

Mary Rose Museum, Portsmouth

Complete	Area	Client	Architect
2016	UK England	The Mary Rose Trust	Wilkinson Eyre and Perkins+Will (UK) Ltd (interior)

Services provided

Henry VIII's flagship "Mary Rose" was completed in the year 1511 and sank in 1545. This museum provides a permanent home for its hull which was raised from the seabed of The Solent at Portsmouth in 1982. The hull requires highly specialist environmental conditions, and the design takes an 'inside-out' approach, cradling the hull at the centre of the museum.

A virtual glass hull, created alongside the original hull to represent its missing section, provides an in-context display of the artefacts found with the ship. Deck galleries run the length of the ship corresponding to the original deck levels and lead to further gallery space at the end. The building, constructed around the Mary Rose while maintaining the conservation environment in its old enclosure, is roofed by a prefabricated shell structure.



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Special acoustic features

The museum is divided into several parts including the main environmentally controlled chamber housing the hull and 'virtual hull', an immersive theatre to provide introduction to the museum, informational exhibits at either end of the main chamber, and an education wing off the side with back of house areas.

The main challenge was to control reverberation in the various spaces. In the main chamber, the goal was to take the ring out of the large volume space to provide a suitably sombre space for viewing the hull and contemplating what life was like on board. There are also rolling automated audio and video vignettes highlighting specific parts of the hull that needed to be heard and understood in addition to not unduly disturbing other parts of the museum. The key was to provide sound absorption on the underside of each of the decks of the 'virtual hull' to ensure the best effectiveness could be achieved from the minimal area of treatment.



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In the informational exhibits, there are presentations to tour groups, audio exhibits, children's activities, and exhibits allowing one to test one's strength as an archer, all of which are noisy and noise sensitive, and need to coexist with others viewing the artefacts. Controlling reverberation was again a key consideration and was provided with unobtrusive sound-absorbing rafts at the ceiling, that also help to hide services.

The education areas and staff areas are located behind the main hull in areas where it is key to provide adequate sound insulation from the rest of the museum. In addition, the immersive theatre needs reasonable sound insulation from the rest of the informational exhibits. This was provided through appropriately solid walls and lobbied access doors.



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