

# THE HARRIS

Preston City Council

Extract from Interpretive Strategy and Design Report

August 2018

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studio

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Harris is at a transformative point in its history, part way through a journey to fundamentally change this iconic Grade 1 listed building and the role it plays in Preston, Lancashire and beyond. The Victorian founders' vision was that the Harris Free Library, Museum & Art Gallery would be the focus of culture, arts and learning, an embodiment of aspirations in late 19th century Preston. Re-imagining the Harris is inspired by those founders' early ambitions, whilst also responding to the needs of the people of the city and the region for the next generation.

Preston City Council (PCC) and Lancashire County Council (LCC) are working in partnership to bring the museum and library together as a single service, developing community-led approaches to our programme and are committed to working together to reinvigorate the Harris for our users and the city. We have a compelling new vision, rooted in our Victorian origins and in Lancashire's role as a centre of innovation and creativity: Joyful Making.

Our aim is to create a democratic and high quality offer, with constantly refreshed and community-led museum, art gallery, library services and cultural activities delivered in a truly seamless manner. We want to utilise the unique opportunities provided by the Harris, as a much-loved part of the city's heritage and townscape for the city, housing an excellent range of collections. The role of museums and libraries must evolve as society continues to change at a rapid pace. Therefore we want to create an animated cultural and community hub for the people of Preston and Lancashire.

The Harris should become a factory for stories and memories, celebrating Preston's past, present and future, providing a range of opportunities for users to be creative and have their voice heard.

Given the funding environment facing local government and the cultural sector, there is also a need to make the operation more sustainable.

We have already begun to embed this approach in the services we deliver during the last two years, recent highlights include:

- Securing Arts Council National Portfolio status for the first time, attracting additional revenue funding of £225,000 per annum;
- A 15% increase in user figures in the last two years (with over 350,000 visits in 2017/18);
- The successful development of a network of robust local partnerships, most significantly with the Preston-based University of Central Lancashire, who are keen to play an integral role in the Re-imagining project;
- A much-expanded and popular events and exhibitions programme, including a range of sold out live music events, talks, debates and quizzes.

For many local people and visitors The Harris represents Preston. Central to the city's identity, it is the major landmark, fronting the principal public square and a focus for civic life. However, the Harris is much more than a monumental building – it must be a centre for Preston's cultural and social life; a source of inspiration, pride and creativity – and of enjoyment.

However we can only go so far with the building in its current state, significant investment in the Harris is now essential if we are to deliver the vision successfully and provide innovative and relevant services to the people of Preston and Lancashire in the future. The project described in these documents will allow us to deliver our ambitious vision, truly repositioning the Harris in Preston, Lancashire and the North West. Our work builds on progress achieved in developing the 2016 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, but takes it much further, clearly articulating how we will use the £10.8 million investment to create an innovative, community-led cultural and civic centre for Preston.





# WHY HERE, WHY NOW

## Why is it essential for the project to go ahead now?

It is essential that the Reimagining the Harris capital development takes place now to realise the Harris's unique potential and take advantage of the timely opportunities within Preston. The Harris is at a pivotal moment in its 125 year history: our Re-imagining the Harris strategy is bearing fruit, evidenced by the increase in our visitors by 38,000 last year. Although we have made a great start through imaginative programming and experimentation, we cannot deliver the experiences and learning that our consultation and audience research tells us our varied communities want, nor safeguard our heritage building and collections without significant investment now.

Our spaces are limited and not fit for purpose to allow us to deliver film screenings, high quality ticketed events, creative and messy workshops across the building and other high quality visitor experiences. The potential is there, but we must harness it before it is lost. For example, our Makerspace pilot has had some success, but is limited by the lack of an appropriate space and services so enthusiastic partners are unable to engage fully.

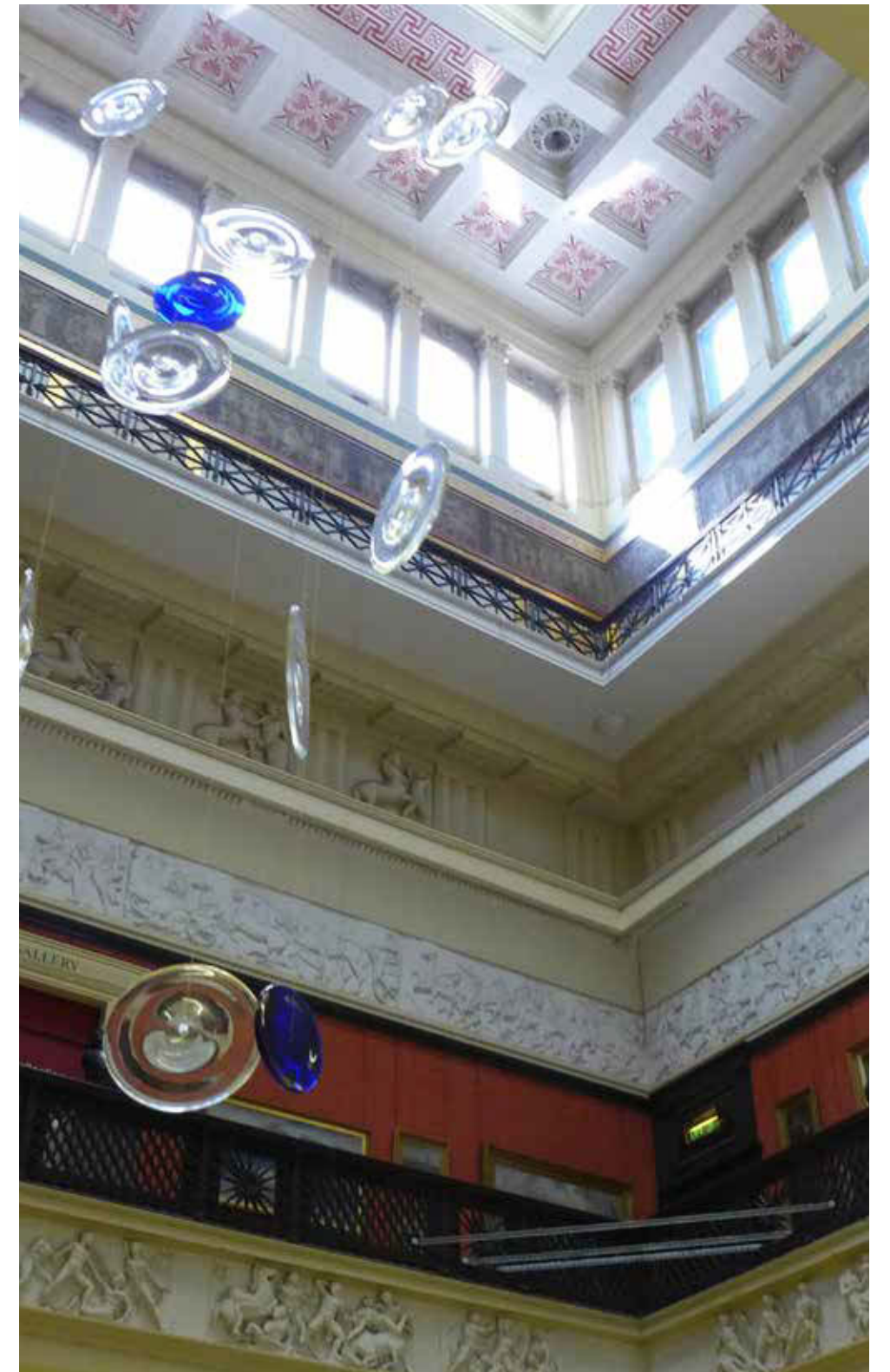
Specific reasons why the project needs to go ahead now are as follows:

**Heritage Risk:** our building needs fundamental once in a generation repair. As evidenced in the Conservation Management Plans carried out in 2010 and 2016, after 125 years the fabric and key services are at the end of their functional life. The internal drainpipes have corroded leading to damp and erosion, the rooflights are displaced in high winds, allowing water and pests to enter the top galleries through the gaps, the basement stores flood in heavy rain putting collections at risk, and the M&E services are no longer able to maintain the conditions required for the collections. Services – electrical, plumbing and technological – have been developed piecemeal over the years and are now over-stretched, aesthetically inappropriate and unfit for the new generation of digital natives. All of these impact heavily on the quality of our service delivery and visitor experience.

**Council funding:** Both Preston City Council and Lancashire County Council have identified significant sums of funding for the project, demonstrating their commitment to work in partnership to realise the potential of the venue. If HLF support is not secured, the funding will be in the majority lost and a small residual spent on critical conservation work only. We will also miss the opportunity to deliver the wider community and heritage benefits of our full scheme, reducing the transformational impact of the development.

**Realising Partnership Investment:** If the project goes ahead now we will be able to draw in financial and other support from key backers including Arts Council England through our National Portfolio status; Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and City Deal, which is making good progress in building 17,000 homes and creating 20,000 jobs; and Preston's university, UCLan, which is delivering the masterplan for its city campus with a presence at the Harris a strongly desired component. These opportunities will all be lost if we cannot progress imminently as their timescales are limited and commitment will be prioritised elsewhere.

**Complementary Investment:** On the Harris' doorstep, new projects fundamental to the creation of an economically and socially powerful city centre are taking shape – the Guild Hall Theatre and Concert Venue has been revitalised, the new market has opened successfully, the former Post Office will be a boutique hotel by next year, the listed Bus Station & Car Park has been transformed, and new cafes and restaurants are springing up alongside the recently refurbished streetscape. The Harris is right in the centre of these improvements. Our project needs to go ahead now to take advantage of the increased vibrancy and footfall as well as providing a cornerstone for the critical mass of attractions and unique selling proposition needed in a modern city centre as identified in the Grimsey Review 2 (<http://bit.ly/2LH0gkd>). The city's lack of culture and leisure offer is recognised in the City Centre Plan 2016-2026= so Reimagining will be a true catalyst working with the other developments to revolutionise Preston's offer.





## WHY HERE, WHY NOW

Just beyond the city centre, UCLan is transforming its campus and the townscape with new buildings and a new 'gateway' public space through a £200m masterplan, creating direct link between the university and the Harris. Together, these constitute the largest investment Preston has had in living memory – and the Harris is at the heart of it. If the project does not go ahead now the Harris will be left behind. In spite of all our energies and improved activities, we will be drowning not waving, with a tired and inefficient building that cannot take its justified place among these investments and provide the high quality access to culture and heritage that people expect.

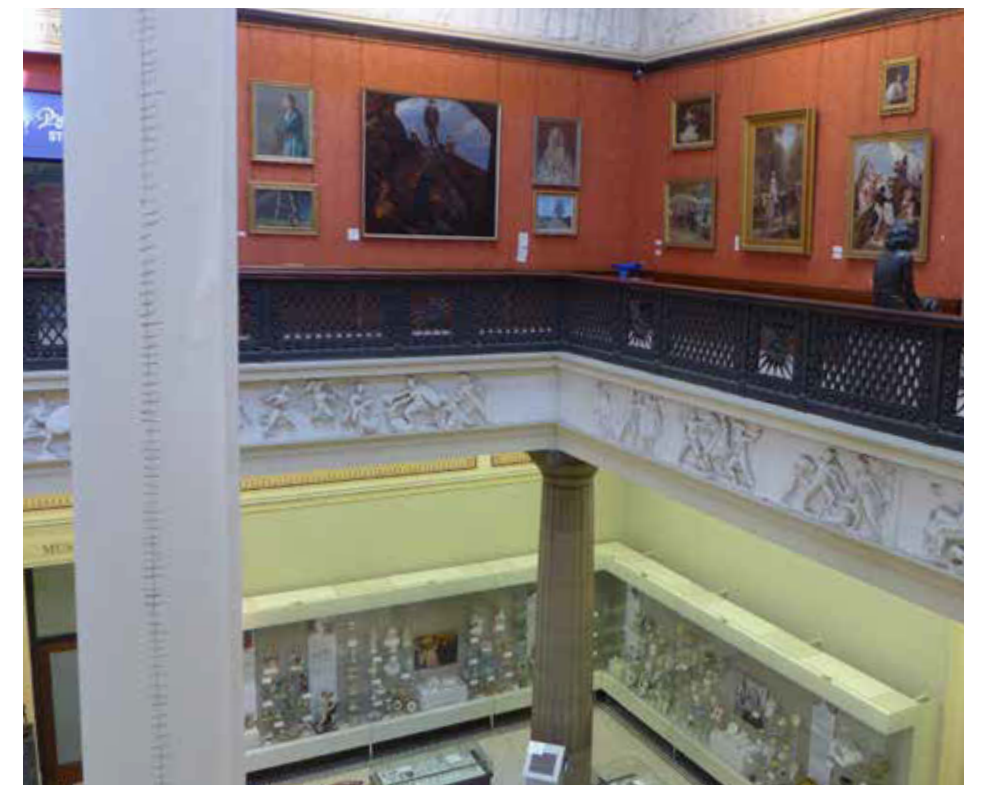
A pivotal time for Preston: Preston is an expanding city in need of improved services for its residents now. Many are young, or have young families, and are in need of opportunities to help with their education and career ambitions – the opportunity to create a truly integrated 21st century museum and library service for them must not be lost. Grimsey 2 (<http://bit.ly/2LH0gkd>) identifies the provision of arts, education, entertainment and leisure as a priority for a successful city and so the Reimagining the Harris project is an essential priority. In support of this, Lancashire and Preston Councils have made concerted efforts to reposition the city, in partnership with UCLan, by encouraging creative graduates to stay and contribute to the economy by starting small businesses or joining local SMEs. The creative sector is innovative and community focused, but is also currently disparate, uncoordinated and with few centres of excellence or opportunities to shine.

**People:** Preston is among the 20% most deprived districts in England and 7 of Preston's 22 wards sit within decile 1 for deprivation, most of them clustered around the city centre where the Harris is situated (<http://bit.ly/2uYG9qz>). At 8.2% Preston has the highest percentage of 16-17 year olds who are NEET in Lancashire; three times the national average (<http://bit.ly/2v0Cx7A>), as well as a suicide rate that has been significantly worse than the England average for the past 10 years (<http://bit.ly/2w5MAbN>). The Harris has the expertise and the collections resources to deliver great experiences to help local people make changes in their lives, but they are hugely compromised by the unwelcoming and inefficient building. It's imperative that local people are able to take advantage now of the cultural benefits of the developing city.

**Changing City Centres:** City centres must reinvent themselves to survive and thrive (<http://bit.ly/2LH0gkd>). Retail is not enough and expectations are high – people want to learn, relax, enjoy and be entertained in new and exciting ways. The Harris has to raise its game and take a leading part – in a way truly fitting for a historic and cultural icon. In changing its offer, the Harris also needs to fulfil a wider regional role. Regarded in cultural circles as a true Northern gem, it is also a hidden one when compared to counterparts in Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds. A once-in-a-generation investment now will enable the Harris to play this wider role – to increase its quality exhibition space and footfall so more cutting edge, informative and thought-provoking exhibitions can be displayed and reach more people, locally, nationally and internationally.

**Commercial Opportunity:** Long term challenges in local authority funding mean it is critical the Harris generates income to make itself sustainable as soon as possible. Current inefficiencies in our spaces and services mean our costs are high, reducing the impact of any income generated. The Reimagining the Harris project will provide spaces that balance the needs of collections, visitors and income-generation through the blended offer, are more easily managed, and attract increased footfall and commercial interest. City centre developments are attracting new potential commercial partners, such as Signature Living who are creating the boutique hotel adjacent to the Harris and Bistrot Pierre, the new French restaurant opening in the long term derelict church on the main high-street. Without the Re-imagining the Harris project going ahead now we will lose these opportunities.

**Conclusion:** HLF funding would build a new future and new legacy for the Harris – one that is more innovative and business like, while rooted in heritage and community need. Given the financial reality of our major funders, it is vital that we forge ahead now with a bold model of service delivery that enables us to achieve our potential by being more flexible, more innovative and more financially secure and sustainable.





# HERITAGE STATEMENT

## The Harris – For the love of Prestonians

Inspired by the Victorian's 'Free Library Movement' and enabled through the honourable bequest of a respected Preston lawyer, the Harris was born.

The Harris name is held in high esteem in Preston and is synonymous with social aspirations of broader educational opportunities and deeper appreciation of the arts and sciences. The Harris museum and art gallery is built on the legacy of a family entrenched in Preston's history and held in great regard by Prestonians. First arriving in Preston in 1788, Robert Harris took the position of headmaster at Preston Grammar School and in 1797 added the role of vicar at St. George's to his responsibilities. Robert Harris invested much of his spare time in the upkeep of Dr Shepherd's library (later bequested to the Harris museum) and had a desire to see all Prestonians educated.

Robert went on to marry Ann Lodge, a girl from a prominent Prestonian family of solicitors, they had 4 children and settled deeper and deeper into the fabric of Prestonian life. Robert and Ann's son Edmund Robert became a successful lawyer and it was Edmund Robert who bequeathed his fortune to be used to provide Preston with a library, orphanage and educational establishments. This generous gift was intended to honour his father and establish a legacy that mirrored his passion to see the people of Preston prosper.

Part of the vast sum of £300,000 (an estimated 15million in today's terms) was used to develop Preston's first lending library based in the Town Hall basement and a new public museum was established in Cross Street. These two institutions were so successful that it was agreed that a purpose built home should be created that would draw together the Library and the museum. Through an act of parliament, 'The Preston Improvement Act', and the determination of Preston officials, a new purpose built home was erected and opened in 1893 to house both the library and the growing collections of the museum.



## The Harris – Preston through and through

This grade 1 listed masterpiece was truly conceived and born through the people and skills of the 'Joyful Makers' of Preston. The Harris was designed by a local architect and Alderman, James Hibbert. James was born in Preston, educated at Preston Grammar School and worked in the Preston based firm of architects, Hibbert and Rainford. The construction of the building was courtesy of Cooper and Tullis, a well respected firm of builders working in Preston.

The Neo-Clasical style Hibbert used for this building is mirrored in public buildings across Europe. It was said that its

*'simplicity, symmetry of plan, truthfulness of expression and refinement of detail'*

would have an uplifting and moralising effect on those who saw and visited the museum and library. Hibbert was so sure of the power of this building to transform the thinking of those who engaged with it and its contents, that he emblazoned gold, gilded quotes on the exterior facades. This quote from the Harris Street side speaks of the change and empowerment that Victorians believed possible through exposure to a powerful collection of cultural objects, exquisite art and the wisdom of the written word.

*'The mental riches you may here acquire abide with you always'*

Hibbert's design does not wait for the passer-by to enter the building to start their journey of discovery, he has designed the outside to inspire and to engage far ahead of anyone crossing the threshold. The 'School of Athens' by Edwin Roscoe Mullins and griffins beautifully carved by Roland Rhodes, are lavish tasters of the offer within. The quotes around the building are designed to inspire and engage questioning minds.

*'On Earth there is nothing great but man: in man there is nothing great but mind'*

Once over the threshold, Hibbert's eye for design and detail continues in the lavish interior. Within the grandeur of the building, complete with a 120 foot high lantern tower, there were references to as many of the 'world's greatest achievements in art' as could be elegantly displayed. Renaissance sculpture, Assyrian art, classical Greek sculpture all had their place amongst the carefully reproduced Greek and Assyrian friezes that embed art and culture into the very fabric of the building.





