



Maidstone Museum Capital Expenditure Update

Appendix 1 – Previously discussed options

1. Option 1: Creation of a new Temporary Exhibition Gallery in Westspace

- 1.1 A new Temporary Exhibition Gallery would require three major elements; a suitable and stable environment to preserve a range of organic and non-organic materials, flexible display equipment and a high level of security.
- 1.2 Conversion to a functioning gallery would require the following as a minimum:

OPTION- Exhibition Gallery	ESTIMATED COST
Removal of the current kitchen and making good	£3,000
Removal of access ramp and replacement with a wheelchair lift	Enabling works and demolition of the existing ramp £2,000 Short Rise Lift (Titan Lifts) £9-15,000 depending on spec and finish
Air handling or HVAC system to provide a stable environment with maximum cycling of 10% in band 50-65% relative humidity in a 24 hour period The space is currently one of the most unstable in the museum due to ingress of air under 3 different doors and the Victorian windows.	Mechanical and Electrical design Equipment and installation – Industry standards vary between £3,000 and £8,000 per square metre depending on the complexity of the required system
Museum quality display cases in a variety of styles each fully configured with internal lighting and dehumidifying cassettes) We only have a small number of cases (approx. 5) currently that meet museum standards	Click Netherfield no longer produce price lists because of the volatile market in materials at the current time and will only price specific requests.. However they have provided a rough estimate for a desk case (1200mmx600mmx1000mm with passive humidity control and dimmable LED lighting £5,350 with 10-15% of case price for delivery and installation <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> This means that tall cases are likely (based on previous comparisons of the two sizes) to be in the region of £12-15,000 each

	
Total covering of natural light sources	Board , installation, decoration £3,000
Installation of a flexible and dimmable lighting system able to achieve appropriate UV and Lux levels	Iguzzini track @ LED spotlights £15,000 Based on actual costs for lighting in museum Art Gallery, a slightly smaller space, in 2017
Storage area for unused equipment and packaging	Lockable . Minimum 3mx2m Shelving Construction and outfitting Labour £40.50 per m2 Materials per m2 £23.50 =£64m2 + shelving TOTAL £900
Wall hanging system or display board system for 2-d material	To be designed to fit over historic fabric
Close sealing door to front courtyard to prevent pests such as insects or mice entering from a planted area. If there was any intention to borrow items from national museums, the space would need to meet standards for the Government Indemnity Scheme (which means that the museum does not have to separately insure loan items) and, in particular, the requirement that a gallery must have two secure doors between the gallery and the exterior of the museum.	Architect's fees Doors/Shutter (subject to Conservation Officer approval)

1.3 Benefits

The space would be a new attraction which may attract new visitors and additional spend or donations
The conversion would give a clear purpose to a large, currently empty space
The gallery is accessible from the courtyard at the front of the museum and is therefore more visible to potential visitors

1.4 Risks

The major argument against this project is that it is not really required. We currently have sufficient space for Temporary Exhibitions upstairs. The recent staff restructure means that we will henceforth show only 2 exhibitions a year and they will be created in-house. It is unlikely we have material enough to create the larger exhibitions needed to fill this space. The current gallery also has level access via a lift which would need to be installed in Westspace.

This option would leave the current temporary exhibition gallery empty and unused. This is wasteful and likely to cause complaint by the Bentlif Trust who have an interest in the room. Current figures suggest that just 8% of general visitors pay to visit temporary exhibitions and so it would take a significant length of time to gain any return on the capital investment

The current environmental conditions in Westspace are currently the least stable in the museum and significant investment in HVAC would be necessary to control this. We would need both a system able to both humidify and dehumidify the large space. As well as the initial costs of installation of such a system, the running costs in terms of maintenance and power are also significant.

In addition, it would take significant works to make the gallery Government Indemnity Scheme compliant. Previous plans included the closing off and re-purposing of the courtyard which would add significant costs for construction and gardening works. Although the Government Indemnity Scheme only covers national and DCMS-sponsored museums, many civic and regional museums have accepted its standards as a baseline for agreeing loans. Without it, our options would be limited in this area. The current gallery is already compliant.

1.5 Affordability

Figures prepared by Innes Architects as part of the Transformation project suggest that the construction work on the gallery and courtyard would cost up to £150,000 (exc fees) which leaves the residue to pay for the fit out, lighting, HVAC and equipment. Barring any unforeseen additional spend, the project could be completed within the budget but would need careful management to ensure this.

