

ROUND READING ROOM - TEMPORARY EXHIBITION SPACE  
DESIGN STATEMENT FOR THE LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION

OUTLINE OPTIONS APPRAISAL

AREA	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Existing Temporary exhibition Gallery Room 5 without causing a blockage to circulation	Already set up for Temporary exhibitions and does not require disturbance of other areas	At 370 square metres of floor area this space alone is far too small to house the exhibition on the scale envisaged.
		The visitor experience would be diminished as a result of the smaller scale
	The space has good environmental controls	A much smaller number of people would get to see the Terracotta Warriors
	The space is relatively simple to use "out of hours" with the rest of the Museum closed	There is relatively little space for people to wait outside the exhibition without causing a blockage to circulation
	The space is known to visitors	

**CONCLUSION** This space is simply not big enough to take the Imperial Exhibition Season, to reduce the exhibitions to a scale where they could be displayed within gallery 5 would diminish them to the extent that the stories could not be told convincingly and the whole visitor experience would be significantly reduced. **Not a viable option.**

Existing TEG (Room 5) and Room 6	With the additional 295 square metres of floor space this makes a total of 665 square metres.	Even at 665 square metres the space is too small for the Imperial Exhibitions
	The other positive features of room five still hold good	Room 6 is a key circulation space for the public to the café and WC's in the south west corner of the Museum and blocking this will isolate these facilities
		Room 6 cannot be conditioned.
		Rooms 11 and 12 (Cycladic Room and Greek Bronze Age Room) are effectively isolated
		The exhibits within Gallery 6 (Assyrian) would have to be taken off display for the duration of the exhibitions.

**CONCLUSION** The disruption to the Museum circulation is a major disadvantage. The space is still on the small side for the scale of exhibitions anticipated, and would result in the exhibition being split into a sequence of rooms in adjacent spaces. Objects from the permanent collection would be off display for the duration of the exhibition season. **An unattractive and compromised option.**

Existing TEG and Room 6 with Rooms 11 and 12	This would give a further 135 square metres of floor space which gives a total space of 800 square metres, although split across several rooms which would present significant design challenges to the exhibition designers.	The use of Rooms 11 and 12 will only be possible with the clearance of the current exhibits
		All the disadvantages for the use of Room 6 are applicable.
	The other positive features of Room 5 still hold good	The space in Rooms 11 and 12 is narrow and linear - not conducive to the display of 3D objects
		Rooms, 6, 11 and 12 cannot be conditioned.

**CONCLUSION** This combined space although larger would still be less than the ideal size; the spaces are poorly shaped for a major exhibition and there is major disruption to the Museum circulation in this area. Many objects from the permanent collection would have to be removed from public display for the duration of the exhibition. **An unattractive and very compromised option.**



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AREA	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Existing TEG (Room 5) with the other temporary gallery in Room 35.	<p>These two spaces between them provide approximately 700 square metres of floor space, still 400 meters less than the Round Reading Room.</p> <p>Both spaces are already set up for temporary exhibitions.</p> <p>Environmental controls in these areas are good</p>	<p>These two rooms are a good distance apart and operating this major exhibition on a split site will be an administrative nightmare with significantly higher staffing costs.</p> <p>The split site will reduce the enjoyment of the exhibition for visitors, will lead to confusion and the possibility that visitors get lost between the two spaces</p> <p>It would be very difficult to manage the flow of visitors between the two exhibition spaces which are a significant distance apart in the Museum.</p> <p>The general circulation in the Museum would be significantly disrupted by the flow of visitors between the two exhibition spaces. This flow would need to cross the main entrance and Great Court.</p> <p>The visitor experience for the mobility impaired would be made significantly more difficult.</p> <p>Gallery 35 is difficult for visitors to find.</p>

**CONCLUSION** Very challenging for the management of visitors, confusing for the public, very difficult to mount a satisfactory exhibition. **An unattractive and very compromised option**

