

THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM MISSION

The Fitzwilliam Museum aims to:

- **touch people's lives by engaging powerfully, thoughtfully and pleasurably with as wide a public as possible**
- **produce and promote innovative, relevant, and interdisciplinary research of the highest quality around our collection**

The Fitzwilliam Museum is widely considered the world's outstanding university art collection. We care for works of art and material culture from Europe, Egypt and Asia of exceptional international importance, works that connect people across cultures and time. Founded in 1816 'for the increase of learning', the Fitzwilliam has long been both a great public cultural asset and an extraordinary scholarly resource – local, regional, national and global. The Museum is also a place of enormous potential; we must now build on our achievements, bringing them together in ways that will be truly transformational.

All our work begins with the people who experience our great collection. Through our displays and public programmes, we provide opportunities to discover major works by some of the most famous artists of all time, as well as an abundance of objects documenting lives that otherwise went largely unrecorded. The Fitzwilliam has other extraordinary assets: our remarkable record of pioneering research and, just as important, of innovative public engagement. The passionate loyalty of the Museum's current visitors matches the energy and talent of our expert and committed workforce. We are proud of our striking Grade-1 listed buildings from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with some of the finest museum interiors in Britain. These features of our appearance and tradition that make us so special for so many will be the starting blocks for our future initiatives.

Now we must successfully engage a much broader and more diverse audience, and develop our collection in ways that better reflect the backgrounds and interests of all our visitors. Simultaneously, the Fitzwilliam is poised to develop its relationship with the rest of the University of Cambridge and its great resource of enquiring minds. By fully unifying our public benefit roles and our collaborative research activity, we will play an ever more crucial role in the University of Cambridge's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest

international levels of excellence. To make this possible, we must develop robust systems of revenue generation to support our operating costs and to reflect our growing ambitions.

We will achieve our aims by:

- **providing a place**, physical and virtual, that takes people out of their daily lives and gives space to think, wonder, find inspiration and question the world around them
- **promoting dialogues around works of art and material culture**, and the many cultural, political and social issues they represent and embody
- **exploring and developing our collection collaboratively**, placing objects in their historical, artistic and cultural contexts, and demonstrating why they matter today
- **building, preserving and documenting our collection** for the future, ensuring it is fully accessible now and for centuries to come.

Our Values:

The Museum and our projects will always be **inclusive, thoughtful, distinctive, welcoming, rigorous, challenging, unexpected, uplifting and entertaining.**

All our decision-making will be guided by these values.

Our Strategic Priorities:

1. Developing our methods for ensuring access to culture for all
2. Ensuring a multiplicity of voices and approaches in our research
3. Embracing a global history of art and material culture
4. Creating immersive and interactive exhibitions and displays
5. Providing a distinctive, sector-leading digital museum experience

6. Fully supporting the collective ambitions of the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM)
7. Building, maintaining and improving the care of the collection
8. Developing an extraordinary building that unites and realises these aims

To ensure our success, we will need:

9. A work and management culture for the Fitzwilliam that fulfils our mission
10. An organisational structure that sustains our priorities
11. A happy, diverse, inclusive and open-minded working community
12. Appropriate and sustainable resourcing and revenue

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

1. Developing our methods for ensuring access to culture for all

Our projects must be designed from the outset to be mindful of the difference they make for all our audiences.

Using imaginative and inclusive approaches to public engagement and visitor experience, we will take full account of the needs and wishes of all our existing and potential audiences.

We will equip our visitors with knowledge and ideas that sustain and develop their conversations about the works in our care, and incorporate their thinking in our projects.

Cambridge and the East Anglia region have areas of significant economic and cultural disadvantage. The Fitzwilliam must continue to fulfil its civic and regional responsibilities by engaging the widest possible audience throughout their lives. Much weight is now placed on public ‘impact’ in assessing the quality of university research and outputs; the onus is on us to ensure that the experience of visiting the Fitzwilliam and other Cambridge museums is genuinely significant for all.

Key challenges remain. The outstanding work undertaken by our Learning team needs to be made more generally available, through the continued training of teachers, through the provision of transport for schools and groups that could not otherwise afford to visit and by building on our partnerships with education, health, social care and community sector organisations. In the context of our unequal city and region, we will ensure our work with schools is planned to contribute meaningfully to the University’s commitment to widening participation.

We need to get out more, taking works from our collection with us.

Our Front of House teams are already engaged and engaging, but given the right training and opportunities, the Fitzwilliam Visitor Experience team will play a much larger part in welcoming, informing and stimulating our visitors to engage with our collection and research. We need to solve the problem of inadequate directional signage and other impediments to a relaxing visit. In everything we do, we must present our friendliest face.

