship, pilgrimage and education. The Cathedral and Castle have a well-documented history of continual use that stretches back over the past 1000 years. Together, within their defended walls on the top of a dramatic peninsula, they manifest the physical, political, social and religious power of the Norman conquerors and the medieval Prince-Bishops. This powerful skyline still dominates the City of Durham and is a globally iconic image. The conversion of this defensive peninsula landscape to one of peaceful use, with 18th-century terraced gardens and a 19th-century university, contributes to its international significance.

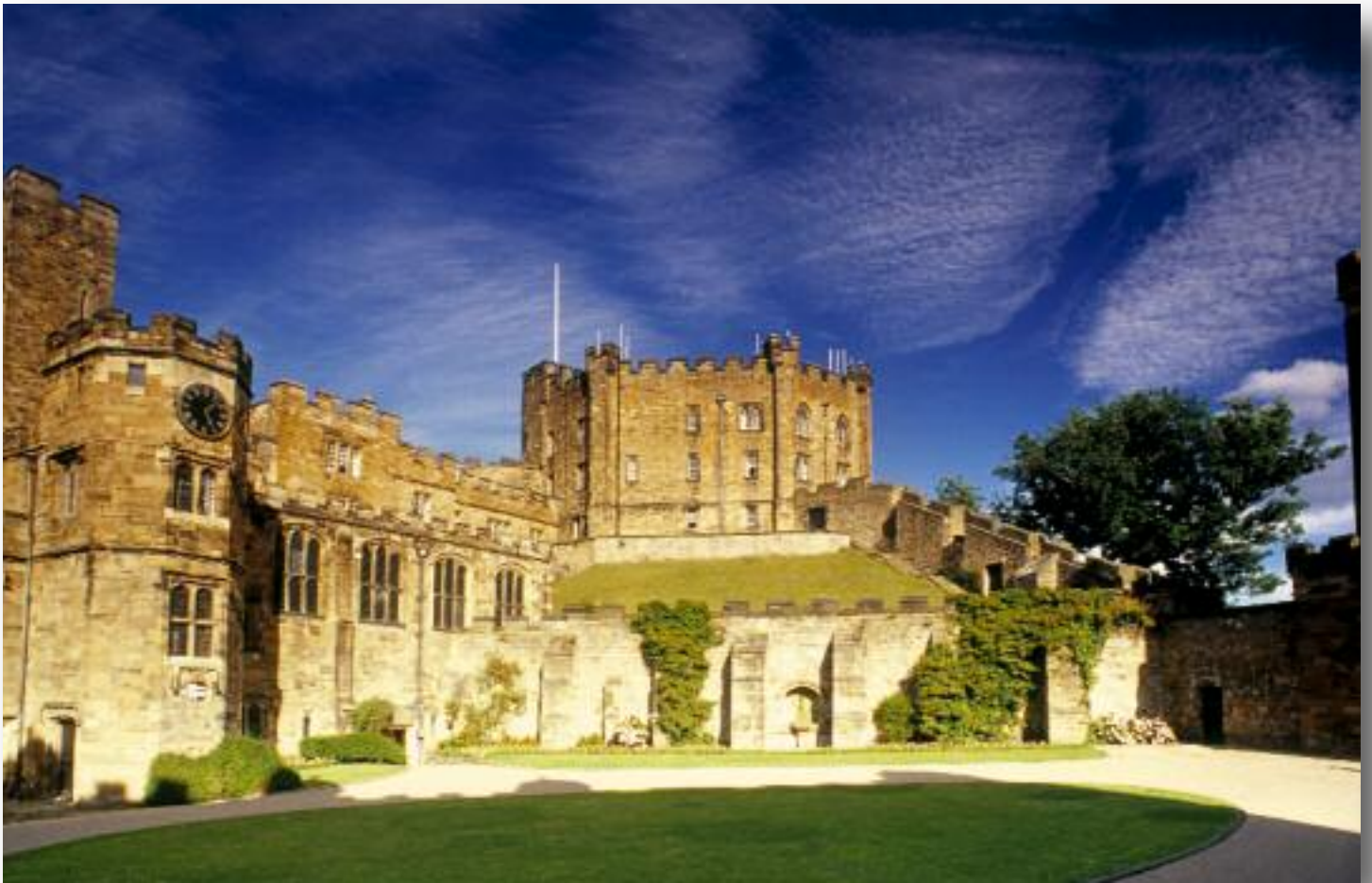
The WHS is a central gathering point for the entire community, serving as a prestigious venue for traditional events such as the Miners' Gala, weddings and other family gatherings, and is the community's principal place of Christian worship. As the home of a university of international importance, the WHS also stands at the centre of the worldwide diaspora of Durham University alumni who hold the WHS in high regard and consider it a poignant symbol of their personal and intellectual development.

