

# The British Museum

## The Islamic World Gallery Design and Access Statement and Conservation significance statement

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BRITISH MUSEUM - THE ALBUKHARY ISLAMIC WORLD GALLERIES DESIGN REPORT

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# 1.0 Introduction

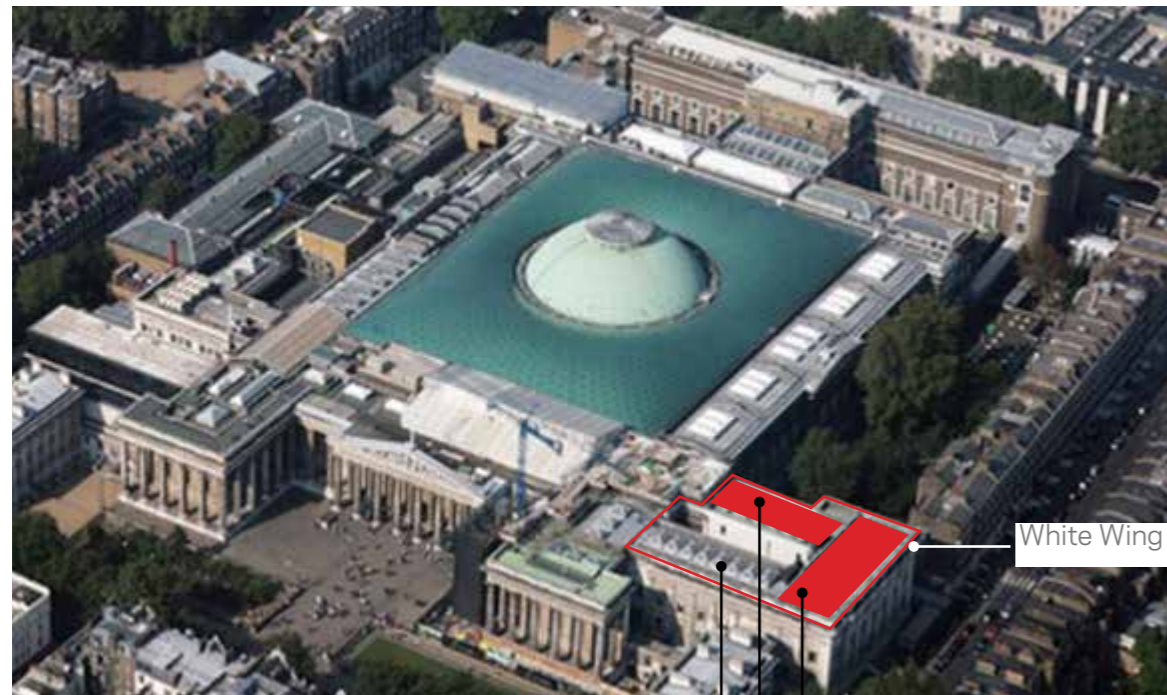


Figure 01: British Museum - White Wing

New Islamic Galleries, in the existing Galleries 42 - 45  
 Gallery 46

This design, heritage impact and access statement has been prepared to support the creation of the new Islamic Galleries in Galleries 42-45 of the White Wing of the British Museum. This application is seeking consent under the Town and Country Planning Act and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act and are made on behalf of the Trustees of the British Museum. As directed by the Capital Planning and Programme Management team, within the British Museum, the application will be submitted by HOK International acting as their agents for architecture and historic building conservation. The exhibition designers are the architects Stanton Williams who recently completed the Waddesdon Bequest gallery.

The works described in this application facilitate and create the new Islamic Galleries. This is the third and final application of this programme and is part of a phased construction programme. The application principally address's architectural treatments, formation of new window openings, structural engineering works and building services integration that will enable the Galleries to open to the public in late 2018.

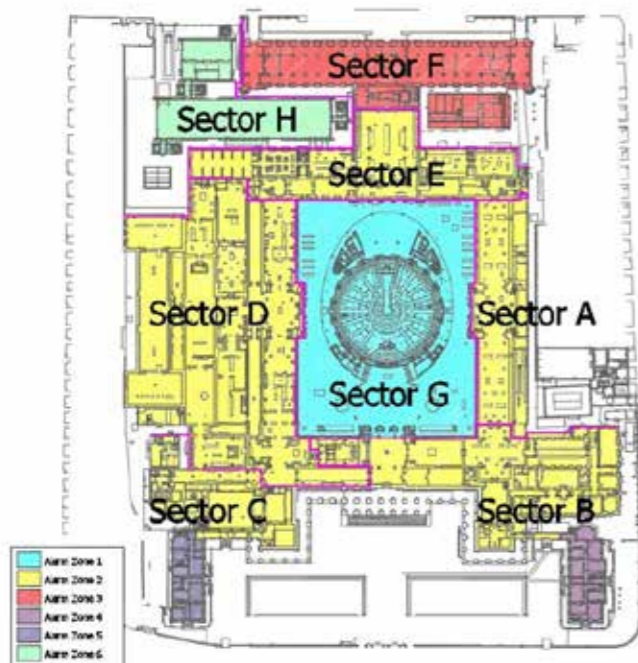


Figure 02: The aim of the Crawford Stair extension project is to improve the fire escape provision in Zone B (diagram extracted from Lawrence Webster Forrest's Sept 2015 Fire Strategy Report)

