



# **ENERGY CENTRE PROGRAMME, BRITISH MUSEUM**

**Statement of Community Involvement**

October 2023

# CONTENTS

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1. Introduction
- 1.2 The Consultation Process and Objectives

## **2.0 Background and Approach**

- 2.1 Policy Framework
- 2.2 Planning Description of Development

## **3.0 The Consultation Process**

- 3.1 Aims of Consultation
- 3.2 Consultation Process
- 3.3 Consultation Area
- 3.4 Project Contact and Communications Channels
- 3.5 Consultation – Levels of Engagement

## **4.0 Feedback**

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Community Feedback
- 4.3 Summary of Responses

## **5.0 Conclusion**

- 5.1 Summary
- 5.2 Continued Engagement

## **6.0 Appendices**

## **ENERGY CENTRE PROGRAMME**

Statement of Community  
Involvement

This document has been prepared by  
Concilio on behalf of  
Trustees of the British Museum

# APPENDICES

Appendix A	Letter distribution area
Appendix B	Consultation letter
Appendix C	In-person event boards
Appendix D	In-person event images



# 1.0

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared in support of a planning application (the 'Application') for the proposals for the Energy Centre Programme at, British Museum, Great Russell Street, WC1B 3DG, the 'Site'). The Energy Centre Programme includes the South West Energy Centre building and the Incoming Substation building. The scheme is being brought forward by Trustees of the British Museum (the 'Applicant') and the proposed description of the development is:

*"Demolition of existing Energy Centre to internal West Road. Removal of temporary buildings to the south of the existing energy centre on the internal West Road and to the north and east of the White Wing facing Montague Street. Erection of new energy centre incorporating maintenance support accommodation to internal West Road, new substation off Montague Street, all together with associated internal and external works, service runs, erection of plant, landscaping, and temporary works associated with construction."*

A comprehensive description of the proposals can be found in the Design and Access Statement accompanying this submission.

This report details the public consultation carried out to date in order to inform the design evolution of the proposals. The consultation process has been carried out in accordance with national and local policies, as is laid out in **Section 2.0** of this report. The consultation took place between August 2023 and October 2023.

Concilio is a communications agency that specialises in political and stakeholder engagement in support of the built environment. Concilio has managed the communications programme, ensuring robust and in-depth engagement has taken place.

## 1.2 The Consultation Process and Objectives:

Concilio was appointed in December 2022 to perform a comprehensive community consultation and to manage the pre-application consultation process with neighbouring residents and occupiers as well as interested stakeholders.

The Applicant has had a vested interest in the area and believes that the local community and other key stakeholders should be engaged to gain valuable feedback regarding the site and to ascertain their view on emerging proposals in order to consider them when developing the scheme. The Applicant therefore implemented a comprehensive programme of community engagement which began in August 2023 and included the following:

### Engagement with locally elected representatives

From the outset, the Applicant sought to engage with the political leadership of LB Camden, and the site's ward members and neighbouring ward members from Camden Council.

### Engagement with interested community stakeholders

From the outset, the Applicant sought to engage with community representatives and invitations to briefing sessions and literature concerning the consultation was sent to:

- Central District Alliance
- Holborn District Management Committee
- Bloomsbury Association
- Bloomsbury Conservation
- Historic Buildings and Places
- The Georgian Group
- The Twentieth Century Society
- Victorian Society
- SOAS University of London
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Bloomsbury Institute
- Royal Holloway University London
- Winston House, University of North Carolina's European Study Centre
- Bloomsbury Professional
- English Heritage
- Canning Training
- Somerton House Residents Association
- Bloomsbury Residents Action Group
- Holborn Community Association
- Knollys House Residents Association
- Tin Pan Alley Traders Association
- Newton Street Action Forum
- Covent Garden Community Association
- Bloomsbury Squares and Gardens
- Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association
- Other immediate site neighbours

### Direct liaison with residents and businesses

The Applicant ensured that members of the project team were able to discuss the plans with residents and businesses who wished to be involved in the application process. This was achieved through the targeted delivery of consultation letters to 180 neighbouring addresses. The letters provided all the related contact details and the information for the public exhibitions.

### In-person exhibitions

The Applicant sought to widely engage with key stakeholders, residents, and community representatives in the area. The Applicant hosted two public consultation events on-site. Both events were well publicised in the museum with notifications for staff and visitors. The first event was held on **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023** between 13:00-17:00 at the Model Room of the British Museum. The second event was held on **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023** between 11:00-15:00 at the same room. In total, the events were attended by 326 people who provided feedback over the course of the sessions, with more information in **Section 4**. Overall, participants of the exhibitions were positive about the proposals, especially in relation to the prospect improving the sustainability element of the museum and understood the need for steps towards this direction. During the events participants had the opportunity to review a model of the museum that included the proposed development.

The Applicant has sought to involve the local community and stakeholders extensively as part of a transparent and collaborative engagement process.