# HERITAGE STATEMENT

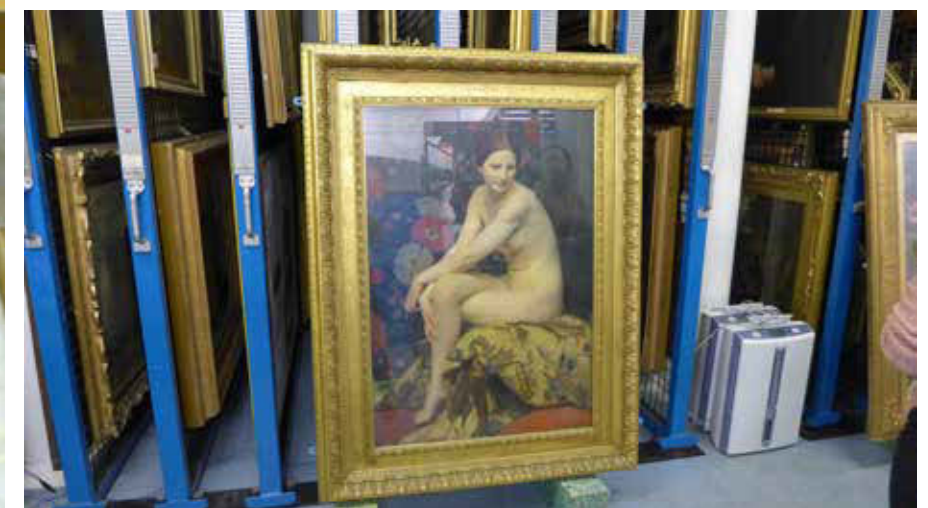
## The Harris – Preston's collections through and through

The original collection, brought from Cross street, made up of local archaeology, natural history specimens, items of numismatics, ethnology and wider historical curios was combined in the Harris with the Shepherd collection of rare books. Not satisfied with just this collection, Preston Corporation started to acquire other collections amassed by local institutions with the express intent of making these artefacts freely available to the people of Preston, who before had needed private memberships or the means to pay subscriptions to access such treasures.

This new concept of access to all was inspirational and soon the museum was receiving bequests of collections. Even before The Harris was complete Richard Newsham's collection of fine art was bequeathed to the flourishing museum. Throughout its history The Harris has continued to receive collections from the people of Preston and surrounding areas. 1911, Cedric Houghton's collection of British ceramics and enamels were added to the museum, in 1949 a 12th century prayer book with notes from John Ruskin was left to the museum in the Haslam bequest and Dr Taylor left a collection of 18th century drinking glasses, which have gone on to form the basis of a larger collection purchased by the museum. These donations have been mirrored and magnified by countless individual, smaller donations and bequests throughout the life of The Harris.

These artefacts have grown into a wider collection that reflects both Preston's social and local history and furthermore, Preston's place in the wider world through ethnography and a world class collection of paintings, pictures and sculpture.

The Harris is truly a building built, filled and visited by Prestonians.





# OUTCOMES & OBJECTIVES

Our Heritage will be:

## BETTER MANAGED

- The Harris will be managed by PCC as a single operational team with a dedicated, cross-disciplined staff and volunteer team equipped with the experience and skills to manage a complex building and varied collections and provide an exemplary experience for our customers.
- Investment will provide building management, maintenance, security systems and infrastructure to safeguard the Harris, its collections and users for the long term.
- The traditional connections between the museum, art gallery and historic library collections will be restored, ensuring they are cared for consistently to a high standard. Including a coordinated plan for storage and display across the building.
- Communities, heritage groups and visitors will be active stakeholders, advocates and protectors of the Harris. There will be a greater understanding of the importance of heritage and making a strong case for heritage as a driver for economic and community regeneration.

## IN BETTER CONDITION

- The building will be conserved to reveal the quality of its architectural detailing and original spaces, with modern accretions removed.
- Repairs will secure the future of the Harris' fabric for a further 125 years.

- Collections both on and off display will benefit from improved environmental and storage conditions.
- Collections will be accessibly documented, stored and displayed to enable our communities to explore them safely and effectively, embracing digital approaches to support this ambition.
- The Harris will be clearly recognisable as a cherished heritage asset at the historic core of the city.

## BETTER INTERPRETED AND EXPLAINED

- There will be in excess of 10% of all Harris collections on display to the public.
- The library's historic books and more of the museum's environmentally sensitive collections will be accessible and on display
- The insights and voices of many people will feature in the displays and visitors will be able to share their own knowledge
- Displays, on-gallery storage and online collections will draw on new community and academic research and narratives to create lively and engaging interpretation, with a strong digital presence.
- New ways of engaging with collections will be expressed through the themes of Exploring, Questioning, Creating, Playing and Connecting.
- New learning and creative programmes, social media and our online presence will give access and meaning to collections for all audiences.

## BETTER IDENTIFIED AND RECORDED

- Community, academic and staff researchers will explore and question the building and the collections, adding to our knowledge and records.
- Increased digitisation of the collection will enable access without borders, connecting the Harris to expertise worldwide.
- New forms of heritage will be collected and documented, by working with our local communities to shape our collections and record their experiences and memories.



# ACCESSIBILITY

Disability Equality North West users have identified the Harris as a 'hidden gem' in Preston, and the aim of the Interpretation Strategy and exhibition design approach is live up to and exceed where possible this endorsement.

The project is underpinned by the Harris' commitment to ensuring access for all its visitors, as laid out in its current Access Policy which sits alongside Preston City Council's Fairness Charter and Equal Opportunities Policy, the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

The seven access commitments are to:

- Consult and engage regularly to understand who our users and non-users are.
- Consider the different needs of our users and non-users and meet these needs in vibrant and innovative ways.
- Provide open public access to the Harris' collections, exhibitions and information without discrimination.
- Guarantee that accessibility is embedded into all areas of our work from the start.
- Encourage representatives from diverse backgrounds to join the Harris' Access Group.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers follow an induction process to incorporate diversity training.
- Ensure that under-represented voices are regularly present and can be seen and heard at the Harris.

The HLF-funded Discover Preston gallery, which opened in 2012, had access as one of its core aims and was greeted by this comment: 'Exciting, dynamic, clear, easy to read & navigate round in a wheelchair. Well done. Thanks. :)'. The same principles and continued learning from consultation with visitors have guided the Design and Interpretation team in developing the approach to this latest project.

Currently research shows that 8% of visitors consider themselves disabled. However, 20% of people within the local drive time have a disability, and the Town Centre ward surrounding the Harris has the second highest number of residents claiming Disability Living Allowance in Preston, underlining the importance of this commitment to access in the design approach.





# VISITOR JOURNEY MASTERPLAN

## Blended Offer

The ambition for the Re-imagining the Harris project is to disregard the traditional method of a visitor experience segregated by the division of council responsibilities. The ‘blended offer’ approach will re-examine the heritage, cultural, literary and arts offer within the Harris to establish a holistic presentation which incorporates all of these elements.

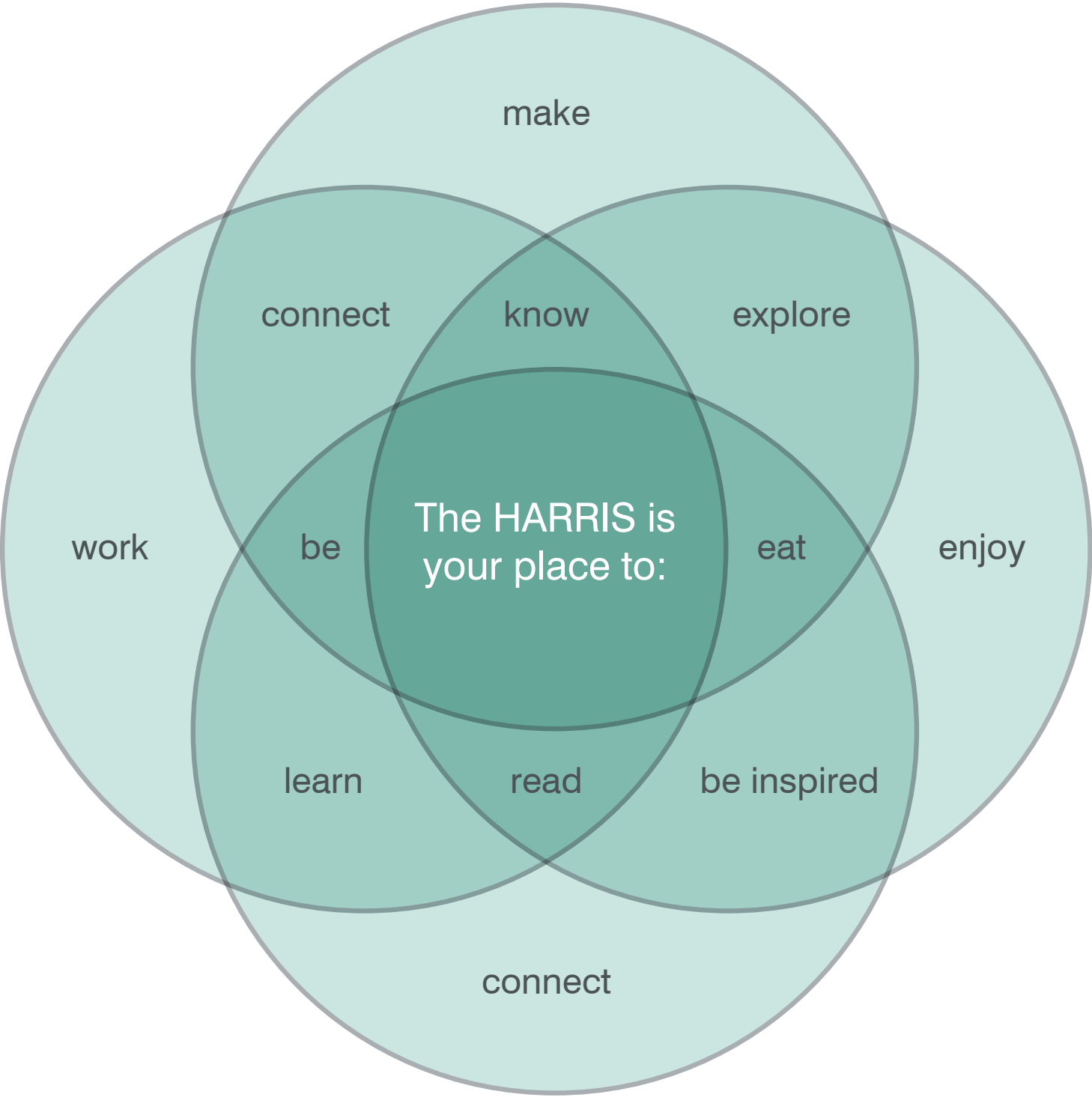
As indicated in the concept design later in the document, this fusion will create opportunity to thematically explore connections between museum artefacts, historic books, contemporary and fine art and where relevant, lending library books. Driven by the heritage of the building and its collections, the interpretation strategy examines themes under which all elements of the offer will feature.

## Spatial Layouts & Interpretation

The following pages set out the spatial layouts of the building which demonstrate the functionality and visitor flow in and around the Harris, utilising the refreshed and more accessible spaces.

To provide structure to the blended approach, each space is given a primary, secondary and tertiary operational function. This permits best use of spaces according to need, but still offers ample opportunity to blend displays and integrate heritage interpretation in all areas.

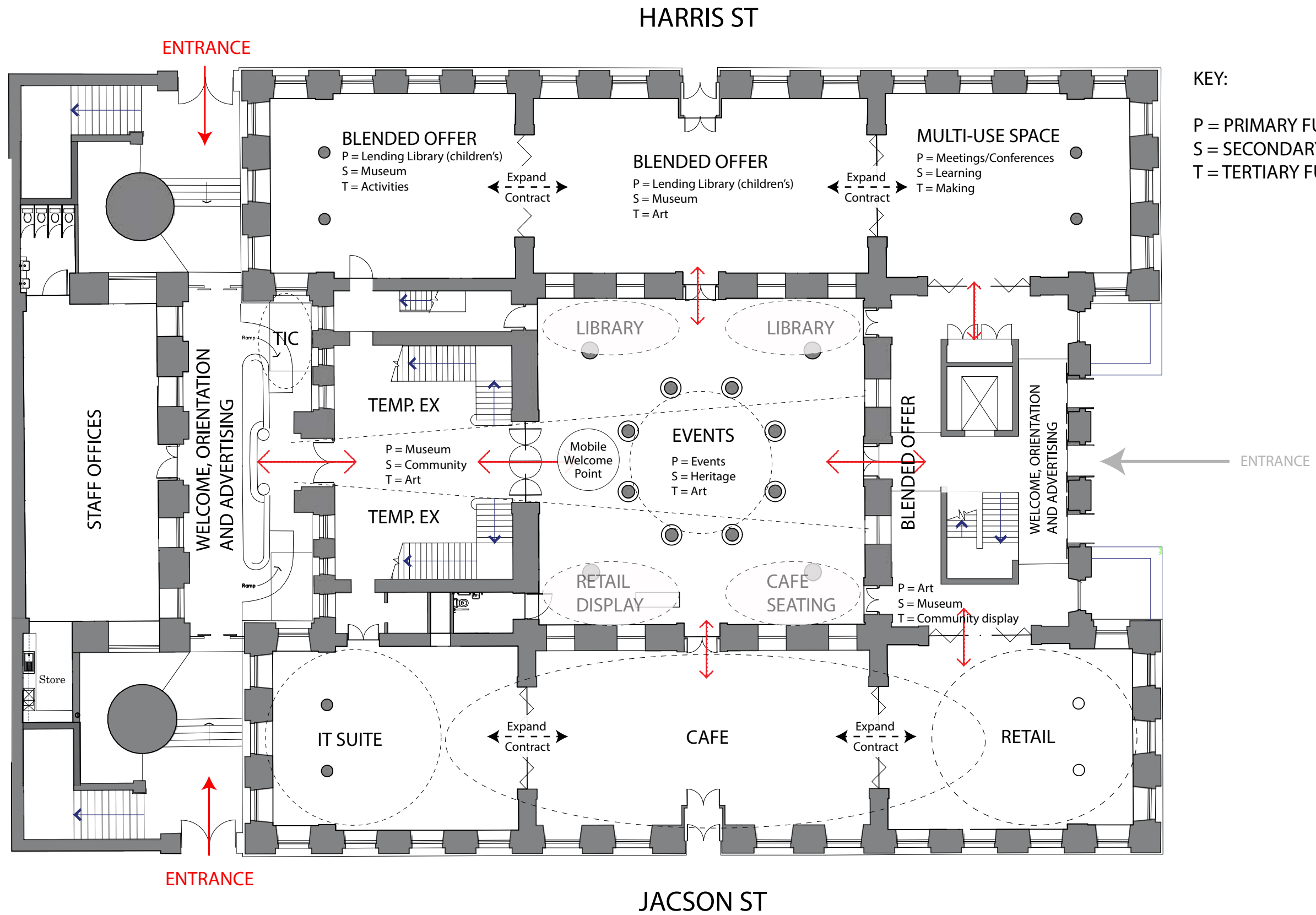
These layouts are followed by the interpretive strategy and the initial considerations of how the themes are plotted on a story map throughout the building. With commercial functions and some library offer situated in the ground floor areas, the interpretive themes are introduced in these spaces, but increase in intensity through the vertical circulation of the building. The interpretation and stories is one of the elements of work that would be developed and tested with the community during the development phase.