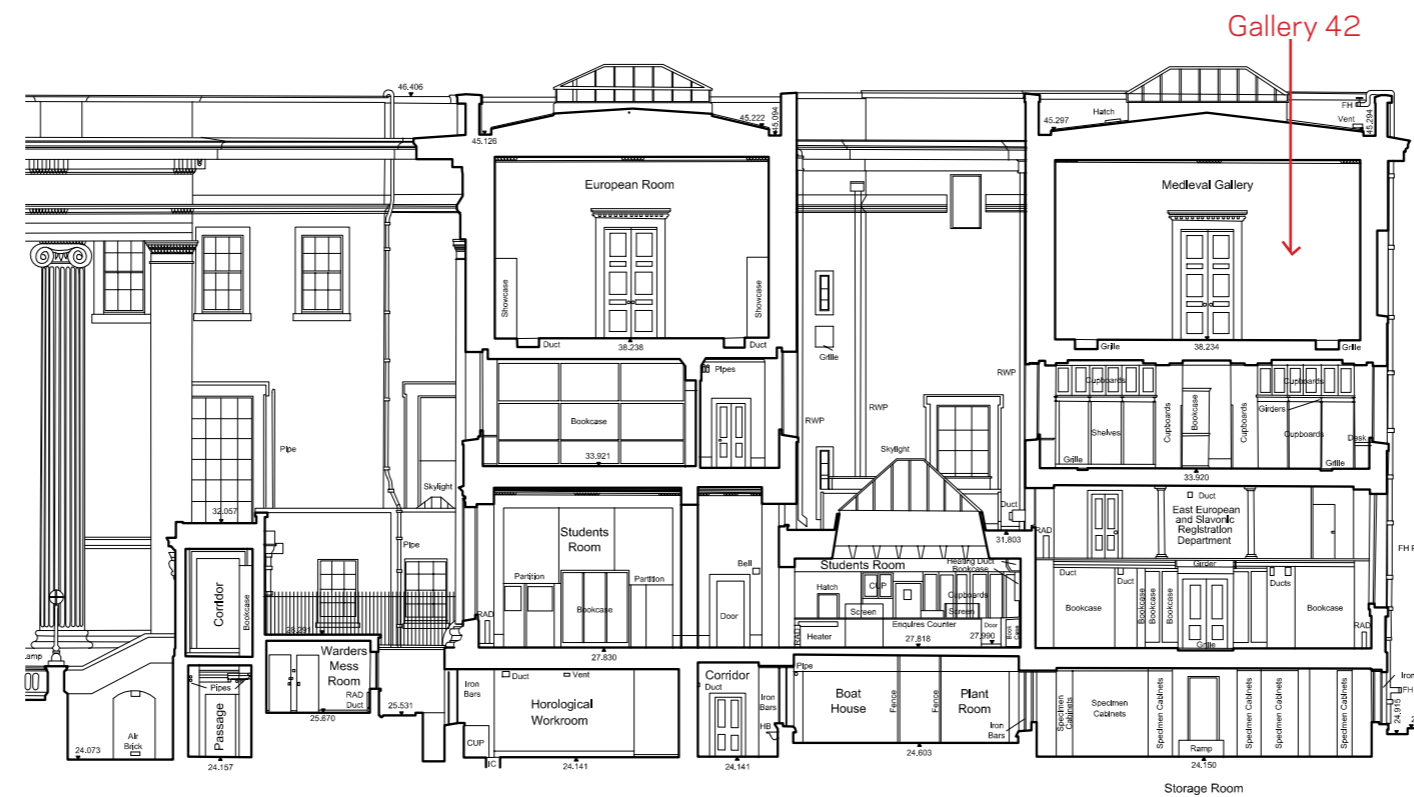
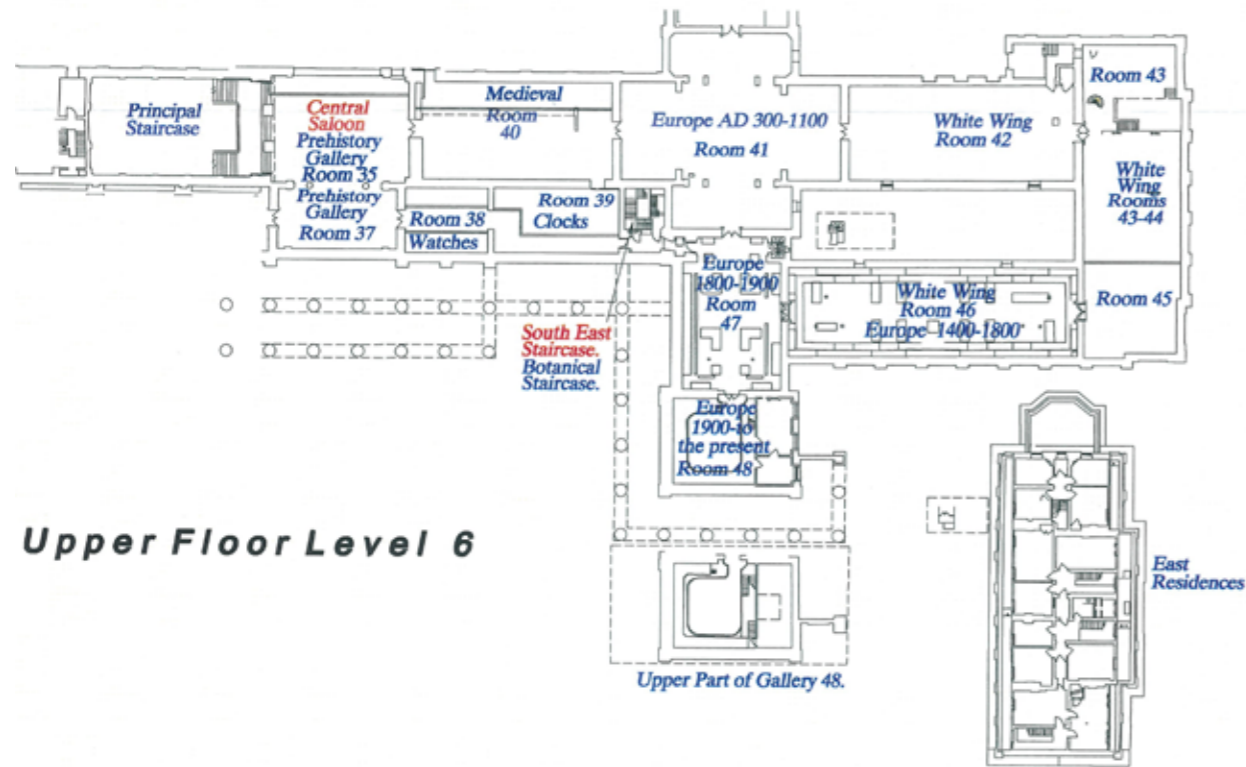


