



Coventry's City Centre Trail

Take a tour of the city centre of Coventry with these top 12 places to visit during your stay. Whether you're looking for historic places, famous landmarks, hidden treasures or Medieval buildings, you're in the right place.

1). Coventry Cathedral – In November 1940 the old Cathedral of St Michael was devastated by fire, leaving only the outside walls and the tower standing. St Michael's was founded in the 12th century by the Earl of Chester. Its architectural form is the result of a great rebuilding in Perpendicular style (Gothic) between 1373 and the middle of the 14th century. The new cathedral of St Michael is one of the few post-war listed buildings in the country. The cathedral contains some of the country's most important contemporary works of art, including Graham Sutherland's tapestry above the altar.

2). St Mary's Guild Hall- one of the grandest medieval guild halls in the country. It was first built between 1340-42 for the merchant guild of St Mary. The principal room is the magnificent Great Hall at first floor level with a late 14th century timber roof and the tapestry dating from 1500. Below the Great Hall is the largest known vaulted under-croft in the city.

3). Holy Trinity Church - is Coventry's only complete medieval parish church. It was established in the 12th century as the chapel of the Prior's part of Coventry. The original Norman building was destroyed by fire in 1257. The church houses many rare artefacts, perhaps the most exceptional being the famous medieval wall painting of the Last Judgement.

4). Herbert Art Gallery & Museum – is named after Sir Alfred Herbert, a Coventry industrialist and philanthropist whose benefactions enabled the original building to be opened in 1960. Building began in 1939, with an interruption by the Second World War, and The Herbert opened in 1960. The museum houses local works of art, history and archaeology collections.

5). Cheylesmore Manor- possibly replaced Coventry Castle as the Earl of Chester's administrative centre, when the castle began to decay after the mid-12th century. The manor house is first mentioned in 1250 and it lay facing Cheylesmore Park. In 1329 the manor and park passed to Queen Isabella, wife of Edward II, and then onto her grandson, Edward the Black Prince. All that remains of the manor above the ground today is the gatehouse, restored in 1965, and now used as the Register

Office. It dates back to the 16th century but has remains of side wings of the 14th and 15th centuries.

6). Priory Visitor Centre & Undercroft – For hundreds of years the ruins of Coventry's first cathedral lay hidden beneath the city centre. Coventry's Millennium project gave archaeologists the opportunity to excavate this important site. Over several years the remains of many of the medieval buildings were uncovered. Some of the ruins have been reburied for their protection, but gardens have been designed over them to reflect the archaeology below. The garden built over the site of the cloister includes the Visitor Centre which not only houses some of the incredible finds from the excavations but also tells the story of this amazing part of Coventry's history.

7). Lady Herbert's Garden - The garden was created between 1930-39 as a memorial to the second wife of Sir Alfred Herbert. Its spine is formed by the most complete remains of the town wall, running from Cook Street Gate to Swanswell Gate.

8). Drapers Hall – The headquarters of the Draper's Company, which has its origins in a medieval guild, was used for meetings, entertainment and ceremony. The present building is at least the third site, the first was built approx 1637, and the present hall was erected in 1831-32 in Greek revival style.

9). Ford's Hospital -These almshouses founded in 1509 have been called one of the most perfect examples of timber-framed architecture in the country. The central doorway leads to an enclosed and secluded courtyard where the rich variety of carving can be viewed. The building was faithfully restored after a direct hit during a wartime air raid which killed a number of residents.

10).Lady Godiva Statue - Godiva's ride naked on horseback through Coventry is legendary. This bronze statue was commissioned to form the centrepiece of the Broadgate island. The statue was made by Sir William Reid Dick and it was unveiled in 1949.

11). Coventry Transport Museum - right in the heart of Coventry city centre displays the largest collection of British road transport in the world. There are many varied exhibitions, the 'Spirit of Speed' being the most exciting as it gives you the opportunity to feel what it is like travelling at 763 miles per hour.

12). The Council House (1913-17) - was designed by Edward Garret and H W Simister. The Tudor style harmonised with St Mary's Guild Hall which is situated at the rear of the building. The most prominent features of the exterior are the corner clock tower and the main entrance, richly decorated with heraldic devices and statues of Godiva, Leofric and Justice.