Lapworth Museum redevelopment project

A major redevelopment of the Lapworth Museum of Geology will start on 1st December 2015 following the award of a £1.56m Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

The work, part of a £2.5m redevelopment, will greatly improve access to the Museum's fantastic collections and provide a unique public visitor experience as well as continuing to maintain a valuable learning and research resource for students.

The proposed redevelopment will include new galleries and innovative exhibitions to showcase exceptional objects that have not previously been displayed.

The new display will be based around four key themes:

- Evolution of Life
- Active Earth
- Mineral Wealth
- Learning and Discovery

Additional funding has also been raised via the University's *Circles of Influence* fundraising campaign, with significant donations from alumni, trusts and foundations.

The Lapworth and the Development, Alumni and Business Engagement (DABE) team were also successful with a grant application to Arts Council England of £80K towards a new museum education room.

Bringing 3.4 billion years of geology to life

The redevelopment project will create innovative new exhibitions and allow the display of one of the UK's most outstanding rock, fossil and mineral collections, which has been designated by Arts Council England as being of National and International importance.

The museum will explore life over the past 3.4 billion years, covering mass extinctions and evolutionary changes.

Professor Alice Roberts "I am so excited about the redevelopment of the Lapworth Museum, which, thanks to the HLF, will now become a reality.

"The Lapworth collection is so important – this is the geology museum in the West Midlands. This funding gives us the chance to make sure the collection is used to its best advantage – and made accessible to as many people as possible."

A host of fossils from around the West Midlands will show how the area has changed from a tropical sea to desert to ice sheets over a 450 million-year period.

Overall the redeveloped museum will create a significantly improved visitor experience and help widen access for everyone.

A **new leaflet (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-les/gees/lapworth-museum/Lapworth-Redevelopment-Leaflet.pdf)** outlining our exciting plans for the redevelopment project is now available.

Beautiful specimens from across the world

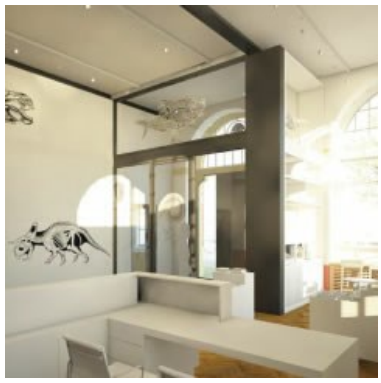
The Museum contains the largest and finest geological collection in the West Midlands region and dates back to 1880 and the foundation of Mason College, the forerunner of the University of Birmingham.

Its collections of over 250,000 objects includes significant material from many influential geologists, scientists and collectors of the 19th and early 20th centuries, including:

- Geological pioneer Charles Lapworth's collection
- Fred Shotton's top secret work for the D-Day landings
- Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery's geology collection, which includes Matthew Boulton's mineral collection

The Museum houses some of the finest fossils from the region, recording intervals when Central England was submerged beneath warm tropical seas or covered in coal forests followed by arid desert conditions, whilst the remains of woolly mammoths provide a glimpse of life during the Ice Age.

The mineral and gem collections, some of which date back to the 18th century, contain over 15,000 specimens from all over the world with rare, colourful and exquisite crystal forms.



We are delighted to be working with Associated Architects (building design team) and Real Studios (exhibition design team) to develop plans and designs for exciting new exhibition displays and galleries.

The proposal for the redevelopment will retain the museum's original features and display cases, as well as its Edwardian interior.

However these will be juxtaposed with a state-of-the-art museum experience, which will be interactive and tactile, with modern technology for a more rewarding visit.

A collection of national importance

Learning resources, including a new dedicated education room, will enable schools and visiting groups to discover and learn

more about a wide and diverse range of topical geological and environmental issues.

Lapworth Director Jon Clatworthy said: "This is fantastic news; the HLF grant will allow us to make the large and nationally important collections of the Lapworth Museum at the University of Birmingham much more accessible to the community.

"Unique access to current research at the University will also be provided focussing on environmental change, the history of life, and the earth's resources.

"It will provide the public with access to outstanding collections relating to popular and exciting themes such as dinosaurs, fossils, volcanoes, earthquakes, evolution and environment change, and provide visitors with greatly improved facilities."

Reyahn King, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, said: "We're delighted to support such an exciting project which will help bring the past 3.4 billion years of geology to life in the 21st century.

"From evolution and woolly mammoths to precious gems and minerals used in local industry, this is an excellent example of just how far back heritage can reach and how events that happened billions of years ago can still impact and engage people today."

Work on the Lapworth redevelopment is scheduled to commence in December 2014 with a proposed reopening time of October 2015.

Anyone wishing to make a donation to support the opening of the new museum, can contact Laura Fairbanks on +44 (0)121 414 8894 or at **l.fairbanks@bham.ac.uk (mailto:l.clark.1@bham.ac.uk)**

If you would simply like to be kept updated about the project, **please register for a newsletter here (/facilities/lapworth-museum/about/register-updates.aspx)** .

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