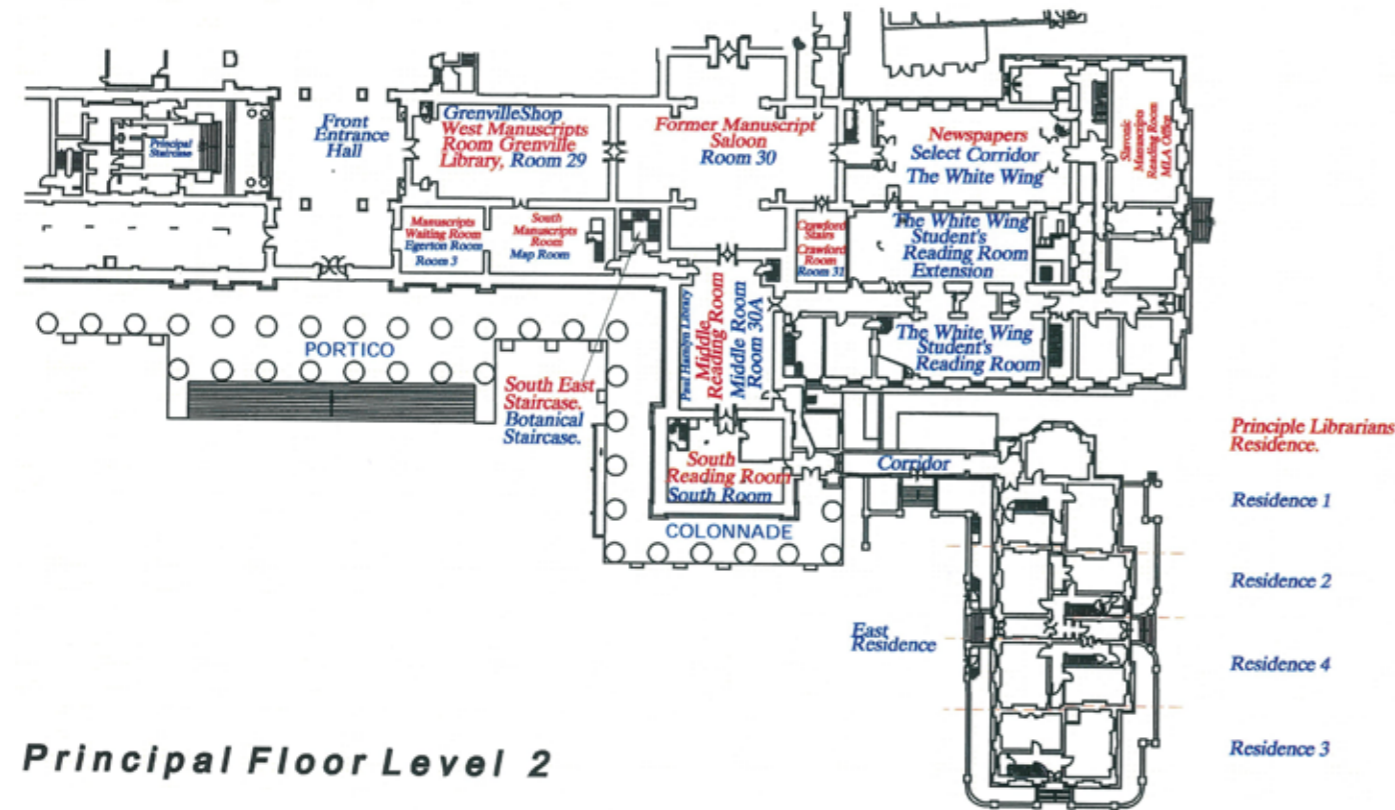
Figure 03: Existing Section through Galleries 42 & 46



# 2.0 Historical Development



Upper Floor Level 6



Principal Floor Level 2

## History of the White Wing

Built from a legacy in the sum of £71,780 donated originally by William White in 1823 and then finally handed to the Museum upon his wife Mrs White death 56 years later in 1879. In anticipation Sydney Smirke had drawn up plans and had costings prepared in 1848 for a building in open space to the west of Montague Street. After this date further schemes were developed and finally the earlier Smirke plans were handed over to the Surveyor to the Office of Works, Sir John Taylor who kept to Smirke's Greek revival style for the new construction with his proposal that was adopted. (Date and Caygille, 1999).

In September 1882 the cornerstone of the White Wing was laid. In 1884-85 the central heating and lifts were installed and electric lighting was provided on a limited basis. Namely in the readers' rooms and staff studies. The wing would eventually cost £48,970. The White Wing today remains largely unaltered although changes have been made in the use of space within.

## Significance

The Conservation Plan records 'the addition of the White Wing in 1873 was an important stage of the Museums development and although it may not have the historic value or the heritage merit in terms of architectural style of Smirke's original building it is nevertheless highly significant'. (PMT, 2000)

Taylor's design used a robust form, good quality materials and a cohesive late Victorian neo classical style. Internally Taylor meticulously replicated Smirke details for doors and floors. Externally the roof lights matched Gallery 52.

The White Wing has architectural integrity and is a good example of a late nineteenth century purpose built museum building. Taylor's design generally complements Smirke's original well but also has a distinctive and cohesive character and presence of its own which is of its time. The addition of the White Wing was an important stage of the museum development and although it may not have the same historic value or the heritage merit in terms of architectural style of Smirke's buildings it is nevertheless highly significant.

The White Wing formed a three sided courtyard to originally house the Prints and Drawings exhibitions (Now in Gallery 91 in the King Edward VII building), the British and Medieval Antiquities as well as storage for newspapers and manuscripts. It was constructed in the former garden of the Principal Librarian between the South East Wing and Montague Street. The original form of this major extension consists of three ranges around the courtyard, which is now infilled and is a light well. The North range connected to the Manuscripts Saloon at the west end, The East range fronted Montague Street and the south range met with the east wall of the Middle Room. The infilling of the light well was carried out in the mid twentieth century and provides a space for staff teaching.