# SPATIAL LAYOUTS - GROUND FLOOR

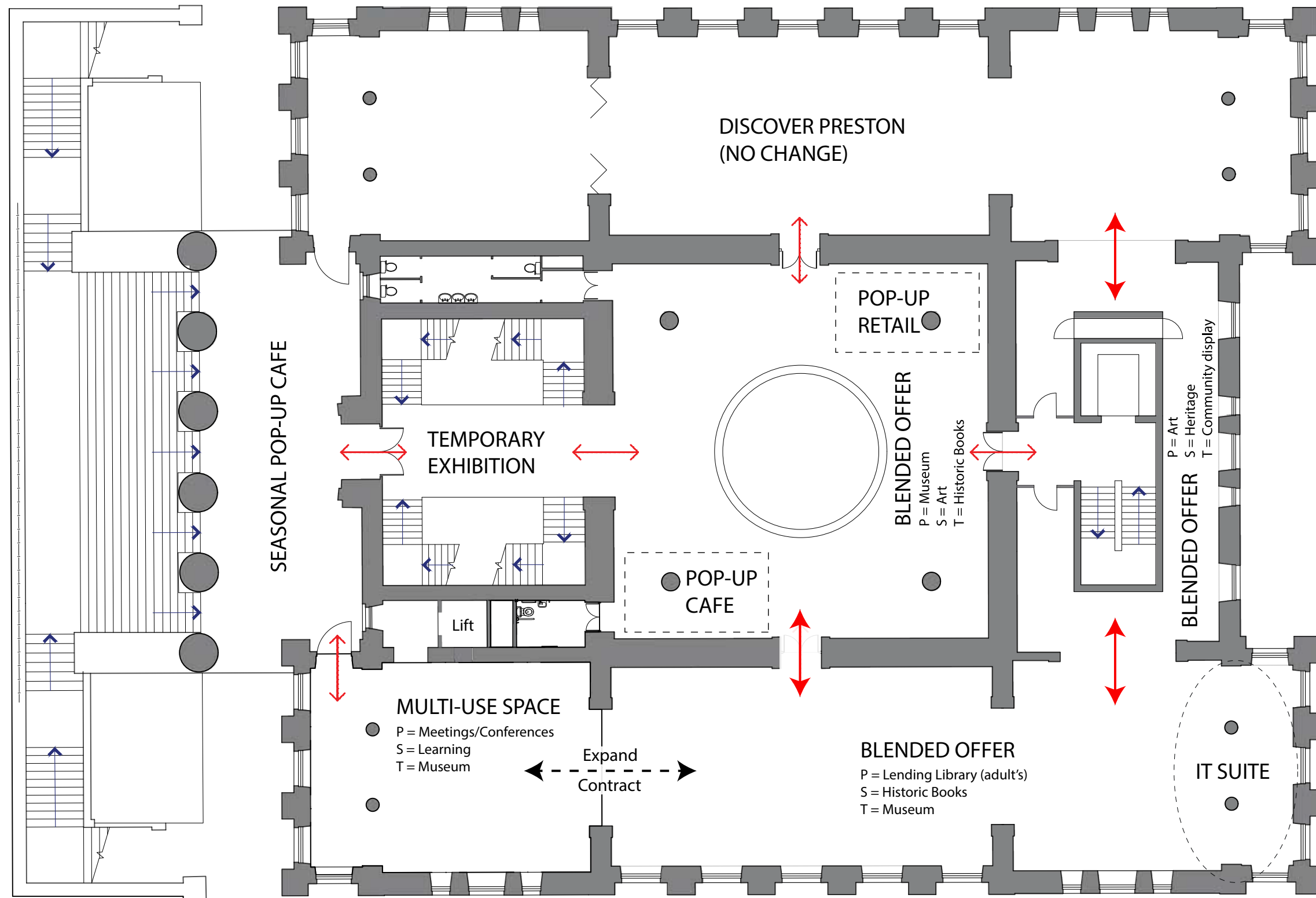
FLAG MARKET

MOBILE TEMPORARY DISPLAYS  
SIGNAGE/DISPLAYS/ADVERTISING





# SPATIAL LAYOUTS - FIRST FLOOR

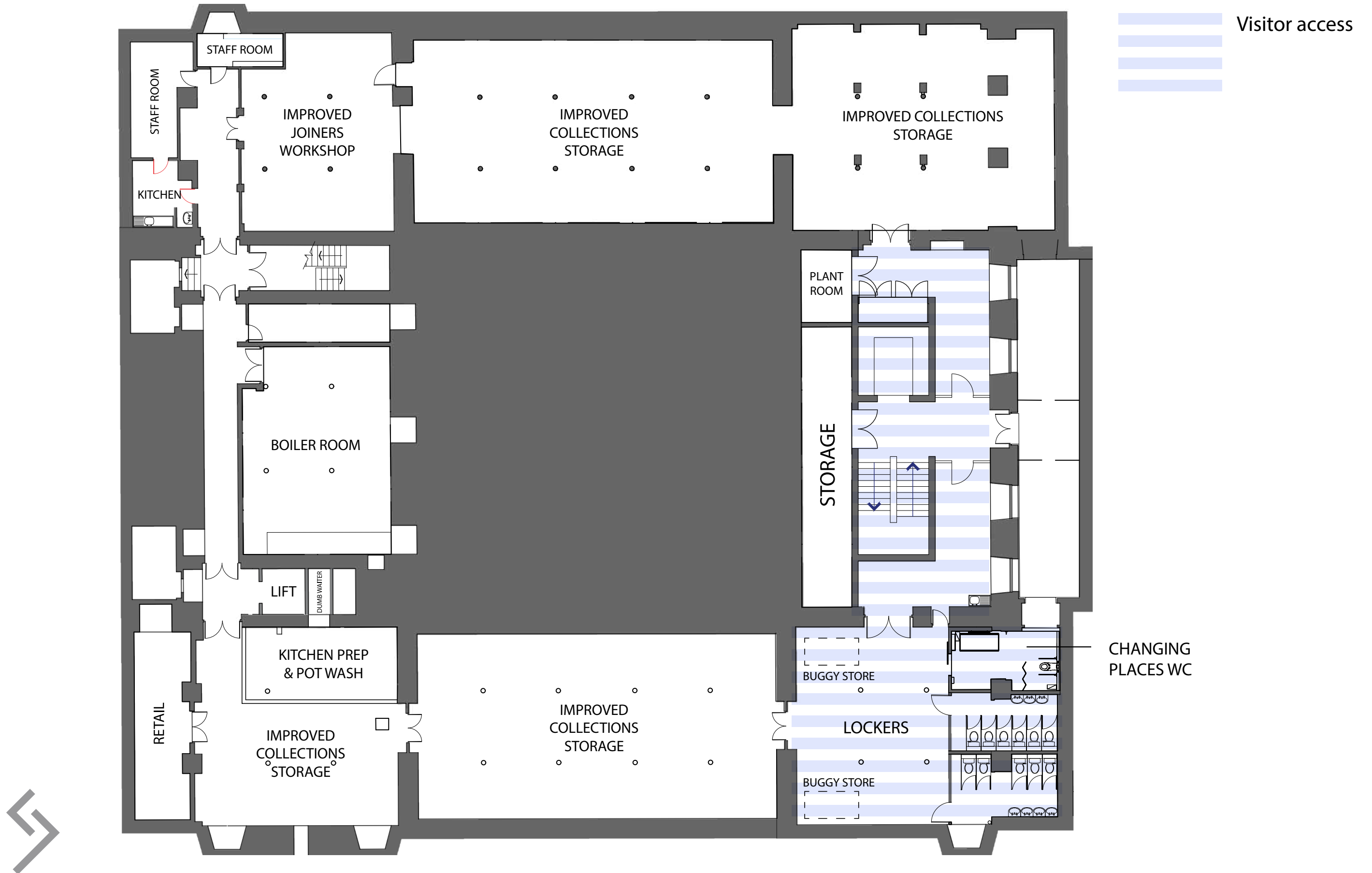


KEY:

P = PRIMARY FUNCTION  
S = SECONDARY FUNCTION  
T = TERTIARY FUNCTION



# SPATIAL LAYOUTS - BASEMENT





# INTRODUCTION

## Stories that inspire action

Our proposed exhibition works are based on the premise of engaging wider audiences with the myriad stories that the Harris has to tell. Providing structure to this process allows us to measure interpretation against the key ambitions of the project and to ensure that we connect the Harris' collections to audiences with a vibrancy and relevancy that will provide a sustainable visitor destination.

We have used accessible themes that are relevant to all visitors and brought them into the Harris using objects that link past experiences to a modern Preston resident or visitor.

The framework we have indicated here supports the evolution and development of stories and personal visitor experiences so that the Harris interpretation stays fresh and linked to its communities.

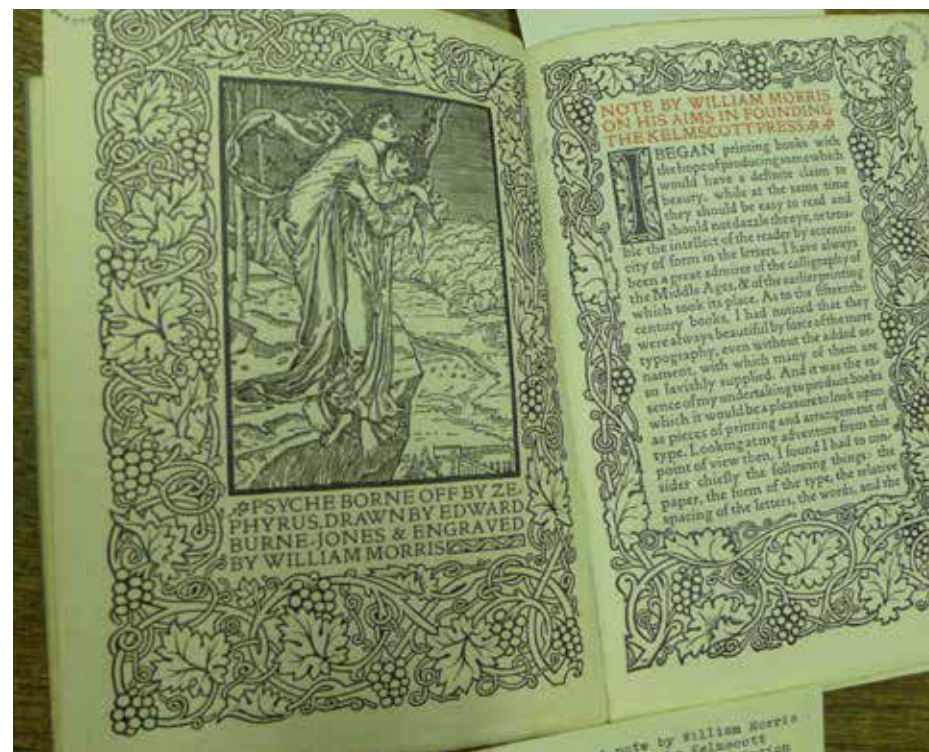
Most importantly, the interpretation structure reflects the Activity Plan in promoting on-gallery experiences, activities and outcomes and community-driven exhibits which constantly refresh and update the visitor experience and create a two-way dialogue.

## Interpretation framework

Shown on the following page is the initial interpretation framework which has been developed in close collaboration with the collections and programming team at the Harris. The themes identified are drawn from the collections and stories engrained in the Harris.

Examples of stories, based on new ways of viewing the collections inspired by consultation and the Re-Imagining project, are explored in more detail on the following pages following the interpretation framework.

Consultation with community groups at the next stage would test the relevance of these themes and stories with the audiences identified in the Activity Plan and in particular, those groups which are targeted for increased engagement such as BAME communities and people with a disability.





INTERPRETIVE STRATEGY

Operational Theme	JOYFUL MAKING									
Operational Strapline	A safe place for our community to experience and celebrate its past and inspire the creation of its future									
Theme	Come and EXPLORE the Harris		QUESTIONING Preston and the lives around us		Things CREATED in Preston make our world go round		In Preston PLAYING is a serious business.		Making CONNECTIONS at The Harris	
Sub-themes										
Examples of stories using objects from across the Harris collections	Stories	Objects	Stories	Objects	Stories	Objects	Stories	Objects	Stories	Objects
	Why the Harris?	Robert Harris bust, examples of founding collections, historic architecture books	Changing world	Smoking items, paintings with smokers, Woods tobacco co., cigarette cards	How did they make that? - object detectives	Focus on process - tools and finished items revealing book-binding (private press collection), dressmaking, printing techniques, clock mechanics...	How do you play?	History collections - sport, music, toys. Art - Melville's Woman at piano, Dub Scratchers painting. Historic books - children's and chap books, ballads. Decorative art - tea services, sewing	Relationships	Valentines and love tokens, clothes and jewellery, paintings, romantic literature, oral history
	A powerful ornament to the town	Features and details of the Harris building, James Hibbert archive	Who decides what we do/ who we are?	Art collection - how women (and men) are portrayed: Pauline in the Yellow Dress, Devis soldier,	Behind the finished item	Sketches and drawings for finished artwork, embroidery samples,	Getting dressed up to play	Fancy dress costume, sportswear, bikinis	Moving to Preston	Caribbean Carnival, South Asian clothes
	Ancient Egypt in Preston	Egyptian balcony, John Somerscales, Ancient Egypt collection	This was the future once	Art acquired when it was new and 'contemporary' across the collection	Poetry in motion	Francis Thompson collection - poetry, mask	Having fun with design	Puzzle jugs, quirky ceramics, fuzzy felt fashions	Industry links	Horrockses advertising, Textile Manufacturers of India, Indian cotton clothing, Preston Dock,
	Delving into the collections	Exploiting randomness of key collections to bring out little seen items, eg 10 red things, every 10th rare book on shelf, fabrics from India, America, Africa etc, a coin from each country with historic map	Who decides what you wear?	Mini skirt, corset, shalwar kameez, uniform, suit	The play's the thing	Paintings featuring Shakespeare's characters	Not just for children	Dolls, Spencer collection of children's books, toys, train sets...	Harris -eclectic to the core	Historic books - travel, nature, buildings, early reference works. Plaster casts of key western artefacts,
	Beyond the Harris	Collections relating to areas of Preston - Albert Woods paintings round Ribbleton, Maudland archaeology, local posters	What do you believe in?	Temperance items, Catholic/Muslim/Mormon/Hindu objects	Handmade / Mass manufacture	Compare and contrast - ceramics, books, clothing, art/prints,	Art imitates nature	Book bindings, ceramic and textile design, nature paintings and drawings	Getting away	Painting of railway station, bus station, Preston people's travels - explorers and tourists
Cross cutting themes	The Harris-revealing your building									
	What do you think?									
	Come and have a go at making.									
	How is this relevant to you?									
	Library offer - Reading, Information, Digital, Health, Learning, Culture									
	Inspired by the past and inspiring our future.									
Activities	Tours of the building from top to bottom Visitor-led/suggested collection handling sessions Community-led projects exploring and representing parts of Preston		Debates on current issues Community-led displays Activities using collections to highlight issues e.g. coin collection and personal budgeting		Creative workshops Makerspace Opportunities for people to exhibit work, perform, make music		Social opportunities Health and wellbeing activities Events spilling out on the Flag Market Holiday activities Creative workshops for beginners		Storytelling Inter-generational workshops and projects Community led displays and events Trails / highlight objects on relationship themes Talks illuminating collections in relation to wider concerns/research/opportunities	



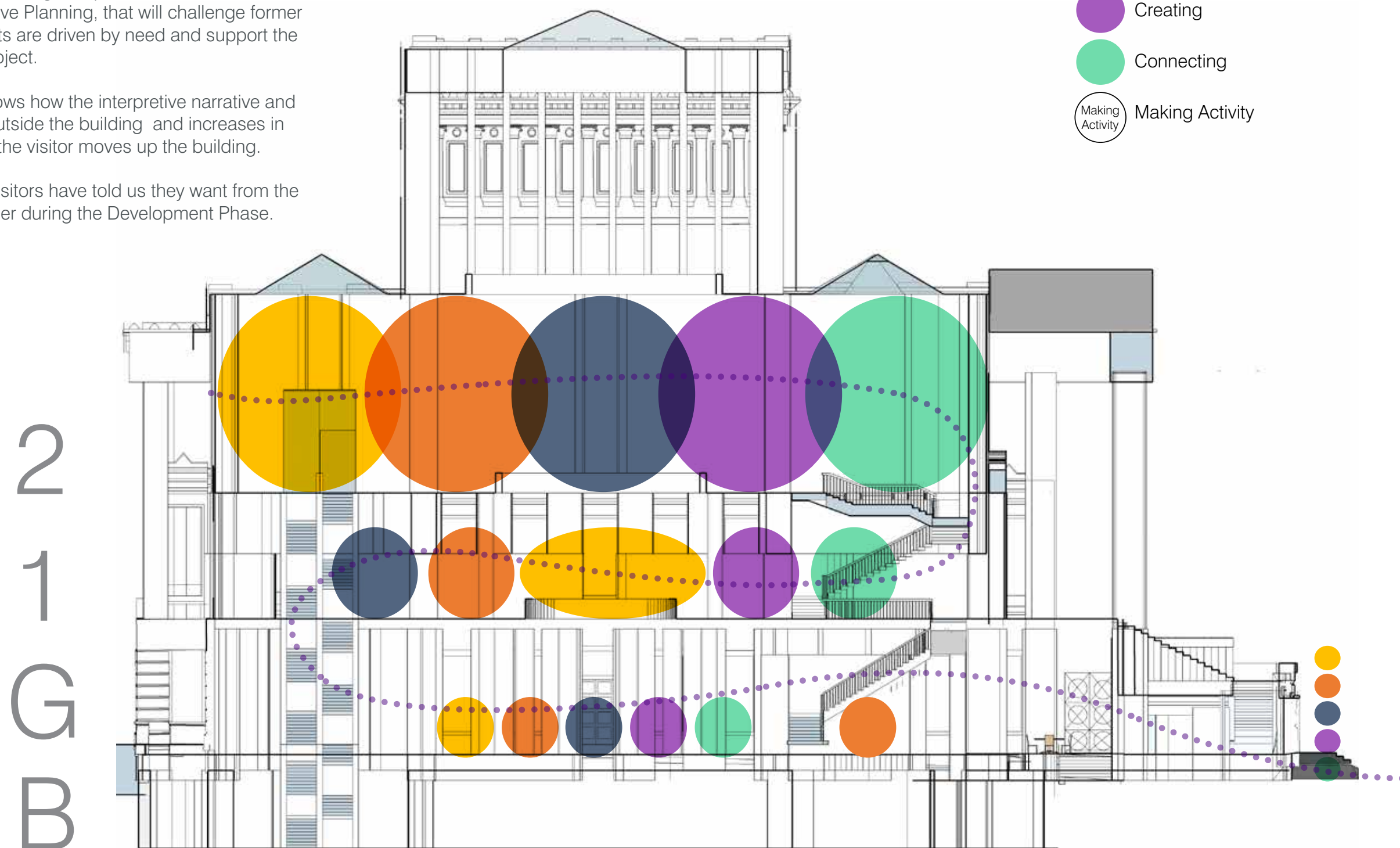


# INTERPRETIVE STORY MAPS

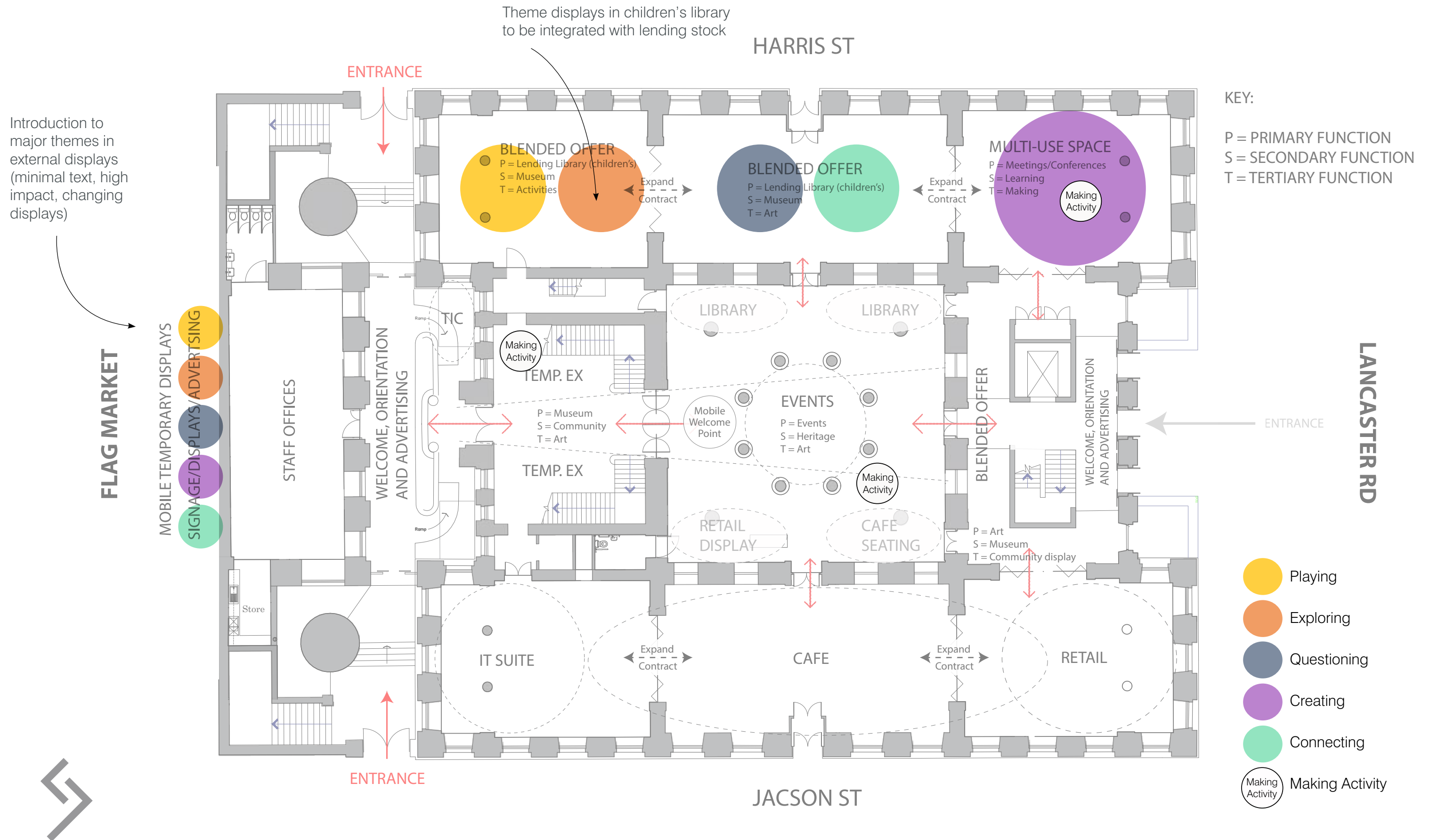
The unique nature of this project requires a profound process of engagement with the Harris' existing and potential communities to develop the detailed Interpretive Planning, that will challenge former approaches and ensure results are driven by need and support the aims and objectives of the project.

