

= Imperial War Museum North =

Imperial War Museum North (sometimes referred to as IWM North) is a museum in the Metropolitan Borough of Trafford in Greater Manchester , England . One of five branches of the Imperial War Museum , it explores the impact of modern conflicts on people and society . It is the first branch of the Imperial War Museum to be located in the north of England . The museum occupies a site overlooking the Manchester Ship Canal in Trafford Park , an area which during the Second World War was a key industrial centre and consequently heavily bombed during the Manchester Blitz in 1940 . The area is now home to the Lowry cultural centre and the MediaCityUK development , which stand opposite the museum at Salford Quays .

The museum building was designed by architect Daniel Libeskind and opened in July 2002 , receiving 470 @, @ 000 visitors in its first year of opening . It was recognised with awards or prize nominations for its architecture and is a prime example of Deconstructivist architecture . The museum features a permanent exhibition of chronological and thematic displays , supported by hourly audiovisual presentations which are projected throughout the gallery space . The museum also hosts a programme of temporary exhibitions in a separate gallery . Since opening , the museum has operated a successful volunteer programme , which since January 2007 has been run in partnership with Manchester Museum . As part of a national museum , Imperial War Museum North is financed by the Department for Culture , Media and Sport and by self @-@ generated income . Admission is free .

= = Planning and construction = =

During the 1990s , the Imperial War Museum sought to open a branch in the north of England . Seventy @-@ one sites were offered for consideration by 36 local councils . One such council was that of Hartlepool , in County Durham , for whom a new museum building was designed by architect Sir Norman Foster for a site on Hartlepool 's dockside . In 1992 the Teesside Development Corporation offered the museum , on behalf of Hartlepool council , a total of £ 14 @.@ 4 million towards construction and running costs . However , the National Audit Office later reported that the Corporation 's offer breached government rules and negotiations were abandoned .

In January 1999 the then Culture Secretary Chris Smith launched a project to construct the new museum in Trafford , Greater Manchester . The Trafford Park area has strong associations with the Second World War on the British home front ; factories in the area produced Avro Lancaster heavy bombers , and Rolls @-@ Royce Merlin aero engines used by a number of Royal Air Force combat aircraft . By 1945 the area employed 75 @, @ 000 people . The area was consequently heavily bombed , particularly during the Manchester Blitz , when 684 people were killed in raids over two nights in December 1940 . By the time of Chris Smith 's announcement , the museum had already received outline planning permission (in October 1997) , with full approval in April 1999 .

= = = Architecture = = =

An architectural competition for the new museum was held in 1997 , with the winning design being that of Berlin @-@ based architect Daniel Libeskind . Born in ?ód? , Poland , in 1946 , Libeskind 's family had suffered during the Second World War and dozens of his relatives had died in the Holocaust . At the museum 's opening , Libeskind said that he sought to " create a building ... which emotionally moved the soul of the visitor toward a sometimes unexpected realization " ' . Libeskind envisaged a ' constellation composed of three interlocking shards ' with each shard being a remnant of an imagined globe shattered by conflict . These shards in turn represented air , earth and water , and each formed a functionally distinct part of the museum . The 55 m high air shard , provides the museum 's entranceway and a viewing balcony above the Manchester Ship Canal with views of the Manchester skyline . The construction of the tower leaves viewers exposed to the elements and one reviewer considered that it reflected " the aerial perspective of modern warfare and the precariousness of the life below " . The earth shard houses the museum 's exhibition spaces , while

the water shard accommodates a cafe with views of the canal .

Originally budgeted at £ 40 million , the museum was eventually completed for £ 28 @. @ 5 million after anticipated National Lottery funding was not forthcoming . The museum was funded by local , national and European development agencies . The European Union 's European Regional Development Fund contributed £ 8 @. @ 9 million , English Partnerships and the North West Development Agency £ 2 @. @ 7 million , and £ 2 @. @ 8 million was provided by Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council . Peel Holdings , a local transport and property company , contributed £ 12 @. @ 5 million ; this was reportedly the largest single sum ever given to a UK cultural project by a private enterprise . The reduction in budget forced a number of changes ; the substitution of metal for concrete in the construction of the shards , the removal of a planned auditorium , and a change of exhibition content . The site 's external landscaping also had to be reduced ; in 2009 , following an architectural design competition managed by RIBA Competitions , Berlin @- @ based company Topotek 1 were appointed to complete this landscaping . Despite these economies , the fundamental " shattered globe " concept remained intact . A final £ 3 million was raised by a fundraising campaign led by BBC News war correspondent Kate Adie . Construction of the museum , by structural engineers Arup and main contractor Sir Robert McAlpine , began on 5 January 2000 and the building was topped out in late September that year . Exhibition fitting started in November 2001 , and the museum opened to the public on 5 July 2002 , shortly before the 2002 Commonwealth Games which were hosted in Manchester that year .

