

National Army Museum

It's a treasure trove of military history and artefacts. Lawrence of Arabia's robes, the Duke of Wellington's cloak, the skeleton of Napoleon's horse, the coat worn by the man who carried the order to the front for the Charge of the Light Brigade are just some of the highlights to be found at the National Army Museum in London, which reopened after a three-year, multi million redevelopment.

The major overhaul has opened the original building to dramatically transform the space. There are now five permanent thematic galleries – Soldier, Army, Battle, Society and Insight – and over 2,500 objects on display, two-thirds of which are on show for the first time. The 500m² temporary exhibition space opened with War Paint: Brushes with Conflict, displaying over 130 paintings and objects. Completing the Museum is the Templer Study Centre, Learning Centre, brand new café, shop and Play Base, where children aged up to eight can learn through play.

Project Highlights

- It was a highly complex project, one where conventional M&E services needed to dovetail with the audio-visual packages which was essential for the interactive exhibits. Co-ordination was critical on the project and we worked closely alongside the AV sub-contractor on the installation and exhibition space lighting contractor.
- Services distribution routes through the floors in the gallery areas is via ceiling voids. The design intent was to maximise the ceiling height, so the ceiling tiles are mounted into floating rafts hung on suspension rods suspended from the structure. All the services had to be accommodated within that void, so a lot of co-ordination was involved.
- Lighting was a key part of the installation and it was there that the collaborative effort of the works was all-important, with a crossover between the general lighting installation and the exhibition lighting. In the galleries, lighting track is suspended between the ceiling rafts. There was over 1,200 linear metres of suspended lighting track installed throughout the project for both the house lighting and the exhibition lighting.
- Contractor design portions included mains distribution, lighting and lighting controls, the building management system, fire alarm and CCTV systems, lightning protection, public address, data infrastructure and cabling for the AV system. We were also responsible for the mechanical parts of the project such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC).

Key Facts

Client
National Army Museum

Main Contractor
Gilbert Ash

Architect
BDP

Consultant
BDP

Services
Mechanical & Electrical

Duration
18 months

Value
£5,000,000

Location
London

