

The British Museum announces shortlist of five architect-led teams for major renovation of its Western Range Galleries

Images:

- British Museum's International Architectural Competition attracts over 60 applications from across the world
- Five teams now selected to take part in the final stage of the competition - overseen by an expert judging panel
- The winning team will embark on one of the most significant cultural renovation projects in the world - working with experts across the Museum to reimagine over a third of the gallery space.

London, 29 August 2024: The British Museum has announced its shortlist of five architect-led consultant teams that will compete in the second stage of its International Architectural Competition.

The competition has been set up to select a team that will work with the Museum to reimagine over a third of its gallery space. Stage two will run until December 2024, at which point there will be a display of the shortlisted candidates' entries in the Museum's iconic Round Reading Room. The outcome of the competition will be announced in early 2025.

The winning team will work with experts across the British Museum to develop designs for the Western Range that respond to the Museum's sensitive historic buildings, ambitious decarbonisation plans, and the ongoing process of reimagining the display and care of collections.

Stage one of the competition ran from 8 May to 21 June 2024, attracting over 60 team entries, ranging across six continents and an exciting range of experience; from recently formed practices to long-established firms. The competition is being run on behalf of the British Museum by Colander Associates.

The five shortlisted teams include some of the most celebrated British and international architects alongside a variety of consultants that represent a compelling mix of expertise from a wide range of perspectives.

The shortlisted teams are:

Team 1: 6a Architects

with: Advanced Integrated Solutions, Arup, David Bonnett Associates, Gitta Gschwendtner, Kellenberger-White, London School of Architecture, Purcell, Studio ZNA

Team 2: David Chipperfield Architects

with: AEA Consulting, Adamson Associates, Alan Baxter Associates, Arup, Atelier Brückner, Atelier Ten, Lobe Lloyd, Julian Harrap Architects, Plan A, Reusefully, Neal Shasore

Team 3: Eric Parry Architects and Jamie Fobert Architects

with: Buro Happold, David Bonnett Associates, Max Fordham, Mima, Price & Myers, Purcell, Space Syntax, Studio ZNA

Team 4: Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture

with: Ali Cherri, Arup, Holmes Studio, Plan A, Purcell

Team 5: **OMA**
with: Arup, Benoy, Cookies, Ducks Scéno, EQ2 Light, Purcell, Salvatore Settis,
Studio ZNA

George Osborne, Chair of the British Museum, said: “The redevelopment of the British Museum is one of the biggest projects of our time. We asked for the best of the architectural community to step forward to help - and they have, from Britain and across the world. The shortlist we’ve chosen mixes renowned experience with exciting new voices. We couldn’t have asked for more”

Nicholas Cullinan, Director of the British Museum, said: “I’m so impressed by the vision, creativity and sheer number of entries at this first stage of the competition. These five teams have strong resumes and demonstrate the qualities we need for the Western Range project which is both an architectural as well as intellectual transformation of the British Museum. This is a career-defining opportunity for the final team and I am excited for the next stage of the competition and the conversation and collaboration to come from this once in a lifetime brief.”

Russell Torrance, Director of Estates & Capital Projects at the British Museum, said: “The purpose of this competition is to identify a team the British Museum can work with on a long-term basis to reimagine its Western Range galleries for future generations. Rather than seeking a fixed outcome in the form of a concept design, the competition allows us to engage with shortlisted teams over an extended period of time. We want to meet the team with the vision and skill to collaborate with the British Museum on an ongoing basis as we embark on a hugely significant programme of work for our historic buildings and the collections they house, as well as our users – visitors and staff.”

The Western Range holds a third of the museum’s overall gallery space, as well as significant back-of-house areas, totalling 15,650 square meters. The complex of buildings range in age from the original 1850s buildings designed by Robert Smirke, to later additions such as Gallery 10 and 22. All of the buildings are in need of upgrade to meet contemporary building performance standards, and many contain highly significant heritage building fabric.

