

Timeline Design Brief

A New View Interpretation Project

Overview

In autumn 2022 Amersham Museum began work on the creation of a dedicated temporary exhibition space, to showcase work made by contemporary and historic artists and makers.

As part of this project, the museum is creating new interpretation, which visitors will experience on arrival. This is a direct result of the creation of the gallery; the existing introductory space (which features a timeline) will become the new temporary exhibition gallery and the new introductory space will move to a room upstairs.

The introductory space will include a timeline, featuring people, places and events that tell the story of the local area. The timeline will be co-curated with local people, including community partners, members of the museum's children's art club, our young curators programme and reminiscence groups.

The new gallery and updated introductory space, featuring the timeline, will open in spring 2024. The project is supported by the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust.

About Amersham Museum

Amersham Museum is an award-winning accredited museum, sharing the stories of local people and places. The museum is housed in part of a Grade II listed medieval hall house in the heart of Amersham, a historic market town. The museum has a beautiful physic garden, next to the River Misbourne.

The museum runs a wide range of activities for people of all ages, including walks, talks, reminiscence, object handling, singing, art and literature workshops and an accredited art club for children. It attracts c.5,000 visitors a year and is brilliantly supported by a team of 125 volunteers and a Friends group with over 200 members.

www.amershammuseum.org

The Brief

Aim

- To design an interactive timeline of the history of Amersham, featuring historic images, maps, documents, photographs and objects from the museum's collection. The design will include an initial concept design, which we can use to consult with visitors and partners, and an agreed final design
- To help the museum source fabricators for the timeline

Objectives

The design will:

- Involve our young curators (aged 14-18) in the design process
- Include the ideas of visitors and community groups in the content
- Result in a dynamic timeline, where new narratives can be added as our knowledge evolves
- Include elements where visitors can share their experiences and opinions about the local area
- Incorporate objects from the museum's collection as well as maps, documents and images
- Enable the space to continue to be used for workshops when the museum is not open

Style and Approach

In consultation with our project steering group, working group and young curators, we have reviewed the timeline in our current introductory space and we would like to create a new timeline that is:

- Visually appealing and colourful, with images used to tell stories alongside text
- Welcoming to new and existing visitors, with diverse voices represented in the timeline
- Interactive, with opportunities to touch, see and hear the past and make our own contributions
- Relevant, with 'touch points' that visitors can relate to their own lives
- Layered, with interpretation that is suitable for all our audiences
- Locally distinctive, reflecting local crafts and the rich artistic tradition of the area
- Explained, with content on how to create a timeline, and details of the team who created it

The Space

The timeline will be located in an upstairs room in a Victorian building, which was part of a major refurbishment in 2017. It is the largest room in the museum and is regularly used outside of normal opening hours for workshops, talks and classes. On arrival visitors will be directed upstairs to this room and the new timeline, to begin their visit. The room features wall space and a large showcase (which will be incorporated into the design). The walls are interrupted by three sash windows, a door opening to a kitchen and a wall of built-in cupboards. These can all be incorporated into the design.

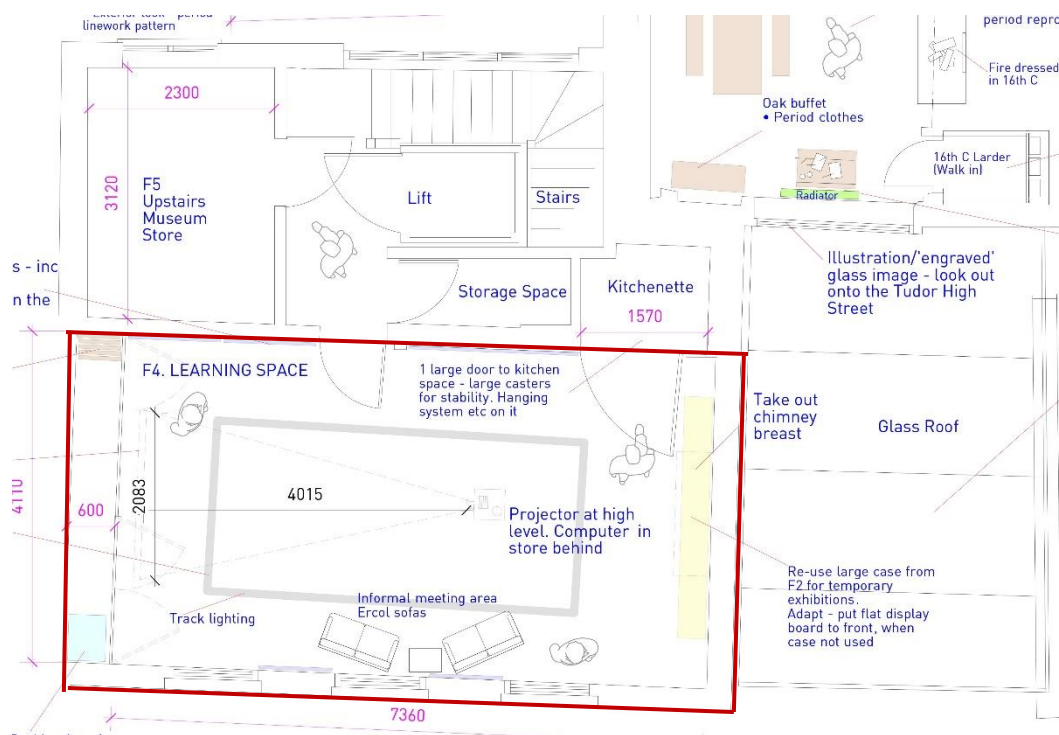


Figure 1: Room for timeline identified as 'F4 Learning Space' on the diagram and highlighted in red.



