

Lincoln Cathedral: Building timeline and significant historic events

Pre Conquest

AD 60	After the AD43 invasion and occupation of Britain by the Romans under Claudius the 9 th Legion, Hispana, built a fort here as their headquarters.
90	The fort and subsequent settlement becomes a <i>Colonia</i> , (called Lindum) with forum and other important stone-built buildings.
c. 150	Lindum population estimated to be between 6000 and 8000. Around this time the earth and timber city defences were rebuilt in stone, with four gateways. One of these gateways still partially survives as Newport Arch, the oldest surviving arch across a public road in Britain.
c. 4 th century	Outline of floorplan of St Paul in the Bail exposed by excavations close to the forum. Thought to possibly date back to the time of the Roman occupation.
407	The last of the Roman soldiers left Britain, by the end of the 5 th century most, or all, of the towns inhabitants had fled, leaving the Roman buildings to decay and collapse.
839	First records of Vikings attacking Lincoln. From 876 the Danes founded a settlement within the former Roman fort.
918	Edward the Elder recaptured Lincoln during his successful campaign to reclaim all lands south of the Humber.
1013	Vikings capture Lincoln from the Saxons in a series of Danish and Norse raids, submission made to King Sweyn of Denmark. After the battle of Assundun in 1016 his son Canute becomes ruler of all England.

Post Conquest

1068	The King moved the Diocese from Dorchester on Thames to Lincoln in 1072. The Normans found Lincoln to be a mixed Saxon and Danish town within a Roman site. William the Conqueror builds Lincoln Castle (originally in timber) in SW corner of Roman wall, the Cathedral later occupied SE corner.
1073	Cathedral church of Blessed Mary of Lincoln begun by Bishop Regimus de Fecamp, he died shortly before its consecration in 1092.
1141	The wooden roof of the Cathedral was destroyed by fire. Alexander the Magnificent (Bishop 1123 - 1148) started its reconstruction in stone. He was also responsible for the considerable embellishment of the magnificent West front.
1185	Major collapse of Cathedral, probably due to a combination of a quite severe earthquake and unsound building methods, only the West wall, the two western towers and one bay of the nave survived.

1186	Henry 2 nd appointed Hugh of Avalon (later St Hugh of Lincoln) as Bishop. He set about raising funds and the workforce for a new cathedral.
1192	Work started on new building in the new Early English Gothic style, starting with the Choir and carefully incorporating the surviving Norman sections. This rebuild completed by c.1235, including Soldier's Chapel of 1200 and the revolutionary polygonal Chapter House with central pillar as well as the marvellous Dean's Eye window. (The Bishop's Eye, in the opposite transept was not constructed until over 130 years later, in 1330)
1237	The central tower collapsed and rebuilding started.
1255	Henry 3 rd approved the petition by the Dean and Chapter to demolish part of the Roman wall and extend the cathedral.
1256 1280	Hugh's eastern end with its five apsidal chapels was replaced with the much larger Angel's Choir in a fine version of Geometrical Decorated Gothic. The great East window, the first in the country of eight lights, was installed. In 1280 King Edward 1 st and Queen Eleanor attended the dedication ceremony.
1290	Eleanor of Castile's viscera (removed in embalming process) were buried in the Cathedral and Edward erected a duplicate of her Westminster tomb here.
1292	Cloisters were constructed, these were not a requirement as Lincoln was not a monastic foundation but staffed by secular clergy who recognised the convenience of a covered route between the Cathedral, Chapter House and Library. The library includes one of four extant copies of the 1215 Magna Carta.
1311	Completion of the central tower and its spire, this was a total of 160m tall, taller than the largest pyramid which had been the tallest structure in the world for about 4000 years. Lincoln tower and spire was the tallest building in the world for the next 238 years.

The Reformation

1536	In the Pilgrimage of Grace, a rebellion against aspects of the religious changes, the Cathedral and precincts were stormed by rebels but Henry 8th quashed the uprising and the Lord Lieutenant was executed in Castle Square.
1538	Henry 8th closed the Friary and religious guilds in Lincoln; some of the Cathedral's treasures were seized but Lincoln not being a monastic foundation the Dean and Chapter continued in office.
1548	The central tower and spire were blown down and then the spire was subsequently removed completely. The West Tower spires were not removed until 1807.
1674	Christopher Wren's Honeywood Library was constructed over the north alley of the cloister

Roman

Saxon

Norman

Gothic

Tudor

Stuart