

Paisley Museum Reimagined



Overview

We understand that culture has the power to transform towns, lives and communities. It can define who we are, create new opportunities and shape our civic centres, neighbourhoods and communities. Paisley Museum is central to us reimagining the High Street and turning the town centre into a place where residents and visitors are drawn to explore, learn and gather whilst creating jobs and benefiting the whole of Renfrewshire

The £42m extension and complete refurbishment of Paisley Museum, known as Paisley Museum Reimagined (PMR), is the leading project in a £100 million capital investment in Paisley Town centre. PMR is underpinned by a series of high-level strategic aims that will create a:

- a. Leading international museum - telling the story of Paisley as a pattern and town
- b. Vibrant visitor destination drawing its audience from Scotland, UK and overseas
- c. Hub for learning, skills development, innovation and research
- d. Community resource at the heart of Paisley's local life
- e. Means of restoring civic pride, and increased feeling of community ownership

Renfrewshire Leisure

Our vision is to improve the health, well-being and quality of life of local communities through accessible arts and culture, leisure and sporting opportunities. We deliver a year-round programme of activities and services that meet the needs of our diverse audience groups. As well as supporting the economic regeneration and civic renewal of Renfrewshire, we are developing a cultural portfolio intended to raise the profile of Renfrewshire as a national and international cultural and tourism destination.

Paisley Museum

Paisley Museum, inaugurated in 1871, was the third publicly run library and the first publicly run museum in Scotland. It traces its roots directly to the spirit and principles of the Scottish Enlightenment, which flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 18th century, Paisley weavers were independent craftsmen with a passion for further education. An environment of self-improvement evolved, leading to the creation of the Paisley Philosophical Institution (PPI) in 1808. The creation of the Category A listed Museum, designed by Honeyman, Keppie and Mackintosh, was driven by the PPI and Sir Peter Coats. Sir Peter Coats was a partner in the successful Paisley thread making company, J&P Coats, and was a local philanthropist who financed the Museum build. His brother, Thomas Coats later funded the construction of the

Coats Observatory which is also Category A listed and is part of the modern-day museum campus.

The museum collection consists of over 350,000 objects representing the richness and diversity of Paisley. The Recognised Collection of National Significance is grouped under eight disciplines: Art, Applied Art, Archaeology, Human History, Natural History, Science, Textiles and World Culture. We have 1200 Paisley shawls – unrivalled anywhere in the world, working looms, pattern and design books and weaving technology. We have one of the best collections of 20th century studio ceramics in Scotland and in the top ten of British collections. The Observatory houses a collection of late 19th century astronomical equipment and the Fine Art collection includes paintings by the Glasgow Boys, many of whom had a connection with Paisley such as Sir John Lavery. The National Audit of Scotland's Museums and Galleries (2002), identified the collection as Scotland's 8th largest collection of international, UK and national significance. An overview of the collection is provided in appendix 1 and in the PMR Collections Summary PDF provided.

Paisley Museum Reimagined

Paisley is delivering a pioneering approach to cultural regeneration that is physical, social, economic, and long-term. The major investment of £100m in cultural venues and outdoor spaces began in 2016, with the £3.7m investment in The Secret Collection. The facility replaced a vacant department store and is the first publicly accessible museum store on a UK high street. Complete refurbishment of the Museum, Art Centre, Library and Town Hall are also included in the £100m investment.

As the signature project in this investment, PMR will deliver a free to enter cultural campus of national and international significance, whilst ensuring physical and intellectual accessibility for all. We will utilise the Museum's High Street location to transform Paisley's perception of itself, develop a visitor economy, lead the regeneration of the town centre, and give Paisley a confident, outward-facing profile. The Museum alone is projected to be worth over £79m to the local economy by 2049, which is essential given the social and economic need of the local area.