Our Marketing, Events and Membership team will work in imaginative ways to attract a much wider community, not least among the residents and students of Cambridge and the surrounding area.

These methods and their effectiveness must themselves be a focus for Fitzwilliam research, for the benefit of museum and university sectors locally, nationally and internationally.

2. Ensuring a multiplicity of voices and approaches in our research

Supporting the University's and the UK's research agenda, we intend to work with a wide and diverse community of scholars and other experts in Cambridge and beyond, right across the humanities and sciences.

The Fitzwilliam will work hard to become a fulcrum for national and international interdisciplinary research partnerships.

The research contribution of Fitzwilliam and HKI curators and conservators is world renowned. Successful collaborations over the past decade have shown what can be achieved with others elsewhere in the University. However, there has been an inconsistent relationship between the Museum and the rest of the University, resulting in periods when collaboration was not as straightforward as it could have been. Our most ground-breaking exhibitions were however popular and effective because of collaborations with colleagues in the Faculties of History, Classics and Mathematics, which enabled them to interrogate works of art in relation to pressing scientific and historical research questions. While such collaborations are inevitably serendipitous in their origins, the Museum needs to put structures in place to ensure that they are strategic, transparent and mutually advantageous.

Going forward, our developing strategic research partnership with the Department of History of Art will be a key priority.

Our visitors and workforce have made it clear they are especially interested in the making of art and objects of material culture, so the role of the HKI and Fitzwilliam conservation and science staff will continue to be critical in such investigations.

The other multiple ways in which art and science connect are similarly intriguing for many of our visitors, not least as they illuminate urgent contemporary concerns.

Equally important are the ways the art and archaeology of the past help us understand the present-day life issues we all face.

Academic and research contracts for research-active staff at the Fitzwilliam and HKI will bolster our research productivity. The Fitzwilliam will continue to support specialist collection expertise and subject approaches for all researchers, inside and outside the Museum.

The introduction of annual museum themes, posing questions that illuminate both art and life, aligned where possible with other University Collections, Schools, and cross-School research centres and initiatives, will provide a framework, context and inspiration for our innovative research.

3. Embracing a global history of art and material culture

We will work in close collaboration with other Cambridge Collections, Schools and Departments, with creative experts of many kinds, with our visitors, present and future, and with the wider community of all backgrounds and ages, to make sure that everyone can see themselves at the Fitzwilliam.

Together we will ensure that diaspora communities in Cambridge and elsewhere in Britain, as well as visitors from all over the world, can discover and explore their history, art and culture.

Championing diversity within a museum begins with its displays, sending a clear message of inclusivity that is fully supported by public programming and exhibitions. Our currently Eurocentric displays are the result of the Fitzwilliam's historic remit, acquiring art from those areas of world regarded in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain as having contributed to the progress of human civilisation. Now, urgently, we must make sure we do not give the impression that 'art' happened only in Europe, ancient Egypt and in some parts of Asia.

Close collaboration with the UCM and other Cambridge Collections will be essential to ensuring diversity is a guiding principle in delivering our future projects and displays. The Fitzwilliam will support research and teaching of global histories of art and material culture, in line with the ambitions of the Schools of Arts and Humanities and Humanities and Social Sciences. Our collection-building will also seek to address these issues, with an increased focus on artefacts created as the result of global encounter.

4. Creating immersive and interactive exhibitions and displays

The Museum will aim to provide exhibitions and collection displays that are interactive and immersive to ensure the objects and research presented are engaging and involving.

Our exhibitions and displays will usually be flagship projects for our annual museum themes, and, with accompanying print and online publications, will often constitute the principal public outcomes of research projects.

Visitors, especially to exhibitions, are no longer considered, or consider themselves, passive recipients of images and ideas. Instead they must be valued as engaged participants whose varied expectations, and individual expertise and enthusiasms, should be fundamental ingredients of every project. We will present a point of view, sometimes a bold one. We will also pose questions rather than offer fixed answers. Where appropriate, we will design more complex forms of visitor participation. By involving potential visitors in our exhibition and programme research and development at the outset, we will ensure the finished products are appealing, relevant and engaging. Touring our exhibitions internationally is an important ambition.

Regular, innovative and interdisciplinary collaborations with University Collections partners will ensure that Fitzwilliam exhibition and display spaces can also be used, when wanted and needed, by the University and wider community in Cambridge.

5. Providing a distinctive, sector-leading digital museum experience

Working especially, but not exclusively, with Cambridge's leading tech community, we aim to provide an entirely novel, sector-leading digital experience of a great museum and its collection.

Digital engagement, underpinned by accessible collection documentation, is an aspect of our work that must become primary. There will be extraordinary opportunities within 'Silicon Fen' if we offer ourselves as experts, partners and guinea-pigs in designing and trialling new kinds of digital knowledge transfer and cultural debate. We must use our digital presence to extend our reach, making sure that those who cannot visit in person can connect with our collection, particularly those works that cannot be permanently displayed.