The Wellcome Trust Gallery Room 24	<p>At 816 square metres of floor space this is space is significantly larger than the current gallery but still not of sufficient size for the exhibitions.</p> <p>The space has modern environmental control</p>	<p>The exhibition could only be staged by removing the relatively new displays and large display cases, and very important parts of the permanent collection from public display. The cost alone would make this prohibitively expensive.</p> <p>Access to the lower floor Galleries (Africa) would be made almost impossible and these would also have to come off public display.</p> <p>Commitments to sponsors would make this a very difficult option.</p> <p>This room is on the main circulation route north/south in the Museum and there is no other way of accessing the King Edward building at this floor level. This would unacceptably hinder the public visitor circulation.</p>
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**CONCLUSION** Difficulties of circulation through the Museum, taking essential parts of the permanent collection off display and the colossal cost of dismantling the current gallery rule this space out. **Not a viable option.**



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AREA	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Grenville Library, Manuscript Saloon, Middle Room, Map Room and Egerton Room	These five rooms have a total floor area of 810 square metres so do not provide the space required.	One of the spaces (the Manuscript Saloon) has just been completed and opened to the public; it would not be possible to remove this from display in the short term. There would also be strong disappointment if it is immediately closed again
	The rooms are well placed by the entrance to the Museum and to the existing cloakroom	Two of these rooms now form a key part of the outer circulation route at the main visitor level
	A circulation route with entry and exit is possible	The existing shop will have to be relocated
		Three of the rooms will have to be cleared of their current displays
		It is not possible to achieve a clear open space.
		There will be some considerable cost in altering these spaces
		Listed building consent would be required for necessary alterations.
		Close environmental control cannot be provided easily.

**CONCLUSION** Although difficult and costly this series of spaces appear to offer the best possibilities for the exhibition after the Round Reading Room. A difficult second choice location.

The Round Reading Room	The Round Reading Room can provide 1170 square metres of clear floor space if a deck is put in above the furniture	The restrictions of the historic furniture, will present challenges to the designers and increase the cost of staging the exhibition.
	The Room is well placed for the main entrance and the existing cloakroom and is easy for visitors to find.	The present Hamlyn library and Compass information service will need to be relocated
	There are good facilities in the adjacent Great Court e.g. WC's; cafes; retail	Listed building consent will be needed for the alterations to make it possible to use this space
	The current activities within the Reading Room can be relocated elsewhere in the Museum. The room is at present underused and so no major activity will be displaced	
	The space can be conditioned to meet the loan requirements	
	Access for the mobility impaired can be provided.	
	The use of this very special Room may add to the excitement surrounding this exhibition	
	There is good circulation with "in and out" doors as well as two fire exits	The dome will be left on view during the exhibition.
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**CONCLUSION** This presents a unique and very exciting opportunity to use the Reading Room to stage the largest exhibition that the Museum will have staged in thirty years. This option presents the most appropriate environment, setting, and scale for such a significantly exhibition season. The preferred location



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Rooms 49, 50, 51 & 52. (First Floor East wing)	At 1071square metres this space is certainly big enough to mount the proposed exhibition	These rooms are undergoing a full refurbishment at present with the exhibits in 49 & 50 protected and stored in situ. The galleries are due to re-open to the public in early 2007.
	Circulation through the space is good with a possible entry and exit	Significant areas of the Museums permanent collection which are currently being prepared for re-displaying in these galleries would be removed from display until the exhibition had completed.
	Environmental controls are being improved in this space at present	Galleries 36-40 are due to close later this year for refurbishment, this would make the access to 49-52 for a major exhibition very unattractive.
		The timing of the present work would make it very tight on the proposed exhibition dates
		There would be a good deal of work and disruption moving the cases and exhibits from 49 and 50
		These rooms are some distance from the front entrance and the present cloak room
		The circulation of the upper level galleries would be heavily compromised
		If space is needed outside the exhibition for ticketing and queuing this would also disrupt Room 41, the Sutton Hoo and Early Mediaeval gallery
		There would be considerable additional cost incurred in delaying the current gallery projects and in removing and reinstating the Museum showcases and objects.
		Delaying the opening of these galleries would be unacceptable to the sponsors of the galleries.
		Access for the mobility impaired to this space would be poor
		This would be a difficult space to use outside the normal opening hours (if evening opening is a regular feature of the exhibition for example)

**CONCLUSION** This space would present significant challenges logistically and in terms of the current work which is due to complete shortly. The current programme of improvements to the permanent galleries would be severely delayed and disrupted at significant additional cost if the exhibition season had to be accommodated within these spaces. **Not a viable option**