Figure 04: Level 01 Historical Development Plan (extract from Conservation Plan)



Figure 05: Level 02 Historical Development Plan (extract from Conservation Plan)

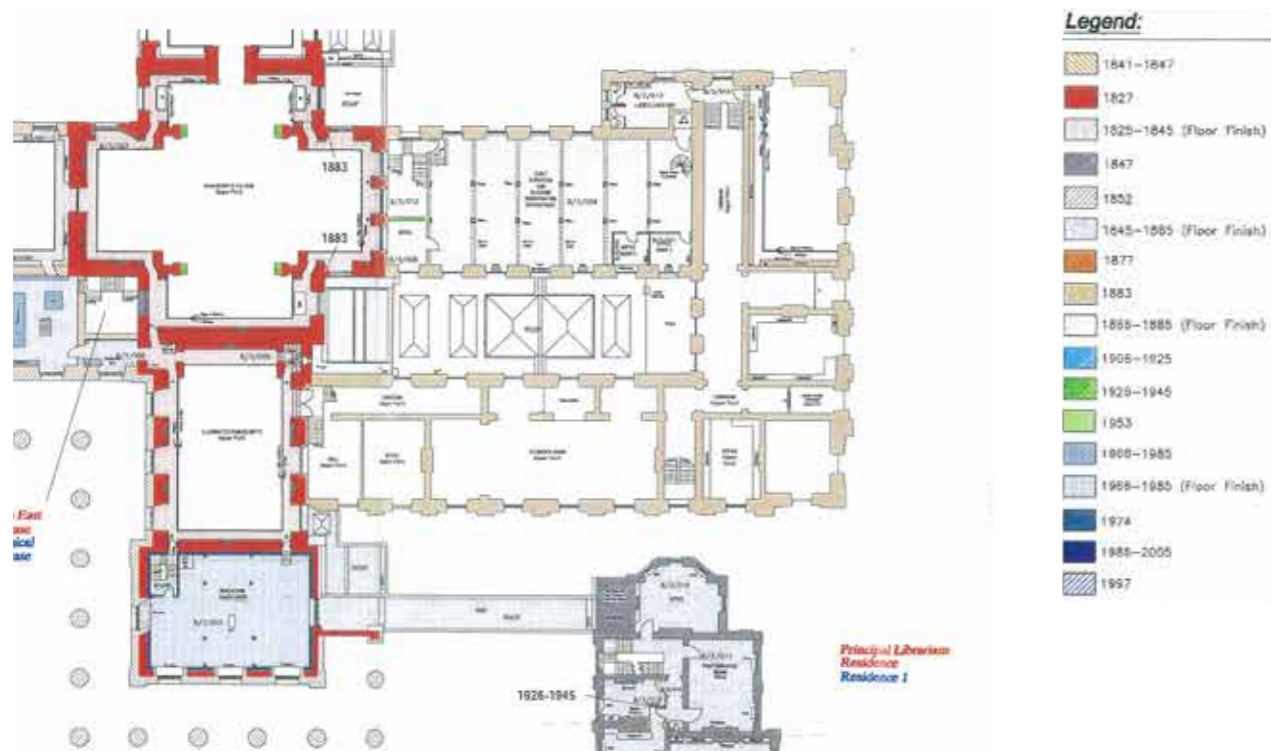


Figure 06: Level 03 Historical Development Plan (extract from Conservation Plan)

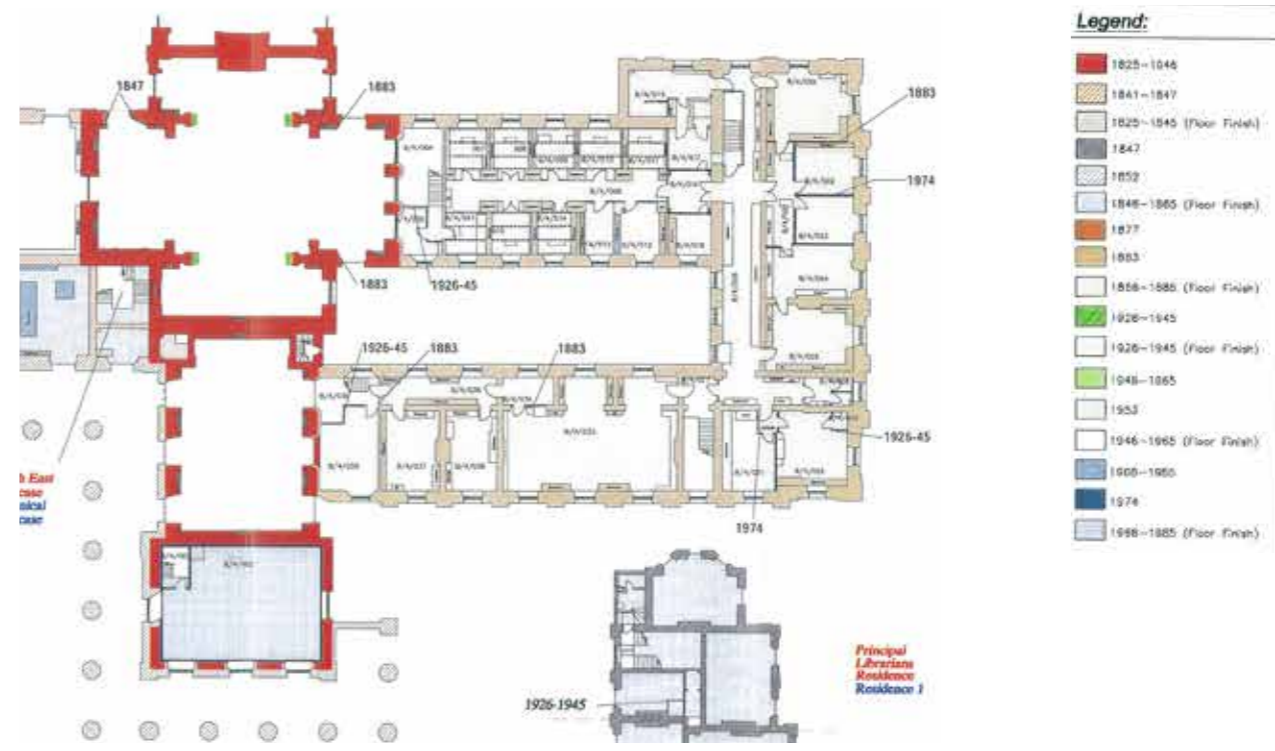


Figure 07: Level 04 Historical Development Plan (extract from Conservation Plan)