This process is in addition to ongoing correspondence and communication with the LB Camden as part of the formal pre-application process.

# 2.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

## 2.1 Policy Framework

There is no statutory requirement to involve the community at the pre-application stage of planning proposals. However, planning policy at every level strongly encourages pre-application consultation with the community on proposals for significant developments. Camden Council's Statement of Community Involvement (2016) recommends that pre-application consultation undertaken by a developer should comply with the principles and approach of community involvement set out in the document.

Camden Council's Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (adopted in July 2016) makes clear that: 'We strongly encourage all applicants to consult any neighbours who may be affected by their proposals before they submit a planning application. We encourage other groups such as local Conservation Area Advisory Committees (CAACs) and any other local interest groups to be consulted. It is especially important to undertake consultation on a wider scale for major, or potentially controversial, proposals where:

- the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on the environment or on the local community, and
- the nature of the development is likely to attract significant local interest.'

This is in alignment with the suggestion in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that it strongly encourages developers to involve the local community from an early stage. They suggest that this should take a variety of forms such as local exhibitions, public meetings, circulation of leaflets or the creation of well-publicised digital mediums, including a facility to make online comments.

Paragraph 39 of The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (updated September 2023) outlines that early engagement has *"significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties"*. Paragraph 16 of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) encourages pre-application engagement with the community where it will add value to the process and outcome.

Paragraph 42 of the NPPF sets out that *"the participation of other consenting bodies in pre-application discussions should enable early consideration of all the fundamental issues relating to whether a particular development will be acceptable in principle, even where other consents relating to how a development is built or operated are needed at a later stage"*. The consultation strategy has been designed to meet the requirements for consultation as laid out in the NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance and Camden Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

## 2.2 Planning Description of development

*"Demolition of existing Energy Centre to internal West Road. Removal of temporary buildings to the south of the existing energy centre on the internal West Road and to the north and east of the White Wing facing Montague Street. Erection of new energy centre incorporating maintenance support accommodation to internal West Road, new substation off Montague Street, all together with associated internal and external works, service runs, erection of plant, landscaping, and temporary works associated with construction."*



# 3.0

# THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

## 3.1 Aims of Consultation

The Applicant was keen to ensure the consultation strategy put in place delivered a series of key aims to assist with the evolution and development of the proposals:

- To raise awareness of the emerging proposals for the redevelopment of the Site and discuss the public benefits;
- To undertake consultation that ensured feedback could be incorporated into the final proposals;
- To build on the existing relationship with the local community;
- To enable constructive dialogue between local stakeholders, the community, the project team and the Applicant;
- To ensure everyone who wanted to take part in the consultation was able to by being accessible and inclusive.

## 3.2 Consultation Process

The consultation strategy and process that Concilio has undertaken in relation to the Application has been developed with both local and national policy and the above aims in mind. Specifically, the consultation process has:

- Conducted an engagement programme that is appropriate for the local community and key stakeholders;
- Conducted consultation using a mix of mediums to maximise awareness, including proposed individual meetings with key stakeholders, in-person events, dedicated freephone number and emails for online engagement
- Ensured the consultation was well publicised through the delivery of consultation letters;
- Analysed the results from the consultation objectively;
- Publicised collective responses with due regard to the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements.

### 3.3 Consultation Area

A consultation area was identified to reflect the scale of the proposed redevelopment proposals. The consultation area consisted of **180** addresses, comprising local residents and businesses around the site.

A copy of the distribution area is included in [Appendix A](#).

### 3.4 Project Contact and Communications Channels

Details of the in-person exhibition were provided on the consultation letter. The letter also included a freephone number and e-mail address for general questions and comments. The freephone number was provided so those who did not have access to the internet could still engage with the consultation. Any emails received throughout the process were responded to by the project team in a timely manner. The Applicant ensured that the channels of communication remained open throughout the pre-application period.

A freephone number and e-mail address were publicised to ensure that information and questions could be managed from one place and that there was a single point of contact for residents.

The interactive public in-person exhibitions sought the views of the public and were well attended by 326 people who provided meaningful feedback.

[Appendix B](#) is a copy of the consultation letter.

### 3.5 Consultation – Levels of Engagement

As part of the consultation meetings were arranged with key stakeholders. A site visit and meeting took place with the Georgian Group on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October. A further virtual meeting with the Victorian Society was held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October.