At high level, this diagram shows how the interpretive narrative and associated collection starts outside the building and increases in quantity and engagement as the visitor moves up the building.

This approach reflects what visitors have told us they want from the Harris, and will be tested further during the Development Phase.

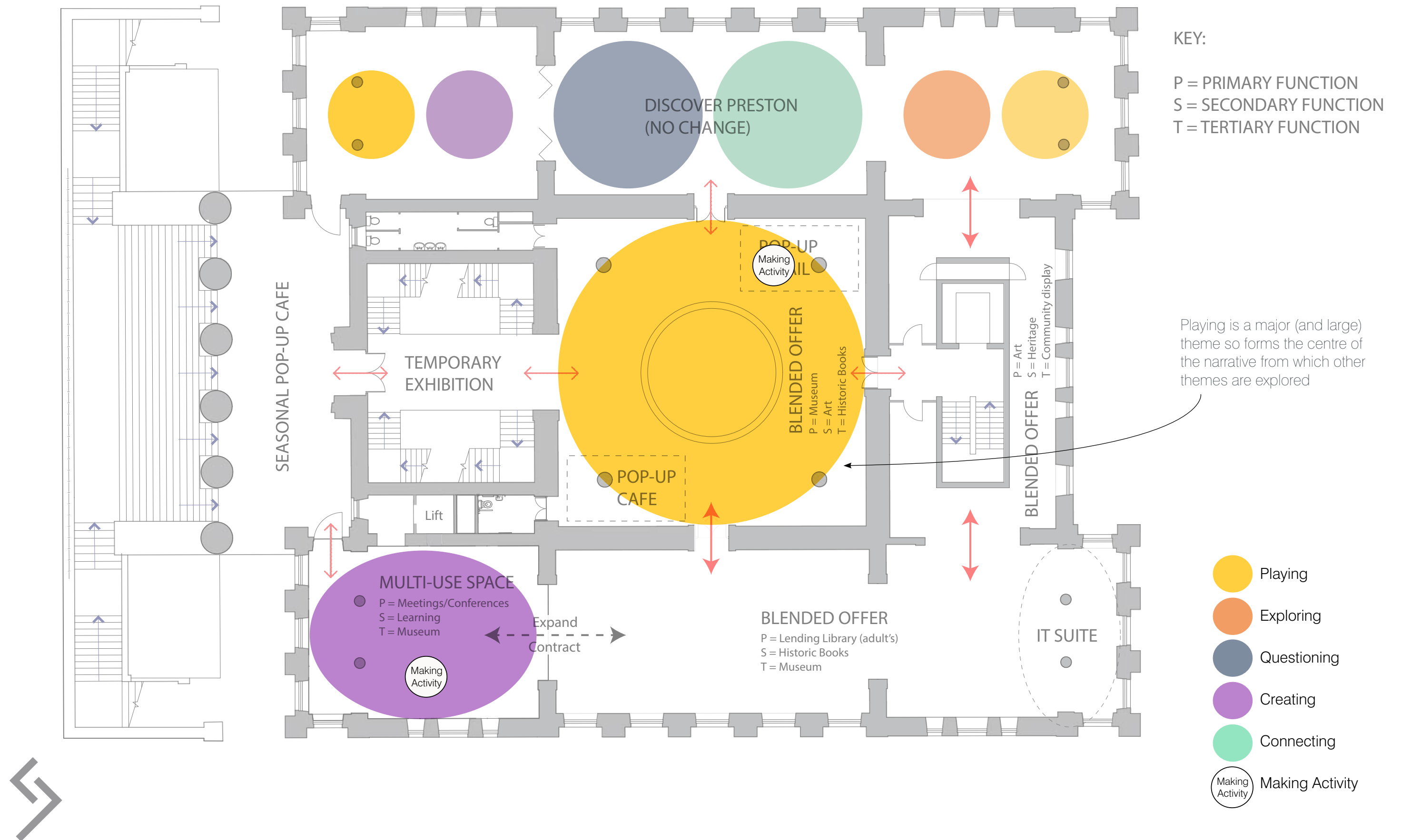


# INTERPRETIVE STORY MAP - GROUND FLOOR

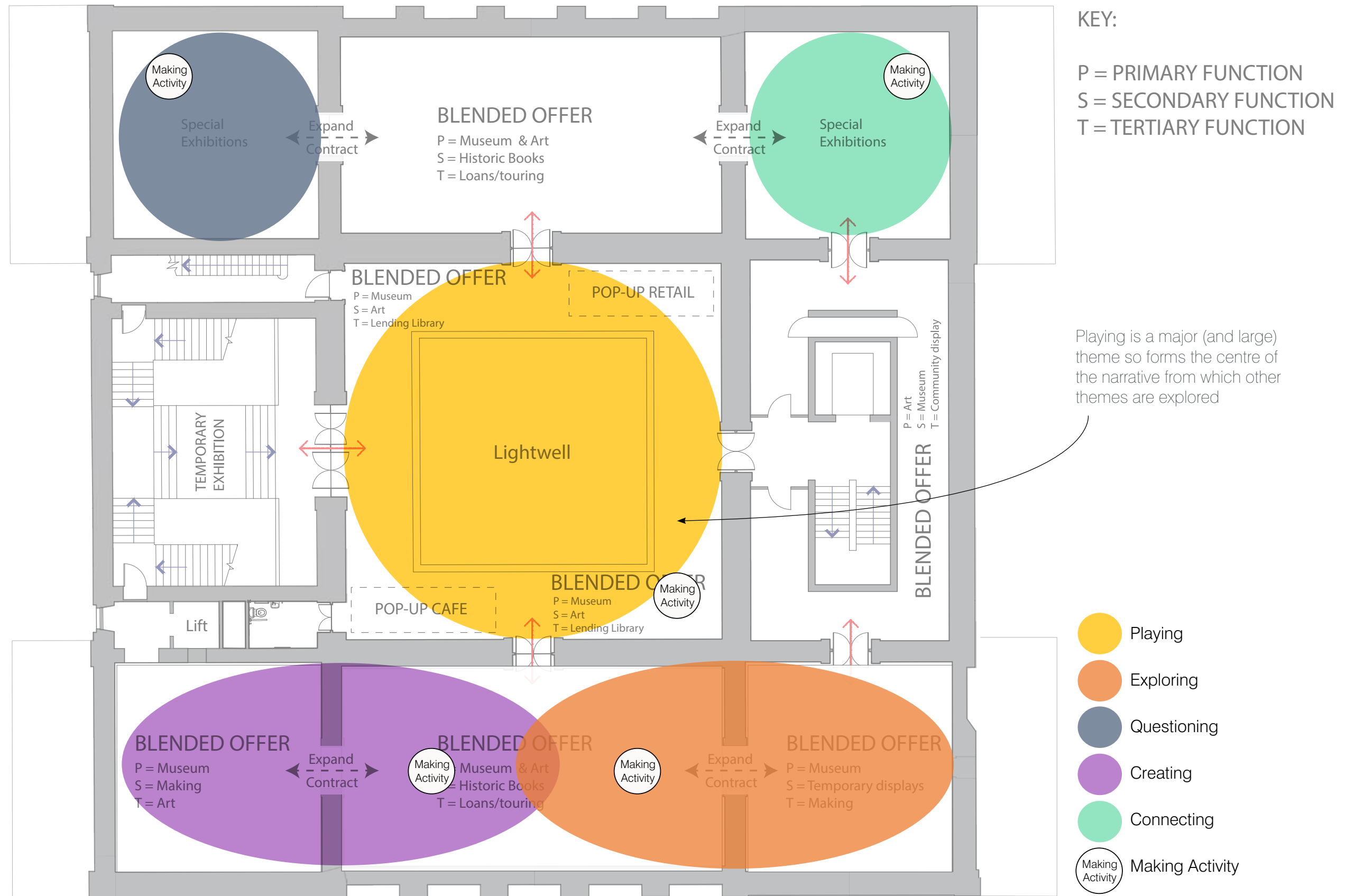




# INTERPRETIVE STORY MAP - FIRST FLOOR



# INTERPRETIVE STORY MAP - SECOND FLOOR





# THEME 1 - COME AND EXPLORE THE HARRIS!

This theme encourages physical exploration of the Harris building, but also inspires exploration of the wider world beyond its walls through the stories and collections which represent global connections.



## Story 1.1 - Why the Harris?

How the Harris got its name!

Visitors often ask how the Harris got its name. It commemorates Robert Harris, the Vicar of St George's church for over 60 years, whose son Edmund bequeathed £300,000 to Preston in the late 1870s.

Edmund had been one of those campaigning for a free library and a museum in Preston for over 20 years. His bequest also funded the Harris Technical Institute and the Harris Orphanage.

Left: Bust of Robert Harris



## Story 1.2 - A powerful ornament to the town

A story dispersed right across the Harris picks out original, quirky or hidden features of the building – Coalbrookdale ironwork balustrades, former fireplaces, the Parthenon frieze, marble urinals etc. – and relates them to the vision of the architect, James Hibbert.

Left - Original chair

Below - Hibbert's Design report

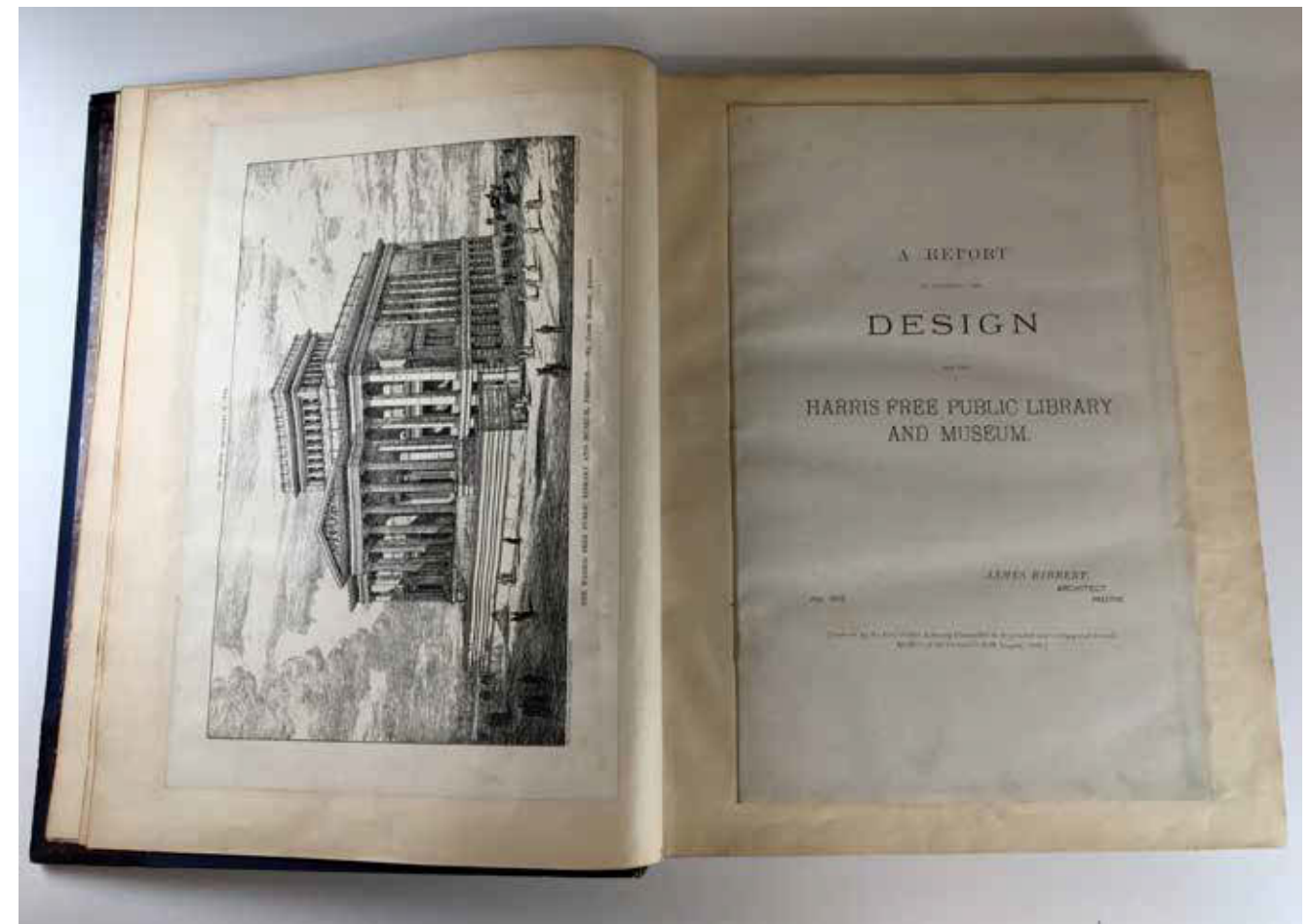


## Story 1.3 - Ancient Egypt in Preston

The Harris' founders wanted to transport people to the land of pyramids and pharaohs –before television and easy travel. They commissioned John Somerscales' paintings for the Egyptian Balcony and invested in archaeological digs to bring Egyptian history to life in Preston.

Top left - Painted face of a mummy case

Bottom left - The pyramids at Gizeh, by John Somerscales





# THEME 1 - COME AND EXPLORE THE HARRIS!



## Story 1.4 - Delving into collections

10 Red things

The Harris holds around 150,000 items in its collections that are wonderfully diverse and full of surprises.

This is a story that will change to reflect different ways of exploring and revealing the collections, in response to visitor suggestions, community delving, local and national priorities etc. This option brings together 10 red items from across the collections, from a cricket shirt to the colourful image of a bird of Paradise in a historic book.

Left - The Judge by Siegfried Charoux, 1963

Bottom row left to right - Preston Guild toffee tin, 1922, Sheet music, 1870, Birds of Paradise book illustration, Decimalisation calculator, 1970, Two Figures by Ana Maria Pacheco, 1991, Dress, 1980s, Scent bottle, 1870s, Lancashire cricket shirt, 2006, Vivienne Westwood shoes, 1991



## Story 1.5 - Beyond the Harris

The Harris' collections tell past stories about areas of Preston – surprising the people who live there now. The Ribbleton area is now covered by large housing estates, but under them is land the people once hunted over and farmed.

Top left - Farm at Ribbleton, Moonlight by Albert Woods, 1935  
Bottom left - Flint arrowhead found in Ribbleton in 1960





## THEME 2 - QUESTIONING PRESTON AND THE LIVES AROUND US

This theme instigates questioning of the world around us - all those external influences, as well as local, that resonate universally.



### Story 2.1 - A changing world

Some of our collections reflect habits and opinions that are no longer accepted, and cast light on our changing world and opportunities for debate.

Smoking was once universally accepted and part of everyday life. Cigarettes and pipes were found in nearly every home – you could buy a Guild souvenir ashtray as late as 1972. Woods' tobacco company employed hundreds of people in Preston. And children collected themed cigarette cards given away in packs. Now the health risks are recognised, smoking objects are rarely on view and there are major initiatives to help people stop smoking.

Opportunities for people to respond and add to the debate: Did you/do you/would you smoke – or want your nearest and dearest to smoke? What makes society change and people behave differently?

Top left - Girl with a Cigarette, by Fred Elwell, 1942

Bottom left - Woods cigarette tin, 1910s



### Story 2.3 - This was the future once

Visitors often find contemporary art surprising and sometimes shocking, but paintings acquired by the Harris in the past were the contemporary art of their day. Some were commentaries on life at the time, some caused controversy and lively debate.

Left - Nude by George Spencer Watson, 1927

Below - Bird Scaring by George Clausen, 1896



### Story 2.2 - Who decides what we do/who we are?

Men are soldiers – looking masterful. Women play the piano – looking decorative. We like to think these are views from the past, but museum collections can reinforce old ideas. Active collecting will change this, but meanwhile we challenge the past.

Below left - The White Piano, by Arthur Melville, 1897

Below right - William Pitt Amherst, by Arthur Devis, 1803





## THEME 2 - QUESTIONING PRESTON AND THE LIVES AROUND US

### Story 2.4 - Who decides what you wear?

From crinolines to shoulder pads, the way we dress changes all the time. Why is our clothing so gendered? And why do different cultures dress differently? What stories can we tell about clothes as personal and public expressions of their time?

Below left - Dress, 1980s

Below right - Sari, 1980s



### Story 2.5 - What do you believe in?

We all have beliefs and values that guide the choices we make, like Joseph Livesey, a champion of teetotalism and self-improvement. Or the priest who risked his life to carry this silver pyx to take communion to Lancashire Catholics when their faith was forbidden.

Left - Sculpture of Joseph Livesey about 1884

Below - Pyx, about 1650





# THEME 3 - THINGS CREATED IN PRESTON MAKE OUR WORLD GO ROUND

Using the collection to create, inspire and learn from artists, makers and manufacturers



## Story 3.1 - How did they make that - object detectives

It's easy to admire beautiful or intriguing things without considering all the different processes involved. From weaving fabric to engineering clocks and watches, it's time to use our detective skills to explore how they're made and how they work.



Far left - Float from back of woven silk from 1740s

Left - Watch mechanism, made by Yates, Preston clockmakers

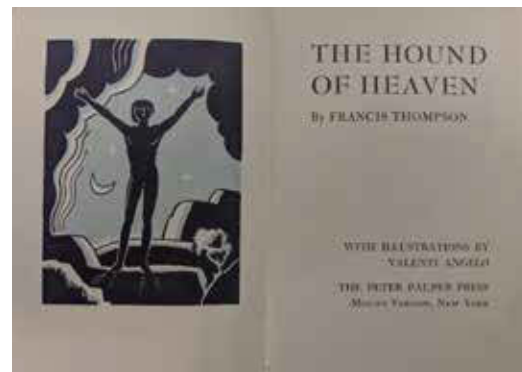


## Story 3.2 - Behind the finished item

Design is a key part of creating things that are both practical and beautiful. As with the V&A Museum's origins, the Harris' founders wanted to exhibit good design. The collections are still used by artists, makers and students for research and inspiration.

Left - Horrockses lace dress

Below - Horrockses lace dress design



## Story 3.3 - Poetry in motion

Preston has an active poetry network and has been home to poets Gerard Manley Hopkins, Robert Service and Francis Thompson, whose archive is in the Harris. And poetry has inspired artists, like Tennyson's Crossing the Bar and the 1900 painting The Ebb.

