



Fulham Palace

Distance: 3 km=1¾ miles (including walk round grounds)

Region: Central London

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Author: Thwelder

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Refreshments: Fulham Palace

Map: A-Z of London

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Ancient historic building, gardens, river

In Brief

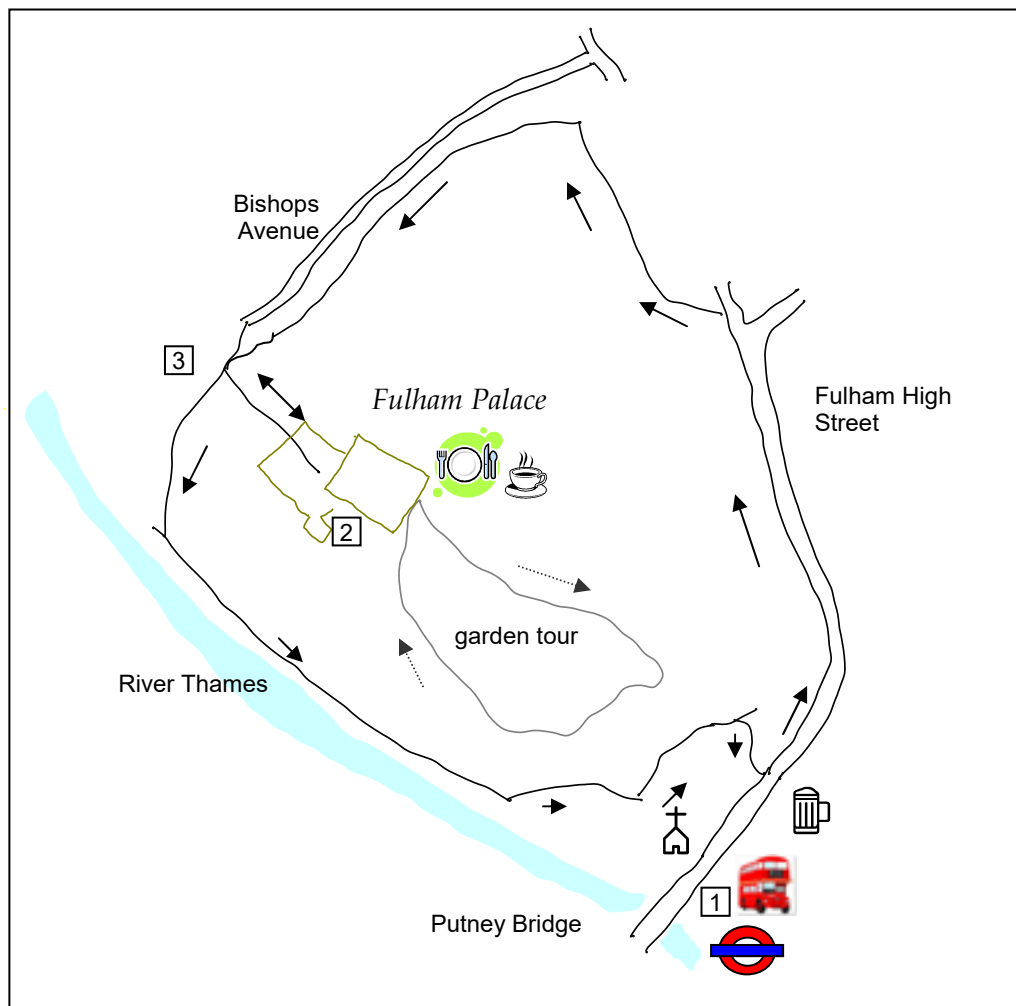
Fulham Palace is a historical gem, between the Fulham Palace Road and the River Thames. It remains unknown even to many Londoners. The front part is early Tudor, but some fragments are much older still. It was the residence of the Bishop of London for nearly a thousand years. [In the summer of 2019, it re-opened after completion of a £3.8 million restoration.](#) This little circular walk finishes by the River Thames and the length printed above takes into account a generous stroll through the ancient garden.

