

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL Timeline and significant events.

Post Conquest

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| 1075-92 | At the Council of London it was decreed that bishoprics should not be continued in small towns or villages where clergy could be exposed to violence from local (English) residents. The King urged the Bishops to move to towns where defensive structures could be built with a garrison to protect the Norman settlers and the clergy. The dioceses of Sherborne and Ramsbury were merged at Old Sarum in Wiltshire , a castle built within a walled precinct and a new abbey next to it, consecrated 1092. Bishop Osmund supervised the building of this large Norman cathedral. |
| 1200-20 | The resident canons were unhappy with the exposed site at Old Sarum, and there were conflicts of interest between the castle and the abbey which lead Bishop Herbert Poore to seek a Papal Bull to relocate the Cathedral 2 miles away on land (80 acres) owned by his brother Richard Poore, who was planning a new town by the River Avon, large enough for the proposed cathedral complex. This was the beginning of Salisbury. |
| 1220-58 | Richard Poore succeeded his brother as Bishop in 1217 and he laid out the foundations for the new cathedral starting at the east end chapels, then the presbytery and eastern transepts, followed by the crossing, choir and western transepts c.1240. The master mason was Nicholas of Ely, working under the direction of canon Elias of Dereham. Their combined efforts produced one of the most stately cathedrals in England, praised for its consistency of style (mostly Early English) and restrained use of decorative ornament . The 10 bays of the nave and the west front were completed in 1258, largely in the same EE style, excepting the West Front which shows much 'Dec' detailing and a fine screen of statues. |
| 13/14 th cen. | The cathedral had 52 Canons in the late 13 th century, 28 of which were papal appointments. Canons were expected to pay for the building of their houses on 1-1.5 acre plots. They also paid for their servants, cooks and secretaries. The houses were large with a hall for entertaining and an annexe for the staff, which included room for a vicar choral. The Bishop's Palace completed in 1225 sat on a 7.5 acre plot. It has had many changes and additions over the years, but apart from the dereliction caused at the civil war, the Palace remained the home of Bishops until 1945. |
| 1263-1308 | A large stone detached bell tower with spire was built c1270 west of the cathedral, but demolished 1790. The cloister is the largest in the UK, even though it has no monks to give it daily use, it was started 1263 -80, as was the magnificent Chapter House, modelled on Westminster Abbey. |
| 1310-30 | The precinct wall was completed around the Close (all 80 acres). The cathedral Tower was raised above the battlements c1315, the upper stage and the soaring spire completed 1330 all by master mason Richard of Farleigh in 'perp' style 404 feet high. It is unsurpassed in height and |

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| | magnificence in the UK. The completed Cathedral has hardly changed between 1330 and 2019, except in small details. Old St Pauls London had a taller spire (500 feet) but it collapsed approx. 100 years before the 'fire of London in 1666 |
| 1445-1500 | The library was built over the east walk of the cloister. The chantry chapels for Bishop Beauchamp, Bishop Hungerford and Bishop Audley were built in the Trinity Chapel (retrochoir) at the east end. Strainer arches to strengthen the masonry beneath the tower and spire were added. |
| 1539 | Reformation. Henry VIII separated the Church in England from Rome following his failure to have his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled. The Dean and Chapter regime continues but with fewer canons, some with the prospect of marriage! |
| 1640-1700 | Much damage to fittings and medieval glass was done by Cromwell's troops but the main fabric was unmolested. The ' Restoration ' of the monarchy and return of prosperity lead to many of the original houses in the Close being modernised and made large enough for vicars with families. With the reduced number of Canons, empty houses were converted to schools or sold to wealthy gentlemen who wished to live in the prestigious Close e.g. Malmesbury House. Bishop Ward built Matrons College in 1682 on the site of a chantry priest's house. The college remains an almshouse for clergy widows. |
| 1790 | James Wyatt (architect) repaired the cathedral, but also removed most of the surviving medieval glass, demolished the medieval bell tower, and made inappropriate repairs to the historic fabric including whitewashing over original paintings on the vaults and wall surfaces internally. He also removed gravestones surrounding the west and north sides and covered these areas with grass. This campaign might have been inspired by a modernising bishop(?) |
| 1850-1900 | GG Scott was engaged to undo most of Wyatt's work on the fabric which he did 1862-78 adding medieval murals in the choir and reinstating missing statues to the screen niches of the west front, repairing eroded stone, and reglazing the Chapter House. Architect G E Street followed on with a restoration of the North Porch c1890. |
| 1985-2018 | A major programme of conservation, mostly external involving repair to masonry at all levels (Limestone from Chilmark just 12 miles away from the original quarry). The Purbeck limestone from Dorset is stained and polished to give a sepia appearance, it is still available for conservation repair. |