Stage two of the competition will ask the teams to participate in a process that includes a day-long charette with the Museum team, as well as a series of design exercises that will assess their approach to historic fabric, as well as different elements of spatial, environmental and exhibition design.

Deliberate limitations have been put in place to ensure that the teams do not arrive at an overall, complete plan for the Western Range project but are instead able to demonstrate their ability to envision and lead a collaborative process that responds to the complex needs of multiple stakeholders, both within the Museum and from external groups.

Applicants will be judged by an expert panel that will comprise ten members, chaired by George Osborne. He will be joined by leading experts in this field including Yvonne Farrell, Meneesha Kellay, Mahrukh Tarapor, and Sarah Younger. Mark Jones and Nicholas Cullinan will also sit on the panel alongside representatives from the British Museum’s Board of Trustees: Tracey Emin, Charlie Mayfield and Alejandro Santo Domingo.

The International Architectural Competition is part of the wider Masterplan project, which will restore and renovate the British Museum’s iconic Camden site, extend to new locations, and ensure its extraordinary collection is housed in buildings and galleries fit for the 21st century.

The scale, complexity and importance of Masterplan means it will be one of the most significant cultural redevelopment projects ever undertaken. Projects currently in progress include the recently completed British Museum Archaeological Research facility (BM_ARC) in Reading, and a new Energy Centre for the Bloomsbury site, which will phase out of the use of fossil fuels.

The Museum has confirmed that it will stay open to the public throughout works on the Masterplan, maintaining the founding commitment to keep the collection safe and accessible to the public.

Notes to Editors:

The jury panel will be made up of 10 people – including four external members whose expertise covers a range of perspectives within the built environment: from architectural design, delivering complex projects, sustainability to wider critical thinking in the subject.

The external judges will sit alongside Director Nicholas Cullinan, Chair of Trustees George Osborne, and Trustees Tracey Emin, Charlie Mayfield, and Alejandro Santo Domingo, alongside former interim Director Mark Jones.

Shortlisted Teams:**TEAM 1****6a architects**

6a architects was founded in 2001 by Tom Emerson and Stephanie Macdonald. Based in central London with a current team of thirty, the practice has an international reputation for award winning cultural and educational projects in sensitive historic settings. The practice has completed several museums and galleries including the pioneering not for profit, Raven Row (2009) in Spitalfields, the South London Gallery (2010-18), MK Gallery (2019) in Milton Keynes and most recently, the Center for Art, Research and Alliances (CARA, 2022) in New York.

6a architects	Architecture design leadership Interior design leadership (excluding exhibition design) Design team coordination and management
Advanced Integrated Solutions	BIM lead for the design team
Arup	Structural and civil engineering Mechanical, electrical and public health Fire engineering Environmental sustainability expertise
David Bonnett Associates	Access Consultant
Gitta Gschwendtner	Exhibition design
Kellenberger White	Graphic Design - wayfinding Exhibition graphics and other 2D design
London School of Architecture	Social Engagement
Purcell	Conservation architecture
Studio ZNA	Lighting design

TEAM 2**David Chipperfield Architects**

David Chipperfield Architects comprises five offices in London, Berlin, Milan, Shanghai and Santiago de Compostela. The London office was founded in 1985 by Sir David Chipperfield. The practice's major cultural projects include the redefinition of the Neues Museum and Neue Nationalgalerie both in Berlin, Turner Contemporary in Margate and The Hepworth Wakefield as well as an ongoing masterplan for the Royal Academy of Arts in London and the Firoz Lalji Global Hub, the first net carbon zero and adaptive reuse Passivhaus project developed for the London School of Economics.

