



Durant Hall CGI (c) Aptus Construction

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Work commences on three state-of-the-art teaching facilities at Northumbria University

On Monday 12 May works began to redevelop the interior of Durant Hall, a GRADE II listed church in Ellison Place, Newcastle Upon Tyne. The project will include the renovation and refurbishment of the existing spaces to create much-needed additional teaching spaces for Northumbria University.

Durant Hall was acquired by the University in May 2023, and since then significant time has been spent working with contractors, John Flowers, to

refurbish the ten roofs on the church many of which were blighted by dry and wet rot. Due to the listed status of the building this was complicated work and needed to be done with due deference, and the final stages of this work were completed last month, enabling the team to move on to the next stage, which is to redevelop the building's interior.

Northumbria University will be working with Aptus Construction as principal contractor, who have designed the interior to create state-of-the art teaching facilities while maintaining the heritage of the building. Wherever feasible, the building's historic fabric is being retained and restored, but the project also includes significant accessibility upgrades, including new ramps and a platform lift providing access across all four floors. Once completed the building will house two, tiered lecture theatres comprising 400 seats and 150 seats and a flat teaching room of up to 60 seats, providing much needed additional flexible teaching space for faculties across the University.

Aptus Managing Director Chris Price commented: *"Revitalising a Grade II listed building like Durant Hall requires a balance between conservation and innovation. Through close collaboration with Northumbria University and our consultant team, we've developed a scheme that respects the building's historic fabric while integrating modern interventions to support contemporary academic and community use. It's a testament to what adaptive reuse can achieve in the built environment."*

Northumbria's partnership with Aptus has been augmented with excellent support from other partners on the project which include Architects Group, Jasper Kerr, Desco, Apex Acoustics, Hedley Planning, Hydrock Consultants, Savana Environmental, Gardiner and Theobald, Naylor's Gavin Black, Knowles & Co Ltd and Adept Building Consultancy

Commenting on the project, University Executive Sponsor, Professor Graham Wynn, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education said:

"I am extremely grateful for the work John Flowers have done to refurbish the roofs on Durant Hall, and want to congratulate Aptus Construction and all our partners for coming together to create a grand design for the interior of the building which will be of huge benefit to staff and students once the works are complete.

I look forward to works starting on 12 May and to seeing progress along the

way which will complete in May next year ahead of the 2026/27 Academic Year.”

The works on Durant Hall form part of a wider scheme of building works planned by the University, which will transform the southern area of the Northumbria campus. These include development of NESST – the North East Space Skills and Technology Centre – and Mea House, another GRADE II listed building in Ellison Place.

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