1.6 Timescales

The gallery is in use until July 2021 but the project could commence during the financial year 2021-22 and is likely to take 6-9 months to complete

1.7 Permissions needed

Planning Permission

Listed Building Consent

Consultation with Bentlif Wing Trust

1.8 Resources

This option would require capital funding to carry out the conversion work but an on-going concern would be the cost of maintaining air handling equipment. In

addition, its easy access to and from the main road and Fremlin Walk would require a staff member to provide security cover during opening hours and this would be very difficult to resource from proposed staffing.

2. Option 2: conversion of Westspace a room for income generating events and external hire

2.1 Currently the museum has two small spaces which it uses as venues for meetings and small events. The creation of a space capable of hosting events for a larger audience or small conference would seem to present an obvious opportunity for maximising the use of the space whilst generating new income.

2.2 Conversion would require the following as a minimum:

- Removal of the current kitchen and making good
- Removal of access ramp and replacement a wheelchair lift
- Improved central heating to enable longer use of the room which gets very cold
- Provision of fast, reliable WiFi at this end of the building
- Black out blinds for all windows
- Storage area for unused equipment and furniture
- Provision of a new toilet
- New seating in the form of individual chairs and tables alongside a retractable seating system (2 aisle 50 seat system is approx. £25,000)

2.3 Benefits

Potential hire income is increased. A larger room would allow us to expand our market into larger meetings and small conferences which in turn would increase income generation. A bigger, flexible space would allow us to provide a wider range of activities with greater income likely from ticket sales. This might mean we could accommodate local community group activities, school events or commercial hire for leisure activities such as yoga or weight watchers. If, as anticipated, the Adult Education Centre is closed in the next few years, it is also possible we could offer some of the activities currently provided by KCC and secure that income while providing a popular service. This diversity of activity would allow us to target under-resourced audiences and improve the Diversity and Inclusivity of our offer to new audiences. The availability for occasional museum activity would make collections work such auditing, decants and possible volunteer projects easier and more efficient to run.

2.4 Risks

The assumptions above in relation to increased audiences and spend have not been market tested so there is a risk of investing with no definite return. A growth in room hire could easily out-strip our ability to resource meetings, conferences or events properly. We are unable to offer in-house catering or dedicated front of house staff during such events. Our experience of meeting hire is that organisers frequently change plans with little notice or have unplanned requirements. A professional conference venue would have staff dedicated to addressing this. The museum is an attractive venue but must

provide a professional service to compete with hotels or other venues such as the Hazlitt Theatre. Larger, higher profile events would need wider marketing to attract audiences which potentially double current event crowds. We have very little marketing budget and rely on the Communications Team for all our services in this area. The current museum WiFi in this area will not be suitable for external hire. Reliable, fast internet is a given in today's market and coverage within the museum could best be described as patchy.

There is also a significant drawback in the layout of the room in the form of two columns on the west side of the room which limit usable space and affect sightlines. Any set up would have to be carefully designed to make best use of available space.

2.5 Affordability

Less construction work would be necessary for this option and so the Innes figure could probably be reduced by at least £50,000. Even with £25,000 for seating and, say £10,00, for table, chairs and other equipment, the whole project could be comfortably brought in under budget.

2.6 Timescales

The gallery is in use until November 2021 but the project could commence during the financial year 2021-22 and is likely to take 3 months depending on lead in times for equipment.

2.7 Permissions

Listed Building Consent

2.8 Resources

On-going staffing resources are a concern. Previously meetings have been facilitated by front of house staff and the administrator. Both of these roles have been reduced in the new structure and the capacity to react to the needs of hirers is lessened at the same time we would hope to grow the customer base with organisations expecting higher standards of service. It is unlikely that this gap could be filled with volunteers.

Changes to business post-Covid also pose a risk if businesses continue to meet online and there is less demand for room hire in general.

3. Option 3: Refurbishment of one of the museum's display spaces to tell the story of local archaeology

3.1 One of the drivers for the Vision adopted in the Museum Transformation Plan agreed by members in 2018 was the poor and outdated standard of some of the museum's galleries. The transformation of the Ancient Lives gallery provided a benchmark to judge our other galleries against and while data does not allow us to assert cause, there has certainly been a rise in visitor numbers of roughly 20,000 in the past few years aligning with its opening. We propose that the most appropriate gallery would be the British archaeology gallery on the first floor which has many issues with its current presentation but is at the heart of the building.

3.2 It must be said that the production of Ancient Lives was carried out to a timetable which fitted the requirements of the Property Services team and for a very small amount of money. Savings were made by the re-use of freecycled equipment and cases. Those cheaper options are unlikely to be available again. The proposed gallery would tell a much greater story in terms of scope and chronology and fill a much increased floor space.