Detailed analysis indicates that local people will benefit from the project as a result of:

- a. 250 volunteer placements and 300 training opportunities
- b. 1,250 early years children attending formal learning sessions annually
- c. Over 7,000 school pupils attending formal learning sessions annually
- d. Over 2,000 further education students utilising the Museum annually

With a population of just over 77,000, Paisley has been impacted by decades of economic decline after losing the industry which defined it. Today 34,000 residents live in deprivation and one in three of its children live in poverty. The ambitious plans for the Museum and the town signal a fresh commitment to caring for our cultural heritage and using it to help revitalise the town centre and its communities. When asked if there was a project in the UK that stood out in the way it was helping to unite fractured communities The Wolfson Foundation CEO, Paul Ramsbottom OBE said, '*Paisley Museum will place its collection right at the heart of Paisley's identity. It speaks about the way in which it can draw the community together and the way in which museums and collections can work in an area of relative deprivation as a real positive.*'

In recent years, the Museum fell into disrepair and urgent action was required. Structural defects placed the Category A listed building and its collection at risk due to persistent water ingress. Should appropriate action not have been taken there was a real risk that the building and its collection would have been damaged beyond repair. The refurbished campus will include the Museum, Observatory, Observatory House, Transit House and the Philosophical buildings. The last three will be made easily accessible to the public for the first time. Prior to

its temporary closure the town's Library was attached to the Museum. The Library is being relocated to a new-fit-for purpose location on Paisley's High Street. The vacated space will add to the Museum's publicly accessible footprint.

A summary of the most significant building alterations is listed below:

- a. Repair of all buildings, allowing significant re-interpretation of the collection
- b. A world-class new build extension, housing accessible visitor reception and café
- c. A relocated and revitalised shop
- d. Landscaped area to the west and rear of the Museum
- e. Compensatory interactive experience in Observatory
- f. Resolution of physical access and circulation issues
- g. Installation of new efficient mechanical and electrical plant systems

In 2019, we announced that the internationally renowned and award-winning architect practice, AL_A would help us reimagine Paisley Museum. AL_A has transformed cultural venues across the globe, most notably London's V&A Exhibition Road Quarter, therefore it was a significant coup for Paisley. Stirling Prize winner and owner of AL_A, Amanda Levete, described the PMR project brief as one of the most exciting she had ever read and reinforced that the ambitious investment in Paisley Museum and the wider town has clear outcomes for place, people and communities, '*The project is bigger than the building itself. This is not only about finding the way to best show the Museum's collection, it's also about showing the world how an ambitious cultural project can have a profound impact on a community and its identity*' (Amanda Levete, 2019). A short film clip of Levete talking about the project is included with this information pack.

Project Outcomes

Conservation of Architectural Heritage

The project will safeguard and improve the campus buildings by:

- a. Revealing and restoring the significant historic architecture and fabric
- b. Reinstating rooflights where possible bringing back natural daylight
- c. Restoring the historic top lit gallery spaces
- d. Revealing the Mackintosh features which were previously unknown to visitors
- e. Making alterations to connect Museum and Observatory

Introduction Gallery

This will set the scene for visitors and provide a framework to consider the stories within the rest of their visit. We will capture personal responses to Paisley's heritage and culture and in doing so will provide a multi-layered tour of Paisley and Renfrewshire's development. This approach allows us to raise awareness hidden stories including some of the less tangible heritage of the area e.g. transatlantic slavery, the witch trials as well as what it is like to live and work in Paisley or Renfrewshire now.

The Heritage Archive Centre

Previously located in original Library, the centre will introduce users to its key resources and will be more welcoming and less like a traditional library. The threshold between the galleries and the Centre will be blurred, with displays, lounge seating and digital means all helping to encourage interaction and research whilst removing barriers to participation. Objects displayed in this space will highlight resources held in the archives and will encourage exploration by showing stories and new perspectives revealed by objects and archival material.

The Garden Gallery

This extension will deliver a 'wow' moment for visitors and create a unique social space blurring the boundaries between the Museum and the external landscape. From inside, visitors will see the Observatory framed through the round skylight.

