

## ARCHITECTURE

## October 2018: Member's Favourite Buildings

Our October meeting was a series of short presentations by some of our members showing their favourite buildings and why they liked them. They combined an eclectic mix of ancient and modern.

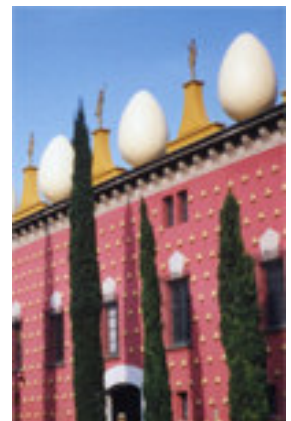
**1. Durham Cathedral.** This shrine of Saint Cuthbert was described as the best example of Norman architecture in Britain. The style is known as Romanesque. It was started in 1093 and required over 65,000 tons of sandstone to build. Particularly liked were its internal flying buttresses and painted arches. The pointed arches in the nave were an architectural first. Another innovation was the stone 'ribs' to support them, allowing greater heights to be achieved. The painted arches are all that is left of what would have been vibrant reds, blues and gold painting on walls and ceiling throughout. The Monks' Dormitory is the only intact monastic dormitory in England and the spectacular oak-beamed roof is rivalled only by Westminster Hall. (Photo: Wikipedia, Creative Commons)



**2. The Sage, Gateshead.** This "architectural coup" designed by Foster and Partners was the winning entry in an architectural competition. Completed in 2004 it cost £70m to construct. It houses three auditoria, the largest of which can seat an audience of 1,650. Acoustically separated, but because of strong coastal winds, the three are combined into a single unit. 40m high, the roof comprises 3,500m<sup>2</sup> of glass panels and 3,043 stainless steel panels.

People either hate it or love this building. It has been variously described as a "chrysalis", "large slug" or "shiny condom". But it did win the RIBA prize for building of the year 2005. (Photo: Keith Edkins, Wikipedia, Creative Commons).

**3. Dali Theatre and Museum, Figueres.** Conceived by Salvador Dali and the mayor of Figueres this 'largest surrealist object in the world' was designed by architects Joaquim de Ros i Ramis and Alexandre Bonaterra ' with strong input from Dali. It took over a decade to complete and was opened in 1974. It has many Moorish architectural elements. Distinctive features are decorative eggs on top of its walls interspersed with gilded figures. What were once auditoria boxes are now installations with human figures. Another noticeable feature is the geodesic dome that crowns the building. Dali himself is buried in the crypt below the theatre stage. (Photo: Wikipedia, Public Domain).





**4. Anglesey Abbey, Cambridgeshire.** A pleasing building whose core is the ruins of a priory. The original manor house was built around this core around 1600. It was considerably extended and remodelled from 1926-1954 when it was the home of Lord Fairhaven who mostly lived in the USA. He also extensively redesigned the gardens. The house is built of limestone under a steeply pitched tiled roof, laid out in the shape of a letter T. The interior has been described as “not so much a stately home as an idiosyncratic museum, a delightful jumble of curious objects and fine art.” Particularly liked are the

dormer windows and the ceiling in the winter room. (photo: Wikipedia, Creative Commons Licence)

**5. City of Arts and Sciences, Valencia.** This complex is situated on part of the old river bed of the River Turia which was diverted following a devastating flood in 1957. Over a period of more than a decade from 1998, a set of six buildings were constructed, five of them by local architect Santiago Calatrava. They are all very futuristic in style using tens of thousands of tons of steel, concrete and tens of thousands square metres of glass. The complex has been described as “phenomenal, inventive, exciting”, though it is not without its critics due to being excessively over budget (>€1bn vs €300m), and suffering from leaks and falling mosaics.



**6. Cologne Cathedral.** The largest cathedral in Europe being 144.5m long, 84m wide and with 10,000 square metres of windows. Its dominant twin spires are 157m tall. Construction was started in 1248 but stopped in 1473 only to be restarted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and completed in 1880. This used the original medieval drawings though applied more modern construction techniques. The style is German Gothic though the external flying buttresses are reminiscent of Amiens cathedral in France. In WW2 it was hit by 14 bombs but stood tall and largely unscathed amidst the devastation of the buildings surrounding it. 80 stonemasons are constantly at work to maintain it.

**7. Osborne House, Isle of Wight.** The meeting watched the first part of the official DVD of Osborne House. This was built as a summer residence for Queen Victoria between 1845 and 1851. It was designed by Prince Albert in Italian Renaissance style. Nearby is St Mildred's Church in Whippingham, the church used by Queen Victoria when she stayed at Osborne House. The church itself is of architectural interest, restored by John Nash in 1804 with the chancel rebuilt in 1854 with input from Prince Albert. (Photo: Wikipedia, Public Domain).

