

# UNITED KINGDOM

## Durham Castle and Cathedral

### Brief description

Durham Cathedral was built in the late 11th and early 12th centuries to house the relics of St Cuthbert (evangelizer of Northumbria) and the Venerable Bede. It attests to the importance of the early Benedictine monastic community and is the largest and finest example of Norman architecture in England. The innovative audacity of its vaulting foreshadowed Gothic architecture. Behind the cathedral stands the castle, an ancient Norman fortress which was the residence of the prince-bishops of Durham.

### 1. Introduction

**Year(s) of Inscription** **1986**

#### Agency responsible for site management

- Mailing Address(es)  
Durham City Council-Durham World Heritage Site Management Plan Steering Group  
Hawthorne Terrace Byland Lod  
DH1 4TD Durham  
United Kingdom  
e-mail: [ingle@durhamcity.gov.uk](mailto:ingle@durhamcity.gov.uk)  
website: [www.durhamcity.gov.uk](http://www.durhamcity.gov.uk)

### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** **C (ii) (iv) (vi)**

#### Justification as provided by the State Party

Durham Cathedral is the finest example of Early Norman architecture in England. However, although Romanesque in origin, the introduction of rib vaults, the use of the structural pointed arch and of lateral abutments (in effect diminutive flying buttresses albeit concealed within the roofs of the galleries) all dating to the years 1137-39, represent the first stage in developments which revolutionised the architecture of Europe.

St Cuthbert, who is buried in the Cathedral, was a key figure in the conversion of England to Christianity and played much the same role in the north of the country that St Augustine played in the south. His relics include some of the oldest surviving embroidery in Europe. The Cathedral also contains the tomb of the Venerable Bede (673-735), another influential figure, whose historical

writings are of crucial importance to knowledge of Dark Age Britain.

In architectural terms the Castle is less important, but visually it dramatically illustrates the concept of the motte and bailey castle, it includes features of notable architectural interest such as the Norman chapel (the oldest building in Durham), the Norman gallery and the richly decorated entrance to the original Great Hall and it demonstrates in structural terms the change of function from castle to palace to university. However it is in relationship to the Cathedral that its justification lies, since, towering over the town in truly awesome fashion, they symbolise together the spiritual and secular powers of the Bishops Palatine in an manner which, once seen, will never be forgotten.

#### As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Criterion IV. Durham Cathedral is the largest and most perfect monument of "Norman" style architecture in England. The small castral chapel for its part marks a turning point in the evolution of 11th century Romanesque sculpture.

Criterion II. Though some wrongly considered Durham Cathedral to be the first "Gothic" monument (the relationship between it and the churches built in the Ile-de-France region in the 12th century is not obvious), this building, due to the innovative audacity of its vaulting, constitutes - as do Spire and Cluny- a type of experimental model which was far ahead of its time.

Criterion VI. Around the relics of Cuthbert and Bede, Durham crystallised the memory of the evangelizing of Northumbria and of primitive Benedictine monastic life.

#### Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement.

- A new Statement of Significance is being developed for the management plan. The State Party will discuss and agree a Statement of outstanding universal value which will be submitted in due course for consideration by the World Heritage Committee
- No change required to UNESCO's official description of the site

#### Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: inadequate
- Buffer zone: no buffer zone has been defined
- Further work needed by the State Party to define one

**Status of Authenticity/Integrity**

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

**3. Protection****Legislative and Administrative Arrangements**

- A cascade of policies from national to sub regional to local set the parameters for protecting the site from inappropriate change and seek to conserve the setting of the site
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions taken/proposed:

- Retain and enhance the value and authenticity of the site: A range of key management issues are articulated in the management plan as objectives
- Timeframe: not known

**4. Management****Use of site/property**

- Visitor attraction, religious use. Also: university college and student residence, visitor accommodation, residence, office, theological library

**Management/Administrative Body**

- Steering group formally set up on 27 January 1998 to examine issues arising from the City of Durham local plan review which proposed extension of the site and preparation of a management plan for the site
- No site manager but one is needed
- Management by the two major site owners
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

Actions proposed:

- Reach consensus on future management of the site, including: appointment of a WHS coordinator, re-evaluation of current boundary, establishment of closer working relationships between site owners and other stakeholders
- Timeframe: not known

**5. Management Plan**

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation starts: December 2005

- The WHS management plan is currently in draft form. It has been formally agreed by the site owners and is about to undergo public consultation. Following that the plan will be formally passed to the State Party to be signed off and submitted to UNESCO. As a consequence of this the implementation of the plan has been delayed, however dialogue between stakeholders has facilitated more joint working. The joint working, for example has led to the creation of stone masonry apprenticeships at the university and a new master plan and development framework for the city. A steering group has also been set up as a result of joint working
- Effective
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: the site's owners, the site's steering group and One North East (Regional Development Agency)

**6. Financial Resources****Financial situation**

- The site has no core funding at this time. Conservation and protection of the site is funded substantially by the owners. The site currently receives no international financial assistance
- One North East; English Heritage; charitable funds; private sector charitable funding - Northern Rock; Heritage Lottery Fund; Learning Skills Council; private fundraising - nationally, regionally, locally and through the University of Durham alumni network and through cathedral congregation; funding from the City of Durham Council (where the project already forms part of their existing discharge of duties)
- There is no funding to appoint a coordinator for the site, although this is the first objective of the management plan once approved. Other funding issues covered within the management plan include: funding building repairs and conservation work is a key issue for the long-term management of the site. In addition, the recommendations contained within this management plan will also require funding, over and above the currently identified works to repair and conserve the built heritage at the site
- insufficient