Figures 1 & 3: The space as it is laid out now

Audiences

Current visitors to Amersham Museum are made up of: adult leisure learners (either coming individually, in small groups or as a pre-organised group visit); older, vulnerable adults (in reminiscence activities), families with children, and formal education visits, mostly for KS1 and KS2 aged children.

The museum welcomed 4,715 visitors in 2022, of whom 1,566 were children. In 2023 it is anticipated that 6,500 people will visit the museum, and 2,000 of them will be children.

The vision for Amersham Museum is to continue to focus on the site's local audience, with the development of a targeted offer for the four key segments of: adult leisure learners; families with children; school groups; older, vulnerable adults. The aim is to enhance the site for existing visitors and to encourage new visitors from these segments.

Resources

The designer and fabricator will be able to draw upon:

- The content created for the existing timeline, in the current introductory space
- Extensive knowledge of the museum's collection and the history of the town amongst the museum's staff and volunteers
- A collection of over 6,000 images (all digitised), over 120 oral history interviews (all digitised) and a collection of over 2,700 documents and 2,100 objects. There are also reference collections of books and maps and information available online at www.amershammuseum.org
- Evidence about audiences from the annual visitor surveys
- Consultation work with volunteers and visitors for this project
- 2020 Learning and Interpretation Strategy.

Project Team/Working Group

The appointed designer will work with the:

- Project working group of museum director, project manager and two museum trustees
- Museum staff; learning officer and collections manager
- Young curators group and wider community partners

Timetable

Send out tender for design	wk c/o 3.7.23
Submission deadline	28.7.23
Review/interview and appoint	3.8.23
Museum consultation on content	07.23 and 08.23
Concept designs, review and consult	09.23
Agree final designs, commission illustrator	Mid 10.23
All content supplied for graphics	Mid 11.23
Sign off artwork	12.23 (before Christmas)
Production	1.24
Fit out	2.24

Evaluation

The project will be externally evaluated, alongside existing museum evaluation processes which include a visitor survey, comments book and feedback forms. There will also be opportunities to share ideas and views within the timeline.

Budget

- There is a budget of £16,000 inc. VAT to produce the timeline (with an additional contingency)
- There is an additional £1,500 inc. VAT to appoint an artist/illustrator to produce original artwork, to feature in the timeline.

Fee

There is a fee of £2,500 inc. VAT for the design of the timeline, including support for the museum in sourcing fabricators. A separate fee for graphic design is costed in the production budget.

Application

Please send a response to this brief, outlining how you would approach the project, a breakdown of the budget, an outline timetable and examples of recent, relevant work.

Appendices

1. Outcomes and outputs

The timeline will contribute to the following outputs for the museum in 2024:-

- Increased visitor numbers and a growth in the diversity of visitors to the museum and across our programming
- An increase in repeat visitors
- Improved feedback on the quality of the visit
- Improved visitor income and secondary spend
- Increased recognition for the museum
- An increased number and more diverse group of people volunteering for the museum
- Improved environmental performance of the building

The timeline will contribute to the following outcomes:

- Increased interest in museums and in the local area
- Better understanding of local history and the stories of local people

2. Museum interpretation theme and generic learning outcomes

2.1 Theme

The museum's interpretation theme is:

Amersham: a medieval market town to Metro-land

This was developed in consideration of the history of the town (which is reflected in the collection and the building) and covers the following broad themes:

- The development of the market town
- Transport: the development of coaching inns in the 17th century, the arrival of the railway and the subsequent development of Amersham-on-the-Hill
- Protest and Dissent: martyrs, Quakers
- Local industry
- Housing and domestic life

2.2 Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes were first developed in 2012 as part of the museum's Learning and Interpretation Strategy. The outcomes are categorised according to MLA's Generic Learning Outcomes:

1. Knowledge and Understanding

- To consider the early development of Amersham as a market town and understand the High Street and Broadway in this context
- To learn about the arrival of the railway, the development of Amersham-on-the-Hill and Metro-land
- To learn about the design and evolution of the shopping streets and their occupants
- To gain knowledge and understanding about how leisure time was and is spent in the town

2. Attitudes and Values

- To consider how the attitudes and values of the Drake family affected the landscape of Amersham today (and consider those decisions in a contemporary context with the development of HS2)
- To question and consider the opinions and actions of the Amersham martyrs and those who persecuted them
- To consider the evolution of attitudes and ideas towards the poor and needy
- To evaluate the development of leisure time and how it has changed

3. Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity

- To enjoy and be inspired by the building and the garden
- To make a creative response to the collection, building and garden either through participating in a museum activity or at home
- To be inspired by the artistic and creative responses that others have had to the area, including the Metro-land design, local artists and craftspeople
- To be inspired to find out more about your home or street

4. Skills

- To learn some of the traditional crafts, such as straw plaiting, lace making or woodwork
- To develop skills as a volunteer, either in a front of house role of helping with collections care, research and development projects

5. Activity, Behaviour and Progression

- To make a repeat visit to the museum and encourage other friends and family members to visit
- To inform and feedback about your visits, creating an active dialogue with the staff and volunteers at the museum
- To research your home, street or club and contribute your findings to the museum, thus constantly informing the story and understanding of the area
- To donate objects, documents or photos to the museum, thereby enriching the museum's collection
- To become a volunteer in the museum

3. Background Information on Amersham Museum

- For more information visit www.amershammuseum.org
- For details of Amersham history visit www.amershammuseum.org/history/