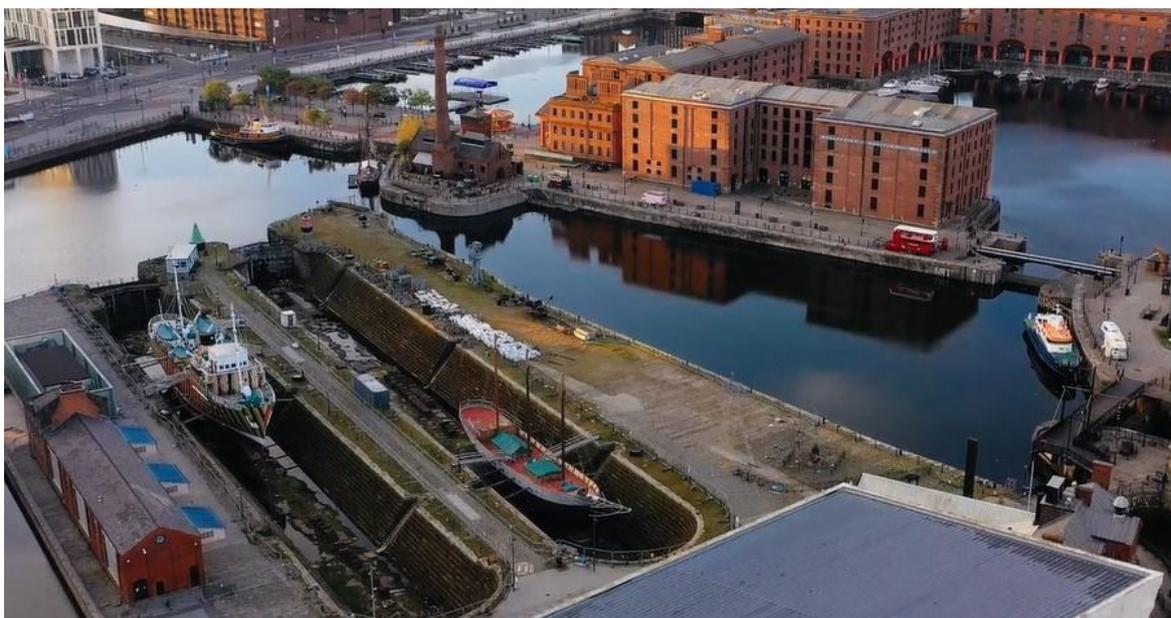


WATERFRONT TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Announcement of long-term plans for transformational projects on Liverpool's waterfront



Aerial view of the Waterfront / Canning Dock © National Museums Liverpool

National Museums Liverpool (NML) – the largest cultural organisation in the North West - has announced it will be launching a high-profile design competition in March as part of a 10-year masterplan of transformation of Liverpool's waterfront.

The organisation of eight museums and galleries is seeking to appoint a multi-disciplinary team to be part of the area's development and embark on the landmark project to enhance a key part of the city's historic waterfront. Spanning the area between the Royal Albert Dock and Mann Island, the transformation project will take in key landmarks linking back to Liverpool's prominence as one of the world's greatest and busiest trading ports in the 18th century.

A masterplan study was undertaken by a team led by Feilden Clegg Bradley (FCB) Studios in 2019 to explore the potential of the site over a 10-year period. Included in the long-term plans are the repurposing of multiple buildings and docks including the Canning Graving Docks, to breathe new life into an area that once played a role in the fitting out, cleaning and repairing of ships, including those used in the transatlantic slave trade, central to Liverpool's economy at the time.

The competition led by Colander Associates, will seek to appoint a multi-disciplinary team for the development of the public spaces, raising the profile of the area whilst responding to the history of the site, developing new pedestrian routes, and allowing for more commercial and cultural opportunities on the waterfront, further enhancing the area alongside the hugely popular Royal Albert Dock. The brief will encourage a diverse team of architects, engineers, artists, and other creative people – embracing and fully reflecting Liverpool and the wider City Region demographic. NML will work closely with Colander to run an inclusive design competition and appoint a team that demonstrates their commitment to diversity.