Above - Francis Thompson - Hound of Heaven

Right - The Ebb, by Herbert Draper, 1900





## THEME 3 - THINGS CREATED IN PRESTON MAKE OUR WORLD GO ROUND



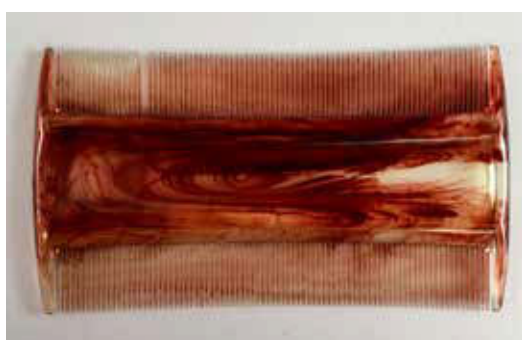
### Story 3.4 - The play's the thing

Shakespeare's plays have appealed to many artists over the years, combining the Harris' commitment to Literature and the Arts.

Paintings are complemented by the Nonesuch edition of the plays and other historic books.

Top left - Puck from Midsummer Night's Dream by Richard Dadd, 1841

Bottom left - Hamlet by Carel Weight, 1962



### Story 3.6 - Inspiration and innovation

Designers, makers, engineers and artists are all looking for inspiration to make things better, faster, cheaper, simpler or just different. It might be about using different materials or an invention that changes the world – from moulded animal horn to modern plastics.

Left - Plastic comb, 1940s

Right - Horn spoon, about 1600



### Story 3.5 - Handmade or mass manufacture

These two blue pots were produced at the same time – but are very different. One potter built her own kiln and prepared her own clay and glazes. The other was an industrial designer employed to create wares for mass-production in a factory.

Top left - Blue vase designed by Keith Murray, produced by Wedgwood, in 1930s

Bottom left - Blue vase, hand-thrown by Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, in 1930s

Below - Both pots together





# THEME 4 - IN PRESTON, PLAYING IS A SERIOUS BUSINESS!

Having fun through exploring collections related to leisure time and play



## Story 4.1 - How do you play?

Playing isn't just for children, it's how each of us finds pleasure in whatever leisure time we have.

Many of the Harris' collections exist because people have enjoyed collecting things for pleasure or have given things that they have enjoyed using in their spare time. Preston is a place where people dress up – especially for the Guild, are enthusiastic cricketers, take part in egg rolling on Easter Monday, or spin and scratch vinyl records.

Left - Dub Scratchers by Denzil Forrester, 1990  
Middle row left to right - The Children of James Todd by William Logsdail, 1920, Cindy doll, 2012, Lancashire cricket bat, 1975

Bottom left to right - xxx



## Story 4.2 - Getting dressed up to play

Preston people love getting dressed up. There's a tradition here of holding fancy dress balls – often for the Guild, but sometimes just for fun. And don't forget special outfits for playtime – from cricket shirts to swimwear.



Far left - Knave of Hearts outfit worn to Preston Guild in 1882 and 1922.

Left - Sun-suit from 1948 by Horrockses Fashions.

## Story 4.3 - Having fun with design

Expect the unexpected – designers play with our expectations to make us look twice, and smile.

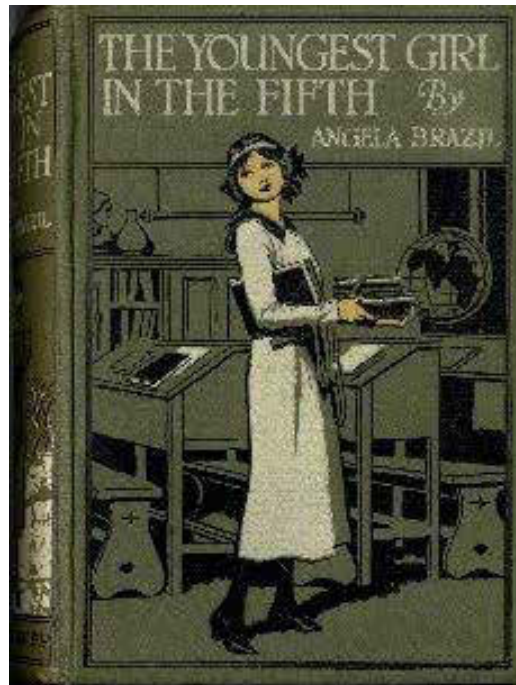
Form and function are key principles of design, but sometimes designers subvert these principles and play with materials or shapes or pattern to create the unexpected. The pretty pattern on that Horrockses dress turns out to be plates of food, and who knows what the Royal visitors in 1913 thought of the two-headed soap made by a Preston company. Why not use Fuzzy Felt to decorate your clothes?

Above left - Mugs by Carol McNicholl, 1993  
Below left - Anatomy book, Spencer collection





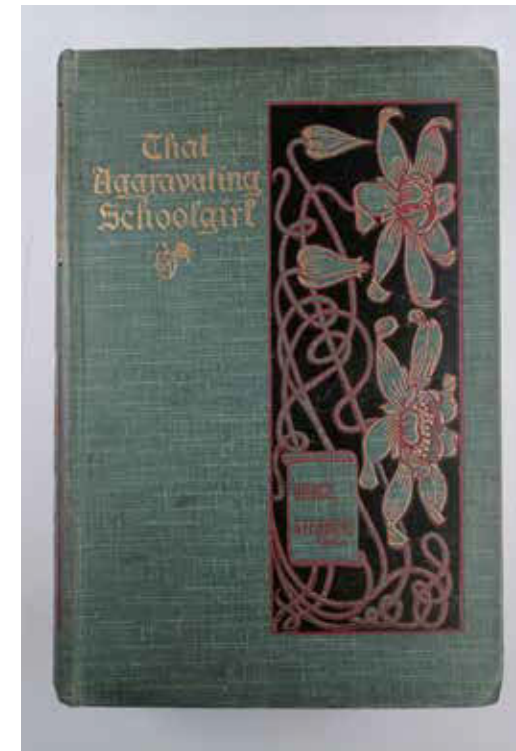
## THEME 4 - IN PRESTON PLAYING IS A SERIOUS BUSINESS!



### Story 4.4 - Not just for children

Playing's not just for fun – it's a serious business at any age. It stimulates your mind and body, develops your imagination and creativity, helps you learn new skills and improves your wellbeing. How do you escape from the pressures of everyday life?

Left - Brazil, Angela. The Youngest Girl in the Fifth  
Below - Hornby model train, 1930s



### Story 4.5 - Art imitates nature

Designers and artists are inspired by the natural world – plants, animals, birds, flowers and even vegetables. They may try to recreate nature with a particular medium – porcelain, perhaps – or use nature's design as a starting point for something new.

Porcelain leaf sauceboat, 1740  
That Aggravating Schoolgirl cover, 1900



### Story 4.6 - Artists at play

Many artists play with ideas, colour and marks as part of their creative process as they develop new work. They carry sketchbooks to capture what they see around them, and what inspires them. And some artists' finished work is playful.

Left top - Group of Figures by Joseph Nollekens, about 1770  
Left bottom - Untitled by Bruce McLean, 1988





# THEME 5 - MAKING CONNECTIONS AT THE HARRIS

Opening up the Harris collections to connect to wider influences, art and heritage.

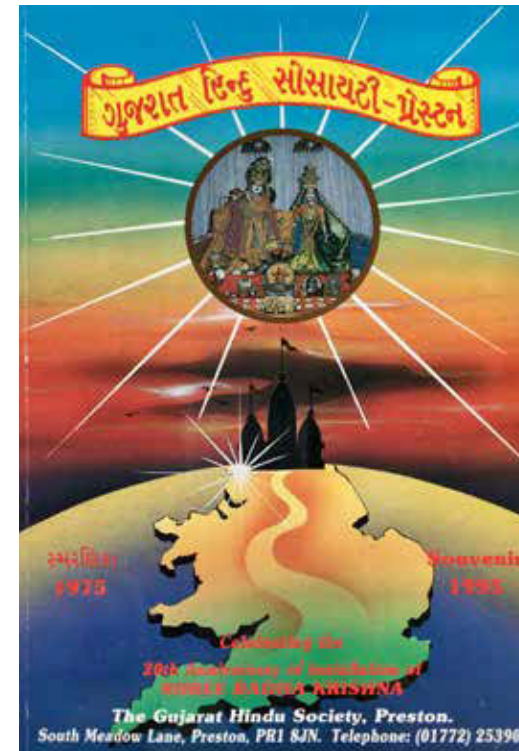
## Story 5.1 - Relationships

The Harris is full of stories, art, and objects that reveal people's relationships – love, friendship, families. They can prompt conversations to support wellbeing or act as a setting for visitors' developing relationships.



Far left - Marriage and courtship mug, made in Staffordshire in 1760s ce337

Left - Detail from rebus Valentine's Day card from early 1800s.



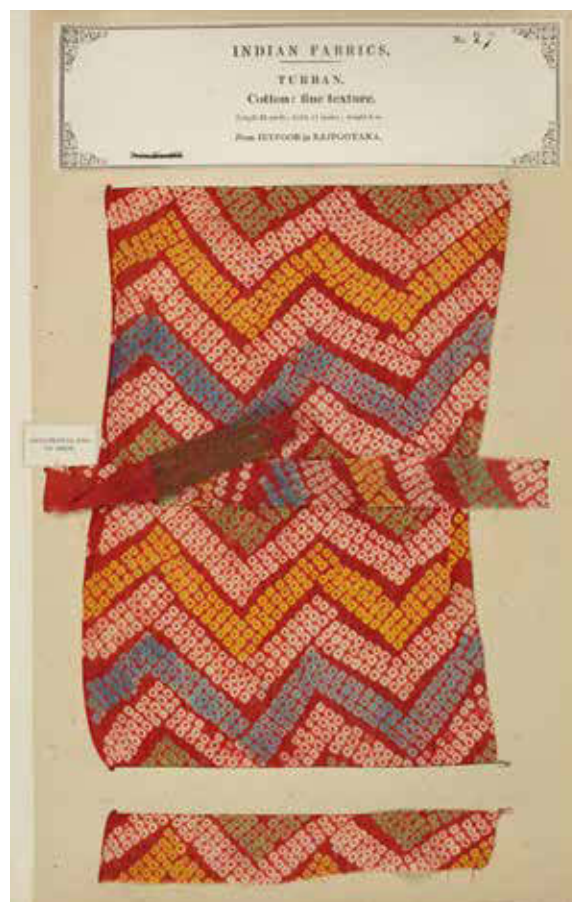
## Story 5.2 - Moving to Preston

Jobs, study and relationships have drawn people to the city from around the world, especially South Asia, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and China.



Far left - Gujarati Hindu booklet

Left - Caribbean Carnival programme



## Story 5.3 - Industry links

Preston connects across the world through its dock and industries past and present. The Harris collections reflect how trade has brought goods from China, India or the Caribbean, and sent products out in return.

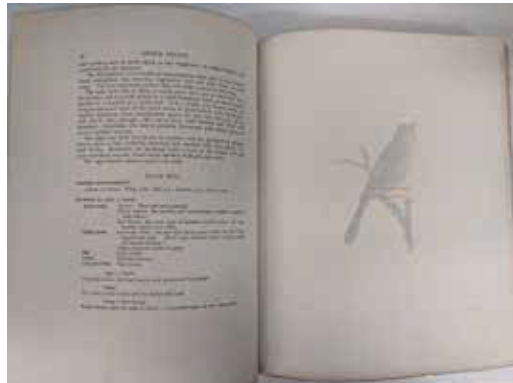
Far left - Textile Manufactures of India, 1866

Left Horrocks international brand Supreme72, 1890s





## THEME 5 - MAKING CONNECTIONS AT THE HARRIS



### Story 5.4 - Harris - eclectic to the core

'Enquire within upon Everything' could replace the 'Mental Riches' exhortation on the Harris. From the extensive book and periodical collections to the best of British art and design and western history, local people could find out about almost anything.

Top left - Bird Encyclopaedia  
Bottom left - Book Wikipedia



### Story 5.6 - Unlikely Links

An artist. A poet. Could one of them have been Jack the Ripper? Recently, researchers have suggested that the artist Walter Sickert or Francis Thompson, the Preston-born poet, might have murdered up to 11 women in the East End of London in the 1880s.



Far left - Two Women, 1911 by Walter Sickert  
Left - Poem by Francis Thompson



### Story 5.5 - Getting Away

Preston is a public transport hub, was a busy port and sent people around the world as tourists, soldiers, explorers and workers. Big and small adventures can be found in the collections.

Left - Chamonix souvenir, 1910  
Below - November Afternoon [Preston Station], by Rosemary Singleton, 1958





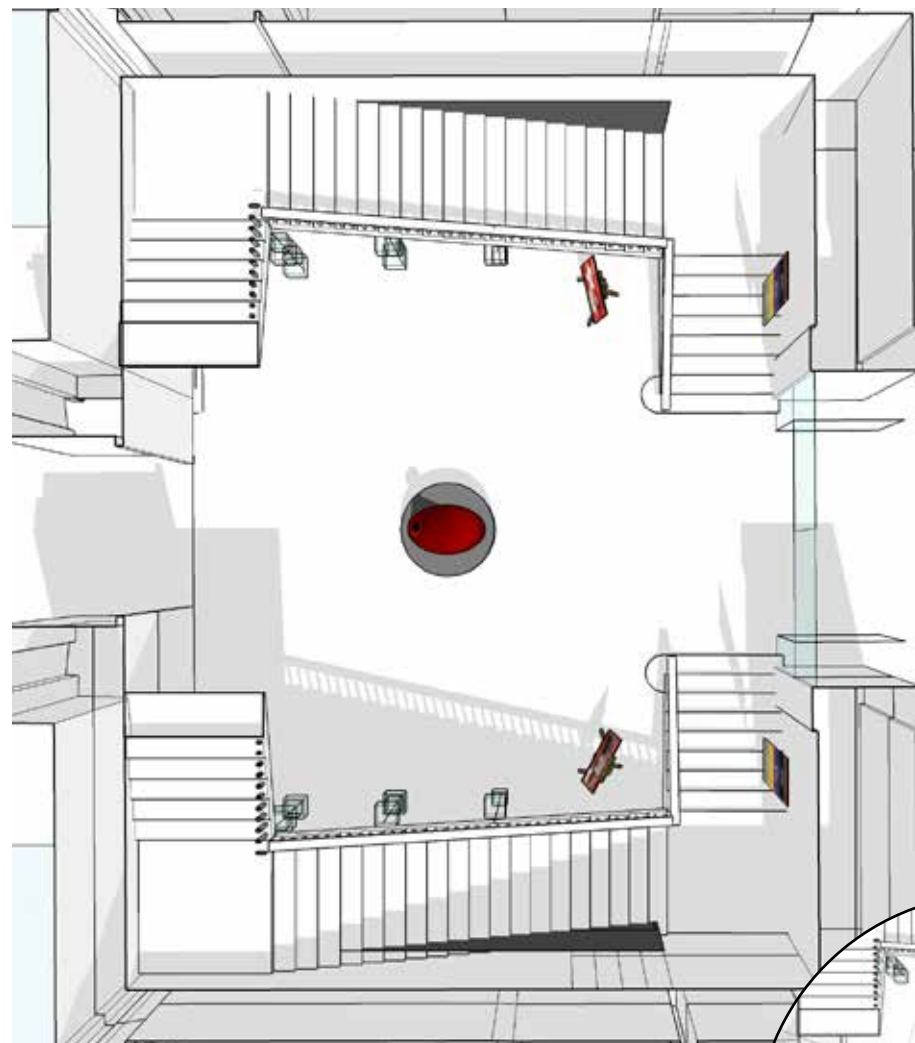
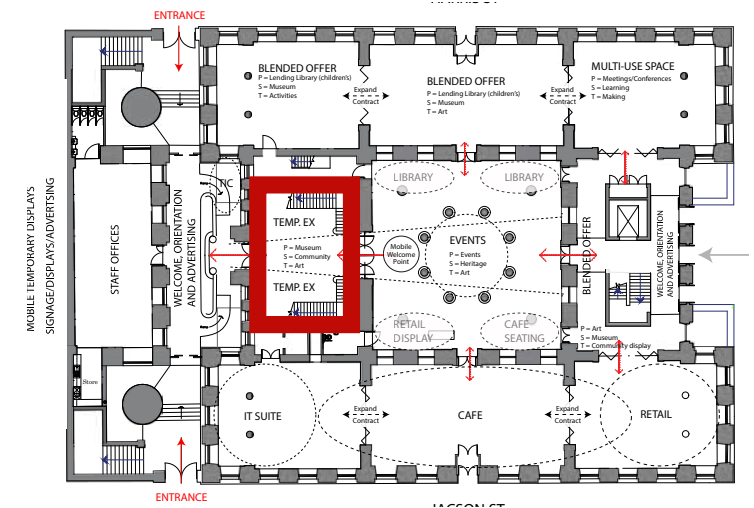
# ENTRANCE LOBBY TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS - GROUND FLOOR

The 'Your Space' gallery is the first that greets visitors as they enter the Harris from one of the front side entrances. Intended to be co-curated with and by local communities, it will be a vibrant and dynamic area that changes frequently, revealing the collections that are currently in storage beneath the Harris.

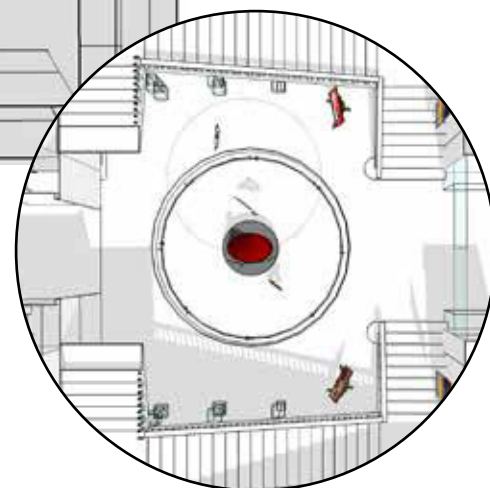
Ideas will be explored and tested here, conversations encouraged and responses recorded and considered for future displays. Prototypes can be made throughout the Harris and displayed in this area to ensure maximum visibility and engagement.

The images on this page show an example display in response to visitor suggestions. This idea brings together 10 red items from across the collections, from a cricket shirt to the colourful image of a bird of Paradise in a historic book.

These objects will be presented alongside fine art, lending library stock, historic books and making activities (in this case co-design and production of displays) to showcase our blended offer and approach to storytelling.