We have received a response from the following stakeholders and will be booking meetings with them shortly:

- Bloomsbury Ward Councillors

We are continuing to engage with the following stakeholders if they would like a briefing:

- Central District Alliance
- Holborn District Management Committee
- Bloomsbury Association
- Bloomsbury Conservation
- Historic Buildings and Places
- SOAS University of London
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Bloomsbury Institute
- Royal Holloway University London
- Winston House, University of North Carolina's European Study Centre
- Bloomsbury Professional
- English Heritage
- Canning Training
- Somerton House Residents Association
- Bloomsbury Residents Action Group
- Holborn Community Association
- Knollys House Residents Association
- Tin Pan Alley Traders Association
- Newton Street Action Forum
- Covent Garden Community Association
- Bloomsbury Squares and Gardens
- Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association
- Other immediate site neighbours

### Raising Awareness

Attendees at the public exhibitions were able to provide their feedback through a survey and had the opportunity to provide open feedback through the email address provided with the consultation letter. The project team continues to accept comments. The consultation was advertised via a letter drop to 180 addresses in the vicinity of the site. Political and community stakeholders were also invited to participate at the public consultation through an email notification. A website was also set-up and has remained live so that people can sign-in their details for future updates.

# 4.0

## FEEDBACK

### 4.1 Introduction

The consultation on the proposals for the Application took place between August 2023 and October 2023.

As outlined above, this involved meetings with key stakeholders, two in-person exhibitions, and a survey with an open question box where people could leave feedback.

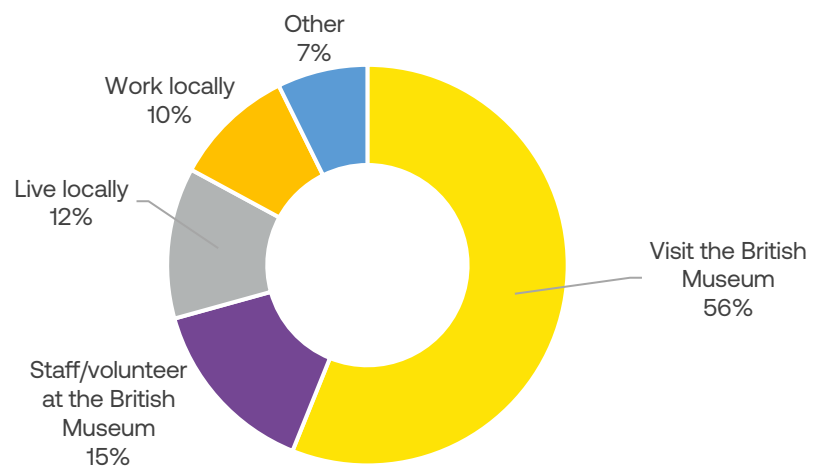
During the consultation period, meeting invitations were sent to political and community stakeholders. The proposed format of these meetings involved a presentation from the project team and an open Q&A session to understand initial views and opinions.

The sections below outline the feedback received throughout the consultation.

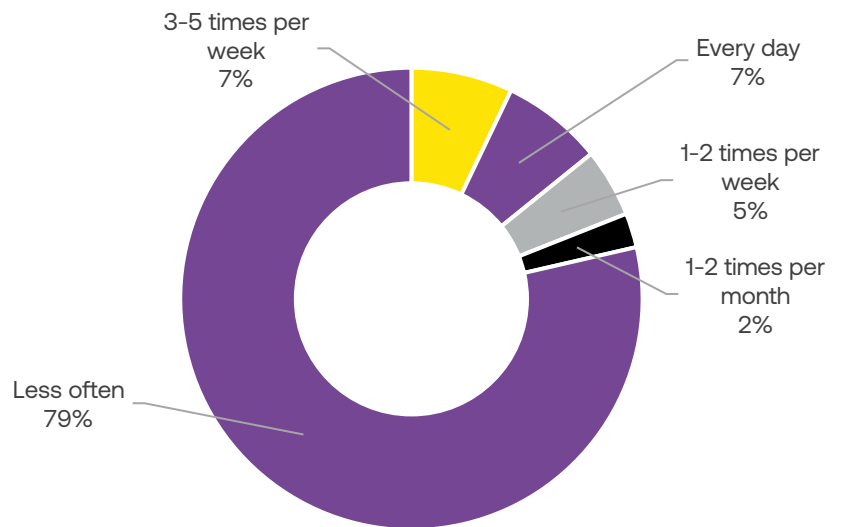
### 4.2 Community Feedback

A total of 43 survey responses were received. A report of the feedback received is outlined below:

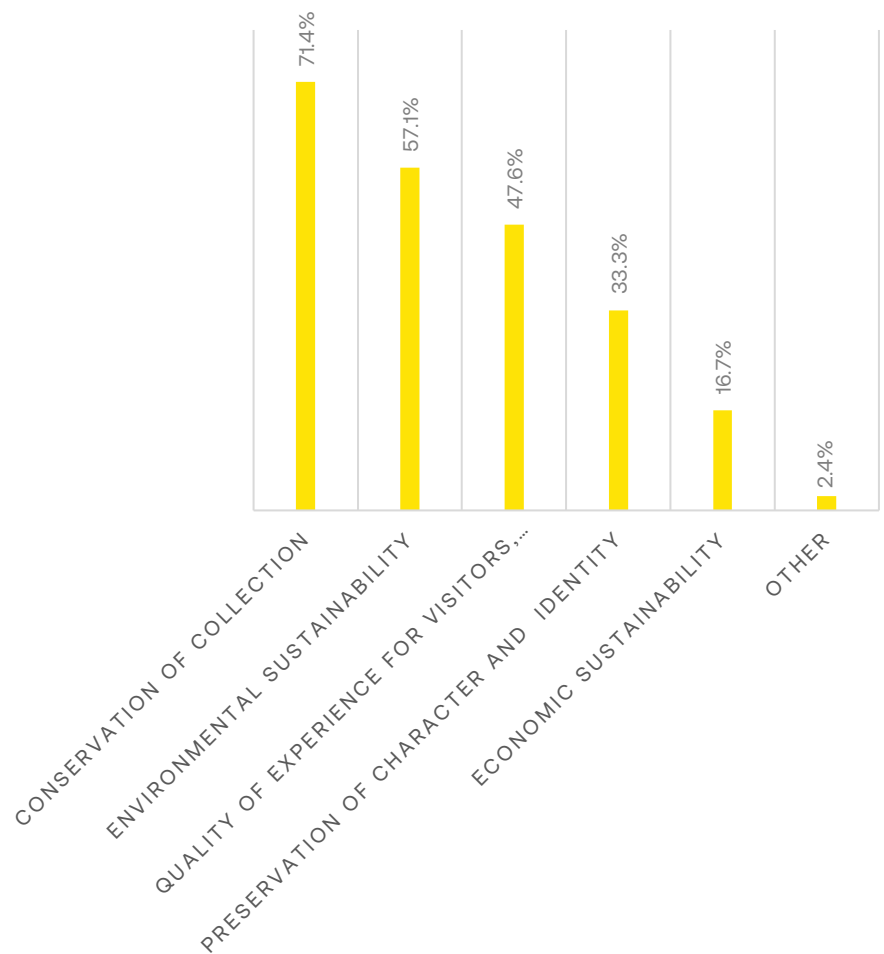
#### Question 1 – Which best describes your relationship to the area?



### Question 2 – How often do you visit the British Museum?



### Question 3 – When thinking about the British Museum, which of the following is most important to you?



**Question 4 – We want to understand how important each aspect of the Energy Centre Programme is to you. On a scale of 1-10, how important are the following elements of the Energy Centre Programme to you:**

**1: Preserving the character and identity of the British Museum**

The average rating for this was 8.3 out of 10

**2: Environmental sustainability and moving towards a net-zero future**

The average rating for this was 9.3 out of 10

**3: Quality of experience for visitors, volunteers and staff**

The average rating for this was 8.8 out of 10

**4: Long-term economic sustainability for the British Museum**

The average rating for this was 8.7 out of 10

**Question 5 – Our proposals will see significant improvements to the sustainability of the building. How important is this to you?**

Support carbon reduction, energy sustainability and zero carbon objectives.
The hideousness of this building warrants demolition.
Interesting project that should be implemented to the future of The British Museum. It should also think about wellbeing of people who maintain the museum.
The explanation of the progress is engaging
Very pleased to hear of the improvements - thank you and keep up the great work!
very impressed with the museum's efforts to help future generations while still preserving the past. Beautiful to see.
I work with renewable energy companies. I have a stakeholder engagement tool that can benefit your stakeholder engagement. Simply Stakeholders
Excellent presentation of Energy renovation
Cleaning above windows would reduce the need to use lights
I think the pump project is important, I'm just surprised it didn't happen before

Amazing
Looking forward to seeing it.
Brilliant idea, thinking about the future and the impact that using energy will have on the environment in the future.
Amazing. Route to carbon neutral and focus on sustainability setting the tone for future British museum projects.
Fantastic scheme that moves the museum towards a net-zero future. Great to see and iconic building represent sustainability aims which are vital for our climate. Fully support
I think it's a great initiative backed by some amazing people.
It is an amazing program, and I am sure we need the same for any big structure in the world. Thanks for your effort for making a better world.
Really important to modernise energy and improve conditions. Love the ideas
Please give the plan imagination
It's good to see environmental stewardship being undertaken by such a large and important organisation

### 4.3 Summary of Responses

The feedback gathered from the consultation has enabled the project team to consider the evolution of the proposals and enhance relationships with the local community. The Applicant has established themselves as a partner of the community and has gathered key public feedback to inform the design review process and to help positively tailor the proposed development where possible.

The consultation made clear that the community is supportive of the overall positive impact of the proposed development. Those who visited the consultation were keen to protect the museum's future while moving towards net zero. Over 70% of visitors said that preserving the collection was important and recognised that this was an important step to protect the identity of the museum for the future.

The Applicant also welcomes the overall positive feedback, particularly in relation to the environmental sustainability of the proposals. The importance of environmental sustainability was rated 9.3 out of 10. This was seen as one of the most important things for us to include in the proposals.