Plans for new pedestrian bridges will create a cohesive connectivity and increased accessibility in the area, and the highlight of the building transformations will be the redevelopment of the Dr Martin Luther King Jr Building – formerly the Dock Traffic Office – which stands as a major iconic focal point of the Royal Albert Dock and will provide a dramatic and prominent entrance to the city's International Slavery Museum (ISM).

Laura Pye, Director of National Museums Liverpool, said: “We’re thrilled to start the new year with news of our ambitions for our Waterfront Transformation Project. The public realm between the Royal Albert Dock and Mann Island represents a huge opportunity for development and this project will be a big step towards enabling the public and our communities to share, enjoy and engage with this incredibly rich heritage.

“With the launch of our placemaking competition in March, we hope to reinvent some of Liverpool’s much-loved public spaces and create an exciting, welcoming, and engaging environment for the benefit of the museums, our visitors, colleagues and the many businesses in the area and wider city, whilst enabling the stories told at our three waterfront museums to also be visible beyond our buildings.”

Currently housed on the third floor of the Maritime Museum (MM), the plan to evolve the International Slavery Museum (ISM) is central to the Waterfront Transformation Project, expanding the museum into the adjacent Dr Martin Luther King Jr Building; giving it a front door of its own that is immediately visible to every visitor entering the Royal Albert Dock.

The transformation will also extend into the Maritime Museum, as gallery spaces and narratives around Liverpool’s maritime history will be developed and evolved to support and complement ISM, along with a new special exhibition space, community spaces and shared facilities that will create a seamless visitor experience between both museums.

Head of the International Slavery Museum, Dr Richard Benjamin said: “Liverpool became the epicentre of the transatlantic slave trade, hence the importance of the stories we tell and the work we do at the International Slavery Museum. This exciting and timely transformation project will allow the Museum to grow, develop and be central to national and global discourses. These include racial inequality, other legacies of transatlantic slavery, being actively anti-racist, diverse, and inclusive.

“Utilising the iconic Dr Martin Luther King Jr Building is key to this as we can create new spaces that are community-focused, educational, welcoming, and thought-provoking. Social movements and the growing discussion of Britain’s role in the slave trade have changed the urgency for this discourse and involvement.”

The Royal Albert Dock is a powerful location for the International Slavery Museum to tell not only Liverpool’s story, but also the global story of slavery in an historical context and in current times. The expansion of the International Slavery Museum will create a much stronger, physical presence on the waterfront, symbolising the city’s commitment to addressing its ties to the transatlantic slave trade, and framing how visitors understand the history of the docks and the built environment surrounding them.

As a visitor attraction, the Royal Albert Dock is a major driver for the region’s visitor economy. Its appeal combines a visually stunning location and strong culture and leisure offer with a powerful heritage narrative as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Waterfront which will benefit further from National Museums Liverpool’s plans to develop the neighbouring area and a portfolio of buildings; all very much part of the area’s incredible history. Inspired by feasibility work carried out by MICA Architects and local firm Harrison Stringfellow, NML will activate these buildings as part of their sustainability plans to increase dwell time and the visitor economy on the waterfront, helping to generate more income streams to support the organisation’s important work.

Laura Pye continues: “Our aim will be to create a vibrant, active, and public water space that has long term flexibility of use and to utilise the surrounding redundant quaysides to complement existing developments and create a solid foundation for the future. We are actively seeking partners to work with in our smaller buildings, and to help further develop the

offer and enhance the area alongside the hugely popular Royal Albert Dock. We also want to re-engage local communities and empower volunteers with research skills to bring this significant and incredibly rich part of the waterfront back to life. It's something for everyone to be involved in from the outset, so we look forward to appointing innovative designers who thrive on collaboration, to work closely with local people to make our plans a reality."