= = Exhibitions = =

Permanent exhibitions are housed in the museum 's first @- @ floor main gallery space within the earth shard . These consist of a chronological display which runs around the gallery 's 200 @- @ metre (660 ft) perimeter and six thematic displays in " silos " within the space . As part of the earth shard , the 3 @, @ 500 m2 floor of the gallery is curved , gradually dropping away like the curvature of the Earth from a nominal " North Pole " near the gallery 's entrance . Within this hall , described as cavernous and dramatic , a number of large artefacts are displayed ; they include a Russian T @- @ 34 tank , a United States Marine Corps AV @- @ 8B Harrier jet and a 13 @- @ pounder field gun which fired the British Army 's first shot of the First World War . Around the gallery , a number of vertical mechanical conveyors called " timestacks " display selections of smaller artefacts , some of which can be handled by visitors .

In addition to the physical exhibits , the walls of the gallery space are used as screens for the projection of hourly audiovisual presentations called the Big Picture , which explore themes related to modern conflict . These presentations use up to 1 @, @ 500 images from the Imperial War Museum 's photograph archive and were originally projected from 60 synchronised slide projectors mounted throughout the space . In 2011 digital projectors were installed , allowing a greater degree of flexibility . The images are complemented by personal accounts from the museum 's oral history sound archive . The Big Picture was devised after the reduction in the museum 's budget forced the scrapping of the previous exhibition plan by designers DEGW and Amalgam .

Also within the earth shard , a separate gallery accommodates a programme of temporary exhibitions . These have included the Witness series of art exhibitions from the museum 's collection , examining First and Second World War art , and the work of female war artists .

The WaterWay , a passageway linking the earth and water shards , is used for smaller art or photographic exhibitions , such as Ghislaine Howard 's photojournalism @- @ inspired painting series 365 .

Outside the museum building , an ex @- @ Iraqi Army T @- @ 55 tank was put on display at the main entrance in August 2008 . This vehicle was captured by the Royal Engineers during the opening stages of the Iraq War in 2003 . The spot had previously been occupied by an Iraqi ZSU @- @ 23 @- @ 4 Shilka anti @- @ aircraft gun . Captured by the Royal Artillery after the 1991 Gulf War , it was moved from Imperial War Museum Duxford and displayed to mark the museum 's fifth anniversary in July 2007 .

= = Reception = =

The museum enjoyed a successful first year , with an initial target of 300 @, @ 000 visitors surpassed after six months , with over 100 @, @ 000 visitors in the first six weeks ; by the museum 's first anniversary on 5 July 2003 some 470 @, @ 000 visitors had been received . The museum won the Building Award in the 2003 British Construction Industry Awards , and was shortlisted for the 2004 Stirling Prize . The museum received a largely positive critical reception , with reviewers remarking on the metaphorical power of the building , the complementary effects of the museum 's main exhibition with its internal architecture , and the economy with which the museum was built . In August 2005 Imperial War Museum North received its millionth visitor . The museum was , however , criticised in 2008 by The Guardian for poor energy efficiency , as part of a report into the carbon dioxide emissions of UK public buildings .

= = Volunteer programme = =

Supporting Imperial War Museum North 's educational goals , the museum has operated a volunteer programme since opening in 2002 . The programme seeks to engage local people at risk of social exclusion . Originally based on a National Vocational Qualification , the programme was revised and relaunched in 2004 , and consisted of a basic cultural heritage course , providing opportunities to develop academic skills and improve confidence , and to support individuals seeking to return to employment . In return volunteers work in the museum 's public spaces as part of the front of house teams . In January 2007 the museum launched the in Touch volunteer programme , in partnership with Manchester Museum and supported by £ 425 @, @ 000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund . The programme was recognised by the Department of Culture , Media and Sport as a case study of its kind , in the department 's Third Sector Strategy .