

PRESTON CITY HERITAGE TRAIL



Start point:
Preston Bus Station, Tithebarn Street, PR11YT.

Preston Bus Station

Preston Bus Station is one of the city's most iconic buildings. The Brutalist architectural style was designed by architects Keith Ingham and Charles Wilson and officially came to life when the station was built in the late 1960s.

The architects' vision was to create a structure that gave everyday visitors the feel of luxury air travel. This was achieved with the building's curved edges and capacity for 80 double decker buses as well as a combined car park.

The 'megastructure' was originally created to combine Preston's former four bus stations into one convenient hub. On its creation, it was the largest bus station in Europe. Though it no longer holds this crown, at 170 metres long, it still remains near the top of the list.

Through the years Preston Bus Station has caused much controversy, with some calling for the building to be demolished and some calling for its protection. Visitors and residents are divided on opinion whether to love or hate this building. Whatever your opinion, it can't be denied that the iconic building wears its 1960s style proudly and has become a staple landmark in the city.

Preston Bus Station continued its journey in 2013 when it was granted Grade II listed building status and saw its restoration in 2018. Its restoration combines the 60s Brutalist style with modernised and renovated areas. Original features that were lovingly restored include the rubber floors by Italian tire brand Pirelli and Iroko hardwood benches.



Follow the trail for Preston Markets

With your back to Preston Bus Station, head down Old Vicarage Road, off Tithebarn Street. At the end of this road turn left onto Lancaster Road. You will then see Preston Markets opposite you on the other side of the road.



Preston Markets, Earl Street, PR1 2JA.

Preston Markets

Here you will see Preston's Market Hall and Outdoor Market under a detailed iron canopy. This outdoor area is referred to as the Covered Market. Preston's Box Markets can be seen under a smaller canopy to the side of this area.



Preston Markets

The Covered Market is a Grade II listed landmark structure and was Preston's answer to a much-needed covered market area. The idea for a covered market was first dreamed up in 1837, however, after many setbacks and a delay in construction, the markets were only officially finished in November 1875. Until then, trade was mainly carried out around Preston Corn Exchange.

The smaller market area, which houses the Box Market, was formerly a fish market and was covered with its canopy in 1924.

The market canopies feature cast iron pillars and lattice, and originally featured a glass and wood roof. The ones you see today are the originals and have gone through a number of restorations and improvements throughout the years. These include the removal of the glass skylights and electric lighting being installed in 1958 as well as the cobbled floor being replaced.

The markets were a staple place to visit in Preston for local and fresh produce and they remain so today, much-loved by Prestonians and visitors. The Market Hall and Box Markets are the most recent structures to be added, built under the canopies in 2018 to keep the trademark structures intact whilst bringing the markets into the modern world.



Follow the trail for Preston Town Hall

With the Covered Market on your right, and the Bus Station to your left, walk along Lancaster Road until you come to Preston Town Hall on your right.



Preston Town Hall, Lancaster Road, PR1 2RL.

Preston Town Hall

Once a gap between Preston Sessions House and the Earl Street Police Station, Preston Town Hall was completed in 1933.

Described as elegant and well-balanced, the building was designed by architects Messrs Briggs and Thornley of Liverpool. The figures on the façade represent health, education and trade as well as remembering King Henry II who granted the first Charter to Preston.



Preston Town Hall



Follow the trail for Preston Sessions House

Further along Lancaster Road, next door to Preston Town Hall, is Preston's Sessions House.



Sessions House, Lancaster Road, PR1 2RL.

Preston Sessions House

Preston Sessions House is a fine example of an Edwardian Baroque architectural style, common for many public buildings built in the British Empire during the Edwardian era.

Plans to erect the County Sessions House began in 1899, with the building officially opening in 1904. It was designed by Manchester architect Henry Litter and features many sculptures and ornate details to admire. Depictions of weighing scales can be seen around the side of the building as well as detailed balconies.

The building, built in sandstone, has three floors, a basement and a stunning tower. This tower makes the Sessions House one of the tallest buildings in Preston.

Today it is Grade II listed and still operates as a courthouse.



Preston Sessions House



Follow the trail for Preston Guild Hall

Turn your back to Preston Sessions House and you will find the Guild Hall opposite.



Preston Guild Hall, Lancaster Road, PR1 1HT.