3.3 The project would include:

- Definition of the stories being told, what periods are covered and what the narrative approach would be
- Research of the periods and the local picture
- Object research and documentation to discover what we hold that tells the stories and is viable for display
- Object conservation and preparation for display by an external specialist contractor
- Appointment of designers and work to create the physical experience including digital and interactive elements
- Activity Plan creation and implementation to ensure the involvement of groups and individuals (eg, Maidstone Archaeological Society, KAS, residents in significant geographical locations, partners with concern for specific elements such as disability access, marginalised stories etc)
- Decant and storage of current exhibition material
- Gallery fit out and replacement of Withdrawing Room floor by Property Services
- Marketing

3.4 Benefits

A new gallery would be a visible and popular addition to the museum attracting more visitors and increased spend. This option would continue the work of delivering the new museum vision without the need to involve major funders such as the National Lottery, the project can be carried out at a pace that is determined by MBC and not an external body. An exciting new project would revitalise the image of the museum among stakeholders, residents and staff. Community involvement with the development of the gallery would engage new groups and individuals in our work and their heritage.

This would be a key project in going forward with Kent Archaeological Society and regularising our relationship with them and the status of their collections. It would allow us to identify and agree long term loans for those parts of the collections we are interested in. This will set the scene for inevitable future negotiations should KAS plans for a new Collections Centre come to fruition. British archaeology of one kind or another is always on the history National Curriculum and so presents the most opportunities for learning opportunities, paid services to schools and interest from families and specialist audiences alike.

3.5 Risks

This would be, by far, the most expensive option and expenditure would have to be tightly controlled. There may be a possibility of further funding from local

sources including the Oldham Trust, but no fundraising campaign, on which the project is contingent, will be launched.

This would be a huge project to deliver on revised staff capacity. Although this might seem the most 'fun' option for staff because it is closest to what many went into museum work for, this work couldn't be delivered alongside a full programme of other work. It may be necessary to budget for extra staff resource (either individuals or hours) and would be critically necessary to reduce work in other areas and to allow a realistic timescale of activities.

The gallery is a major meeting point of routes round the museum and so works here would cause significant disruption but for a limited time.

This option still leaves Westspace empty in the medium term.

3.6 Affordability

The budget for the space available is not generous but is workable. The usable space in this gallery is 112 square metres and based on a budget of £350,000 this allows for £3,000 per sqm for fit out. Of course, that doesn't cover all other costs involved with research and preparation but could be reduced to, say £2,000, to help cover those other expenses.

3.7 Timescales

A project of this scale would take approximately 3-4 years

3.8 Permissions

Listed Building Consent

3.9 Resources

Staff capacity to deliver is the largest concern. There is an option to capitalise some staff costs which would be helpful and may be where potential donations are useful. If this project were to go ahead, there would need to be a firm agreement around the hours available and other priorities to be dealt with alongside this work. Future running costs of the gallery would also need to be discussed as part of the design of any gallery. However, a gallery such as this would provide many opportunities for volunteers and others such as archaeology groups to get involved in the day to day delivery of related activities.

4. Option 4 minimal refurbishment of Westspace as an events and hire space and development of a new public gallery

4.1 This option would combine elements of 2 and 3, bringing Westspace back into use at a manageable level whilst concentrating on the development of the archaeology gallery

4.2 Conversion would require the following as a minimum:

WESTSPACE

- Removal of the current kitchen and making good/minimal redecoration
- Removal of access ramp and replacement a wheelchair lift if financially viable

- Provision of fast, reliable WiFi at this end of the building if financially viable
 - New blinds to windows
 - New chairs and tables
- GALLERY
- As above

4.3 Benefits

This option combines the most essential elements of two other options, each of which has significant benefits

4.4 Risks

There is a not inconsiderable risk that splitting the available spend may mean that not enough improvement is made to Westspace to attract new hirers nor is the archaeology gallery sufficiently exciting and visually appealing to attract new users to the museum so that the whole investment is made for insufficient return

4.5 Affordability

This option would remove possibly £20,000-25,000 from the exhibition budget and would mean it is much more likely that some level of external funding is required but it would still be a relatively small amount.

4.6 Timescales

Whilst the Westspace work could be done any time after July, the whole project would still take approximately 36 months if both projects were able to commence concurrently and the work to Westspace required minimal museum staff input.

4.7 Permissions

Listed Building Consent

4.8 Resources

With the support of Property Services to deliver the Westspace element of this option, the concerns that remain would be those as detailed at Option 3 above