

Birkenhead Priory

Art and Culture



Zumtobel displays its sensitive side at Birkenhead Priory

Zumtobel Lighting has supplied a sensitive lighting solution for the refurbishment of Birkenhead Priory, the oldest standing building in Merseyside, now under the care of Wirral Council and used as a museum. The old, inefficient Tungsten spotlights that used to provide the illumination of the display cases has been replaced to provide highly effective yet gentle highlighting of the exhibits. Working closely with Ainsley Gomon Architects, Zumtobel came up with a lighting scheme that would see the gloomy interior and shadowy exhibits restored to become an inviting facility with beautiful interior décor and clear displays





Founded in 1150, Birkenhead Priory shares its site with the tower and spire of St Mary's Church, one of Thomas Rickman's 'Cast Iron Churches'. As a Scheduled Monument site with Grade II to Grade I listed buildings, the site provides rich historical interest of significant local and national value. The buildings were in need of repair and maintenance following a lack of attention, plus basic improvements to its visitor facilities.

In order to provide gentle accents for the precious exhibits, Zumtobel's MICROTOOLS LED lighting system has been installed in the display cases. This has had the effect of presenting the goods displayed to optimum effect, whilst selective lighting accents emphasise even the smallest product details, presenting them as elegant highlights. The extremely compact gimbal-mounted lighting heads are the smallest currently available on the market for display cabinet lighting. MICROTOOLS excellent colour rendering index of $R_a > 90$ made this the perfect solution for the priory.



Floor mounted PYLAS LED floodlight was chosen for uplighting the vaulted brickwork ceiling and enhance the previously dark and gloomy interior, making it more appealing to visitors. Featuring superior LED technology and efficiency of more than 60 lumens per watt, PYLAS LED is perfect for illuminating façades or columns and highlighting details. Anti-glare accessories have also ensured targeted lighting without any scattered light.

Alf Plant, from Ainsley Gommon Architects, commented "Zumtobel Lighting and in particular, their technical advisor in this region, Tony Eastwood were extremely helpful to us to get a workable and affordable lighting scheme for the project, to go in a space that was very poorly lit before. This has greatly improved the lighting of the museum interior and the visitor experience of the site. The project won a regional RICS Conservation award for NW England earlier in the year and is now through to the national finals."

As one of the most iconic and important buildings in the Wirral, Birkenhead Priory is a vitally important part of Wirral's heritage and culture. This facelift will return the Priory to the forefront of people's consciousness and encourage more visitors to the museum.

The Light.

ZG Lighting (UK) Limited
Chiltern Park
Chiltern Hill
Chalfont St Peter
Buckinghamshire
SL9 9FG
T +44 1388 420 042

zumtobel.co.uk

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