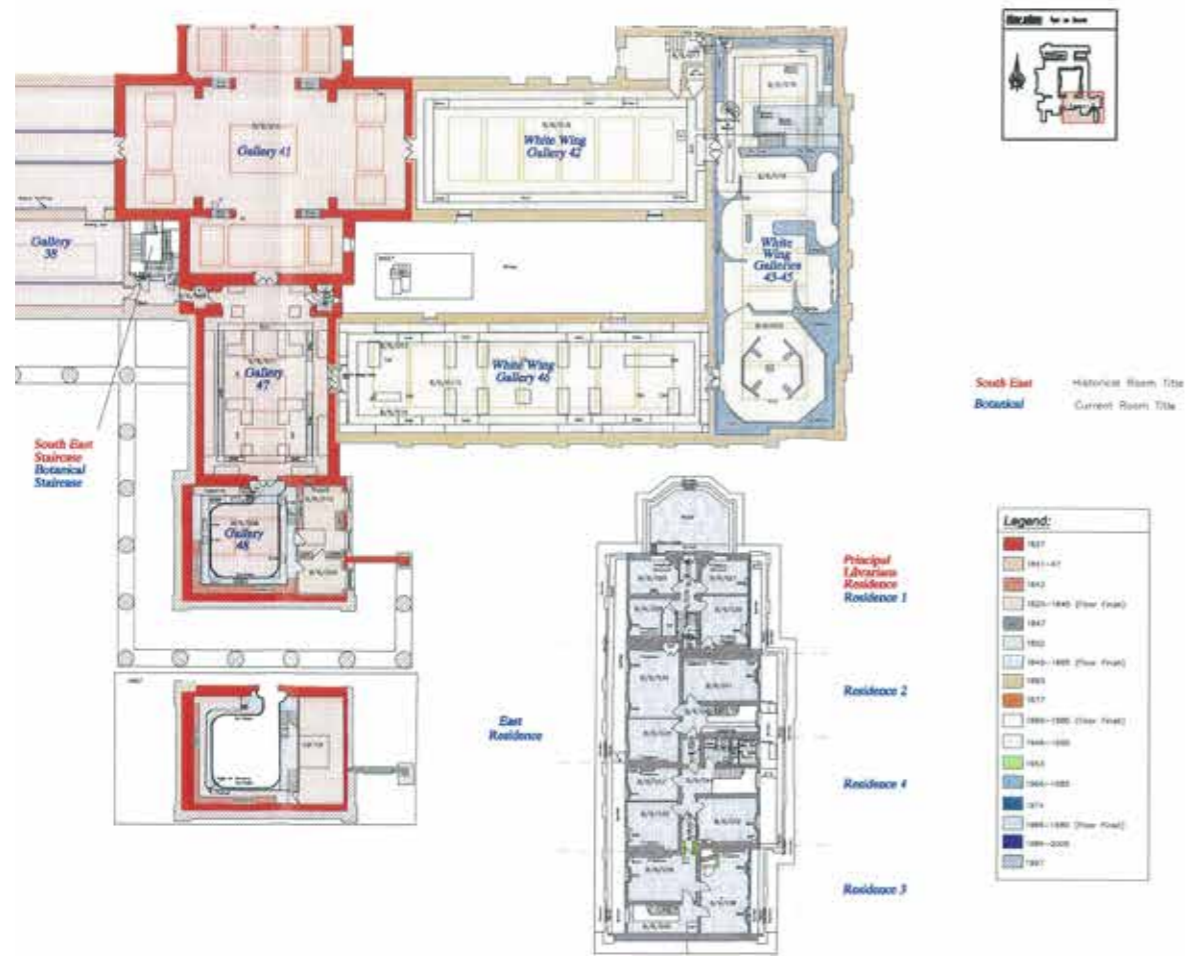


Figure 08: Level 06 Historical Development Plan (extract from Conservation Plan)

## Conservation Approach

HOK are acting as lead architects and conservation advisors for the new Galleries. Our long standing involvement with the British Museum since 1998 has given our team extensive knowledge of the British Museum. This knowledge of working with the museum has helped shaped our conservation approach and has allowed us to incorporate the interventions required in the least intrusive way practicable. As part of the design we have consulted extensively with the British Museums conservation management plan and the Museums archives.



# 3.0 Design Statement



Figure 09: Window seat and vista to stone inscriptions\*



Figure 10: Border with timber floor\*

\* Stanton Williams visuals

## Design Statement

(written by Stanton Williams)

### Introduction

This new gallery represents the shared vision between the British Museum and the Albukhary Foundation to redisplay the Museum's outstanding collection of Islamic Art and give visitors an understanding of the diverse and wide ranging cultures of the Islamic World. The space for the new gallery will be within galleries 42-45 on the first floor of the museum within the White Wing. These prestigious spaces have been closed for many years and this project provides the opportunity to revitalise and reopen them to the public. They are beautiful day-lit galleries and are almost double the height of the existing John Addis Islamic gallery with 6m high ceilings.

The new galleries are accessed via Gallery 41 'Sutton Hoo and Europe AD 300-1100' and Gallery 46 'Europe 1400-1800'. The adjacency to the galleries of early modern Europe will create a more cohesive historical narrative between medieval Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

The collection is to be organised chronologically, with the first gallery taking the visitor from the 7th century to 1500, leading to the second gallery displaying the collection from 1500 to the present day. The objects in the first room will generally favour natural light such as pottery, brassware and tiles whereas the second room will contain more light sensitive materials such as textiles and works on paper and will require lower light levels.

The juxtapositions and contextualization of objects from all reaches of the Islamic world in these galleries will continually draw attention to the cross-fertilisation existing between regions and time periods, encouraging visitors to explore these connections.

### Aims and Objectives

The vision for the new Albukhary Foundation Galleries of the Islamic World is an exciting and innovative redisplay of the British Museum's important collection. The intention is to change and widen the scope and interpretation of these displays, in order to tell the story of the Middle East and the broader Islamic world from the beginnings of Islam in 7th-century Arabia to the present day and to illustrate a geographical spread from West Africa to China and Southeast Asia.