Our website should be every bit as distinctive as the other parts of the Fitzwilliam experience, standing out from the digital offers made by other museums. Our use of social media must also be more distinguished, exciting and inclusive, ensuring all our audiences have a platform.

6. Fully supporting the collective ambitions of the UCM

Working closely with our partners in the University of Cambridge Museums consortium, we intend to develop new, shared approaches to research, programmes, collection care and management and the delivery of other services and activities.

Taken together, the University of Cambridge Collections constitute an exceptionally rich public and scholarly resource, very much more than the sum of their parts. Our explorations of global histories, and of the intersections of art and the sciences, will depend on establishing robust methods for practical and intellectual cooperation, as well as common approaches to collection management, care and access. Although some valuable joint projects have already taken place, a systematic programme of truly collaborative, highly ambitious, long-term research projects has yet to be instituted. Such collaborations will add depth to established partnerships and ensure that what the UCM offers our audiences is truly distinctive.

To support such activity, and to increase collaborative efficiency, the Fitzwilliam will continue to support the UCM in finding more and better ways to share resources.

7. Building, maintaining and improving the care of the collection

Working closely with collectors and owners, we will add to the Fitzwilliam collection in ways that further stimulate thought and discussion, expanding our narratives of European and Asian art and material culture, and exploring areas of artistic production not yet represented in Cambridge.

We will ensure that the works in the Museum collection are well preserved and well documented, to be available for discovery and research for decades to come.

The works in our collection are our *raison d'être* – the things our visitors want to see and discuss, and the inspiration and tools for our research. Collection care is therefore a central activity for the Museum. Conservation treatments of objects and art works increase our understanding of them and so enhance their accessibility, both physical and intellectual.

The Fitzwilliam collection has grown mainly thanks to the vision and generosity of successive generations of art lovers and owners. Over the years, collectors, curators and directors have thought together about the evolution of the collection. We must continue to work in this way, aiming to acquire powerful, complex pieces of the highest quality and of the kind that reward scrutiny in the context of a great

university. Our collecting strategies will be focused, judicious and highly selective. This will apply particularly as we consider the exciting future of our modern and contemporary collection.

We must turn our storage areas into safe but accessible study spaces, with each work secure, documented and easily located. Where appropriate, we will rationalise our collection to make sure that each work merits the care and attention it receives in a museum setting.

8. Developing an extraordinary building that unites and realises these aims

The Fitzwilliam will create beautiful and welcoming, sustainable and flexible exhibition, display, teaching, community and research spaces that bring our audiences and collection together.

The University of Cambridge can feel impenetrable within the city, not least to its residents. The Fitzwilliam and other Cambridge museums, however function as a crucial bridge between the University, the city and the rest of the world.

Our distinguished and much-loved historic building is one of our great assets. The quality of our old buildings is not however matched by more recent additions. Nor are the extensions of the 1980s, '90s and early 2000s environmentally sustainable. Finally, they do not currently allow us to function fully as a cohesive and efficient museum, to realise completely our exciting aims and ambitions, or to maximise our revenue generation.

The Fitzwilliam's Masterplan proposes a future Museum that will enable new, dynamic, and interactive ways of working with our core collection and all our visitors. What we offer our audience must contain the joy of scholarly discovery and an intimacy of encounter that is usually the privilege of the specialist or the museum insider. We must ensure that our collection can be used as the great learning resource it is, not only in dedicated spaces behind the scenes, but also in our public galleries.

For many people, the Fitzwilliam's grand and intimate architecture is an important exhibit in its own right. For others, however, the sheer magnificence of the Museum's entrance can be intimidating. In future, our welcome must begin outside our building, continuing within our entrance spaces and throughout our building.

The Fitzwilliam Museum's conservation, study, teaching, visible storage, office and teaching needs are elegantly solved in the Masterplan, including the relocation of the Hamilton Kerr Institute for paintings conservation to our main site as an essential ingredient. We must also create facilities and events that can be used to generate income.

9. A work and management culture for the Fitzwilliam that fulfils our mission

Our planning, management and communications systems need to be strategically revised to establish a working environment that is efficient, effective, fair, forward-looking, transparent and responsive.

Our human and financial resources need to be deployed carefully. Sensitive prioritisation is essential and we will introduce new approval, planning and evaluation procedures as standard. These will identify the ambitions and measure the success of each project, each aligned with the core ambitions of the Fitzwilliam Museum Mission, and the priorities of the University of Cambridge. Decisions will be made by the Fitzwilliam's Senior Management Team, based on these key criteria, and, crucially, the institution's capacity to deliver at any one time.

