The Exhibition Road Building Project will create a state of the art underground gallery for V&A exhibitions, a magnificent courtyard space and a new entrance from Exhibition Road on the west side of the Museum. This will all be set within the beautiful historical facades of the V&A’s Grade 1 listed buildings, which have never been open on public view.

We are committed to keeping the local community and visitors informed throughout the project’s construction before it opens to the public in 2017. Information is displayed on the site hoarding, updated at vam.ac.uk/futureplan, and through our project blog featuring contributions from the design team, Wates (our main contractors), and other project team members. The public display located in Gallery 20 has been de-installed so that refurbishment of the Ho Family Foundation Galleries of Buddhist Art can commence. We look forward to relocating some of the visuals, models, and images of current construction progress and artwork elsewhere in the Museum and will update staff and visitors on a new location.

Main Construction Update

Autumn 2016

We are pleased to report that construction activities are progressing well, and a number of key milestones have been achieved on site after a busy and productive summer. In mid-June, the tower crane that presided over the site for two years, facilitating excavation and delivering tonnes of concrete and steel for the build was dismantled. This enabled the removal of the remaining temporary props within the underground spaces, allowed completion of the new shop floor and allowed Wates to begin the process of laying over 11,000 square metres of tiles to the V&A in late September. In October, following final surface works and completion of the steps leading to the new entrance, another team of contractors will begin laying over 14,000 bespoke, handmade porcelain tiles on the courtyard and cafe roof. This is one of the most anticipated phases of the project so far and will be carefully documented throughout. Alongside main construction, procurement of security equipment, IT, special object monitoring equipment, storage and bespoke fixtures and finishes, fixtures and fittings later this year. The mezzanine cloakrooms and toilets are currently being constructed, all lifts – including the art lift measuring 6 metres in length – have been fitted and are in operation, and activities continue on the courtyard in preparation for laying of the courtyard tiles. In the entrance lobby, the bespoke Italian mosaics, which create a dialogue with the historic floors around the museum, are being meticulously laid and the support structure for the balustrade to the feature staircase leading down to the gallery is being constructed.

Future Works

You may have noticed the construction of scaffolding behind the site hoarding on Exhibition Road. Over the next six months, the stones of the Aston Webb Screen will return from secure storage for careful reconstruction in their original location to form a series of arches allowing access to the courtyard and Museum spaces beyond. Specialist contractors PAYE continue to mobilise on site, and will begin transporting the listed stonework to the V&A in late September. In October, following final surface works and completion of the steps leading to the new entrance, another team of contractors will begin laying over 14,000 bespoke, handmade porcelain tiles on the courtyard and cafe roof. This is one of the most anticipated phases of the project so far and will be carefully documented throughout. Alongside main construction, procurement of security equipment, IT, special object monitoring equipment, storage and bespoke fixtures and finishes has commenced and is being managed by the V&A team. The return of the Sackler Centre for Arts Education is also being programmed with Wates’ anticipated completion dates and will be reopened with the new project spaces next year.
How will the local area be affected by the works in Autumn 2016?

There are a number of activities occurring over September involving scaffold installation for the Aston Webb Screen, scaffold removals from the exhibition gallery as well as changes to deliveries of materials to site.

To relieve congestion around the main site entrance and mitigate risk to pedestrians and cyclists on Exhibition Road, scaffold removal is taking place via the V&A Science Gate out of site working hours, from 18.00 to 02.00. These evenings of late work will occur on Tuesdays and Thursdays and are expected to take three to four weeks. On these Tuesdays and Thursdays, Wates will temporarily store scaffoldings in front of the gated hoarding near the RCA block from 2pm for evening pick up. There will be a small motor running during lifting operations and all operatives will be thoroughly briefed on methods and noise restrictions prior to works commencing. Emergency access will be maintained at all times and a manager will be in contact with the V&A Control Room each night of work. All lifting methods and hours of work have been approved by RBKC.