The collection comprises beautiful works of art, textiles and clothing, exquisite paintings and calligraphies, artifacts from religious contexts, objects from palatial contexts to objects of everyday life and thought-provoking works of contemporary art. The range and breadth of the objects will allow stories to be told in poignant and inspiring ways, within a design that the brief describes as being 'innovative, exciting and accessible'.

Some of the British Museum's key aims and objectives:

- For the visitor to feel they have visited an impressive, inspiring and coherent object-focused display, one that is intellectually, emotionally and aesthetically satisfying.
- The design should create a sense of orderliness and clarity to make the interpretation strategy easy to identify and to assist with the visitor's intellectual orientation. It should be bold, simple, clean and pared back to maximise the impact of the objects.
- The galleries must be welcoming and inclusive, with room for gallery talks, convivial and inviting areas for storytelling and spaces to rest and pause.



Figure 11: View on entering the Galleries\*

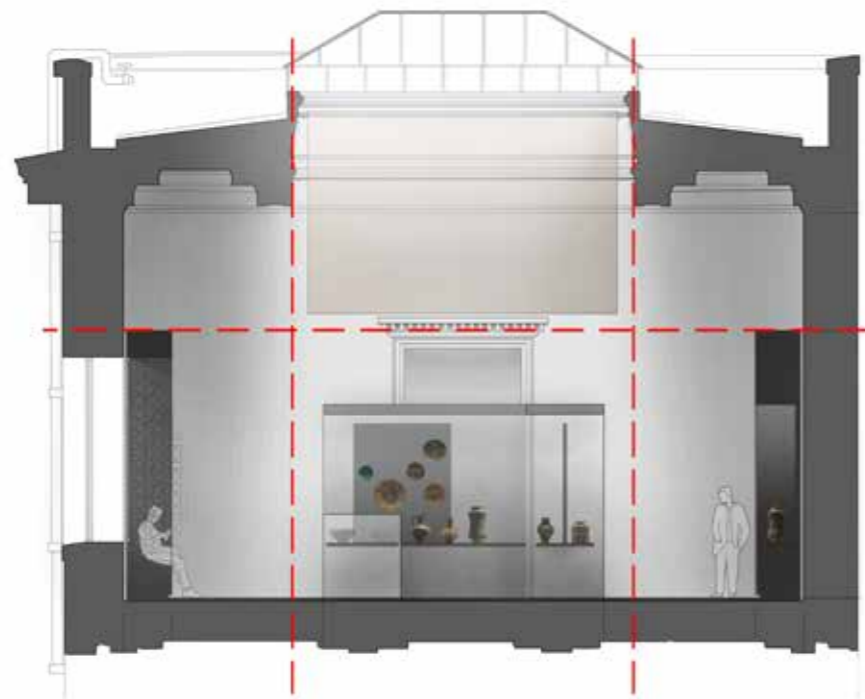


Figure 12: Proposed Section illustrating the relationship of the gallery design with the architecture of the room\*

## Design Statement

Stanton Williams have been appointed by the museum as the exhibition designers for the creation of this new gallery. The proposed design aims to create an elegant, timeless design that sits sensitively within the existing building.

The gallery design employs a simple strategic layout by grouping the chronological cases in the center of the gallery with thematic cases along the perimeter walls to create a more intuitive visitor experience and enhance legibility. This gives the space clarity and allows the visitor to navigate through the collection, enabling them to immediately position the objects in time and place.

The design picks up on key datums from the architecture of the room as can be seen in the section; the top of the wall cases align with the architrave of the door and the timber flooring, heating grille and central display relates directly to the coffered ceiling and rooflights above.

The proposed design creates a number of primary and secondary vistas through the gallery. The positioning of key objects at the end of these vistas will help to draw the eye of the visitor and encourage further exploration. The central cases will permit views through, creating a vista through to spaces beyond.

The design incorporates a number of window seats and benches offering moments for rest and contemplation. In addition there are also spaces to accommodate larger groups such as gallery tours and school groups.

The qualities of light and shadow play a powerful role within Islamic Architecture. To this end the use of natural light is a key element of the design to help enliven and enrich the gallery and visitor experience. Daylight from the rooflights will be used to atmospheric effect in the first gallery space evoking a light filled courtyard with a more intimate perimeter. Proposed new window openings will bring in lateral light and offer the visitor views and connections to the outside, helping them orientate and locate themselves within the wider museum. Delicate 'Jali' screens have been incorporated within the case design to form windows seats with beautiful diffused light.

The objects to be displayed are mostly very small compared with the scale of room and the visitor's eye is often drawn upwards to the brightness of the rooflights rather than being focused on the objects below. To address this issue, we have introduced a series of lightweight hanging screens that are delicately suspended within the rooflight coffers. They function as an abstraction of mosque lamps that hang low within large spaces to define a zone of human interaction. They form a key part of the design helping to focus the eye of the visitor on the collection whilst still allowing the volume of the space to be enjoyed and appreciated.

# 4.0 Heritage Impact Assessment



Figure 13: Gallery 42



Figure 14: Galleries 43-35



Figure 15: Galleries 43-45 Part West Elevation



Figure 16: Gallery 46

Extract from the Conservation Management Plan guidance

*“Rooms 43, 44 and 45 are a different matter, as a complete modern insertion has obliterated the original appearance entirely. It is assumed that the original finishes are retained beneath so the historical value is retrievable.*

- *The modern inserts in Rooms 43, 44 and 45 have little architectural or historical merit and consideration could be given to removing them.*
- *Refurbishment of Rooms 42-45 inclusive to match Room 46 would be appropriate.”*

(PMT, 2000)

The key interventions for the works are identified below and the matrix that follows discusses the intervention, the justification and the mitigation measures.

- Removal of floor to facilitate steel support work for showcases
- Replacement of existing floor with new slate border and hardwood floor includes floor boxes and steel perimeter support
- Additional natural ventilation – creation of new air ventilation slots

- A new window in gallery 43- with Jali fret screen
- Four new timber sash windows in gallery 42
- Hanging metalwork screens
- Historic paint analysis has been carried out – the exhibition design will employ a different paint colour which will probably be ICI Dulux Swansdown BS 22B15
- Showcase layouts
- Perimeter heating in a repositioned floor trench
- Artificial lighting at ceiling level
- Bespoke screens and moveable partitions
- Secondary fire-rated window at adjacent staircase

This application supports the Conservation Management Plans recommendation to refurbish Galleries 42 – 45. The removal of the modern Insertion (c1970’s) has been carried out under the Listed Building application reference 2016/0462/L. Town planning reference 2016/0498/P.