*Inset image shows location of suspended projection drum*



*Your place projection onto the suspended drum can be easily updated to display video footage or images.*

*Graphics feature images of the people involved in designing and co-curating the exhibition*





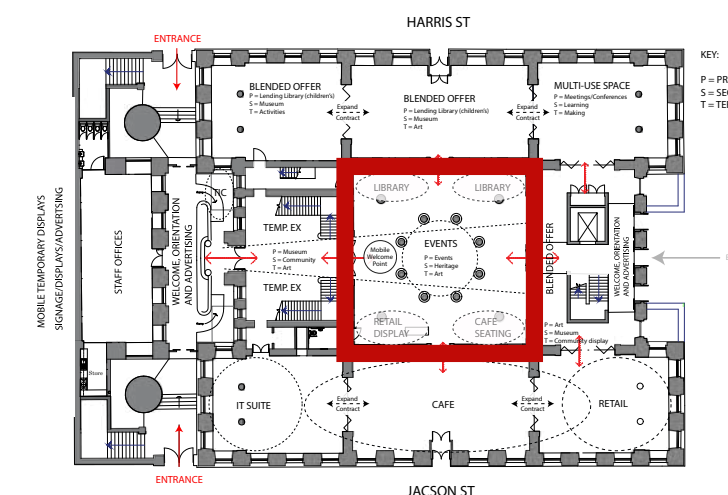
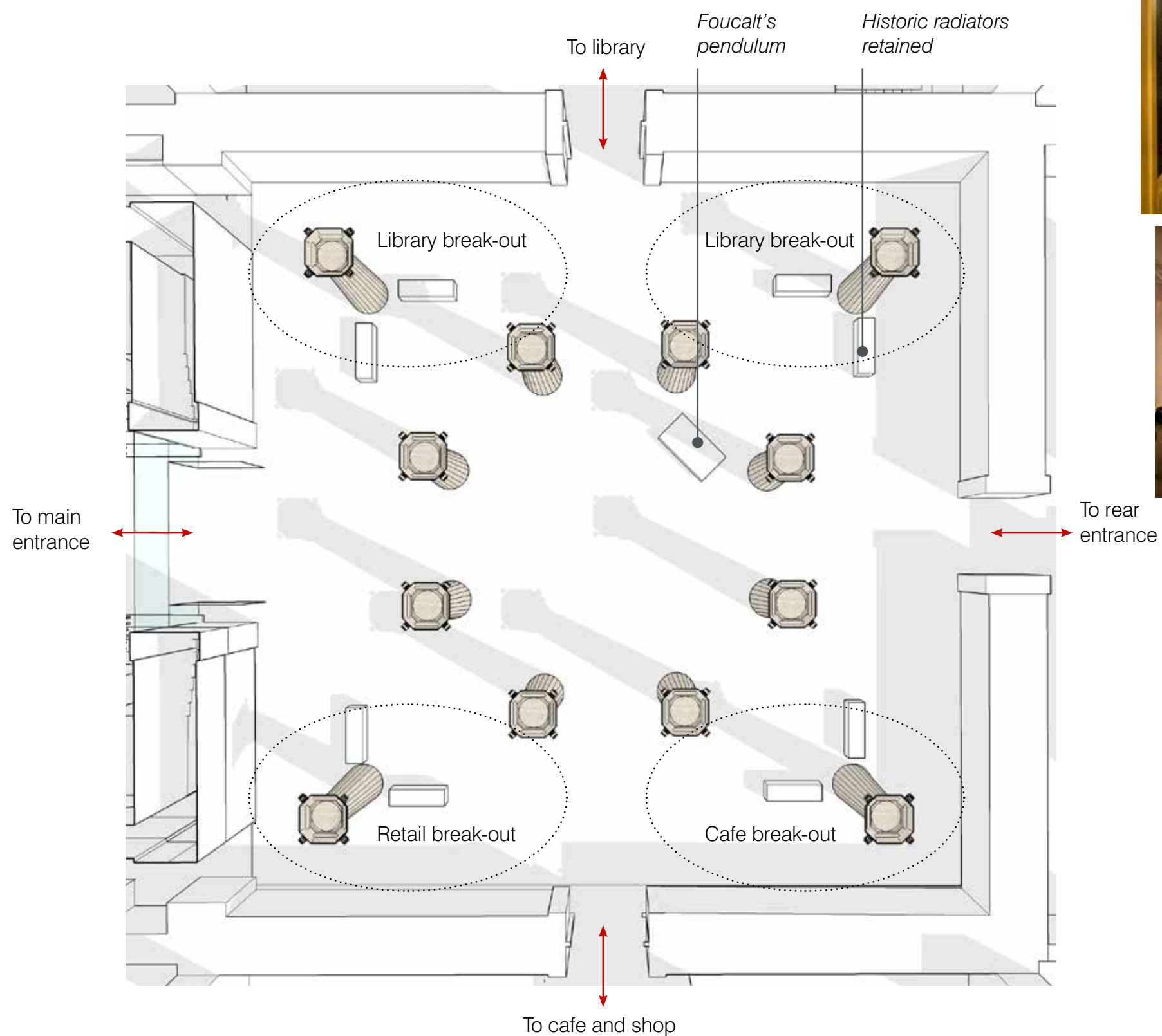
## ENTRANCE LOBBY TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS - GROUND FLOOR





# CENTRAL HUB EVENTS SPACE - GROUND FLOOR

The 'heart' of the Harris, this beautiful space will be a dynamic hive of activity. By keeping the layout flexible, with light-touch interpretation, the space can be used for regular activities such as making and collection handling sessions, or can be used for events such as music concerts, supporting the objectives of both the activity and business plans.





# CAFE & RETAIL - GROUND FLOOR

The images on this page show how the blended offer at the Harris will permeate all spaces including those normally used for commercial activity. Collections, art, historic and lending books will be displayed within the cafe and retail spaces, connecting narratives and activities.



*Furniture printed with stories and images*



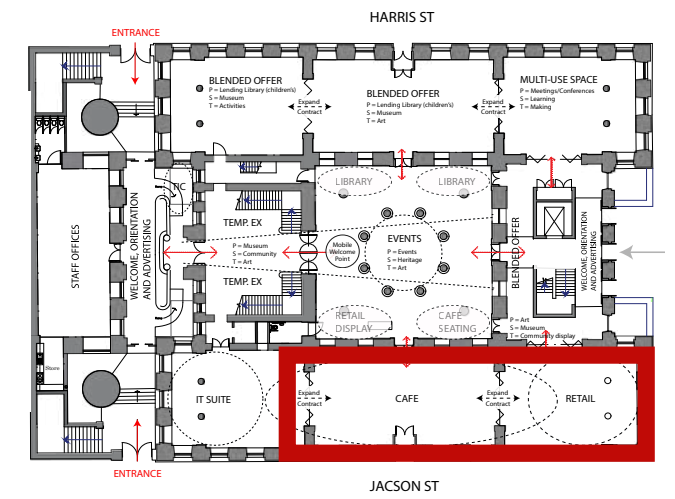
*Pop up mobile cafe units can move around the building*



*'Create your own cafe' on gallery using pull out furniture integrated into displays*



*Book display integrated with cafe seating*



*Retail offer visible in circulation spaces*



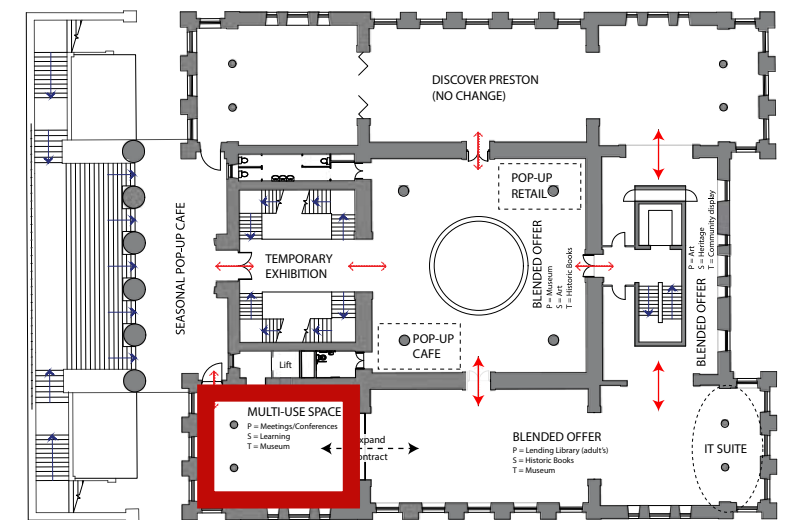
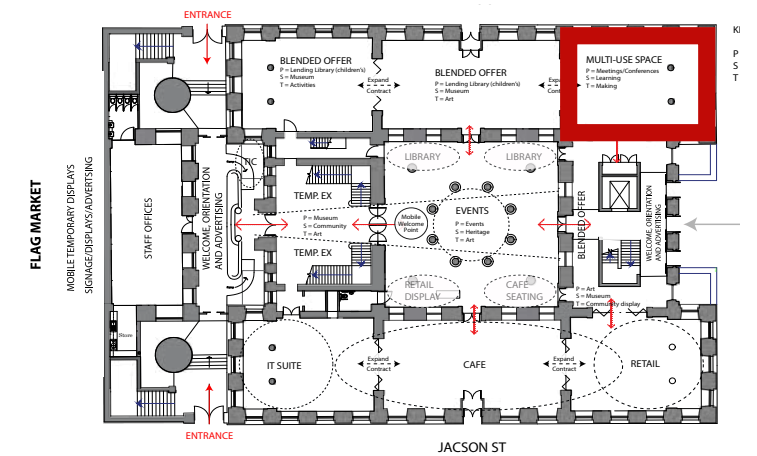
# MULTI-USE SPACES - GROUND AND FIRST FLOORS

These spaces which feature on both the ground and first floors are intended to offer flexibility for the operations and activities of the Harris. Whilst they may feature permanent displays of collections, displays will be modular to allow reconfiguration of the space for events and activities, whether a weekly mums and toddlers group, chill-out spaces for teenagers, a monthly community group meeting, or a one-off commercial event or wedding.



Maintaining and revealing historic features and decoration - usp of the Harris

Relaxed chill-out spaces for teenagers



Sketch shows how curtains could create enclosed spaces for meetings or quiet time



# MAKER SPACES - ALL AREAS

Central to the Joyful Making approach at the Harris, is that maker spaces will be included within the blended offer across the whole building. Visitors will discover making opportunities or spaces in which they can make in every gallery, ensuring they are truly integrated rather than separated or an add-ons. This is key to allow people to be inspired and encouraged to make by the collections and spaces they are in. Making will be appropriate to the space they are in to provide considered care for collections, and will also include co-curated displays made by visitors.

A makeshop area in the retail offer would provide opportunity for makers, artists and entrepreneurs to advertise and sell their works.

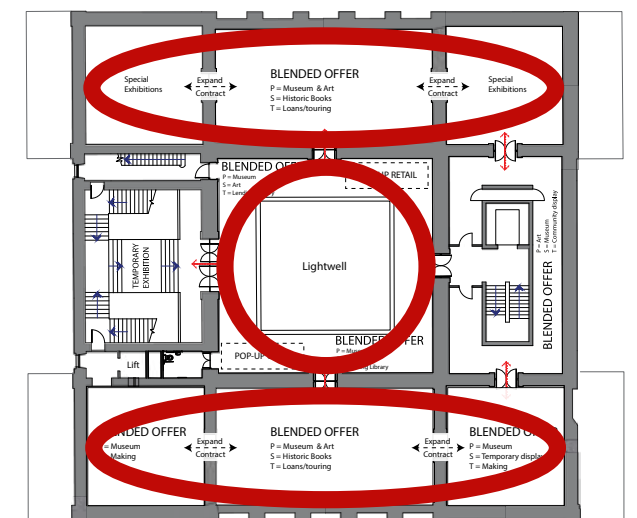
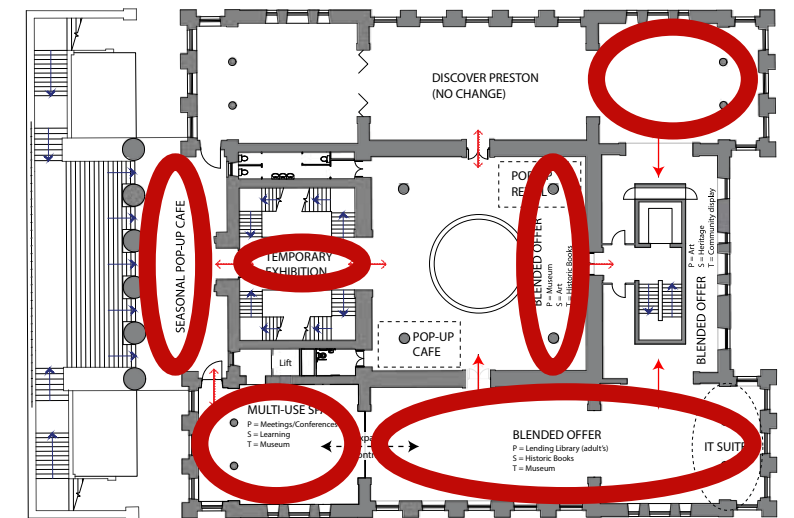
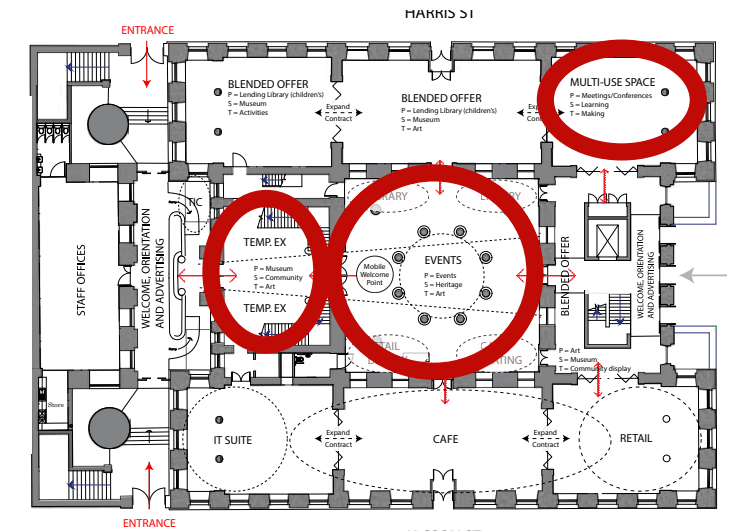


*Making co-curated displays with different communities*



*Digital making software provided in IT areas*

*Visitors can request new making opportunities*



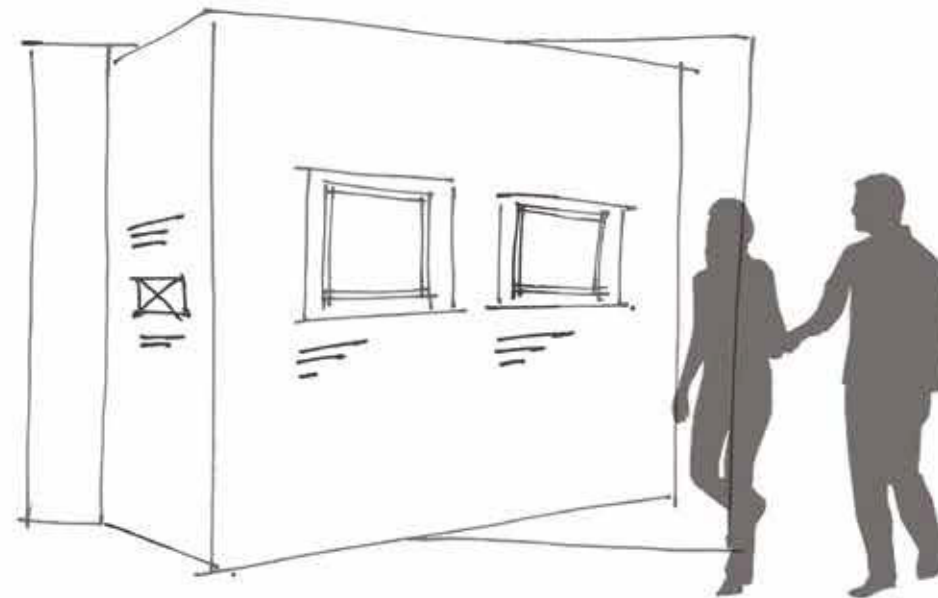
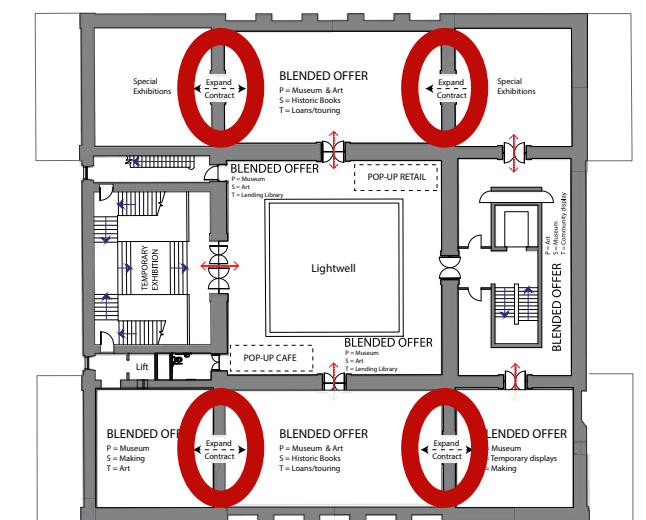
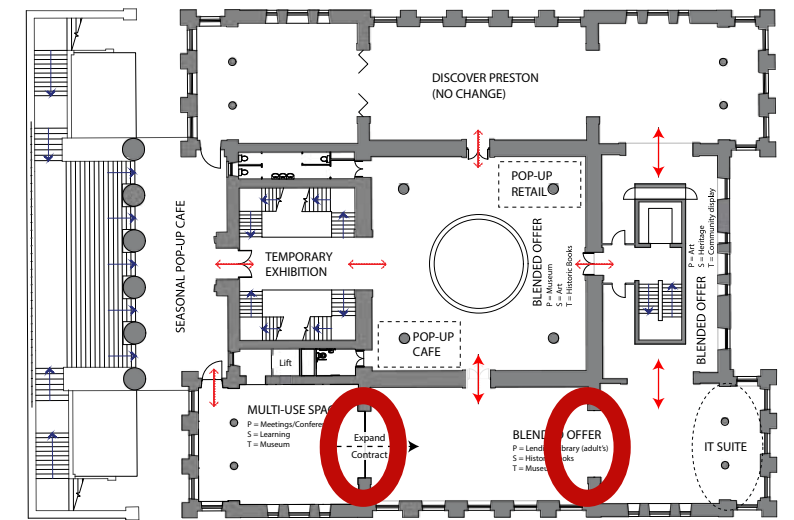
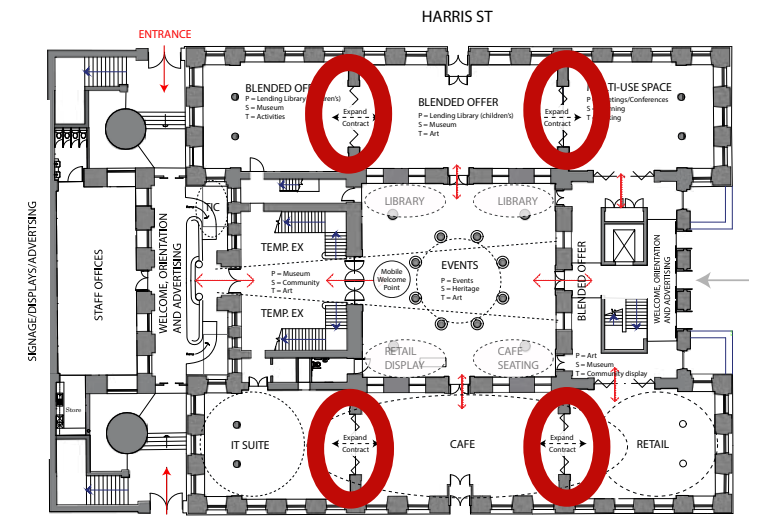


# THRESHOLDS - ALL FLOORS

The ambition to remove recent unsympathetic partition walls will reveal the original building and return the spacious gallery spaces to their former glory. Space dividers will provide opportunity for flexible spaces which can accommodate different blended offer, uses and the needs of different groups.