Preston Guild Hall

Built to replace Preston's Public Hall, this current Guild Hall building officially opened its doors in 1972. Its main purpose is as an entertainment venue, with a floor dedicated to shops and dining.

The building has witnessed many huge names over the years and has been graced with top musicians including David Bowie, Queen, Led Zeppelin, Elton John, Black Sabbath, Supertramp, Genesis, Jackson 5, Bing Crosby, and many more.

The building is typical of 70's architecture and has certainly played a large part in shaping the city of Preston.



Preston Guild Hall



Follow the trail for the Cenotaph

With the Guild Hall on your left, turn right down the side of the Sessions House (taking note of the detailed stonework) and continue onto the Flag Market. The Cenotaph sits to your right in front of the old Post Office building.



The Cenotaph, Preston Flag Market, PR1 2AP.

Preston Cenotaph

The Cenotaph was paid for by public donations and stands in memory of the men of Preston who lost their lives in WWI. The structure underwent a restoration project in 2013 and stands proud over the Flag Market in memory of some 2,000 men who tragically lost their lives in the Great War.

It was designed by architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, whose father Sir George Gilbert Scott designed Preston's first town hall, before it mysteriously burned down. Sir Giles Gilbert Scott also designed the iconic red telephone box; a design which can also be seen to the left of the Cenotaph, down the side of the old Post Office building, in the longest row of red telephone boxes in England.



Preston Cenotaph



Follow the trail for the Harris Museum & Art Gallery

With your back to the Cenotaph, the Harris Museum & Art Gallery will be on your left. Entrances can be found on either side of the building.

Please note: The Harris temporarily closed its doors in 2021 for refurbishment. You can still visit elements of the museum in the Preston Guild Hall building.



Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Market Square, PR1 2PP.

Harris Museum & Art Gallery

The Grade I listed Harris Museum, Library and Art Gallery delivers plenty to admire inside and out. Make sure to spot the quotes along the outside of the building as well as its fine sculptures.

The building officially opened in 1893 as a free library and museum, made possible by the bequest of Preston Lawyer Edmund Robert Harris.

Edmund had inherited his family's wealth after the death of his father and brother and had no heirs when he died, aged 73 in 1877. He was the principal benefactor of the Harris Museum, alongside the Harris Institute or Art School, Harris Technical School (now UCLan) and the Harris Orphanage.

The building itself is a treat to admire and wander through, with its collections and exhibitions being the icing on the cake. Inside the museum you'll find the "Discover Preston" exhibition where you can learn even more about the city's past as well as the Roll of Honour in gratitude to the men of Preston who lost their lives during WWI.



Harris Museum & Art Gallery



Follow the trail for the Obelisk

Standing on the Flag Market, with the Harris behind you, you will find the Obelisk outside the Crystal House building, on the opposite side to the Cenotaph.



The Obelisk, Preston Flag Market, PR1 2AP.

The Obelisk

The Obelisk sits opposite the Cenotaph on Preston's Market Square/Flag Market. The monument dates back to 1782 and was originally installed for the Guild celebration the same year.

In 1816 a gas lamp was fitted to the top of the Obelisk, making it the first outdoor location outside of London to be lit by gas.

After the monument was removed, it was then restored again in 1979. This re-erection was to mark and celebrate the 800th anniversary of the city being granted the charter by King Henry II.



Preston Obelisk



Follow the trail for the site of the old town hall

Remaining in the same spot as the Obelisk, you can see Crystal House - presently apartments and restaurants. This building is the site of the old town hall.



Crystal House, PR1 2AQ.

The site of the old town hall

Behind the Obelisk is the Crystal House building. This building was once the site of Preston Town Hall.

The town hall was built between 1862 and 1866 and was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott. The building featured Gothic revival architecture, with the clock tower being the second largest in Britain after Big Ben.

The town hall met its end in a mysterious fire in 1947. The damage to the hall was too severe to save and resulted in the remains being demolished.



Preston's old town hall



Follow the trail for Miller Arcade

With Crystal House on your right, walk towards Jackson Street (to the side of the Harris Museum & Art Gallery). You will see Miller Arcade in front of you towards the right.



Miller Arcade, Lancaster Road, PR1 1DA.

Miller Arcade

The Miller Arcade was Preston's first indoor shopping centre and formerly included Turkish Baths.

The Grade II listed building was built in 1899 and proudly displays Victorian features. Just some of these fantastic features include ornate tiling, a glass panelled ceiling and fine stone carvings.