Durham Cathedral

The Romanesque Cathedral was built between 1093 and 1133. It is impressive for its sheer scale, mass and drama, representing innovative structural developments and a maturity of architectural quality. Durham Cathedral was the first major English church to be covered entirely with a stone vault and one of the earliest buildings in Europe to use ribbed vaulting throughout. It represents the culmination of the structural and aesthetic advances of European Romanesque architecture; the sense of spatial unity it achieves internally was without comparison. This architectural achievement at Durham laid the foundations for the gradual emergence of the Gothic style across Europe during the course of the 12th century.



World Heritage Sites are places or buildings of Outstanding Universal Value, recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as constituting a world heritage 'for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate.'



Durham Castle

The present Castle buildings were begun shortly after the Norman Conquest in 1072 by Earl Waltheof at the instigation of William I, as part of his campaign to subdue and control Northern England and the Scottish borders. The building's greatest importance lies in its status as the palace of the early Norman bishops, for whom the Cathedral was their church. The Castle symbolises the quality and scale of buildings undertaken by the Norman kings across Britain, which have now all but disappeared. The west and north ranges in particular are of outstanding national importance and illustrate the scale and development of the quasi-regal medieval hall from its early 11th-century beginnings in Durham through to its zenith in the 14th century. The Castle served as the bishop's palace from 1076 until 1836. Thereafter it was ceded to the founding college of the University of Durham (University College).

Palace Green

The establishment of Palace Green in the early 12th century and its enclosure with the great offices of the Prince-Bishops is a major piece of medieval 'town planning' of national importance. Its visual function as a piece of landscape design, in uniting the great bishop's church to his castle-palace, is of great significance to the successful grouping of the WHS monuments. Less well understood is its significance as a set piece for the display of secular palatinate power, exemplified by the Court, Mint, Prison and Exchequer (built to house the bishop's financial accounts and legal records). Of these medieval buildings only the Exchequer survives. This massive sandstone construction with small twin lancets, relieved by later traceried windows, stands adjacent to Bishop Cosin's Library. Both these buildings form part of today's Palace Green Library which, through its collections, unites the two great institutions at the WHS, holding archives and collections that relate both to the University and the Cathedral.

3. Palace Green Library

The heart of any university must be its library and the historic core of Durham University has been, since its foundation, the library established by John Cosin (1595 -1672). Founded in 1669 as an endowed public library for local clergy and scholars, *Bibliotheca Episcopalis Dunelmensis* is nestled on the western side of Palace Green in between the Cathedral and Castle. It is a uniquely surviving example of a French-style 17th-century library in Britain.

Palace Green Library's development parallels that of the University itself; the growth of the collections mirroring its expansion. Within one year of the fledgling University's establishment, William Van Mildert, the last Prince-Bishop of Durham and one of the University's founders, housed his own 'foundation collection' in Cosin's library in a gallery erected at his own expense. Further major donations in the Victorian period necessitated the Library's further expansion, including its occupation of adjacent lecture halls and the 15th-century Exchequer Building. 1966 saw the completion of another major extension to Palace Green Library designed by George Pace, the most distinguished British ecclesiastical architect of the mid-20th century. The Pace Building, regarded by many as his finest work, is bold and imaginative, combining a sophisticated modernism with a respect for tradition and craftsmanship.