# 5.0

# CONCLUSION

## 5.1 Summary

Throughout this consultation, the Applicant has effectively engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including locally elected politicians, community groups, and local residents.

The Applicant's consultation on the proposals for The British Museum Energy Centre has prioritised an open and collaborative approach to engagement, genuinely seeking to understand the views of the local community and establish close relationships.

Those who engaged with the proposals welcomed the fact that the proposals will move towards net zero while protecting the long term future of the museum, ensuring people can continue to enjoy the museum for many years to come.

The Applicant has worked with the design team to address these comments and positively refine the development to further support the comments made by visitors. Further details can be seen in the Design and Access Statement submitted with this application. The Applicant is committed to working on community considerations about possible implications of the development.

## 5.2 Continued Engagement

Throughout this consultation process, the Applicant has been clear in their intention to create genuine dialogue and create relationships with the local community. The Applicant followed an engagement approach that was transparent and accessible to all the interested parties.

The Applicant will ensure that the submission of the application does not mark the end of community engagement and will continue to discuss the proposals with the local community throughout the planning application determination process. The contact details remain on the website and the team will respond to any enquiries received.

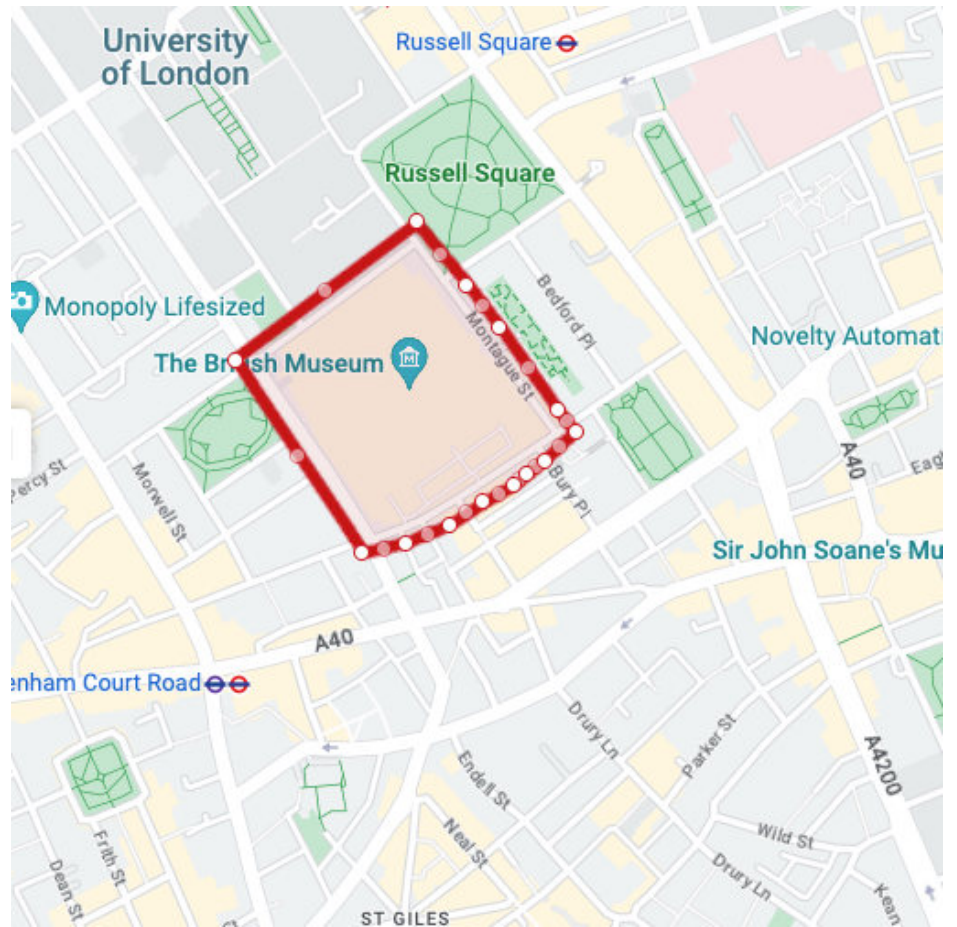
Once the application has been validated, there will be a period where those who are interested can visit the planning portal to view all the documents submitted as part of the application.

Should the application be approved by Camden Council the Applicant is committed to continue to work with the local community and stakeholders throughout the lifetime of the project and ensure that neighbours will be informed about the Construction Management Plan (CMP), any construction work and the mitigation measures that will be in place. The Applicant will ensure that there will be a community liaison group during the construction period and an open line of communication and regular updates to neighbouring residents, political stakeholders and community groups.



# 6.0 APPENDICES

## Appendix A



Dear Neighbour,

On behalf of the British Museum, we are pleased to invite you to take part in a public consultation on the emerging proposals for the Energy Centre Programme.