The Factory Hall

This space will create a vibrant entrance and the sheer scale of the space will allow us to place large-scale objects such as hanging tapestries above the visitors eyeline. The Interactive Weaving Studio is an exciting addition and its development has been led by our exhibition designers, OPERA Amsterdam.

Learning Spaces

We will have two dedicated spaces. Learning Space 1 will be tailored for schools, community groups and evening events. In addition to hosting presentations it will provide a space for low-mess programming and quieter/reflective activities. Learning Space 2 is in the former Philosophical Society Building and visitors will see it on their way to the Observatory. The space overlooks the garden and will have a Learning Studio and a Makers Space.

The Galleries

In the heart of the Museum building there are a range of historic galleries such as Galleries 1-5, Pillar Gallery, Textile Studio Space, Sculpture Court, Balcony Gallery and the Rotunda. The general arrangement for all galleries is now complete therefore we know what displays will be in each space. The final arrangement is based on factors such as vistas, mixing collection types, conservation & collections management and wayfinding opportunities. As well as our 100-story led displays these galleries will allow us to display high density and high impact objects such as our ceramics, sculptures, shawls, natural history artefacts, musical instruments and paintings.

The Museum Cafe

The café will have 60 covers and will be a social space enjoyed by families, groups and individuals. A picnic area close to the café and Garden is also available to visitors. The addition of the Museum Garden/Outdoor Terrace allows the Museum to create a unique green space within Paisley town centre supporting and sustaining wildlife. It will be a place for people to meet socially, participate in organised activities, enjoy purchases from the café or enjoy a picnic.

The Observatory

The Observatory, which is the oldest public observatory in Scotland, will become better integrated into the museum campus and free access will be given to all visitors. We will interpret both the building and the scientific collections. Displays relating to the story of the Observatory and activities such as scientific recording, measurement and learning that historically took place there will occupy the ground floor. We will offer a compensatory experience for visitors unable to access the telescope on the top floor. For the first time the public will have access to the Oakshaw and Philosophical Buildings which are situated to the rear of the Museum.

Excellent Interpretation of Permanent Collections of National Significance

Audience research carried out between 2016-18 indicated that a lack of changing content was a significant reason for not revisiting the Museum. PMR will address this by telling the previously untold stories hidden within the remarkable collection, with around 100 story-led displays, an introductory gallery, high density displays, high impact objects, key attractions, trail stories, and the interpretation of the Museum's historical spaces. This includes full digital integration, a 100% increase in the number of objects on display and flexible display systems. Our award winning (European Museum of the Year 2019) exhibition designers – OPERA Amsterdam – will deliver agile, multi-sensory, interactive exhibitions that change regularly in direct response to audience consultation.

Our story-led displays, including 10 that will be co-produced, are grouped around four concepts:

1. Paisley and its Pattern
2. Paisley Beyond the Pattern
3. Paisley and Scotland;

4. Paisley and the World

Within each concept, we explore five recurring themes:

1. **Radical:** Embracing the idea that anyone can exercise ‘the rightful occupancy of the intellectual terrain’ and in doing so question and challenge accepted norms.
2. **Pioneering:** Exploration, innovation and invention across pursuits in art, technology and natural history, through history and in the present day.
3. **Productive:** Skill, ability and talent has supported many different industries, trades and types of production.
4. **Curious:** Curiosity about the world and a desire to explore it through arts, culture, literature and science.
5. **Community:** The creation of community cohesion through shared values and notions of identity. This includes building community across borders, countries and continents.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund stated that our approach to co-production is ‘*sector leading*’ and that our storytelling and interpretation plans were of the highest quality and engaging. As an interpretative method, storytelling helps the audience connect with the collection on a deeper level by focusing on specific relatable narratives that objects can tell. This mirrors the way visitors interact with objects in everyday life and removes the hierarchical boundaries that traditional museum curatorial practice creates.

