

3rd June 2024

Preparing for our roof replacement

We are undertaking a significant project to improve the condition of our museum building to protect our collections for future generations. This is really exciting news for the museum but it will have an impact on our visitor experience so we will do our best to be transparent.

In March 2024 we received the news that our bid for just over £1.1m to the 'MEND' fund was successful. The museum is contributing 20% of the total project costs from our own reserve funds.

For years our team has been fighting water ingress, mould and pests in our collections, threatening their condition and draining our resources. At one point our team was emptying buckets of water daily from stores - including Christmas Day! Throughout 2023 the whole team came together to clean, pack and move over 2,000 animal skulls and a whole library of books, all affected by poor building conditions. This process has been very expensive and taken up all of our time, delaying much anticipated redisplay projects. The MEND project will allow us to redirect our time and money to research and development projects which we have been promising to deliver for some time.

What will the works do?

The program of works includes completely replacing the museum roofs, including removing some roof lanterns. We will also replace the floor in galleries 2 and 3 (these contain the Kashmir dioramas and jungle dioramas). Other works include extensive internal and external repairs to windows, guttering, drainage and decoration.

Protecting the objects

As part of our application, we created a risk register that prioritises preventing potential risks to our collections both on display and in storage. It became obvious to us that we would not be able to move any of the animals in the dioramas without damaging them. We also consider part of the value of the dioramas is



QUEX PARK, BIRCHINGTON, KENT CT7 0BH T: 01843 842168 WWW.POWELL-COTTONMUSEUM.ORG E: ENQUIRIES@POWELL-COTTONMUSEUM.ORG

that they have never been moved or changed. They are some of the oldest untouched dioramas in the world! Therefore, the main risk we will look to mitigate is transferred vibration. We are working with a specialist company to provide us with equipment to monitor this and we will have to cover the glass with boarding as the works progress. We don't know at this stage how long each diorama will be off public display but we will inform our visitors as soon as this becomes clear.

Smaller objects in cases will be protected either in situ or removed temporarily. This will allow us the opportunity to check the condition of high-level objects and undertake any cleaning or conservation they might require. Some of this work has already been done and visitors will notice their absence.

Project Timeline

The works are scheduled to start on site in July 2024. The principal contractor will arrive on site and begin to set up. In the weeks leading up to this, we will carefully plan what safe access in the museum we will be allowed to have both for staff and visitors. As soon as we have a clear indication of the detailed schedule of access and works, we will communicate this with our visitors through this website and our social media channels.

July – December 2024 Phase 1. Includes the roofs over galleries 1,2 and 3, internal and external works.

March 2025 – June 2025 Phase 2. Includes the roofs over galleries 4, 5, 6 and 7, internal and external works.

The detail of the sequence of works will be decided by the principal contractor once they are appointed. When we have this information, we will be able to plan the impact on the visitor experience in more detail.

Weddings and Felicity's Café

We are working closely with New Steps Two, the company that operates [Felicity's Café](#) and [Weddings at Quex](#) to minimise the impact on their customers. We have considered the location of the contractor's cabins and welfare facilities and ensured they will not affect Quex House and any wedding photos. Hoarding will be attractively designed and include information about the project. Car parking will be reduced but we will ensure our disabled parking spaces remain available and that a drop-off point is located by the café for anyone who can't walk long distances. Quex Park Estates company have advised that overflow parking just outside the museum car park will be available to all visitors. The café and weddings will continue to operate as normal so please support their business through this time.



Day Visits

We are sure that visits to Quex House and Gardens will continue as normal at weekends and bank holidays. Providing it is safe, we will also offer museum visits and tours to as many galleries as possible. It is likely that some galleries will be closed for a while but we don't expect them all to be closed at the same time. We have been planning some wonderful events and workshops for our visitors and we hope you will keep visiting us to support the museum throughout this project. Our ticket price will still be very good value at £4 for an adult.

New displays to look forward to

We will unveil three wonderful new interpretation projects when we reopen for the new season in February 2025. Working with community advisors, international specialists and community representatives, we have researched and selected a range of objects in our Ugandan, Kenyan and Ethiopian collections which will now join our permanent exhibitions. Some of these objects were in storage and will now be seen by visitors for the first time. Thoughtful and interesting stories will accompany these displays, giving our visitors an understanding of their use and significance. Our natural history dioramas will be exactly the same but the interpretation boards accompanying them will be updated to give new and more accessible information. We have been working on these projects and we will be proud to finally have the opportunity to present them to our visitors.

We want to say thank you to all our visitors and project partners who have supported us and continue to stand by us as we work hard to care for our collection and preserve it for future generations to learn from. If you have any questions before our next update, please email enquiries@powell-cottonmuseum.org and if we have any additional information we will be happy to share it with you.

Project Partners:

[MacConvilles Surveying](#)

[Lee-Evans Partnership](#)

[Bickerdike Allen](#)



QUEX PARK, BIRCHINGTON, KENT CT7 0BH T: 01843 842168 WWW.POWELL-COTTONMUSEUM.ORG E: ENQUIRIES@POWELL-COTTONMUSEUM.ORG
[Caroline Taylor Consulting](#)

Thanks to the MEND fund, administered by Arts Council England.

