

Safeguarding Durham University's Heritage: Local Specialists Help Preserve Historic Estate

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Durham University, one of the region's most historic institutions, is taking steps to protect its landmark estate for future generations. With over 80 listed buildings and two scheduled ancient monuments, the University is not only a centre of learning but also a living part of the region's heritage.

But like many historic sites, Durham's estate faces mounting challenges. Years of modifications and outdated records have made it difficult to plan refurbishment and restoration projects. On top of this, climate change is adding new risks, with storms, flooding, and extreme weather threatening the long-term stability of older buildings.

To protect this unique legacy, Durham University has brought in local specialists [Lucion Survey Ltd](#) to create a permanent digital record of 42 buildings across the campus. Over several months, [Lucion's surveyors](#) carefully mapped and captured every detail of the estate, from lecture theatres and libraries to iconic stone staircases and historic façades.

Siobhan McMahon, Interim Space Manager at Durham University, said: "The complexity of managing refurbishment projects across our university estate requires precise and up-to-date building information. Our previous reliance on generic spatial maps was creating challenges in project planning and execution. Lucion's comprehensive, measured building and topographical surveys have provided our Space Management team with accurate, detailed documentation of our facilities, enabling more efficient planning and implementation of our refurbishment programmes. Their team's thorough approach and technical expertise have made them a valuable partner in our estate management strategy, and I look forward to

continuing to work with them in the future.”

Digital records like this are already proving invaluable in heritage preservation worldwide. [Detailed laser scans and 3D mapping](#) were instrumental in the restoration of Notre Dame Cathedral following the 2019 fire. By applying the same approach in Durham, Lucion has helped ensure that one of the UK’s most historic university campuses can be cared for, restored, and preserved well into the future.

“Working on projects like this is incredibly rewarding, as we’re not just providing a service – we’re helping to safeguard a vital piece of the North East’s heritage. Durham University’s historic estate is a treasure that belongs to the whole community, and our digital surveying work will help ensure these magnificent buildings can be preserved and maintained for future generations,” said William Vennard, Business Unit Director at Lucion Surveys.

“Our team takes immense pride in combining cutting-edge technology with careful attention to detail, ensuring every architectural feature is captured accurately while respecting the sensitive nature of these protected structures.” William continued.

This project is part of a wider effort to ensure Durham University’s historic buildings remain resilient in the face of future challenges. From protecting heritage features to planning sensitive refurbishments, the new [digital record](#) gives the University confidence to plan, safeguarding one of the North East’s most treasured landmarks for generations to come.