

Places to Visit: Re-Used Buildings in the North East

These buildings are all publicly accessible, either for free or for a small charge. There may well be historic buildings with new uses or contemporary architecture near to your school/college which you could visit.

Baltic, Gateshead – Re-used industrial flour mill on the River Tyne, built in the 1950s and converted into an art gallery in the late 1990s. The building has contemporary additions such as a glass lift

The Black Gate, Newcastle – Built during the reign of Henry III as part of the medieval defences of Newcastle, this building was re-used as slum housing, a tavern, and eventually a museum. It was refurbished in 2014 with the addition of a wooden lift shaft, and is now in use as a museum and education venue.

Great North Museum, Newcastle – Built in 1884 as the Hancock Museum, to house a natural history collect, the building was extensively remodelled 2006-2009 at a cost of £26 million. The Victorian building was retained, and new structures added including a large exhibition area, and a planetarium.

Discovery Museum, Newcastle – Built in 1899 as Blandford House, the headquarters of the Northern Region Co-Operative Wholesale Society, and originally housed offices, canteen, and even a ballroom as well as acting as a distribution centre for the co-op stores across the region. The building was converted in to the Discovery Museum in 1978 and has undergone several refurbishments, including the addition of a glass lift shaft within the vast internal space.

St Mary's Heritage Centre, Gateshead – Medieval grade I listed church, converted in 2008 to an arts, library, and heritage centre. Much of the original building fabric remains, with contemporary additions such as a new entrance lobby.

Loch Fyne, Gosforth – Located on West Avenue in central Gosforth, this building was originally a United Reform Church. It was converted into a fish restaurant, retaining features such as carved wooden roof supports and stained glass windows, with the addition of contemporary features such as open dining areas and kitchen. Located nearby are the Northern Rock Foundation offices (in a former chapel) and the Trinity Centre, a church which has had extensive refurbishment and additions to become a centre for the community.

The Alms Houses, Palace Green, Durham – Bishop Cosin's Almshouses, built in 1666 to provide housing for 4 men and 4 women, and space for a grammar and a music school. The building was converted into a museum in 1876, at which time the internal walls were demolished, and is now a café. The grammar school room is still used as a classroom by Durham University.

Bessie Surtees House, Newcastle Five storey 16th and 17th century merchant's houses, now home to Historic England and English Heritage offices, with some public access. Some areas remodelled in the 1930s.

Eagle Workshops and Exchange, Sunderland – Conserved, refurbished, and opened in 2004, following a major programme of works at both buildings. The former Eagle Tavern dates from the late 1800s and the Quayside Exchange was the original town hall, built in the early 1800s. Both buildings now operate as a function centre and banqueting centre.

The Canny Space at Holy Trinity, Sunderland – 300 year old Holy Trinity Church, recently awarded a substantial grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to carry out major works to convert the building in to a centre for storytelling and a cultural community hub. This project is beginning in 2015, contact the Churches Conservation Trust for more information.

The Head of Steam Museum, Darlington – Station and associated railway buildings which were part of the world's first steam driven passenger railway, opened in 1825, and now in use as a railway museum with exhibition spaces, education rooms, a research centre and train restoration workshops.

Areas to visit for a walk around tour of historic and re-used buildings

Most city centres have areas with a wealth of historic buildings that have been altered and given new uses over time. In more rural areas, there are converted agricultural buildings to look at, often with re-use as housing or for tourism. In the north east, high concentrations of re-used historic buildings can be found at:

Ouseburn, Newcastle

Newcastle/Gateshead Quayside

Durham City Centre, including Palace Green