The building also found its spotlight when it was featured in the 1962 romantic drama film 'A Kind of Loving'.

Make sure to venture inside the building and admire all of its intricate detail and unique design.



Miller Arcade



Follow the trail for the Bull & Royal

Head back onto Lancaster Road through the Miller Arcade or by walking around it. With Miller Arcade on your right, walk towards Church Street. When you reach Church Street, cross over the road towards the Bull & Royal on the left.



Bull & Royal Hotel, 141 Church Street, PR1 3BU.

Bull & Royal Hotel

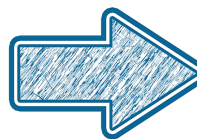
The Old Bull pub, formally known as the Bull & Royal Hotel, is a Grade II listed building. It isn't known for sure when it was built, but it was visited by young pretender Prince Charles Edward as well as Charles Dickens. Dickens is said to have taken inspiration for his novel "Hard Times" from his experiences of the Great Preston Lock Out whilst staying here.

During a second visit in 1868 Dickens fell ill and could not attend a reading he had scheduled. The Bull & Royal Hotel manager at the time borrowed £120 from customers and friends and personally went to the old Guild Hall to repay those waiting to hear Dickens read.

For many years the Bull & Royal Hotel catered for many visiting dignitaries and entertainers. Its carriage entrance and other features can still be admired today.



Bull & Royal Hotel



Follow the trail for St John's Minster

With the Bull & Royal on your right, continue down Church Street until you come to Preston Minster on your right.



Preston Minster, Church Street, PR1 3BT.

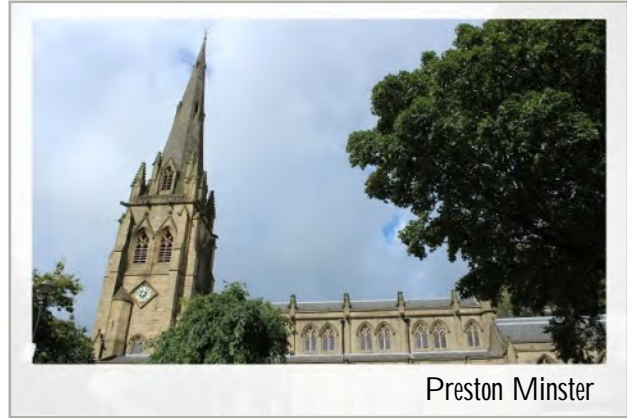
Preston Minster

Originally dedicated to Saint Wilfrid, Preston Minster stands on an ancient Christian site.

The earliest documentation of the church was in 1094. The church has since seen many changes, demolitions and renovations.

The current standing building was built between 1853 and 1855 and was designed by E.H. Shellard. The architecture features gargoyles and many fine attributes to feast your eyes on.

Until recently the church was St John's Minster, but is now known as Preston Minster. The church is very welcoming and allow you to explore inside. In here you can admire its grand interior, with high ceilings, beams and memorials.



Preston Minster



Follow the trail for St Wilfrid's Church

Turning back towards the Bull & Royal, walk down Church Street to the high street/Fishergate. Continue down here until you reach Chapel Street on your left. Turn down Chapel Street and you will see St Wilfrid's Church to your left.



St Wilfrid's Church, Chapel Street, PR1 8BU.

St Wilfrid's Church

After St John's Minster changed its dedication from St Wilfrid's, a new St Wilfrid's was built in 1793. St Wilfrid's was founded by Father Joseph 'Daddy' Dunn. Dunn was also noted for starting the Preston Gaslight Company and formulating a better gas lighting technique, resulting in longer power and more brightness. Dunn transformed Lancashire and Preston by transporting cool-gas lighting around the area.

Hidden on Chapel Street, this Church is built unusually parallel to the street and does not feature a distinctive spire. The reasons behind this discreet placement of the building are thought to be the result of the church being built before the restoration of the English Catholic hierarchy.

The church was made grander in 1878 when the interior was remodelled. Ten years later, further additions were made with stone claddings and terra-cotta and stone carvings added to the exterior. Elaborate marbles from all over Europe were also added to the interior walls and columns. The grand appearance was certainly achieved, with many details to admire inside and out.

Two massive carved wooden sculptures installed here are of 'St Wilfrids' and 'Hidden Life', by Fenwick Lawson, a Durham artist, born in 1932. The sculptures exhibit an intensity of emotions which reflect the artist's deep concern for the human condition.