Bishop Cosin's Library (incorporated into Palace Green Library)

The personal library of John Cosin comprises, in effect, three consecutively compiled collections. Cosin made numerous acquisitions at Cambridge University before the English Civil War, where his service culminated in the role of Vice-Chancellor. He compiled a second set of titles while exiled in France between 1645 and 1660, and amassed an equally distinct collection as bishop of Durham from 1660 until his death in 1672. Cosin's eclectic collection is personal and distinctive. In all, it contains more than 5,000 titles in theology, liturgy, canon law, literature, travel and science. The 585 French-language volumes alone form the finest collection of its kind and period in Great Britain, more than 150 of which are not represented in the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, Paris. Rarity and individuality define the collection.



Palace Green Library today, showing the Victorian extension (L), Bishop Cosin's Library (centre) and the Exchequer (R)

The Routh Collection

In 1855, Martin Joseph Routh (1755-1854), patristics scholar and president of Magdalen College, Oxford, bequeathed to the “recently established University of Durham” almost 22,000 items on scripture, church history, English history, and religious and English political controversy. Shelved in the Exchequer, where it remains to this day, and presided over by a portrait and bust of the donor, this represents the most significant gift to the Library to date.

The Durham Diocesan Archive

With items dating from 1494, this extensive holding forms a major local and national resource for ecclesiastical and Anglican history, as well as local history more generally, including genealogy, dialect studies and archaeological, architectural and geographical research. The diocese included the county of Northumberland as well as Durham up to 1858.

The Sudan Archive

The Sudan Archive is recognised as one of the best in the world on a single African country and represents the international dimension of the University’s research collections. Begun in 1957 by Richard Hill, a Durham lecturer and former Sudan official, it now comprises more than 300 individual deposits and contains papers, ephemera and artefacts from officials, soldiers, missionaries, business individuals and others who lived or served in the Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium period (1898-1955). It attracts many researchers every year from all over the world.

Further collections of merit encompass politics (e.g. papers of the Earls Grey of Howick), literature, history of medicine, cremation, Catholicism, hymnody and music (e.g. the newly acquired archive of Sir John Stainer).

Palace Green Library – its buildings and more than 70,000 printed books and manuscripts dating from before 1850 – was in the first round of libraries to be awarded Designated status by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in 2005, for Bishop Cosin’s Library and the Sudan Archive.

Palace Green Library today is a cluster of listed buildings with Cosin’s original library at its heart, somewhat eccentric and endearing in equal measure. Together they provide an architecturally unique repository for Durham University’s treasured collections. Rich in history and of inestimable value, Palace Green Library and its collections have assumed an integral role in Durham’s scholarly community for centuries.



The Bamburgh Collection

The combined libraries of three generations of the Sharp Family at Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland, in the late 18th century created a collection of 8,500 volumes which has been likened to a college library. Its contents include medieval manuscripts and multiple holdings in classics, theology, English Literature, mathematics and natural science.

4. The Treasures of Palace Green Library

Durham's historic collections of rare books and manuscripts contain material from across the globe, dating from Antiquity onwards and donated by ecclesiastics and scientists, scholars and politicians, institutions and private individuals. They are of sufficient breadth and depth to command the admiration of most university libraries.

Because of continuing acquisitions and enrichments to the collections, it is possible to give only an overview here of the many treasures to be found within Palace Green Library. One of the oldest items, a papyrus dating from the 2nd century AD, is a personal letter from one friend to another enquiring as to his health. The medieval manuscripts include the best-preserved service-book produced in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest, a manuscript of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* from the mid-15th century, and a collection of the works of Thomas Hoccleve transcribed by the poet himself; while among the modern literary manuscripts are the best preserved sections of the famous diary of the Victorian curate Francis Kilvert, letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins and E.M. Forster and the Basil Bunting poetry archive.



