



SEEING THE LIGHT

ARC Show exhibitor LED Light Sheet has recently transformed Durham Cathedral's retail space helping to achieve a huge increase in sales.

Part of a £1.2 million renovation of Durham Cathedral by architectural practice Purcell, the first phase of work has been the hospitality areas of the Grade-1 listed cathedral including the relocation of the shop and creation of bespoke product display cabinets lit by LED Light Sheet. Durham Cathedral is free to enter, and as a World Heritage Site and Grade 1 listed building, has yearly running costs in excess of £3 million as the building is conserved and maintained.

Isolated from other visitor amenities on the Cathedral site, it was recognised that the retail space was underperforming as a source of this much needed income. The moving of the shop into the western Undercroft, located off the Cathedral Cloister, brings visitor amenities together in one location. The new shop is directly opposite the popular Undercroft Restaurant, with the toilets close by. This physical work is the first in a series of projects called Open Treasure - a major development which will transform the way in which the Cathedral buildings are experienced and understood. For the first time in over 100 years, the full extent of all thirteen bays of the medieval West Undercroft, one of the most remarkable, intact, monastic vaulted undercrofts in the UK, is visible

through a new clear-glazed frontage on the shop and the restaurant, making the new shop a 'must-see' hidden Treasure space of the Cathedral for any visitor. Images from medieval manuscripts owned by the Cathedral are a major reference point in the design of the retail space and LED Light Sheet illuminated product display areas. With the architectural qualities of the Undercroft exposed, lighting design was planned by Purcell and Sutton Vane Associates according to a policy of minimal intervention. Floor lights cast light upwards along newly revealed columns and vaults, whilst down lighters form pools of light to create atmosphere. After considering a range of LED options, LED Light Sheet was chosen to illuminate oak display cabinets and a sales desk designed by Purcell in full consultation with the cathedral's retail staff. Tested in comparison to a number of LED modules, 8mm thick LED Light Sheet was chosen to achieve even illumination and preserve the sleek, luxury finish of the cabinets.

Christopher Cotton RIBA AABC, a Partner at Purcell and Durham Cathedral Architect explains: "The display units, made of oak, glass and bronzed fittings, use integrated LED Light Sheet to create focus on the merchandise display and help

create a beautiful and high quality retail environment which sits sympathetically within the unique architectural space." Central illuminated display units were limited to a height of 1400mm whilst perimeter cabinets were designed to draw level with column capitals at 1800mm and ensure visibility of the room's architecture was uncompromised. The oak display cabinets employ LED Light Sheet to fulfil a number of purposes: in some, the lighting unit provides a cool running illuminated surface on which products such as jewellery are enticingly presented; in other cabinets it is used to cast light down onto non-illuminated shelves or illuminate cabinet backs, particularly of perimeter display units. Jewel like in design and aesthetically pleasing, the use of LED Light Sheet in the cabinets minimises energy consumption and associated running costs whilst delivering an LED lifespan of over 50,000 hours. Vanessa Ward, Durham Cathedral Business Support Manager, concludes: "Since reopening the shop, sales for November and December of 2012 show a 59% increase against the same period in 2011. The next phase of Open Treasure involves the development of a world class exhibition space within the cathedral."

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