



**PRESS INFORMATION**  
**For immediate release**

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## **A B&B with Soul**

### **New Accommodation in England's Most Beautiful Cathedral Close**

The refurbishment and creation of extra bedrooms at Sarum College in Salisbury's Cathedral Close offers another draw for visitors to the city - an unrivalled opportunity to stay in a what Bill Bryson called England's 'most beautiful space'.

Sarum College now has 40 contemporary, television-free en-suite bedrooms, thanks to the refurbishment of a wing designed by the Victorian architect William Butterfield.

"Staying at Sarum offers something no other accommodation in the city can - the unforgettable experience of walking from the front door straight into Salisbury's beautiful and historic Close," says Linda Cooper, Sarum's director of hospitality. "Guests who aren't here to study tend to want to spend their time enjoying the many cultural attractions in the Salisbury area."

Visitors aren't completely cut off from the wider world, though - there's free wifi and a guest lounge with a television.

The setting inside Salisbury's cathedral close is a haven within a haven. The magnificent medieval cathedral is the centrepiece of this 80-acre space (eight acres of which is lawn) and throughout are museums, historic and private houses, many of which are fine examples of English architecture, some of it designed by Sir Christopher Wren.

Though the Close's grandeur can give the impression that entrance is restricted, this is only partially true. In fact, the Close is open to everyone to enjoy by day; at night, however, the gates are locked - as they have been since the 15th century - so Sarum's guests have the Close practically to themselves.

"Visitors to Salisbury often comment on the peace and tranquillity of the Close. Staying at Sarum College takes that one step further," says Cooper. "We've already earned a reputation for offering an exceptional welcome - now all our guests can enjoy a standard of high accommodation as well as an experience they can't get anywhere else."

The Cathedral Close is in central Salisbury, a five-minute walk from the High Street with shops, cafes and a twice-weekly market. In addition to the College's own art programme, there are excellent cultural venues nearby, including the Salisbury Playhouse, City Hall, Odeon cinema, as well as award-winning museums, Arundells (the home of Sir Edward Heath) and Mompesson House, a fine National Trust property. The World Heritage Site of Stonehenge is a short bus journey away.

There are also dozens of restaurants, pubs and bars just a few minutes' walk away. Sarum College guests can borrow a Close gate key to come and go as they please.

"To have refurbished en-suite rooms in such a wonderful location is fantastic news," says David Andrews, chief executive of VisitWiltshire. "We look forward to working closely with Sarum College to help tourism to Salisbury and the surrounding area."

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## **Photographs (2) credit: Ash Mills**

### **Finishing touches**

Linda Cooper, director of hospitality at Sarum College smooths a pillowcase in one of the 22 new single bedrooms in the refurbished Butterfield Wing.

Freelance photographer Ash Mills hangs his framed photograph in one of the 22 new single bedrooms in the refurbished Butterfield Wing. The photograph is the first submission in Sarum's art scheme to appeal to local artists for art works to display in the new bedrooms.

### **Notes for editors**

#### **Contact**

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**Sarum College** is an independent ecumenical centre for Christian study and research based at 19 The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EE. Sarum College receives no regular funding from churches or other public bodies, and is a registered charity (no. 309501). The college website address is: [www.sarum.ac.uk](http://www.sarum.ac.uk)

An estimated 10,000 people of all faiths and none visit Sarum College each year. The College offers a non-denominational space for spiritual refreshment - no matter what form this takes, whether it's through tourism, learning or guided reflection. Space for this sort of experience is especially valuable given our media-saturated world and the difficult economic climate. By the end of this year, at least two retreat houses will have closed: Offa House in Coventry (March 2013) and Glenfall House in Cheltenham (July 2013). Urchfont Manor, the local Wiltshire Council-owned education and conference venue, was sold in March and it looks likely that it will be restored as a private home.

**Butterfield Refurbishment Celebration:** Sarum marks the completion of the works with a official opening of the new bedrooms by the Right Reverend Nicholas Holtam, Bishop of Salisbury, on May 22, 2013. More than 100 guests will mark the achievement and have the opportunity to tour the building and see the new rooms.

**Art Scheme:** Also on May 22nd, Sarum will launch a call to local artists and photographers to propose art works for the new rooms for long-term loan and possible sale. This initiative aims to enhance the visitor experience and offer artists a new way to showcase and sell their work.

The launch includes a special promotion for first-time guests to Sarum College: starting May 23rd, the first five people to book a stay of two nights or more will receive a free print of a photograph of the Cathedral Close entrance by Ash Mills.

**In his book Notes from a Small Island, Bill Bryson writes:** "There is no doubt in my mind that Salisbury Cathedral is the single most beautiful structure in England and the Close around it the most beautiful space".