



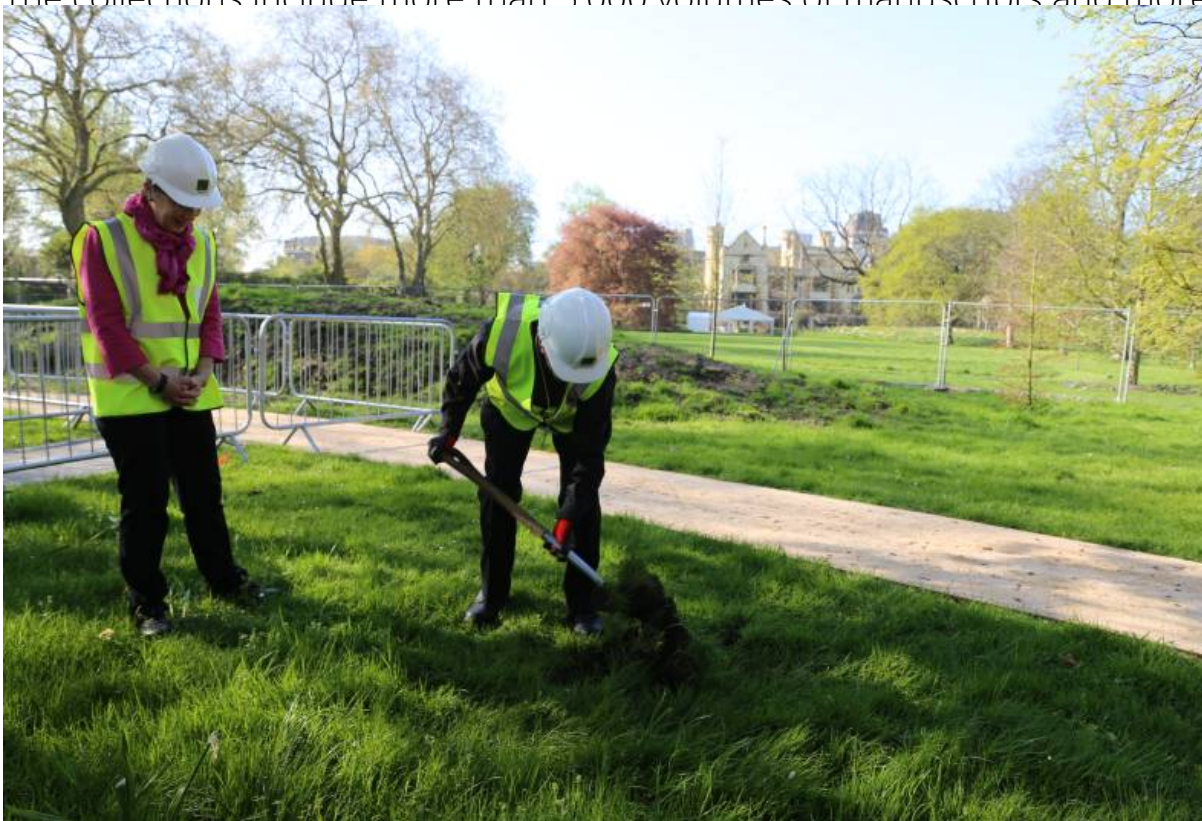
The new library building in the grounds of Lambeth Palace will preserve the most important religious collection outside the Vatican.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has broken the first ground and construction is now underway at the site of the new Lambeth Palace Library.

Archbishop Justin Welby led the ground-breaking ceremony on the site of the new library at Lambeth Palace this morning.

Lambeth Palace Library is one of the oldest public libraries in the UK and houses the most important ecclesiastical collection of rare books and manuscripts outside of the Vatican Library. It is the main centre for research on the history of the Church of England.

The collections include more than 5 000 volumes of manuscripts and more than 200,000 printed books, along with nearly 10,000 linear metres of



They are currently housed in largely medieval Lambeth Palace buildings and in the Church of England Record Centre warehouse in SE London, buildings which are not suitable for the modern day, state of the art archiving and preservation process required for a collection of this importance.

Speaking at the ground-breaking this morning, Archbishop Justin Welby said: “This is an incredibly exciting moment. It marks the beginning of making sure that what the head of the National Archives described as “the second most important ancient library in Europe” – not just in the UK – gets a proper home: a home where it can be looked after, and where scholars can come and it can be used properly.”

The Archbishop said the library’s collection “tells us a huge amount about the history of the nation, particularly in the pre-Reformation period. And it testifies to generation after generation of disciples who loved and followed Jesus Christ. That speaks volumes about the centrality of faith in the life of the nation over its history.”

In a prayer for the new library, the Archbishop said: “We pray that this new library will be to the glory of God’s name, so that all who come may



Declan Kelly, Lambeth Palace Library Director of Libraries and Archives, said: “The new building means the Library can expand and enhance its mission to support the work of the Archbishop and the wider church. We will be able to not only protect and preserve the collections but provide greater access to them than ever before.

"It will also be a space which can be used by and for the Church to promote the Christian message and raise the profile of our Christian heritage as seen through the collections."

# A new home for an ancient library



The new specialist building, in the grounds of Lambeth Palace, is expected to be completed and open to the public by the end of 2020. It will be designed to be as carbon neutral as possible. It will be the first new building on the site for over a century.

The building is scheduled to cost £23.5M to construct plus fitting out, fees and VAT. Architects Wright and Wright are responsible for this project, with construction being carried out by Knight Harwood Ltd.

Wright and Wright are known for public buildings, libraries and galleries including new libraries at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and Magdalen College, Oxford.

Founded in 1610 by Archbishop Bancroft, some Lambeth Palace Library's manuscripts date back to the 9th Century.

The Library houses many notable documents. These include the only surviving copy of the execution warrant of Mary, Queen of Scots by Elizabeth I in 1587, and the MacDurnan Gospels from the late 9th century:



[Find out more about Lambeth Palace Library](#)

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