Use structure to create focus and space for star objects



Sketch shows how rotating displays could act as room dividers or change the use and focus of a space easily





# VERTICAL CIRCULATION SPACES - ALL FLOORS

Circulation spaces such as stairwell walls, external surfaces of lift shafts and corridors all offer vast expanses of wall space, often under-utilised for display. The suggestions here show how the potential of these areas could best be used to present varied collection displays which would increase visitors' access to collections currently held in storage.



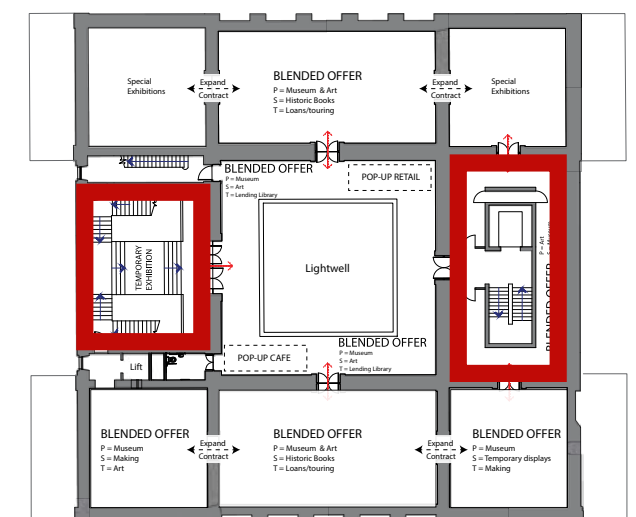
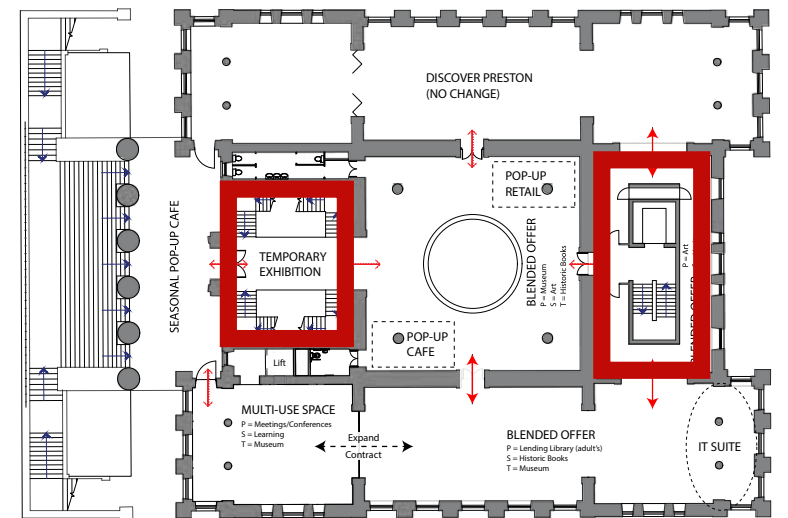
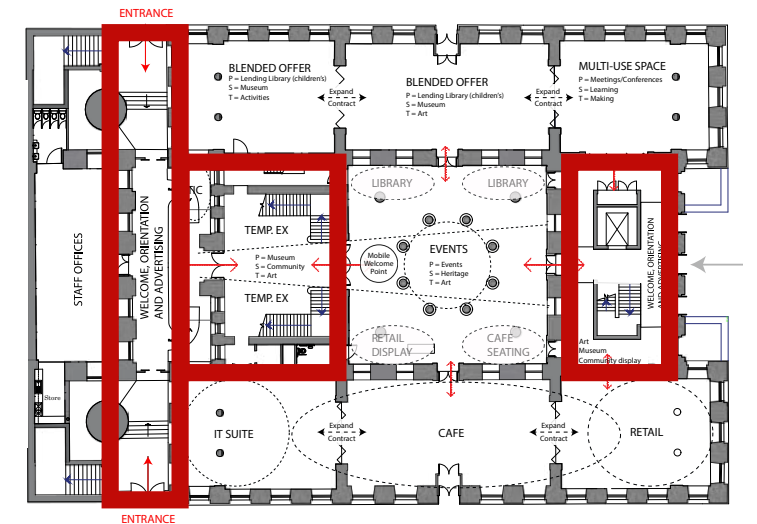
Moving away from a traditional painting display on the stairwells, objects integrated both on walls and in vertical displays viewable from steps



Use large wall expanses for book/object storage (those that don't need regular access)



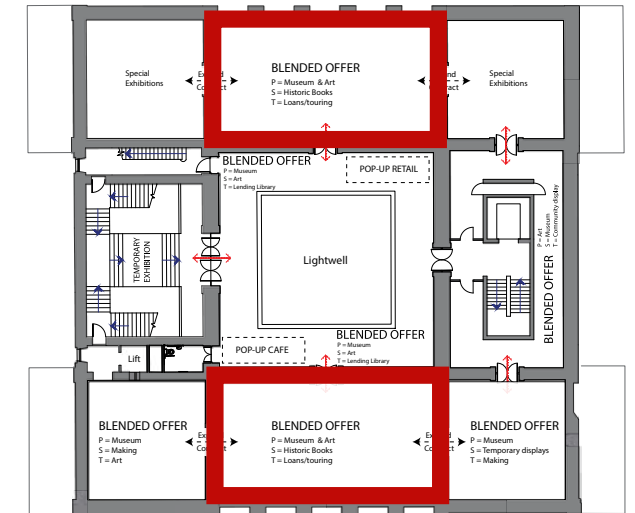
Art en-masse with labels at lower level for accessibility





## BLENDED DISPLAY: PRIMARY USE - ART GALLERY / 2ND FLOOR

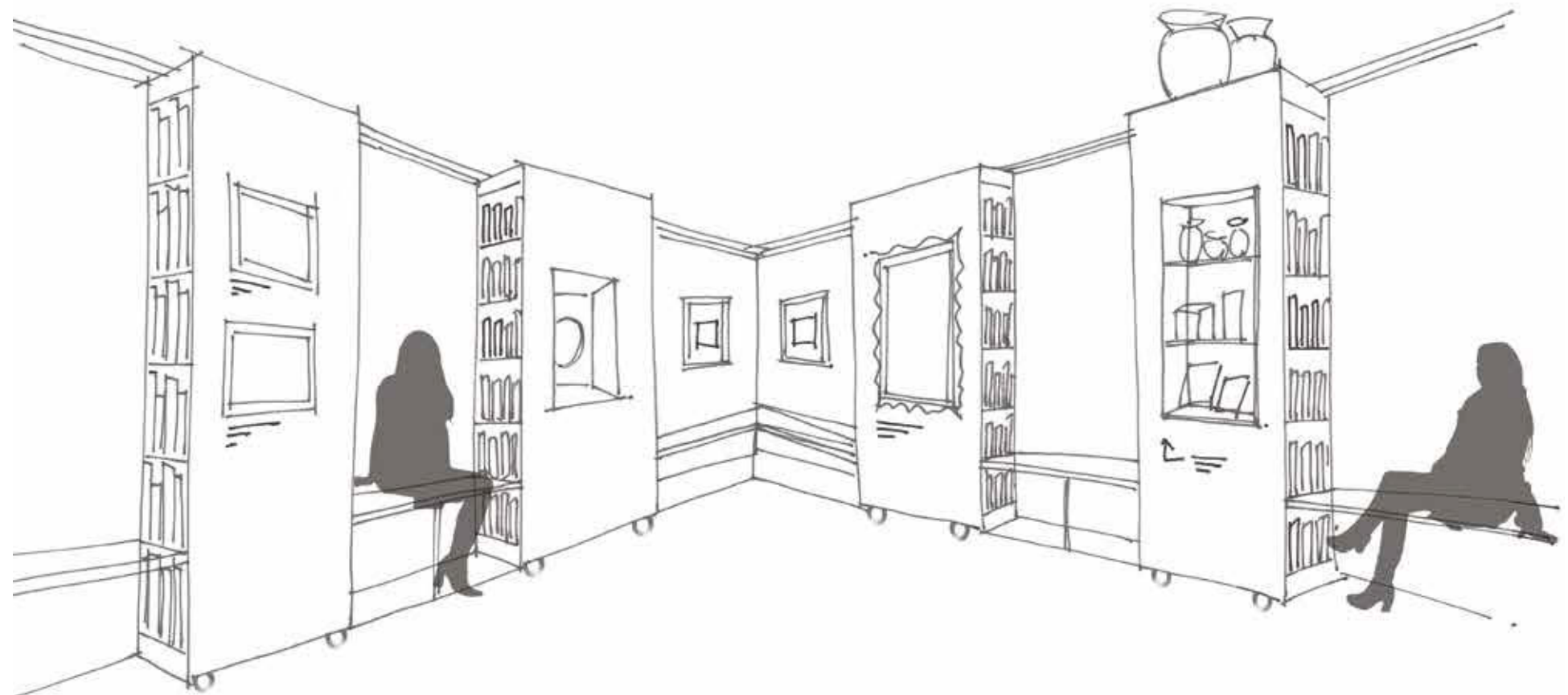
The majority of spaces available as gallery display will feature the new approach which blends the traditionally segregated museum, art gallery and library offers. Each space will offer a primary, secondary and tertiary purpose to provide structure and fulfil operational requirements, but the 'blended offer' will integrate collections from all three functions, united by the thematic interpretation. The following pages explore the possible design solutions for heritage-led blended offer spaces.



Mood image and sketch show art blended with books, collection, storage and seating

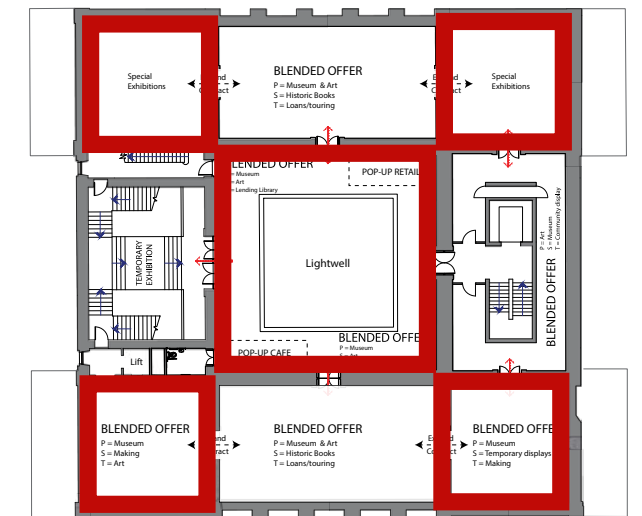


Explore non-wall based display of fine art and water colours





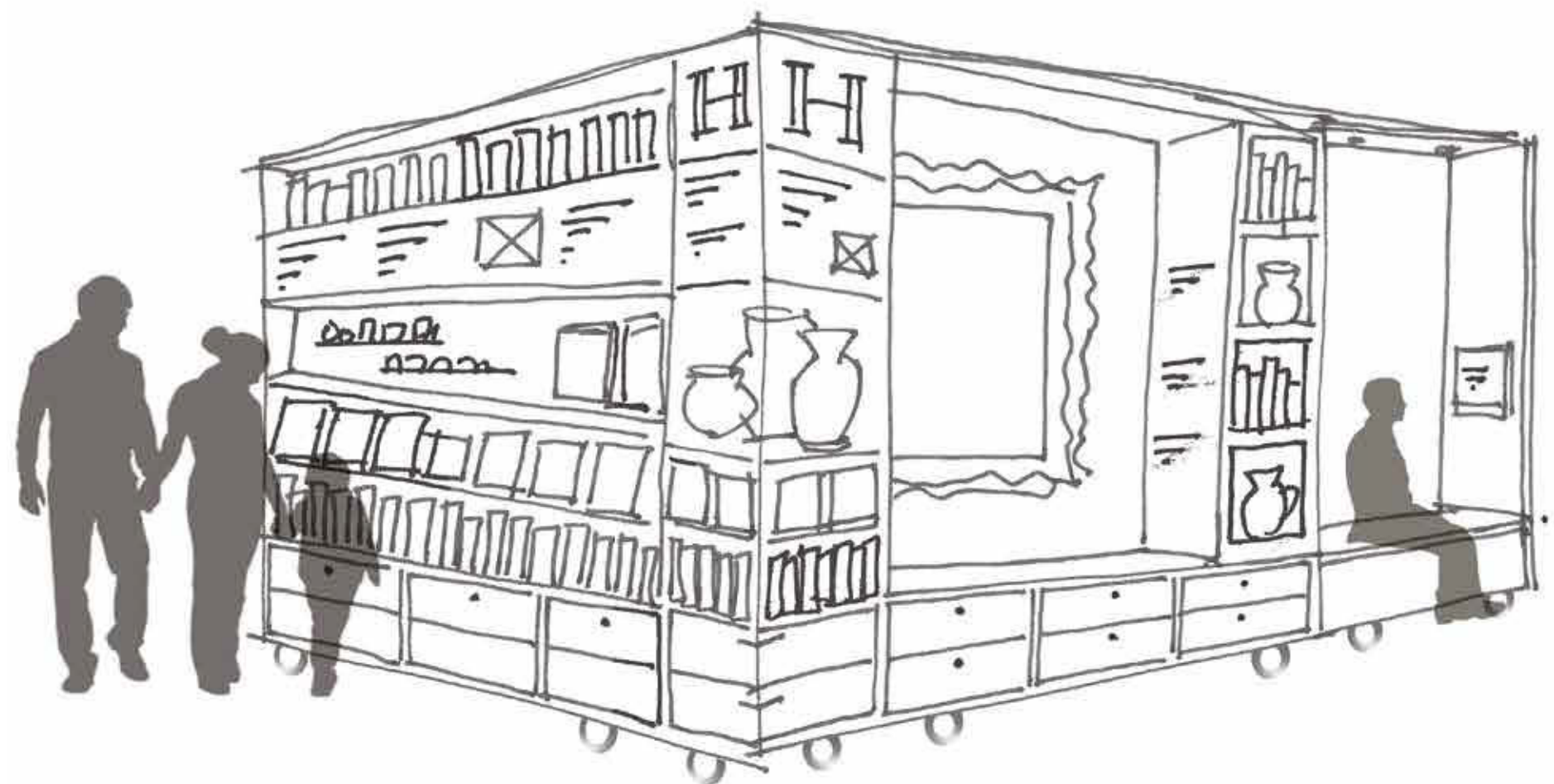
## BLENDED DISPLAY: PRIMARY USE - MUSEUM / 2ND FLOOR



Mood image and sketch show collections blended with art, books, collection, storage and seating



Modular displays on castors to aid flexibility and expansion/contraction

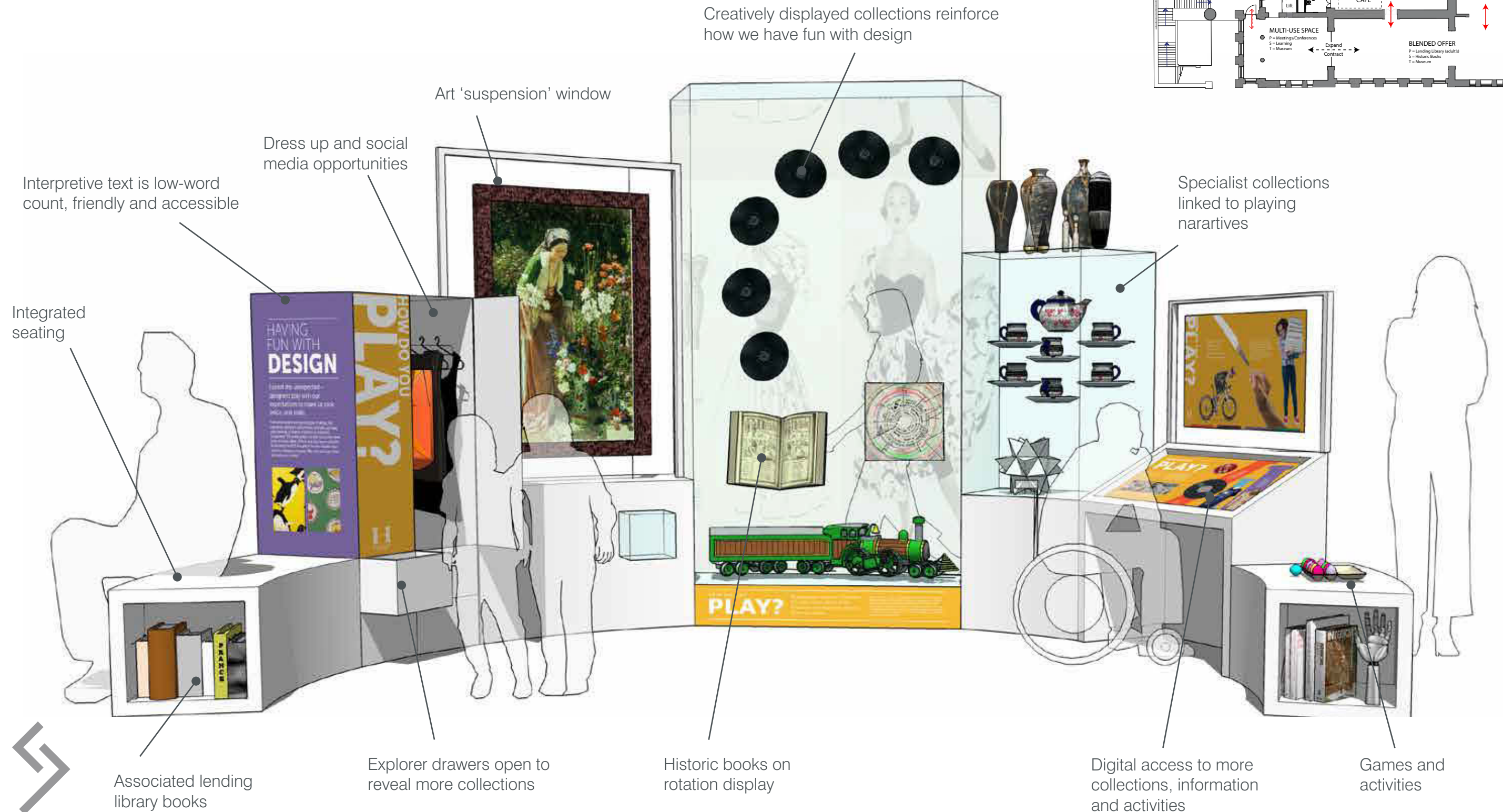
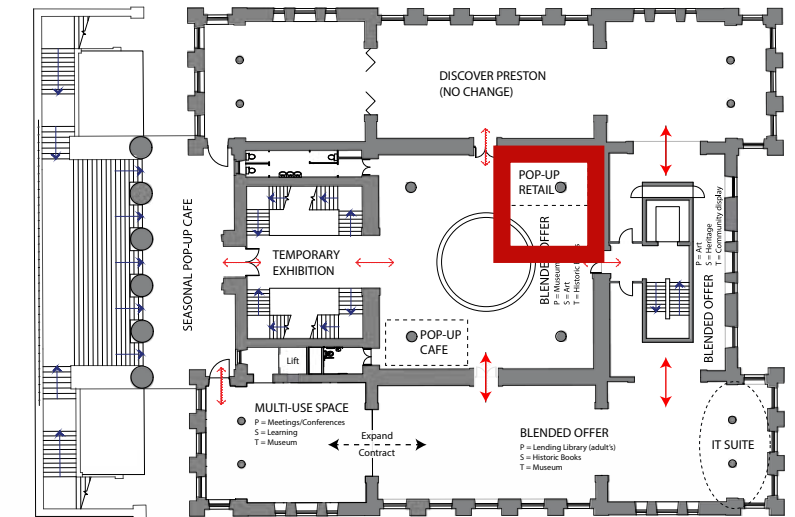




# 

The image on this page shows a typical blended display within the building's central atrium. Designed to ensure visibility of the internal decoration is retained, these flexible modular units can be moved around the building easily accommodating the varying collections and activities.