### What is the Energy Centre Programme?

Since opening its doors more than 250 years ago, the British Museum site has undergone consistent change and adaptation to ensure visitors can continue to explore and enjoy the unique collection. As the Museum has grown and changed over time, so too have demands placed on the infrastructure and facilities needed for its operation.

The Energy Centre Programme represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver significant improvements to the way the British Museum operates. It will:

- **Deliver** a new low-carbon and energy-efficient heating system, paving the way to a net-zero future.
- **Support** the long-term economic sustainability of the Museum.
- **Conserve** the collection for future generations to experience and enjoy.
- **Protect** and enhance the heritage and identity of the British Museum.
- **Improve** experiences for visitors, volunteers and staff.

As part of the development of the proposals, we want to gather feedback from residents, businesses and the local community. Over the coming weeks, we will be holding a series of in-person and virtual consultation events to give everyone the opportunity to learn more about the Energy Centre Programme proposals and put their questions to the project team.

### Upcoming consultation events

**Public Drop-In Session**  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September  
13:00-17:00 The Model Room, The British Museum

**Public Drop-In Session**  
Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September  
11:00-15:00  
The Model Room, The British Museum

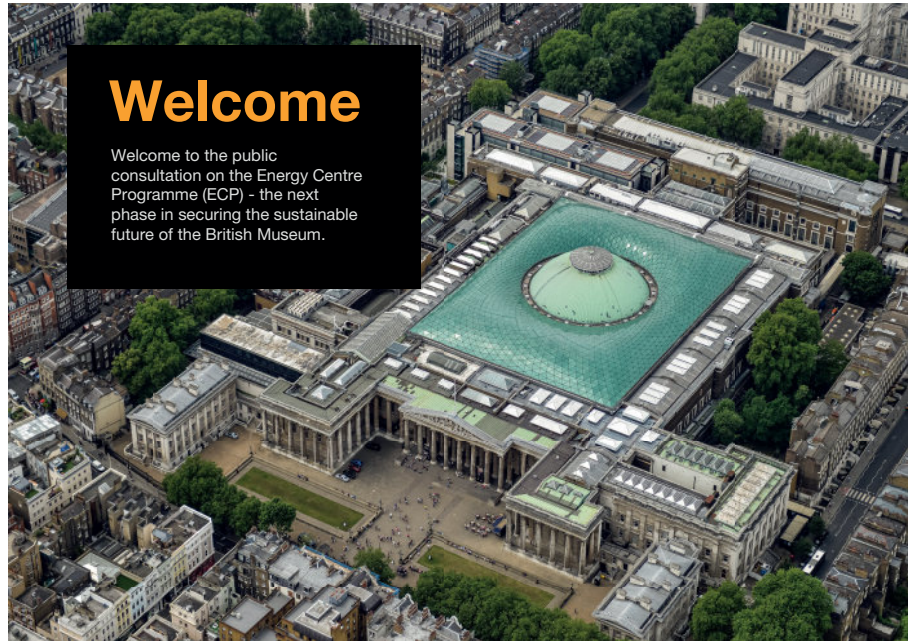
**Online Webinar**  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September  
18:00-19:00  
RSVP via email to [cbegg@conciliocomms.com](mailto:cbegg@conciliocomms.com)

If you have any questions or would like to speak with a member of the project team, please get in touch by emailing [cbegg@conciliocomms.com](mailto:cbegg@conciliocomms.com) or calling at **0800 193 0434**.

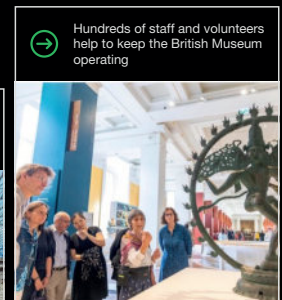
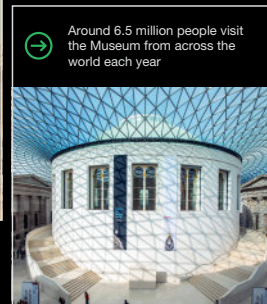
Yours sincerely,

Concilio Communications  
[www.conciliocomms.com](http://www.conciliocomms.com)

## Appendix C



### About the British Museum

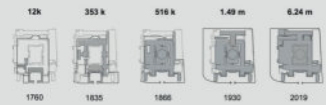


## The British Museum Site

Over the last 250 years, the British Museum has continued to change and evolve to accommodate a growing collection and increased visitor numbers.

At first glance, the Museum appears to be a single and consistent design - but in reality, it is a complex and varied collection of buildings that have been developed and adapted over time.