On some days, especially Saturdays, the site is used for a wedding reception, closing the courtyard and inner rooms to the public, although the grounds and the café are fully open. This is not shown on their website (www.fulhampalace.org), so it may be advisable to call them on 020-7736-3233 before your visit.

The walk begins at **Putney Bridge station**, or any suitable point on the north side of Putney Bridge. See **Getting There** at the end.

Any kind of footwear or attire is fine. Dogs are *not* allowed. You can take a picnic.

The Walk



- 1 Walk northwards (away from the Bridge) up the left-hand side of Fulham High Street. The first bar you pass on the left is called, rather enigmatically, the *Temperance* (sic). The *Old Hat* vintage clothing store is also a gem. Just after the junction with Fulham Road, turn **left** into Bishops Park and keep **right**, so you are walking parallel to Fulham Palace Road on your right. Exit through a gate at the far side and turn **left** onto a path that runs next to Bishops Avenue. The path joins Bishops Avenue and soon you reach a small metal gate ahead that indicates that you have reached the grounds of Fulham Palace. Turn **left** just before the metal gate into the grounds and keep ahead through an archway into the entrance courtyard with a fountain in the middle. The entrance is straight ahead. Entry is free of charge.

The site of Fulham Palace goes back at least to the year 700 and there are believed to be Neolithic and Roman remains here. The Palace was already a country residence of the Bishops of London at the time of the Norman Conquest (1066) and became their main residence from the 1700s until 1975. (It is now Dean's Court near St Paul's Cathedral.) Visitors can see the Great Hall, the Museum and the Chapel. The drawing rooms were commissioned by Bishop Richard Terrick (1710–1777) from the architect Stiff Leadbetter. They now house an art gallery and a pleasant café which serves tasty soup and light lunches and provides newspapers along with comfortable chairs and settees.

- 2 The terrace is pleasant for al fresco eating and during the cooler months the lawn can be reached through the door in the corner of the café drawing room. From here there is a rewarding small circular tour of the gardens.

The gardens of Fulham Palace are as notable as the building. Bishop Edmund Grindal (served 1559-1570) sent grapes from here to Queen Elizabeth I. Bishop Henry Compton (1632-1713) added greatly to the collection of exotic species, notably from Virginia.

If you keep to the left-hand side of the lawn you will gain access through an arch to the walled garden. This area is being restored by Hammersmith and Fulham Council and each visit will reveal a newly renovated part of the ancient herb garden, the vinery and the bothies (old huts). The garden also plays host to some modern sculpture. From here, you can circle right through the orchard and back to the lawn.

In case you are in a hurry to return to Putney Bridge, there is a small exit gate at the far right-hand end of the garden.

- 3 After your visit, return to the fountain court and out to Bishops Avenue. Turn **left** and soon reach the riverside. Cross the grass and turn **left** on the river path itself from where you have a good view across the Thames. *On the other side, amidst the boatyards and canoe clubs is the starting point for the annual Oxford-Cambridge boat race.* As you near Putney Bridge and reach some steps down to the river, turn **left** through the rose garden and enter through a gate into the churchyard of All Saints, Fulham.

The familiar landmark tower of All Saints, Fulham dates back to 1440 but the rest of the church is a Victorian restoration. Inside there are many references to the Civil War (a printed history of the church is available). The churchyard holds the tombs of many local families and Bishops of London. Some inscriptions sound quaint, almost comical, against shifts of meaning in modern English: "loved by his family, and deeply regretted by a numerous circle of friends" and "lies sleeping".

Exit by the far gate, passing by the Almshouses, founded by Sir William Powell in 1680 and now beautifully restored. Turn immediately **right** through a gate into Vicarage Gardens and, in the far corner, go up steps back to Putney Bridge Approach.

Getting there

By Underground: Putney Bridge station.

By Bus: numbers 93, 14, 22, 220, 74, 430.

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