Location Level 06	Intervention (works planned)	Mitigation measures	Justification
Flooring to galleries 42-45. There is no specific reference to the Conservation Management Plan and generally the existing floor are in poor order with many poorly considered patch repairs, plywood and impact damage.			
Flooring replaced.	Take up the existing floor boarding and crude patch repairs and replace with a new hardwood floor with a slate margin.	The existing ventilation grilles which are redundant run too close to the planned perimeter showcases. If the original trenches were reused they would be immediately adjacent to the new perimeter showcases. This would cause unacceptable localised heat gain against sensitive objects and would force visitors to walk on the grilles lessening the visitor experience.	The existing flooring has been patched and is utilitarian and shows sign of damage from the 1970's interventions. There are better examples of timber flooring with trench heating elsewhere in the BM. The proposals will adopt the same language and materials but an alternative hardwood will be used.
New steel support for perimeter slate and showcases.	The installation of steel beams to provide supports for the new perimeter slate borders and the new exhibition showcases. This will require all of the floor boarding to be lifted to facilitate the steel installation.	Extensive structural analysis has demonstrated that the existing floor loading is <math>2.0 - 2.25 \text{ KN/m}^2</math>. A desired floor loading is $4.0 - 5.0 \text{ KN/m}^2</math>.$	The strengthening is required as the showcases are in excess of 2500 kg's. The steel beams will mean the showcase can be safely distributed over the existing substrate. All floors have to be lifted for the steels to be inserted  To create a new gallery in line with the vision it is necessary to provide the structural support needed.
New showcase layout.	Showcases will sit on the new floor and structural support system.	Sensitive treatment of the junction between the showcase and the new floor.	This is in line with the CMP aspiration for a new gallery.
Perimeter slate and new grill to heating trench.	The lifting and removal of the floor will allow for the creation of new slate border, cast iron heating grilles with hard wood flooring. This will replace the sandstone with slate and effectively move a new slate border inbound from the current perimeter position.	The use of similar material treatment (hardwood and natural slate) is synonymous with the Museum aesthetic employed by the architects Smirke and Taylor.	Reinterpretation of the typical classical Smirke floor treatment of a stone margin, with cast iron perimeter trench heating.

Location Level 06	Intervention (works planned)	Mitigation measures	Justification
Fabric Interventions to Gallery 42-45			
Four new sash windows (with Jali fretwork screens with integral window seating within the design of the display case).	Opening up of the brick blank windows visible externally located on the North wall of Gallery 42.	Traditional sash windows with lambs tongue glazing bars will be employed however the BM are keen to employ new hermetically sealed glazed units approx. 14 mm thick to minimise heat loss. This will not be an applied bar but a traditional glazing bar.	To help mitigate heat loss the increased thermal performance of new glazing technologies will be adopted. The new windows are on the sixth floor so visually this will be imperceptible and could only be seen from back of house areas.
New Picture window (with Jali screens and integral window seating within the design of the display case).	West elevation of gallery 43-45.	Designed in a contemporary style so as not to be a pastiche of the existing fenestration. The window is centred on the internal space of the Gallery and not the external façade.	This is a new window and faces out into the White Wing internal light well. The window is introduced to allow for diffuse natural light to be brought into the Gallery.
Floor boxes.	Formation of new electrical floor boxes and heating manifold access will be needed for the exhibition showcases and general maintenance and cleaning.	Bespoke quality product selected similar to the Waddesdon bequest Gallery floor boxes.	Requirement of the exhibition showcases and heating and electrical maintenance.
Hanging metal screenings.	Hanging stainless steel rods 3.75 metres in length by approximately 4.75 metres wide.	Hung from a new timber ring beam within the roof lantern that was introduced to strengthen and repair the existing timber upstands.	These visually light weight elements are purely part of the exhibition design. They help draw the focus of the visitor down towards the collection. All loads are transferred onto new structure not historic timbers.
Exhibition layout.	New purpose designed showcases to best display the Museums Islamic collection.	A carefully designed sub floor steelwork arrangement will minimise the loads placed onto the existing structure.	The creation of the new Islamic collection galleries.
Ceiling redecoration	Redecoration of the existing ceiling and the classical detailing with Swansdown colour paint.	Analysis has been carried out by Hirst Conservation and the findings are included as an Appendix to this application. There was no evidence of gilding discovered.	Works will see the redecoration with a modern breathable paint but in a different colour to the analysis. This is a new gallery and the look and feel is best served with the more neutral Swansdown colour. There was no evidence of gilding found by the paint analysis.
Sliding partition screen in Gallery 43.	Creation of new sliding screen that will allow for the partitioning off of one third of the Gallery 43-45 space.	Heights will be consistent with the heights of the new showcases and will be designed by the Exhibition designers to reflect the Galleries theme.	This will give the Museum the ability to refresh temporary exhibitions without shutting down the whole of Galleries 43-45.

Location Level 06	Building Services Intervention (works planned)	Mitigation measures	Justification
Carbon Reduction Policy: The WCEC section106 agreement sought a carbon reduction of 30% by 2025. LB of Camden Reference 2009/4638/P.			
Perimeter trench heating and new grills.	New cast iron floor heating grills to sit upon newly formed heating trench that will house hot water heating pipes. Form new brick walled to the service trench walls circa 300mm high.	All that will be visible is the new iron floor grills. The new service trench will be formed from stock brickwork but will not be visible. The design team have sought to avoid the use of Fan coil units.	The hot water pipes have been designed to provide an optimal level of year round heating without the need for additional mechanical means.
Natural ventilation at floor level to support the high level openable rooflights.	To provide the natural ventilation required it will be necessary to cut apertures through the walls. These will need dampers will be controlled electronically.	Grills on the external faces of the light well will be a traditional cast iron work painted black to match existing.	The thermal modelling has demonstrated to the design team that to achieve the level of natural ventilation these apertures need to be created.
Artificial gallery exhibition lights.	Wiring to up lighting - generally on cases.	New showcases will mask cable routes.	Required to create the ambience sought by the exhibition designers.
Museum task lighting - Emergency lighting, patrol lighting.	Generally wiring is concealed in conduit chases plastered over.	Traditional lime plaster mix used to plaster over chases. Old routing used where possible.	This is required for security patrol and cleaning.
CCTV.	Wiring and Pan tilt zoom facial recognition cameras.	Optimising the best of CCTV technologies to provide visible yet not obtrusive. Cameras will be kept to a minimum.	Mandated by security and collections.