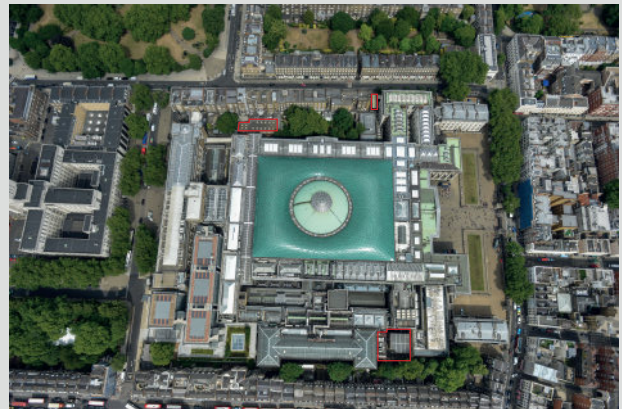
From the original Montagu House structure in 1755, to the completion of the Great Court Project in 2000 - the British Museum has continued to change and grow throughout its history.



## The Energy Centre Programme

Our proposals present a great opportunity to ensure a sustainable future for the British Museum that will have environmental sustainability at the heart of the Energy Centre Programme.

A new energy centre will be built in the south-west of the site, replacing the existing Estate-wide gas-powered primary heating and electrical infrastructure. A new and improved connection will also be created with the National Grid in the south-west, distributing electrical power across the Estate.



## Responding to change

Since opening its doors more than 250 years ago, the British Museum site has undergone countless changes and adaptations to ensure visitors can continue to explore and enjoy the unique collection.

As the Museum has grown and changed over time, so too have demands placed on the infrastructure and facilities needed for its operation. From heating systems to staff rooms and workshops - the current British Museum site has continued to adapt to meet new challenges.

Over time, some parts of the infrastructure have become outdated or in need of improvement. To ensure future generations can continue to enjoy the incredible collection at the British Museum, now is the right time to deliver the changes needed.

### Electrical Infrastructure



Images of existing energy building

### Heating System



Images of existing heating system



## The Opportunity

The Energy Centre Programme represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver significant improvements to the way the British Museum operates.



**Deliver** a new low-carbon and energy-efficient heating system, paving the way to a net-zero future



**Protect** and enhance the identity and heritage of the British Museum



**Conserve** the collection for future generations to enjoy



**Support** the long-term economic sustainability of the British Museum



**Improve** experiences for visitors, volunteers and staff

The Energy Centre Programme will:

1

Result in an estimated annual net saving of 1,700 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> compared to our current usage



2

End the museum's reliance on gas heating



3

Help the rollout of more energy and resource-efficient infrastructure across the Bloomsbury site in future programmes of renovation and renewal.



## The Vision

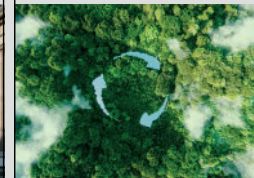
The New Energy Centre programme will support the British Museum in delivering four key objectives.



Protect heritage and character



Environmental sustainability



Enhance visitor and staff experience



Conserve the collection



## Environmental sustainability

Our proposals present a great opportunity to ensure a sustainable future for the British Museum that will have environmental sustainability at the heart of the Energy Centre Programme.

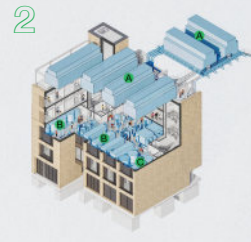
Our proposals will deliver a new low-carbon and energy-efficient heating system, paving the way to a net-zero future.

1



- 1 New resilient emergency life safety systems
- 2 Higher capacity all electrical power substations
- 3 Modern IT and electrical switchboard connections to the wider estate

2



- 4 New all electric low carbon low temperature air-source heat pumps
- 5 New all electric low carbon medium temperature water-source heat pumps
- 6 Modern smart Building Management computer system

3

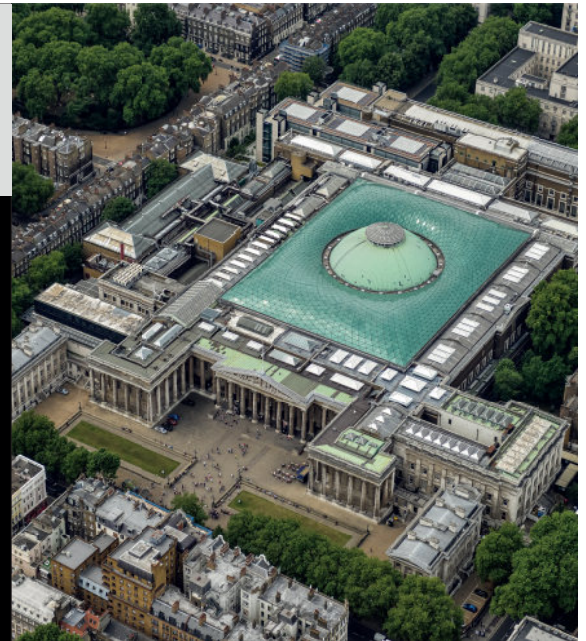


- 7 Maintenance staff management and monitoring offices
- 8 Operations and Maintenance files and archives
- 9 Maintenance staff changing, shower and WC welfare space
- 10 Maintenance staff meeting and mess space

## Conservation of the Museum and collection

Conserving the British Museum is at the heart of the Energy Centre Programme. By delivering more sustainable infrastructure and creating better spaces for staff and visitors, future generations will be able to continue to explore and enjoy the incredible collection on display.

