

Community Use Plan

1. Introduction

The Egypt Exploration Society has supported and promoted Egyptian cultural heritage since its founding in 1882. Over our history we have explored over 150 different sites and monuments in the Nile valley and shared the results of this work in more than 350 publications. Today, the Society supports research projects around the world. We rely almost entirely on donations from members and the wider public to fund our work and run an extensive educational programme of publications and training, as well as online and in-person events to convey the results to interested audiences.

2. Why community use?

Alongside our international reach and charitable work in Egypt, our premises in Camden have provided a unique space for the study of and engagement with Egyptian cultural heritage since our purchase of 2-3 Doughty Mews in 1968. Located near the British Museum and Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology (UCL), our archive and library collections complement their holdings by preserving original records relating to the discovery of artefacts on EES excavations. These objects were given to the EES by the Egyptian authorities and subsequently donated to our neighbouring institutions as well as hundreds of others around the world. The conjunction of the EES, BM, and Petrie Museum creates a heartland for the study of Egyptological artefacts, archives, and published sources unparalleled anywhere else in the UK.

Beyond the Society's value for the international academic community, our links with local institutions, such as the Camden Archives and St George the Martyr Church of England Primary School, demonstrate the potential for further partnerships when the premises are made accessible. The plans submitted to Camden Council would enable us to welcome school groups, families, and those with mobility issues to a dynamic space where they could explore Egypt's heritage for themselves, both within and beyond the areas covered in the UK National Curriculum. While the current layout of our premises has been a hurdle for promoting community engagement, recent visits by families to learn about hieroglyphs, the queens of Egypt, and our founder Amelia Edwards gives some indication of the need for greater access.

Societal responses to the COVID pandemic demonstrated the vital role heritage plays in stimulating positive wellbeing, as well as fostering an international outlook. Our own online event programme, instated during lockdown, attracted over 23,000 attendees in its first year and continues to expand into new avenues such as online educational courses, and in-person study days or craft sessions.

"The man who knows and dwells in history adds a new dimension to his existence..."
William Matthew Flinders Petrie, 1904.

The EES will create a new heritage offer in Camden that will invite everyone to be part of the story of British Egyptology, no matter their needs or socio-economic background. A new focal point within the local community where they can 'drop in' to pick up a book, enjoy a hot drink, attend an event, and discover the history of Egypt and its historical connections with the UK.

3. Community Use Plan

The Society's **Learning Hub** and display space would be publicly available during opening hours. This would include areas for innovative virtual engagement as well as physical exhibitions of our unique archive and papyri collections. This space will be located on the ground floor, fully accessible from the reception area which will welcome visitors to our premises in Doughty Mews. The Learning Hub would also be used for public events including lectures, book readings, craft sessions, and exhibit launches.

A rooftop **Educational Garden** will be made available to smaller groups and will be accessible via stairs or a platform lift. This will be attached to a small meeting room where groups can receive seminar teaching and handling sessions.

The third-floor meeting room and educational garden could also be hired during opening hours (if available), though use for governance meetings and by Society members would have priority.

The archive and papyri storerooms would remain available to staff only, to ensure the security of the collections, but rotating displays in the Learning Hub would give insights into their contents and information about the globally significant collections housed in them. The research library would be available to members of the EES, while a smaller lending library would be publicly accessible from the Learning Hub on the ground floor where visitors can read with refreshments.

Consultation with schools, heritage organisations, and neighbours living in Camden will inform the development of our Community Use Plan following the transformation of the premises. Conversations with teachers at St George the Martyr Church of England Primary School are already underway, and partnerships with museums will be expanded.

Currently, the EES is open Monday-Wednesday, 10:30-16:30. Events can take place outside of these hours by prior appointment. Since our premises are located a quiet residential street, events are not permitted to start earlier than 08:00 or continue beyond 20:00.

Our facilities are available for external hire and rates are currently set at a charitable level based on current usage by educational groups. Use by media companies warrant a commercial fee at an hourly or daily rate. Any charges made cover cleaning, security, and staff time and any hire will be covered by an appropriate Agreement.

The Community Use Plan will be reviewed in light of the transformation of the premises and periodically thereafter.