David Chipperfield Architects	Architecture design leadership
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	Interior design leadership (excluding exhibition design).
AEA Consulting	Economic and social sustainability
Adamson Associates	Executive Architect BIM lead
Alan Baxter Associates	Structural and civil engineering
Arup	Mechanical, electrical & public health Fire engineering Embodied and operational carbon and energy modelling Lighting design (including exhibition lighting)
Atelier Brückner	Gallery design Exhibition graphics and other 2D design
Atelier Ten	Strategic sustainability adviser
Lobe Lloyd	Wayfinding Exhibition graphics and other 2D design
Julian Harrap Architects	Conservation architecture
Plan A	Design team coordination and management
Reusefully	Circular economy specialists
Neal Shasore	Expert advisor and critical friend

TEAM 3

Eric Parry Architects and Jamie Fobert Architects

Eric Parry Architects design and create high-quality, people-focused, sustainable buildings that enhance their surroundings. The practice is known for creating beautifully crafted buildings that are responsive to context and have worked with many cultural institutions and historic sites including The Holburne Museum in Bath and The Charterhouse in London.

London-based Jamie Fobert Architects has established a reputation for innovative and inspiring architectural design. The practice, led by Director Jamie Fobert, has spent three decades working with galleries and museums, resulting in a series of significant public buildings, including the National Portrait Gallery in London, Kettle's Yard in Cambridge and Tate St Ives in Cornwall.

Eric Parry Architects and Jamie Fobert Architects	Architecture - design leadership
Eric Parry Architects	Design team coordination and management BIM lead for the design team
Jamie Fobert Architects	Interior design leadership
Buro Happold	Fire engineering
David Bonnett Associates	Access Consultants
Max Fordham	Environmental sustainability expertise
MIMA	Graphic design - wayfinding Exhibition graphics and other 2D design
Price & Myers	Structural and civil engineering
Purcell	Conservation architecture

Space Syntax	Pedestrian Flows & Urban Planning
Studio ZNA	Exhibition lighting design

TEAM 4

Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture

Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture is a Paris-based practice led by Lebanese-born architect Lina Ghotmeh. The firm's projects are conceived as an "Archaeology of the Future," where each creation reflects history while being materially sensitive and in harmony with nature. Notable works include the "Stone Garden" tower in Beirut, winner of the Dezeen Award for 'Project of the Year' (2021), and showcased at the 17th Venice Biennale, MAXXI in Rome, and the Cooper Hewitt Museum in New York. Other prominent projects include the Estonian National Museum; Ateliers Hermès, France's first energy-positive, low-carbon manufacturing building; the 22nd Serpentine Pavilion in London; and the forthcoming AIUa Contemporary Art Museum.

Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture	Architecture - design leadership Interior design leadership Exhibition design Gallery design
Ali Cherri	Art & objects choreography
Arup	Structural and civil engineering Mechanical, electrical & public health Fire engineering Environmental sustainability expertise Lighting design
Holmes Studio	Graphic design - wayfinding Exhibition graphics and other 2d design
Plan A	Design team coordination and management
Purcell	Conservation architecture

TEAM 5

OMA

OMA is an international practice with offices in Rotterdam, New York, Hong Kong, and Australia, operating within the traditional boundaries of architecture and urbanism. OMA's cultural projects include Aviva Studios in Manchester (2023), Taipei Performing Arts Center (2022), Fondazione Prada in Milan (2018), Fondation Galeries Lafayette in Paris (2018), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow (2015) and Casa da Música in Porto (2005).

OMA	Architecture – design leadership BIM lead for the design team Design team coordination and management Exhibition graphics and other 2D design Gallery design Interior design leadership (excluding exhibition design)
Arup	BIM support for the design team Environmental sustainability expertise Fire engineering Mechanical, electrical and public health Structural and civil engineering
Benoy	Graphic design and wayfinding

Cookies	Gallery exhibition technical designer
Ducks Scéno	Gallery exhibition technical advisor
EQ2 Light	Lighting design (excluding exhibition design)
Purcell	Conservation architecture
Salvatore Settis	Museology advisor
Studio ZNA	Exhibition lighting design



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Further information

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