Increased Community & Visitor Engagement

To help develop the initial Project Brief, the team liaised with local communities and that engagement will continue for the duration of the project. In response to the Project Brief and visitor consultation, AL_A produced a design that focused on access, recognising the importance of outdoor and indoor spaces as being equal and providing multiple opportunities for engagement with the campus. This approach will help us deliver a fully accessible cultural facility that enhances audience development by virtue of being made in collaboration with its community.

Our Activity Plan was created with the support of identified audience groups and was designed to capture their input in the redevelopment process and encourage a clear sense of community ownership. When Covid-19 struck we needed to understand and respond to the potentially changing priorities of our audiences as result of the pandemic. During 2020 we engaged in a listening exercise using a semi-structured interview method. We heard from nearly 70 local organisations, community groups and stakeholders about their work and the challenges they face. We thematically analysed the conversations and identified priorities including tackling social isolation and youth empowerment. In 2021 we have returned to groups with our findings and offered opportunities to be actively involved in co-creating the public programme. This approach ensures that the Museum doesn’t just survive but is an integral part of the town’s recovery.

Learning Programme

Dedicated Learning Spaces

By ‘Learning Spaces’ we mean discreet, enclosed area (i.e. four walls and door entry) within which staff, facilitators, volunteers, groups leaders and others can run or host sessions including meetings, activities and events. These are not ‘meeting rooms’ although they may on occasion be used for meetings by local groups such as the Paisley Astronomical Society amongst others.

The values of our Learning Spaces will create a: fun, experimental and empowering environment. They will also help to deliver our aim of creating Hubs that will be:

- Social: a community resource and a space where people can meet informally to socialise, or network and participate in activities with like-minded people
- Creative: a space where people can play, experiment and participate in hands-on activities that encourage creative learning, exploration and outputs.
- Innovative: our Learning Spaces will provide opportunities to make, create and innovate using techniques and resources inspired by the Museum collections.
- Knowledge & Skills: spaces where people will take part in activities that encourage them to learn new skills and to increase their knowledge and sense of curiosity about the world around them.

There will be two dedicated Learning Spaces and a Makers Space within the new museum campus

Project Evaluation Process

An Audience Research Officer has been appointed to lead the evaluation process. The Officer provides support and training to the wider team to ensure that evaluation and consultation is embedded within our practice. During the development phase we wrote our project Evaluation Strategy which details our evaluation practices and how they will contribute towards achieving and measuring project aims. The Strategy outlines how we will use audience engagement (advisory focus groups, surveys, interviews) and prototyping (display elements, digital interpretation, facilities, and interactives). This evaluation covers both formative and summative stages of the project. In addition, our management processes encourage a reflective practice with opportunities to evaluate and review.

Increasing Visitor Figures by 100%

Prior to its temporary closure, the Museum averaged 36,500 visitors annually. We anticipate that visitor figures will show a minimum fourfold increase, before settling at 125,000 visits per annum by 2026 (3 years post-opening). This figure does not include formal learning programme attendees. We hope to grow our local visitors both within the local area and in the Greater Glasgow area, to 88,000 annual visits (70%). This will be achieved through a combination of new co-produced displays, an exciting range of activities, greatly enhanced retail and a destination café. Through the development of new activities and targeted marketing we will grow the Scottish market to 26,000 p.a. (20%) and the non-national market to 14,000 (11%). This includes niche market areas such as academic research, textile-trail tourism, and coach, cruise and air-travellers – Glasgow Airport is 2 miles from the Museum.

We are currently developing a strategy for repeat visitors. The strategy is based on visitor research which includes an understanding of visitor needs and expectations post-Covid19. This strategy will help us establish motivational factors, with a focus on:

- a. High quality public programming that maximises use of our new public spaces.
- b. Planned schedule of changing story displays bringing new objects and stories to light.
- c. Collaboration with partner organisations across arts, culture and heritage sectors to bring new activities, programmes and displays to the museum.