**7. Staffing Levels**

- Number of staff: 0

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Good: conservation, education
- Average: management, visitor management
- Bad: promotion, interpretation
- Staff resources are inadequate
- The Cathedral has a vast army of volunteer stewards, guides, and chaplains etc who number approximately 450. Many of them do a 4 hour shift once a week, or once a fortnight/month or work the summer months only. It is estimated that the Cathedral benefit from the full time equivalent of 30 volunteers/annum. The University employs students on a casual basis to carry out tours of the Castle. They have advised that they have the equivalent of one full-time volunteer

### **8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques**

- Staff training: university museum at Fulling Mill; Archeology at Durham University; Estates and buildings Joiners; cathedral library staff; cathedral archeologist; cathedral architect; cathedral clerk of works, stone masons and workforce
- Also: conservation/ maintenance and training all depend on availability of funding. Partnership working has facilitated a new scheme to train two stone masons on site with external funding to work for Durham University, under the supervision of Cathedral Masons for their two year apprenticeship
- No training on site management for stakeholders

### **9. Visitor Management**

- Visitor statistics: 540,295 visitors in 2004
- Visitor facilities: castle: tours and personal interpretation cathedral: reception desk, restaurant, exhibitions, bookshop and WCs
- Within the site guides and publications for the site are produced independently by the cathedral chapter, Durham University and St Johns College. Outside the site visitor facilities include a tourist information centre in the city centre, guides and publications are produced by the city and the county councils.
- Visitor facilities are inadequate
- Visitor needs: castle needs visitor centre and stronger education links, WC's needed on

Palace Green, cathedral seeking better education links and facilities

- There is no tourism/visitor management plan for the site

### **10. Scientific Studies**

- There is an agreed research framework/strategy for the site
- Risk assessment, condition surveys, archaeological surveys, transportation studies
- The studies are as yet unimplemented and are part of the emerging WHS management plan. In the meantime ad hoc studies such as architectural studies to specify works, archaeological monitoring of works have been undertaken
- Studies used for management of site: works have informed conservation programs, other areas unknown. A conservation plan has just been completed for Durham Castle

### **11. Education, Information and Awareness Building**

- Not enough signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem not used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, local authorities. Inadequate: businesses
- There is an education strategy for the site: While preserving the cathedral's primary purpose as a working church, to promote an understanding of its religious and historical context and to provide a high quality education service which continues the Benedictine enabling tradition, with emphasis on activities, resources and visitor care.
- Need for awareness raising: business awareness needs to be raised by working on a long term engagement strategy. The current 'Visioning' project seeks to engender new business start up, SME support and relocation of established business into the city retail and commercial centre. This is underpinned by the quality of the city derived from its WHS setting and historic character. Proving a direct causal relationship will assist in raising business awareness and support for the values of the WHS
- No website available
- Local participation: the cathedral has a clear mission that includes and supports the local

community. Durham University offer outreach programmes for the local community. St John's College offer open days and link their student body to the local community. The linkage of these strands needs to be provided for as part of the implementation of the management plan

## 12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

### Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

### Conservation interventions

- **Cathedral:** conservation and consolidation works to eastern elevations and northern elevations from 1981 to present day (and ongoing); works to the Great Dormitory roof 1993-1994; works to The Deanery roof and chimneys 1999- 2000; college properties including complete renovations and works the Chorister School and college chimneys 2000-2005 (and ongoing)
- **Castle:** roof works from 2004 – ongoing; office building in the Fellows garden – 1992-93; Renovation of the Norman doorway off the Tunstall Gallery 1985-90; Stonework on the Gatehouse 1990-91; Stonework and roof of the North Terrace 1993-94
- Present state of conservation: needs more resources

### Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, environmental pressure, natural disaster(s), visitor/tourism pressure. Threats include geological movement and landslide, flood, fire and targeting by terrorists as a major national icon
- Durham Castle is a registered building at risk due to the poor state of the roofs and condition of the stone walling. This is compounded by potential landslide and movement on the site. The cathedral has suffered nearby landslips. There is history of movement that is monitored on site  
Development pressure has an effect on the setting of the site, but careful monitoring of the change of uses of buildings within the locality of the WHS will be needed to ensure the ambience of the locality is not adversely affected  
Tourist numbers are not a threat at present, but rapid and uncontrolled growth will impact the special intangible qualities of the site. The aim of the partners is to attract visitors for a longer stay rather than increase numbers

- Emergency measures taken: improve research to assess potential and real risks (this is dealt with by implementing the management plan). Durham University have secured grant aid from the private sector to carry out repairs to the roof, now largely complete. Timeframe: not known

## 13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- There are ad hoc monitoring procedures in place provided for all of the owners, to protect their built assets. These are not based on the defined outstanding universal value, but do offer protection in as much as the assets to be protected are inherently part of the defined value. Clear and legal constraints guide change on and around the site to ensure OUV is protected. The management plan allows for a better monitoring regime to be established, tied directly back to the OUV of the site

## 14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social, economic, management. Other: Recognition of the value of place, human occupation and use of place
- Strengths of management: landowners have been working towards a management plan, changes to access have been negotiated, fire planning has been embedded into managing the site, major conservation works have been carried out to all buildings within the site and there has been a bringing together of aspirations for the site, articulated as part of the management plan process
- Weaknesses of management: the major weakness is the lack of coordinated management of the site by the owners through a coordinator and formally constituted steering group. Funding to conserve and promote the site remains uncertain. The boundary does not encompass area of outstanding universal value

### Future actions:

- Management plan implementation: funding opportunities will be sought in partnership tied to a community endorsed proactive management plan and management regime
- No WH funding is sought. Timeframe: not known