Throughout the design and delivery phases, the Energy Centre Programme will ensure the character, identity and heritage of the British Museum is respected and protected. At the same time, improvements to heating and electrical infrastructure will support future programmes of renovation and renewal across the site.

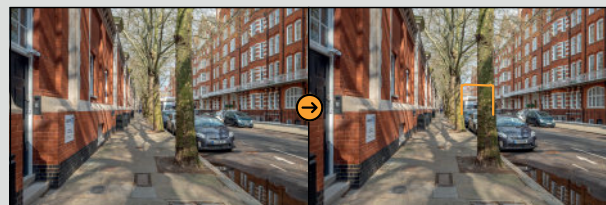


## Enhance visitor and staff experience

By delivering more sustainable infrastructure and creating better spaces for staff and visitors, future generations will be able to continue to explore and enjoy the incredible collection on display.

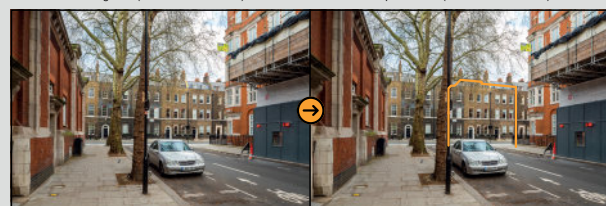


## Emerging design



Existing View (Bedford Avenue West)

Proposed View (Bedford Avenue West)



Existing View (Bedford Avenue East)

Proposed View (Bedford Avenue East)

## Emerging design



Existing View (Bedford Square North)

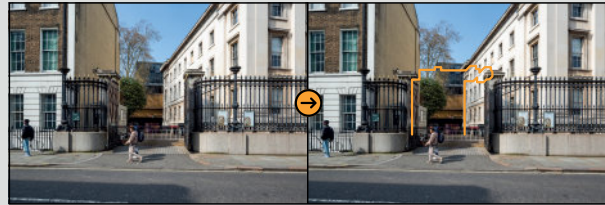
Proposed View (Bedford Square North)



Existing View (Bedford Square South)

Proposed View (Bedford Square South)

## Emerging design

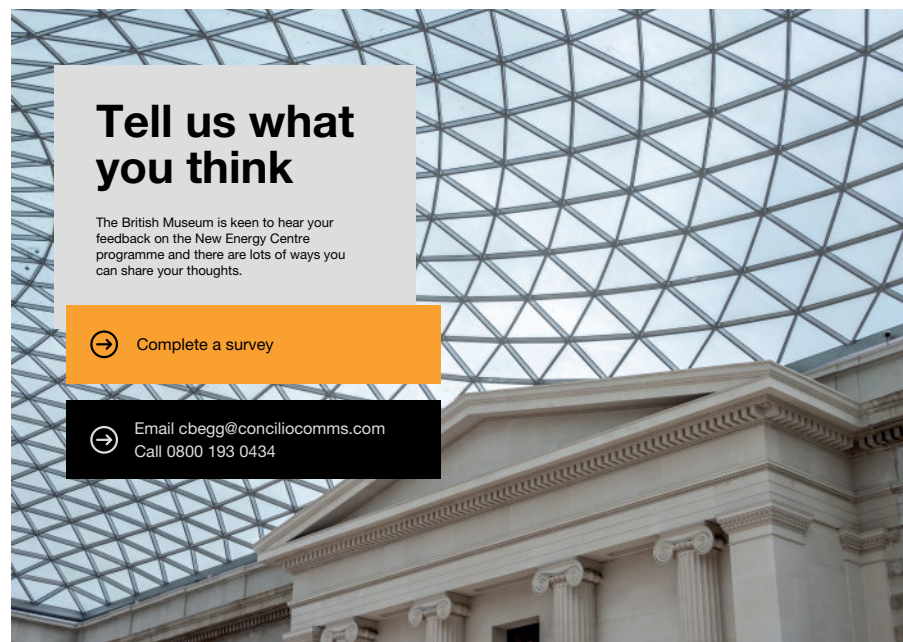


Existing View (Bedford Avenue West)

Proposed View (Bedford Avenue West)

## Timeline





## Tell us what you think

The British Museum is keen to hear your feedback on the New Energy Centre programme and there are lots of ways you can share your thoughts.



Complete a survey



Email [cbegg@conciliocomms.com](mailto:cbegg@conciliocomms.com)  
Call 0800 193 0434



## Appendix D