Project Timetable

The Project Brief and preparation stage commenced in May 2017. This was followed by the Concept and Developed Design stages in 2018, and Technical Design in August 2019. Construction work is due to begin in June 2021 with completion in December 2022. Exhibition fit-out work will begin December 2021 and the museum will fully open during autumn 2023.

Project Management Overview

Renfrewshire Leisure operates and manages Paisley Museum and the PMR project on behalf of Renfrewshire Council. The project is subject to governance and monitoring by the Council and

major public funders: National Lottery Heritage Fund, Scottish Government and Historic Environment Scotland. Renfrewshire Council operates a Prince 2 methodology to deliver the project and the Chief Executive (Sandra Black) has overall responsibility for the project. Renfrewshire Leisure's Chief Executive (Dr Victoria Hollows) is the Senior Responsible Officer.

The Project Director (Kirsty Devine) manages the wider team and has the overall responsibility for the vision and strategy to establish Paisley Museum as an innovative, international-class visitor destination, creating a high quality visitor experience that engages the local community and supports the aspirations of Renfrewshire Council and Renfrewshire Leisure, which connects to the wider museums and collections service.

Fundraising Overview

To-date, £37m (88%) of the project cost has been secured/pledged via funding from statutory bodies:

- £24.1m - Renfrewshire Council
- £4.9m - National Lottery Heritage Fund
- £4m - Scottish Government – Regeneration Capital Grant Fund
- £2m - Scottish Government
- £2m - Historic Environment Scotland (*pledged*)

This commitment gave us the confidence to undertake the £5m capital campaign. The Fundraising Strategy was created and agreed by internal stakeholders in 2019 and deploys a traditional 'big gift' campaign to engage individuals and grant makers capable of making significant investments. To help support this work we have recruited Patrons and developed a well-connected professional network. Two Patrons of note include Scotland's leading artist and screen writer, John Byrne and globally renowned fashion designer, Pam Hogg. Both John and Pam were born in Paisley.

Fundraising Update

Further details at: reimagined.paisleymuseum.org

APPENDIX 1: Collection Overview

The Museum holds the world's largest and most representative collection of Paisley shawls. The **Textile** collections are a key part of the UK's design and industrial heritage, and at the heart of the town's stories. This Recognised Collection of National Significance comprises 1200 Paisley shawls, working looms, pattern and design books, and textile production technology, telling the story of the Paisley Pattern and shawl industry in Paisley. Pictured right is the Kashmir Shawl, an important example of Indian design and craftsmanship, and the Chinese Fairytale Shawl, showcasing an unprecedented level of perfection in textile design and technology.

The **World Cultures** collection has 2,000 objects from all over the globe, reflecting the area's wealthy past and its subsequent relationships with Empire, trade and the world. Highlights include an Assyrian wall panel from Ashurnasirpal II's North West Palace in Nimrud. The palace has been destroyed in recent years due to conflict in the area. We have a significant collection of material from Ancient Egypt which includes objects showing evidence of Egyptian everyday life as well as attitudes to death. The Ancient Egypt collection also reflects Paisley Museum actively funding Egypt Exploration Society excavations at Amarna in 1923. Within the Pacific collections are two Staff Gods carved to depict a deity or god from the Cook Islands. There are estimated to be less than 15 of these remaining in the world.

The **Art** collection is dominated by significant Scottish art from the 19th and 20th centuries although it also features English and Continental oil paintings including the Balgonie Altarpiece (one of the few remaining pieces of pre-Reformation church furnishing left in Scotland). Our collection includes work by the 'Glasgow Boys', many of whom had a connection with Paisley and work that inspired this group from the Barbizon School, including Corot, Courbet, Diaz and the Scottish Colourists. The Museum holds the biggest single collection of work by James Elder Christie in the UK. *Pictured right: 'The Stonebreaker' by Sir James Guthrie.* The unofficial leader of the 'Glasgow Boys', this experimental painting was first worked on by Guthrie in Kirkcudbright in the 1880s when the movement was at its most creative. Guthrie chose to live and work in Scottish rural towns, aiming to represent the labour and life of a single village. The 'Glasgow Boys' were innovators in Scottish art, following in the footsteps of the 'Barbizon School' by painting outdoors and adopting new approaches to subject matter and technique.