St Wilfrid's Church



Follow the trail for the Fishergate Baptist Church

Walk back up to Fishergate high street and cross over the road. Turn left and continue down Fishergate until you come to Fishergate Baptist Church (currently occupied by Bistrot Pierre) on your right.

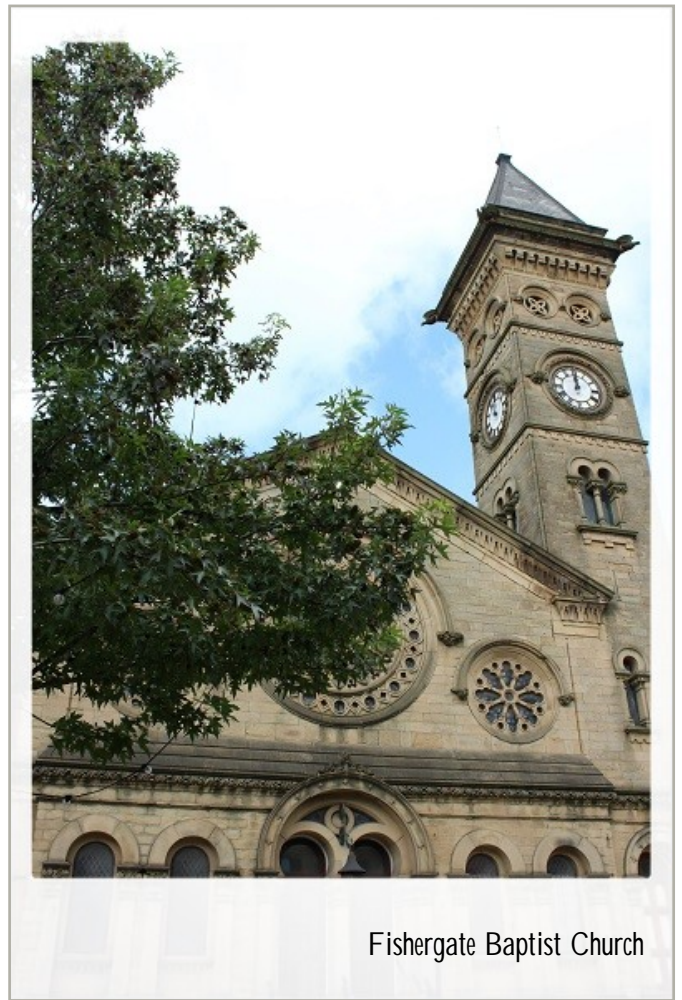


Fishergate Baptist Church, Fishergate, PR1 2UR.

Fishergate Baptist Church

Sit amongst the high-street shops, Fishergate Baptist Church is a beautiful Romanesque style building that stands out to passers-by. Built in 1857/58 and designed by James Hibbert, this church was an active Baptist church for more than 150 years. It received a Grade II listing in 1986 and boasts many details that are worth taking a closer look at.

For many more recent years the church was the focal point for outreach activities and for the homeless in the city. However, the church was unused from 2011 until it was converted into a restaurant in 2018. Thanks to this conversion, many restored features of the building can be admired today, such as the large round windows and arches.



Fishergate Baptist Church



Follow the trail for Preston Train Station

With Fishergate Baptist Church on your right, continue down Fishergate High Street and past Butler Street. You will see Preston Train Station on your left. Enter the station down Station Walk.



Finish point: Preston Train Station, Fishergate, PR1 8AP.

Preston Train Station

Preston Train Station is one of the main train stations in the north, roughly halfway between London Euston and Glasgow Central.

A station was first opened on this site in 1838, being extended in 1850. The current station was built in 1880 and extended again in 1903 and 1913.

The station was the site of the first Sailors' and Soldiers' Free Buffet during WWI and WWII. This was located where the current waiting room now is and provided well needed refreshments, food, and shelter for sailors and soldiers passing through the station. If you pay the visiting room a visit you can now see a plaque to commemorate this area as well as a Preston Pals memorial plaque between platforms 3 and 4.



Preston Train Station

Preston City Heritage Trail map

1. Preston Bus Station
2. Preston Markets
3. Preston Town Hall
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7. Harris Museum & Art Gallery
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9. Site of old town hall
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Inside Preston Minster



Inside Miller Arcade



Inside St Wilfrid's Church