With the installation of the scaffolding behind the site hoarding, delivery methods will be amended for the duration of the build. This is to ease congestion on Exhibition Road and prevent risk to pedestrians and cyclists. Wates’ new traffic management plan proposes reverse access for lorries, hi- and flatbed trucks to the Science Gate out of site working hours, from 18.00 to 02.00. These evenings of late work will occur on Tuesdays and Thursdays and are expected to take three to four weeks. On these Tuesdays and Thursdays, Wates will temporarily store scaffoldings in front of the gated hoarding near the RCA block from 2pm for evening pick up. There will be a small motor running during lifting operations and all operatives will be thoroughly briefed on methods and noise restrictions prior to works commencing. Emergency access will be maintained at all times and a manager will be in contact with the V&A Control Room each night of work. All lifting methods and hours of work have been approved by RBKC.

How will the local area be affected by the works in Autumn 2016?

There are a number of activities occurring over September involving scaffold installation for the Aston Webb Screen, scaffold removals from the exhibition gallery as well as changes to deliveries of materials to site.

To relieve congestion around the main site entrance and mitigate risk to pedestrians and cyclists on Exhibition Road, scaffold removal is taking place via the V&A Science Gate out of site working hours, from 18.00 to 02.00. These evenings of late work will occur on Tuesdays and Thursdays and are expected to take three to four weeks. On these Tuesdays and Thursdays, Wates will temporarily store scaffoldings in front of the gated hoarding near the RCA block from 2pm for evening pick up. There will be a small motor running during lifting operations and all operatives will be thoroughly briefed on methods and noise restrictions prior to works commencing. Emergency access will be maintained at all times and a manager will be in contact with the V&A Control Room each night of work. All lifting methods and hours of work have been approved by RBKC.

With the installation of the scaffolding behind the site hoarding, delivery methods will be amended for the duration of the build. This is to ease congestion on Exhibition Road and prevent risk to pedestrians and cyclists. Wates’ new traffic management plan proposes reverse access for lorries, hi-ab and flatbed trucks to the Science Gate when access is not feasible through the Secretariat Entrance (should they arrive during a Wates delivery).

In addition to the above, Wates’ Traffic marshals and banksmen will be present at all times during access through the Science Gate and will have barrier controls in place to ensure everyone’s safety. They will also assist in directing traffic on the back road if required. Please do not attempt to access the Science Gate when Wates vehicles are moving through this entrance, and banksmen are present. We would also be extremely grateful if any non-urgent deliveries could be re-scheduled to the afternoon to assist morning back road operations going forward.

Finally, following the reinstallation of Aston Webb Screen stonework, vibration monitors and other equipment will be removed at the end of this year. Vibration systems are still in place and being monitored to ensure the safety of all who use Exhibition Road – this is particularly relevant when site access changes and the reinstallation of the Aston Webb Screen is underway. As a reminder, the cycle safety events will run on the below dates over 2016, taking place on the carriageway outside the Natural History Museum, opposite the site. Cyclists will be offered free bicycle check-ups, safety tagging, free refreshments, and the opportunity to sit in a lorry driver’s seat to experience their view of the road. Police and members of the Wates and V&A teams will also be on hand to answer any questions, particularly in regards to the revised traffic management plan.

2016 Cycle Safety Events

It is the Museum’s priority to ensure the safety of all who use Exhibition Road – this is particularly relevant when site access changes and the reinstallation of the Aston Webb Screen is underway. As a reminder, the cycle safety events will run on the below dates over 2016, taking place on the carriageway outside the Natural History Museum, opposite the site. Cyclists will be offered free bicycle check-ups, safety tagging, free refreshments, and the opportunity to sit in a lorry driver’s seat to experience their view of the road. Police and members of the Wates and V&A teams will also be on hand to answer any questions, particularly in regards to the revised traffic management plan.

Wednesday, 21 September: 16.00 – 19.00
Monday, 14 November: 7:30 – 10.00

Open the Gates Public Appeal

Funding for the project so far has been very successful, and we are extremely grateful for the private donations which have made Exhibition Road possible to date. In our last year of main construction, there are various elements of the design and important areas within the project that still need your help. This includes the specially designed Aston Webb gates, as well as equipment for our object preparation areas, materials for our new green roof, and other important behind the scenes requirements. For more information, please visit: www.vam.ac.uk/openthegates

CONTACTS AT THE V&A

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to know how you can support the project, please email us at futureplan@vam.ac.uk or call Alice Fraser, Project Administrator on 020 7942 2427.