The incunabules include one of four remaining complete copies of William Caxton's *Doctrine to Learn French and English*, published just four years after he introduced printing to England, and rare tracts printed by the London workshop of Wynkyn de Worde; while the early printed books include a Book of Hours to which illumination was meticulously added by hand (1520), the only known copy of Thomas More's first assault on Martin Luther (1523), Captain John Smith's *General History of Virginia* (1624) and a most exquisitely embroidered binding on a copy of Bacon's *Essayes* dating from 1625.



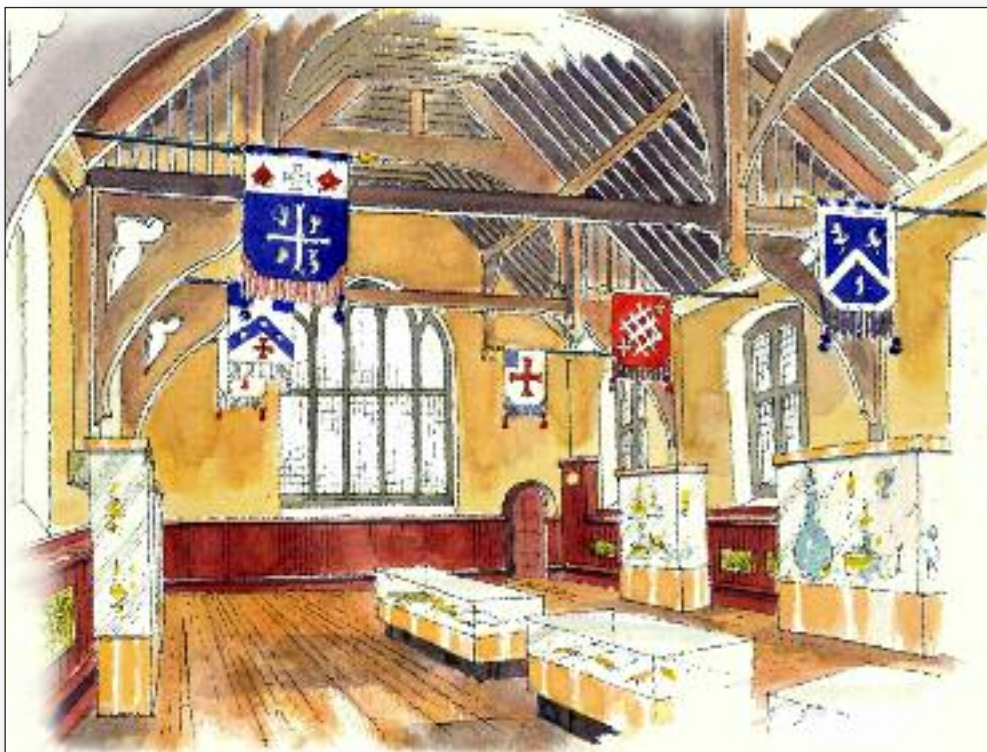
Eighteenth-century first editions of such Royal Society luminaries as Newton, Boyle and Ray form part of the 8,500 titles of the Bamburgh Collection. A Kelmscott Press edition of William Morris' *Love is Enough* (1897) is one notable example of a private press book from the 19th century. Nineteenth century collections are rich in travel books and a wide range of history, English literature, science and theology titles as well as good examples of scarce local printing and ephemera. Fifteen high-quality examples of private press books from the early 20th century add an extra, more recent dimension to the rare books collections.

Highly resonant 'personalised' items include the 'Durham Book', a 1619 folio edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* carefully annotated by John Cosin in preparation for the revision of the Prayer Book after the Restoration in 1660, and the tiny booklet of poems which W.H. Auden presented to his fiancée in 1928. Among the archival treasures are key documents relating to the 'great' Reform Bill of 1832. The Library also holds currency issued and signed by Gordon of Khartoum, the sword of Ali Dinar, last Sultan of Darfur, the actual flag (in fact a pillowcase) of the insurgent White Flag League, and historic photographs of the Sudan – part of the largest Sudanese archive in the world outside Sudan – that are no less remarkable for their beauty than for their documentary and anthropological importance.