We will plan our projects well in advance with all staff involved, making it possible to secure the right funding. Each will be allocated an appropriately structured and resourced team, working closely with staff from elsewhere in the University where possible. The identification of those areas of Museum activity currently lacking designated funding, process or strategy will be critical.

The Fitzwilliam will institute consistent processes for connective project management that will guarantee their success.

More and better training for all managers and staff is required. Departmental plans will be developed that deliver all parts of our activity in line with our agreed mission. An annual review process, including detailed forward job plans, for all staff will be reintroduced, again taking full account of the Museum's priorities. The wide sharing and circulation of project outlines, notes and minutes from purposeful meetings, and of other materials of broad institutional interest, is an urgent priority.

10. An organizational structure that sustains our priorities

Agreeing our mission priorities will enable us to develop a revised organisational structure to delivering our aims and to make the most of the Fitzwilliam's human resource.

We will ensure that our whole programme of work is guided by a Fitzwilliam Museum Syndicate possessing an appropriately wide skillset and knowledge base.

The Fitzwilliam staff is extraordinarily dedicated, with wide raft of professional expertise. The Museum's organizational structure has however grown organically in response to different demands and expectations, both internal and external, becoming overly complex and siloed. There is currently a lack of clarity on individual roles and responsibilities, with some gaps and several confusing overlaps. Our new organisational structure must significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Museum and prove financially viable over the long term.

Four principal areas of activity will determine the Fitzwilliam's future organisational structure:

- the presentation of the collection and the promotion of collaborative research around it
- the public benefit of the Museum as a key part of Cambridge University and as a leading museum and cultural attraction in its own right.
- the conservation and scientific investigation of works of art and archaeology, and the teaching of those methods
- the strengthening of the teams and processes we need to ensure that the Museum can open each day efficiently and safely

Each of these areas, and the teams delivering in them, will need a full-time champion and manager. These senior managers will lead united teams in which each member of Fitzwilliam and HKI staff has a role description that clearly defines their area of activity and responsibility, developing specialist skills, helping others understand the important part they play in the whole Museum, and supporting the connected activity of the UCM.

11. A happy, diverse, inclusive and open-minded working community

Our new staffing structure must not only increase our efficiency, it must also boost morale and job satisfaction.

By ensuring that we all work within a culture of mutual respect, and by giving support and opportunities to all our workforce, we intend to make staff well-being a top priority.

The exceptionally expert and committed workforce (including volunteers) of the Fitzwilliam is an incredible asset. Staff surveys demonstrate however that individuals do not always feel valued within the Museum or the wider University.

A reliance on repeated short-term contracts is unfair and inefficient, and essential roles performing core functions should not be filled on this basis.

The lack of diversity within the Fitzwilliam workforce and its governance bodies is another major concern. A staff that is fully diverse ensures that our collective creativity is greater. Introducing such changes for our recruitment of staff and appointments to the Museum Syndicate will be a key priority. In-house training will ensure that candidates with non-traditional qualifications can be supported while performing within their specialist roles.

Transparent models of career progression must be available to all.

We will introduce a code of conduct, taking account of the particular needs of our public-facing institution.

12. Appropriate and sustainable resourcing and revenue

Both human and financial resources must reflect the ambition of the Fitzwilliam Museum Mission. Those levels must be stable and sustainable.

Our funding derives primarily from the University of Cambridge, Research England, Arts Council England, the Museum's historic endowments and from the donations and legacies of individuals and companies, trusts and foundations.

Despite this support, the financial resource to underpin our programme of activity has not always been adequate. The University Museums and Collections are fundamental for the success of Cambridge University's primary mission of education, but the Fitzwilliam has not always been regarded, or regarded itself, in that light. Arguably, there has been under-investment in the Fitzwilliam for decades. Thus staff have often felt over-stretched and pulled in different directions as our programme of work has become ever more ambitious.

The Fitzwilliam will continue to seek operational partnerships with University-wide service providers. These will take full account of joined-up activity within the UCM and other University Collections and will encourage cost savings across the group, allowing available funds to be repurposed to support our core mission.

The Fitzwilliam's more clearly defined mission, and the better integration of the Museum within the wider University, will require new support and sustenance. "Investment" is the key word here. Our questions must be: "What can the Fitzwilliam Museum and its University Collections partners deliver for the University, working closely with the city and the region, that other organisations cannot? What can't we do now that we should be doing? What will the return be on University, national, civic, corporate and philanthropic investment?"

We will re-examine our structures for giving at all levels. We will increase and diversify our methods for income generation, ensuring we have the right partners and facilities. We must make sure that any systems of charging that need to be introduced erect no barriers to wide access to the Fitzwilliam or to our innovative scholarship.