As well as attracting tourists, driving urban regeneration, regional and social economic growth, the ambitious plans have been accelerated by the continuing presence of Covid-19. With many of us remaining close to home and exploring places we have previously overlooked, the pandemic has demonstrated that locations should become better places to inhabit, as well as visit. National Museums Liverpool's Waterfront Transformation Project will be inviting, inclusive and relevant, contributing to the placemaking and regeneration of the city with a development that people can be proud to have on their doorstep.

The project will also respond to the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, where the powerful outcry for ending racism among a string of other injustices has been amplified. National Museums Liverpool will ensure that Black lives matter in *all* spaces, and this will play a pivotal role in the development, with local people helping shape its vision and programme, ensuring the waterfront is a place for everyone, representative of the cultures, communities, and creativity of Liverpool City Region and beyond.

- Ends -

FURTHER INFORMATION

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High-res [images](#)

Notes to editors:

About National Museums Liverpool

National Museums Liverpool comprises eight venues, including some of the most visited museums in England outside of London. Our collections are among the most important and varied in Europe and contain everything from Impressionist paintings and rare beetles to a lifejacket from the Titanic. We attracted more than 3 million visitors in 2019. Our venues are Museum of Liverpool, World Museum, Walker Art Gallery, Merseyside Maritime Museum, International Slavery Museum, Seized!, Sudley House and Lady Lever Art Gallery. National Museums Liverpool is regulated by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Museums and galleries regulated by DCMS are exempt charities under Schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011. Registered Office: World Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool L3 8EN. www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

About Colander Associates and the competition

In December 2020, National Museums Liverpool appointed Colander Associates to be the design competition providers. They will work closely with NML to articulate the ambitions for an enlarged and enhanced waterfront visitor destination. The competition will be launched in March 2021 and will be officially advertised on the Government's e-notification service, Find A Tender.

The competition will be supported by £120,000 of funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, as part of the Race Equality Programme launched by Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham last year. In December, it was announced that the International Slavery Museum would receive £55,000 to take forward the first stage of its pre-development funding – the first step of the Waterfront Transformation Project, which will see NML realise long-held ambitions

for the museum. Details of the competition will also be published and promoted through NML's and Colander Associates website and social media channels in March 2021. A dedicated portal for competitors will be established on the Colander website. www.colander.co.uk/

About MICA

MICA is a leading international architectural and masterplanning practice with a track record in arts, education, and cultural destinations. Based in London, Oxford and Edinburgh, we work across all sectors and scales with a specialism in the transformation of national museums, arts centres and waterfront environments: including the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, Fairfield Halls in Croydon, and the regeneration of Southbank Centre in London, one of the world's largest cultural complexes. MICA were crowned the Building Design Architect of the Year in 2020 for their work on a rich and varied portfolio. micaarchitects.com/

About Harrison Stringfellow Architects

Harrison Stringfellow Architects are a creative, enterprising practice, based in Liverpool, working throughout the UK. We have undertaken projects for a myriad of clients ranging from large organisations to smaller social enterprises and independents. In 2020 we were awarded the MacEwen Award for our work for Park Palace Ponies.

MICA and Harrison Stringfellow were appointed by NML in November 2020 to progress a feasibility study into the potential to rejuvenate a number of its smaller waterfront buildings, creating exciting, social, and flexible spaces. harrisonstringfellow.co.uk/

About Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios (FCBStudios) is an architectural and urban design practice with an international reputation for design quality, for pioneering environmental expertise and a progressive architectural approach. The practice started small 40 years ago and continues to be committed to social and humanistic values in their work and is experienced in designing for education, housing, masterplanning and urban design as well as places for art and the creative reuse of historic buildings. We believe excellence in design can facilitate change, improvement, and transformation in society. fcbstudios.com/