5. The Future of Palace Green Library

Durham University has commenced an ambitious five-year programme to transform Palace Green Library. Every aspect of the planned renovations addresses key issues of conservation, security and accessibility: the plans will conserve the architectural and cultural significance of the World Heritage Site while providing access for all to the Library as part of the WHS.



Artist's impression

Work has begun to address Palace Green Library's most urgent conservation requirements with the beginnings of the refurbishment of Bishop Cosin's Library. Seventeenth-century panel paintings have been conserved, and repairs and restoration to the roof and decorative wood carvings are underway. This important space is being restored to its former glory in a manner which reflects the pre-eminence of Cosin's splendid collection, allowing it to be reinstated from the strong room in which it is currently housed.

Necessary work includes: the installation of UV-sensitive window blinds and conservation-level heating and environmental controls to a standard recommended by the National Trust; the conservation of original library furniture, shelving, mouldings and flooring; complete electrical re-wiring and the installation of sympathetic, museum-standard lighting; and the purchase of interpretive technology such as the British Museum's 'Turning the Pages' system to display interactive digital facsimiles

of key elements of the collections to visitors. Renovation work on the Victorian parts of Palace Green Library concentrates on the creation, on the first floor, of a dedicated, flexible exhibition area, to be renamed the Wolfson Hall, which meets the strict standard required of the Government Indemnity Scheme (National Heritage Act 1980). The Wolfson Hall will also provide public lecture and performance facilities. The Wolfson Hall will be able to display Durham's library treasures, as well as artefacts from Durham University's Oriental Museum's Designated Chinese and Egyptian collections, and fine art.

Those who benefit will be members of the University and their families, students, residents of Durham and the surrounding regions, and visitors from far and wide. Most importantly, the Wolfson Hall will provide for the first time on the World Heritage Site a venue worthy of hosting visiting exhibitions containing world-class objects, such as the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The inaugural exhibition, due to open in January 2011, will be entitled “*The Treasures of Durham University*” and will showcase selected highlights from the Library, the Oriental Museum collection and other University collections, including, it is hoped, a first view, following its safe return to the University, of Bishop Cosin’s own Shakespeare First Folio, dating from 1623. The Folio is one of no more than 300 surviving copies of the first printed collection of the playwright’s work, and the only copy that has been in the same ownership since its purchase before 1644.



“Books have always been prized, and one of the greatest collections in England, I am proud to tell you, is to be found at Durham.” Dr Bill Bryson

On the ground floor, the existing conservation workshop will be relocated to a larger space in order to expand conservation work on the collections and increase its visibility to scholars, students and the local community. The current conservation workshop will be transformed into an education room where sessions for both schoolchildren and lifelong learners will be delivered. A 19th-century printing press will be relocated to this room and will provide the opportunity to demonstrate early printing techniques.

Also on the ground floor will be a dedicated study space, another government-indemnified exhibition hall for national and international treasures (to be known as the Dunelm Gallery), and a History of the Book display area which overlooks an attractive open courtyard. There will also be a welcoming reception area and retail space. Within the Pace Building a Special Collections Reading Room will be created above improved strong room facilities to provide a comfortable and secure working environment for researchers.

This renovation project embodies the University’s commitment to its key strategic aims of supporting research by widening access to all its collections for students, academics and researchers from all backgrounds – domestic and international. The project will also allow the University to embrace its cultural role in the region, engaging with British and global audiences by mounting exhibitions of international quality.



Non minima pars eruditionis est bonos nosse libros

Not the least part of erudition is to be acquainted with good books
(The motto accompanying Cosin's arms above the doorway to his library)