The **Contemporary** collection includes paintings and sculptures by John Byrne (Patron of Paisley Museum Reimagined), Steven Campbell and Claire Barclay. Paintings have been loaned to America, Mexico, Japan, Germany, France and UK institutions such as National Galleries Scotland and Tate Britain. Artists of Renfrewshire origin, such as Barclay and Gallaccio, are represented, as well as other British and international artists. Many works in the contemporary collection challenge the conventional categories of 'fine' and 'applied' art. Our contemporary and Scottish art collection will feature in Story Displays (Pick A Mango, Stephen Campbell's Golden City, works by Pat Douthwaite, Ian Passmore and John Byrne). These artefacts will also feature as High-Impact Objects at strategic points around the building, including Nina Saunders Duckling near the entrance, two works by Hanneline Visnes on the staircase, works by Claire Barclay in the bright new connecting space between the Balcony Gallery and the Studio Gallery.

The **Studio Ceramic** collection is one of the best collections of 20th century studio ceramics in Scotland and in the top ten of British collections. One highlight is the porcelain bottle created by Dame Lucie Rie (1902-1995). We hold many objects by Dame Lucie Rie in our permanent collections, and her restrained forms reflect the contemporary modernist style of sculpture and architecture. We plan to display our ceramics in the new contemplative space known as, The Garden Room, which has a large picture window with views to the outside and the Italianate former Orr Square Church. The space will contain High-Density Displays showcasing some of

the best of the ceramics collection, selected by Glasgow School of Art lecturer and ceramicist Katy West.

The Museum has a significant **Natural History** collection covering the main science areas of geology, botany and zoology. It plays an important part in illustrating the enormous diversity of plant and animal species found on Earth and is a cornerstone for scientific research and public engagement. The museum holds all four volumes of the *Birds of America* by John James Audubon, one of the most desirable and spectacular natural history books ever produced, as well as a complete collection of the pioneering nine-volume *American Ornithology* by Paisley born Alexander Wilson. The image on the right shows Volume 1 of Wilson's *American Ornithology*. This work was the first significant publication to attempt to scientifically document all the birds of North America, the result of which awarded Wilson the international title of 'Father of America Ornithology'. The Wilson material held by Paisley is surpassed only by Harvard University's collection.

The **Social History** collection reflects the diverse aspects of life from the 17th century onwards. They include agricultural and domestic material common to lowland Scotland, and objects connected with the area's industrial base such as the textile, engineering and food processing industries. It includes examples of technology such as Scotland's first telephone which was built by two local enthusiasts – James Reid and William Holmes – in 1877 shortly after Alexander Graham Bell built his model in 1867. The Museum holds a unique set of medieval manuscripts including The Paisley Abbey Chartulary, Arbuthnott Manuscripts and Paisley Burgh Charter.

The **Science and Technology** collections hold important collections of late 19th century astronomical equipment. Examples include works by some of the most renowned instrument makers of the time, including Howard Grubb (telescope), Adam Hilger (orrery, spectroscopes) and R & J Beck (microscopes). In addition to the astronomical instruments are meteorological and seismological recording equipment and clocks and other timepieces by Ritchies of Edinburgh. The image on the right was taken of the Coats Observatory telescope during the decanting process in 2018.

The collections are now located at the purpose-built and award-winning stores, **The Secret Collection**. The facility has enabled us to store the temporary decant of objects from Paisley Museum and allows us to offer free daily public tours. For the first time, our Curatorial team now has the environment to undertake a full review of the collection, which is exciting news for our future interpretation plans.