

Imperial War Museum London

Complete	Area	Client	Architect
2014	UK England	Imperial War Museums	Foster and Partners

The Imperial War Museum London is one of the capitals iconic buildings. Its exhibits explore the theme of conflict and include over 1,300 objects.

The project involved refurbishing the existing museum to provide a 20 per cent increase in gallery space, a new central hall and improved visitor facilities. A new ground level entrance involved landscaping works to the front of the building to house the iconic naval guns.

The atrium holds a display of over 400 objects, ranging from letters and personal mementos to tanks and aircraft that are suspended from the ceiling.

Imperial War Museum London was one of the finalists for Museum of the Year in 2015.



Imperial War Museum © Graham Hogg <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/legalcode> Cropped

Services provided

Sandy Brown was employed early in the project to provide advice on the acoustic design strategy in relation to:

- noise ingress from existing environmental sources through the new building envelope elements
- noise egress from potential increased activity associated with the development
- noise egress from new plant items
- airborne sound insulation between spaces within the development
- impact sound insulation
- room acoustics
- building services noise and vibration.

Special acoustic features

The main item for consideration within the development was room acoustics and acoustically absorbent finishes. This was driven by the reconfiguration of the atrium space which is a large multi-purpose space acting as a circulation space for the main galleries, but with the potential to be used for out of hours events.

As the atrium and galleries are interlinked, there were a number of acoustic implications. For example, the newly formed gallery on level E is designed to remain open to the main atrium below and around the edges. If specific events are taking place in this gallery while the museum is in general use, noise transfer would be noticeable in both directions.

While the design means that this could only be mitigated to a small extent with the use of acoustic finishes, identifying this early in the design allowed for the finishes and layouts to be adjusted, limiting the amount of noise transfer that occurs, and for the implications on the management of the spaces to be fully understood.

Noise modelling was used to build a model of the atrium and the interlinking spaces and this was used to identify locations for acoustically sound absorbent treatments.



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