



St Peter Hungate

Re-Reusing a church in Norwich

The Church



History

St Peter Hungate was the first redundant Church ever to be converted into a museum. The Museum of Church Art opened in 1936, but closed in 2000. The museum is well remembered in the City, and the closure is still often commented on in visitor feedback.



The closure of the museum

- Several factors led to the closure of the Museum:

'St Peter Hungate Museum formerly covered aspects of the religious history of Norwich, together with wider social history themes, such as the marking of birth, marriage and death. However, after an unfortunate break-in at the museum, a review of the security of collections and the safety of lone-working staff at the site raised serious concerns about the suitability of the building to house a museum with high-value collections. At the same time, local residents were concerned that providing public access to the garden at St Peter Hungate compromised their privacy. It was closed as a museum in 2001.

While safety and security issues were the immediate, urgent reason for the closure, there was also a concern that running St Peter Hungate, Strangers' Hall and the Bridewell as museums telling parts of the Norwich story was spreading subject matter, resources and visitors too thinly to make all these museums viable in the longer-term. Of the three museums, St Peter Hungate was the smallest and offered no scope for adding or improving visitor facilities. The closure of St Peter Hungate is being followed by development initiatives at both Strangers' and the Bridewell, with new displays opening at Strangers' in 2007 and a £1.5m development due to open at the Bridewell in 2011. The collections and stories once covered at St Peter Hungate are now shown at other sites; some are at Norwich Castle, and others will be part of the new displays in the Bridewell.'

Interior – empty
and sad in
2008:

West end



East end



South transept

But with plenty of assets:



The Project

- To open the church as a centre which will:

“...advance the education of the public in the creation, history, conservation and appreciation of medieval craftsmanship, in particular but not exclusively the medium of stained glass, in churches and other buildings of historical or architectural value in Norfolk.”

So how will we avoid the same issues?

- Safely and lone working, privacy and access
 - A volunteer team will be quickly established to reduce loan working time.
 - The Residents Association has been consulted and expressed themselves happy with reopening the church
 - Wheelchair access arrangements have been improved
- A story 'spread too thin' across three museums
 - Not just focused on Norwich. Rotating exhibitions to retain interest.
- Security of high value collections
 - This is the big one – we will not be displaying, and therefore insuring, high value original objects. This massively reduces the costs of the centre.

Initial Exhibition

It is envisaged the first exhibition will be in two sections:

- In the nave four light boxes, one under each window, explaining with illustrations the process of stained glass production.
- In the chancel a series of educational displays including interpretation of the glass in the east window and a family area, eventually to include a plasma screen for film and still displays and access to relevant websites via a pc.
 - It is also proposed to utilise one of the transepts for live demonstrations of stained glass repairs by a craftsman and possibly the manufacture of stained glass.
 - There will be leaflets available, including nine or ten 'stained glass trails' around Norfolk Churches based upon the work done by David King.

The permanent exhibition

MAKING GLASS

Glass is made from sand, but in the Middle Ages it was luxury. Saint Quentin makes windows necessary.




Glass is a transparent material made by melting glass frit (a mixture of silicate and other oxides) into a molten glass. This mixture is then cooled to form a solid glass. The most common color for glass is clear, but other colors are possible. Glass is used for a wide range of purposes, from windows and bottles to art and architecture.

Colored glass was first made in France and Germany. It was used for windows and stained glass. The most common color for stained glass is red, but other colors are possible. Stained glass is made by adding small amounts of metal oxides to the glass. The most common color for stained glass is red, but other colors are possible. Stained glass is made by adding small amounts of metal oxides to the glass. The most common color for stained glass is red, but other colors are possible.

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You can see how simple it is to make glass from different patterns using the same color scheme.




Year	Event
1000	First stained glass window in France
1100	First stained glass window in Germany
1200	First stained glass window in England
1300	First stained glass window in Italy
1400	First stained glass window in Spain
1500	First stained glass window in Portugal
1600	First stained glass window in the Netherlands
1700	First stained glass window in the United States
1800	First stained glass window in Australia
1900	First stained glass window in New Zealand
2000	First stained glass window in Antarctica

MAKING A WINDOW: THE FIRST STEPS

Thinking the design
A glass window is a piece of glass that is cut to a specific shape and size. It is then placed in a frame. The glass is usually made of a material called float glass. The glass is usually made of a material called float glass.

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THE CRAFTSMEN




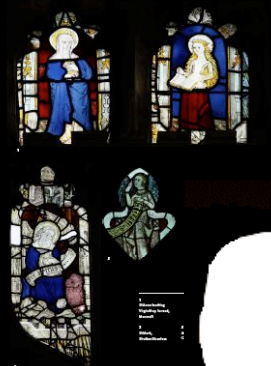
Glass craftsmen were responsible for making the glass and assembling the panels. A finished window was then installed in a building. Glass craftsmen were responsible for making the glass and assembling the panels. A finished window was then installed in a building.

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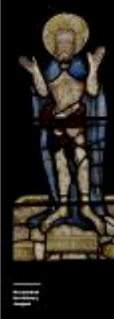
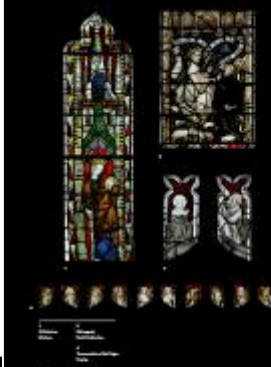
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MAKING A WINDOW: THE NEXT STEPS

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The Trails

- The project is hoping to increase footfall at a number of rural Churches with excellent stained glass.
- 9 or 10 Trail leaflets will eventually be available to collect from the Church.
- Success in this will be traced through the initial funded period of the project.

Where we are up to:

- The Church will be formally let to Hungate Medieval Art from March 1st 2009.
- Renovation work is well underway now.
- Designs for the exhibition are being completed by The Exhibition Team
- A Manager/Outreach Office has just been recruited
- Opening date is scheduled to be April 2nd

Watch this space!