

# DanielStathamArchitects

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## ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM EXTENSION/RESTORATION, CHELTENHAM, UK

As one of Cheltenham's key cultural facilities and public buildings, the current Art Gallery & Museum is compromised by difficult access to its main collections and by limited exhibition, storage and other spaces essential to the provision of a quality public art gallery and museum service. The client aim for this project was to address these issues through development of the semi-derelict site to the east of the Art Gallery & Museum. This will require the removal of some of the existing buildings, to provide adequate space for the new extension, and to establish an appropriate presence on the street – both in terms of scale and proportion.

The new facilities will enable the collections to be more accessible to the widest possible audiences, building on the Art Gallery & Museum's local, regional and national strengths, through providing: larger, flexible temporary exhibition spaces, better public circulation and access within the galleries, improved storage conditions, greater public access to the study collections and more space for the many support services necessary for a modern museum.

The building mass has been organised to strengthen the relationships within the existing and proposed gallery extension. This is to allow a smooth visitor flow through the building and in addition to allow it to fully operate its public service, storage and administration facilities. The Gallery and museum now 'link' on one floor level. Open areas (public, shop, offices, roof terrace) are at Levels 0, 3 and 4 with plenty of daylight.

The form and space planning was established by applying a strong environmental approach to the project. Vertical 'light boxes' puncture the building volume allowing natural light and ventilation to filter through to volumes where necessary. This reduces the need for large mechanical equipment which is intensively energy consuming throughout the year. The outcome of this strategy is to produce a very low carbon producing building. The entrance is open plan and spacious with the 'light boxes' diffusing light through the full height of the building to create a 'welcoming' space. Efficient access to the gallery and museum is through one large staircase which goes directly to level 2. Storage is at level 1 and serves as a structural box platform to the lighter constructed accommodation above. No daylight and ease of connection to loading bay via goods lift makes this logical location for this space. The 'cube' mass of the plot begins to form a distinctive architecture both externally and internally which responds, enhances the present gallery building.