# 5.0 Accessibility Statement

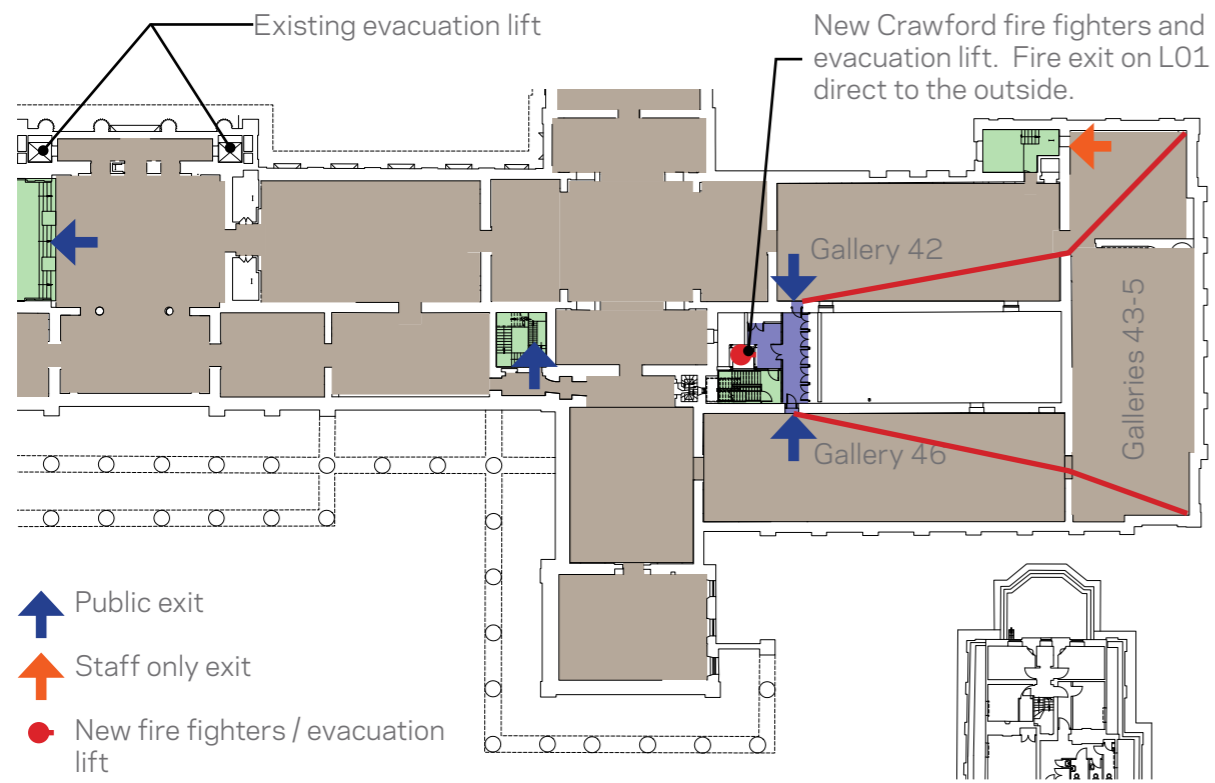


Figure 17: Escape Strategy for Galleries 42-54

The new galleries will be step free. They are assessed via two adjacent galleries, gallery 41, 'Sutton Hoo and Europe AD 300-1100' and gallery 46, 'Europe 1400-1800'. Controlled evacuation will be able to make use of the new Fire fighters lift and escape staircase that was the subject of the Planning and Listed building application, 2016/3083/P and 2016/4254/L approved 19th October 2016.



# 6.0 Appendices

## HOK Architectural drawings

A-IWG-100 revB	LOCATION PLAN & SITE PLAN
A-IWG-200 revA	EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS
A-IWG-300 revA	REFLECTED CEILING PLAN
A-IWG-500 revB	EXTERNAL NORTH ELEVATION
A-IWG-501 revB	COURTYARD ELEVATIONS
A-IWG-600 revB	GALLERY 42 EXISTING ELEVATIONS
A-IWG-601 revB	GALLERY 42 PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
A-IWG-602 revB	GALLERIES 43-45 EXISTING ELEVATIONS
A-IWG-603 revB	FALLERIES 43-45 PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
A-IWG-910 revA	FLOOR DETAILS
A-IWG-911 revA	DETAILS

## Stanton Williams Architectural drawings

SK_039	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G1 WEST ELEVATION
SK_040	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G1 NORTH ELEVATION
SK_041	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G1 EAST ELEVATION
00_042	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G1 SOUTH ELEVATION
SK_043	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G2 NORTH ELEVATION
SK_044	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G2 EAST ELEVATION
SK_045	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G2 SOUTH ELEVATION
SK_046	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G2 WEST ELEVATION
SK_047	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G1 SECTION A-A
SK_048	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G1 SECTION B-B
SK_049	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G2 SECTION A-A
SK_050	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED G2 SECTION B-B
SK_051	PROPOSED DISPLAY - PROPOSED GA PLAN

Note: Gallery 42 is referred to as G1 & Gallieres 43-45 as G2 in Stanton William's drawings

## Alan Baxter Structural drawings

1756-403-001 revA	PROPOSED PLAN: GALLERIES 42-45
1756-403-002 revA	PROPOSED SECTION: GALLERY 42
1756-403-003 revA	PROPOSED SECTION: GALLERIES 43-45
1756-403-004 revA	PROPOSED SUSPENDED SCREEN