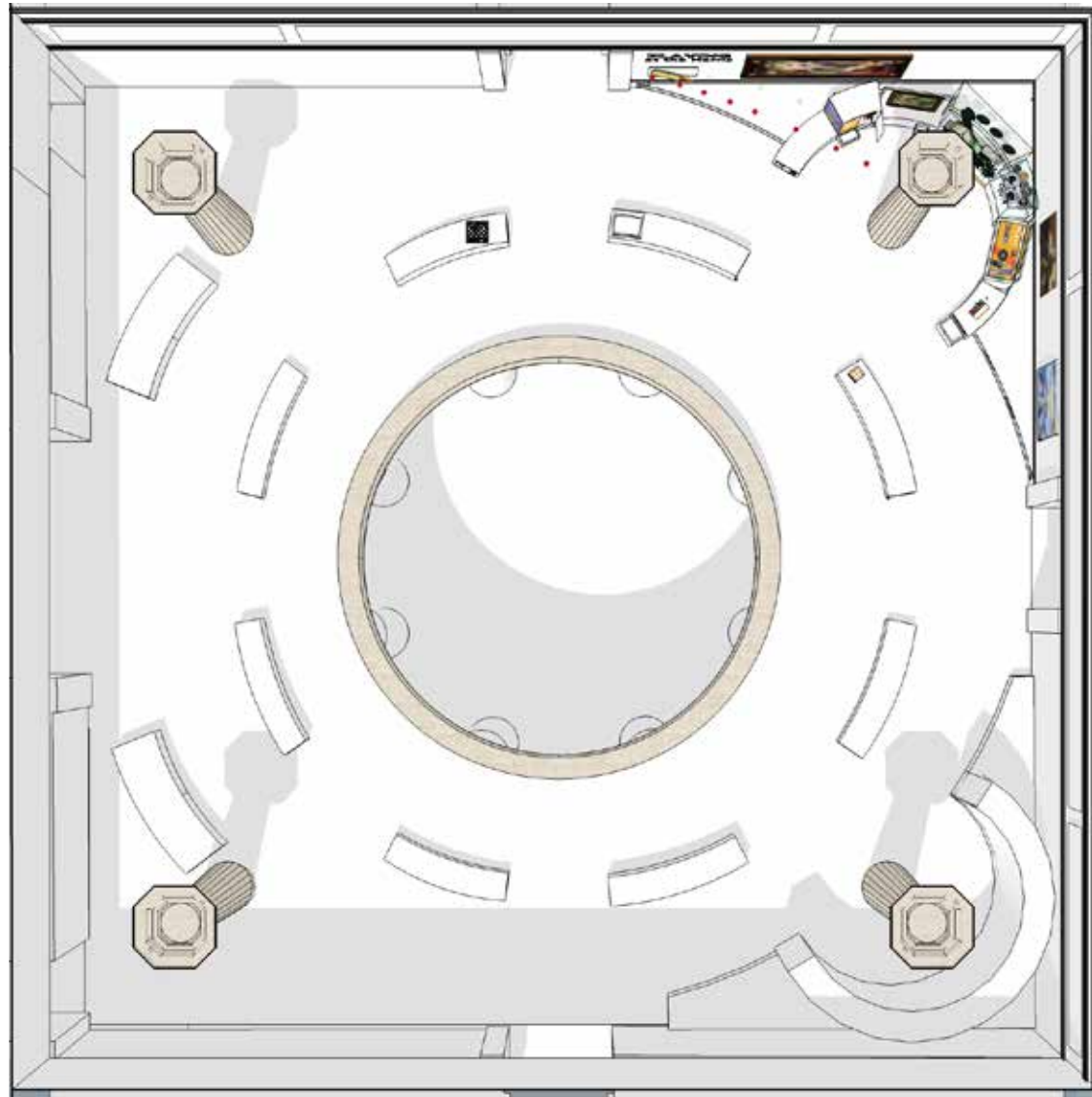
This area will be allocated to the PLAYING theme.



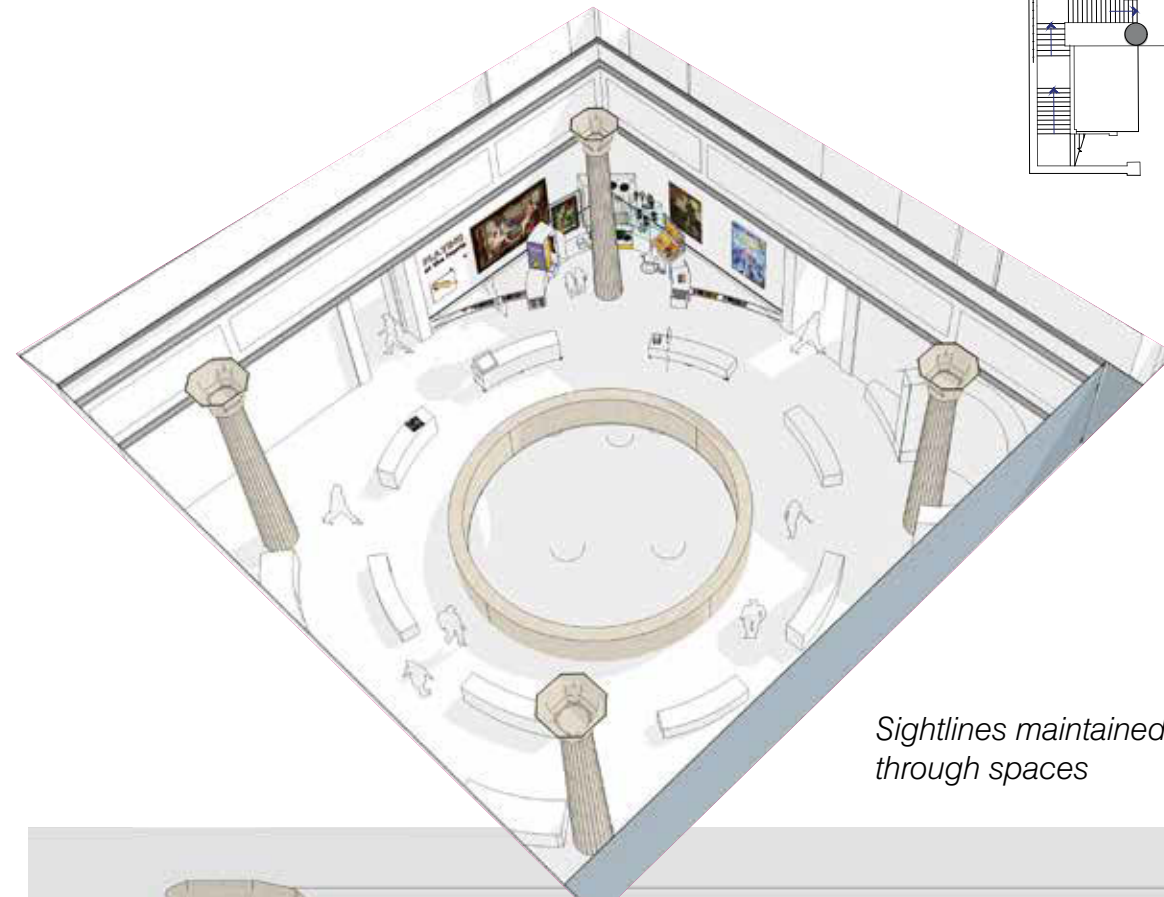


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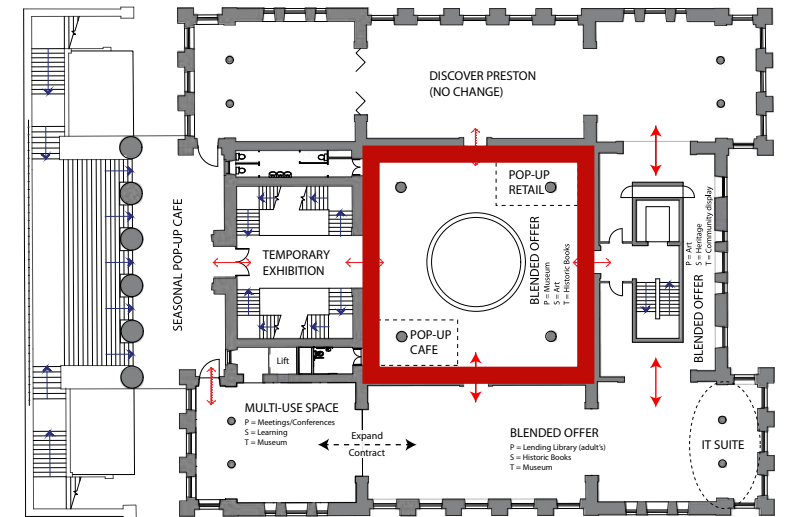
This area will be allocated to the PLAYING theme, and the visuals on this page show how the space planning and display positions have been inspired by a maze, ensuring a playful approach is at the heart of our approach. Modular units on castors allow seating and table top units to be moved around the space and reset as required. Sightlines through the space are maintained and the historic features of the building revealed.



Circular display units inspired by a maze and echo the shapes in the architecture and decoration

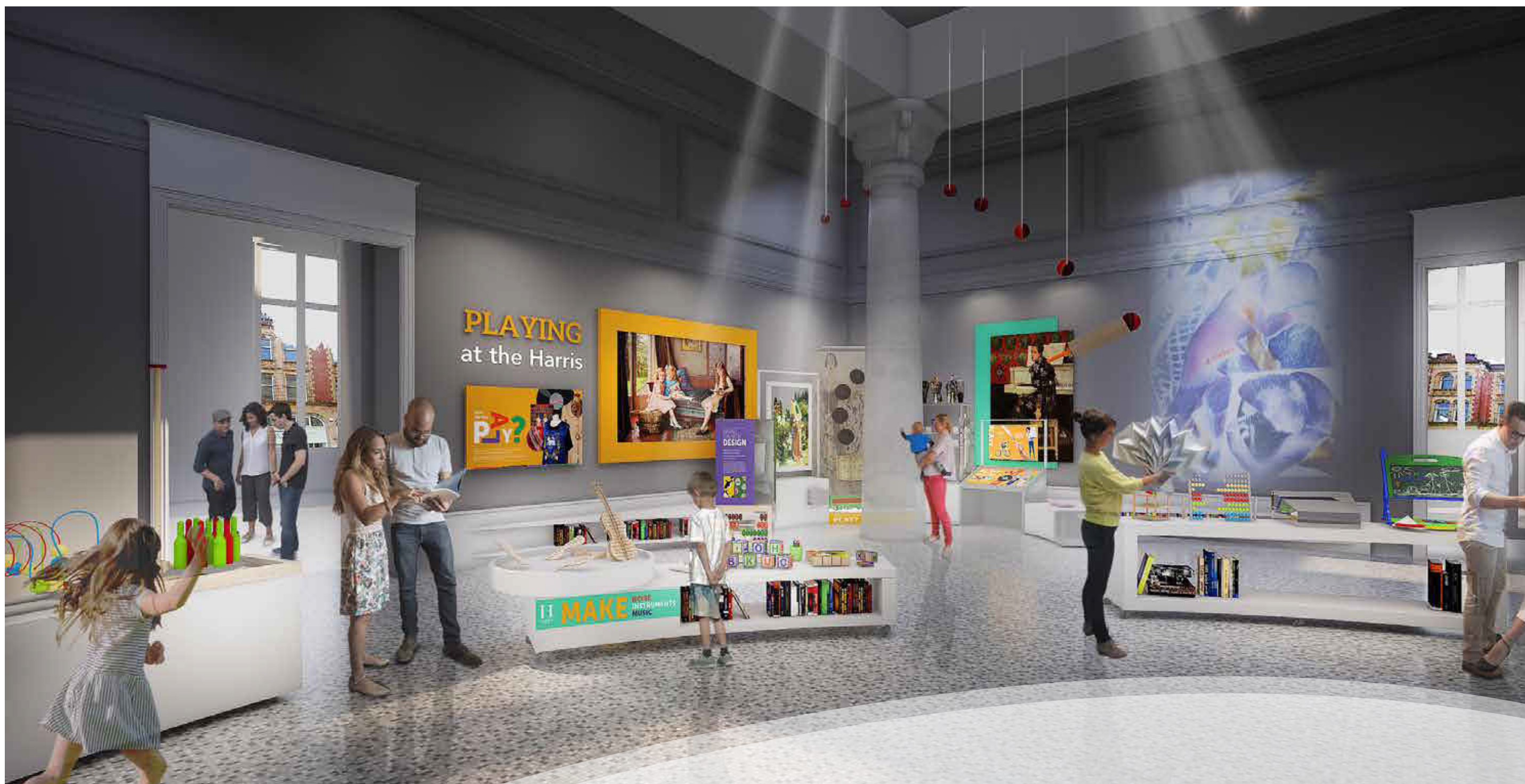


Sightlines maintained through spaces



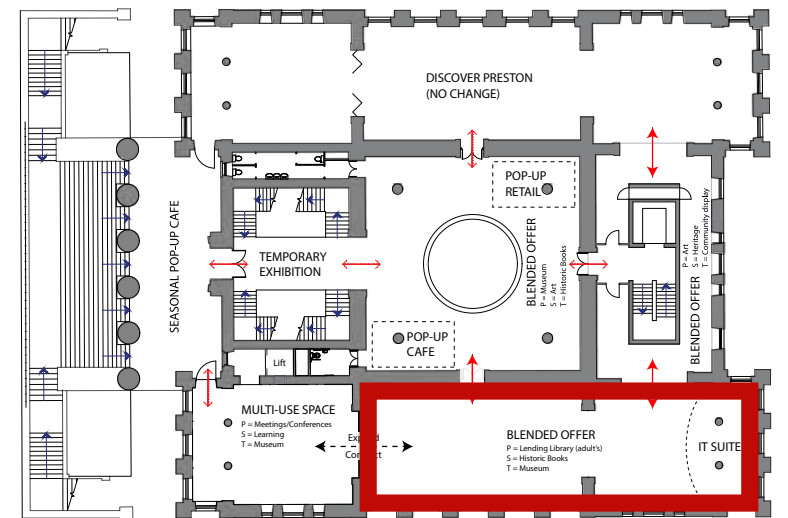
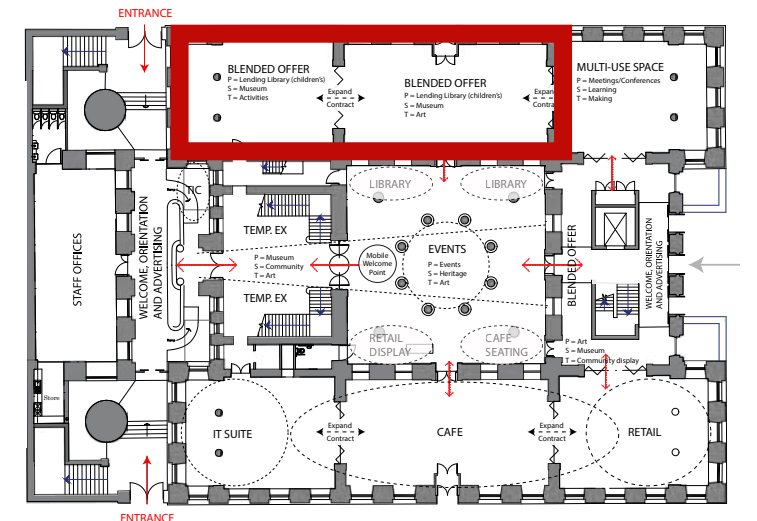


BLENDED DISPLAY:  
PRIMARY USE - MUSEUM / 1ST FLOOR





# BLENDED DISPLAY: PRIMARY USE - LIBRARY / GROUND & 1ST FLOORS



*Creative display of suspended objects above lending library stacks*

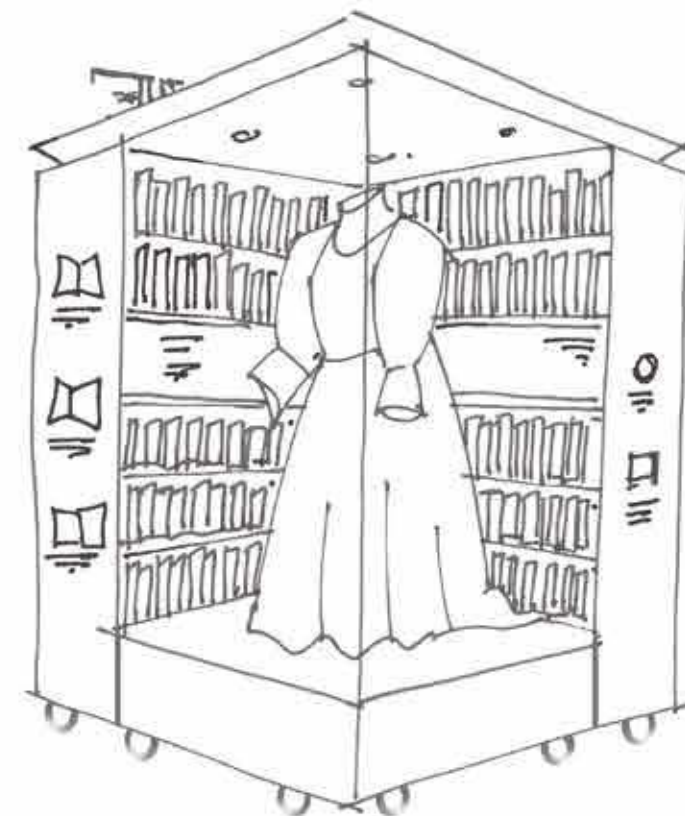


*Durable units on castors for adaptability*



*Multi-purpose furniture helps to blend a space's function*

*Modular library stacks that can open/close or be reconfigured in different layouts*



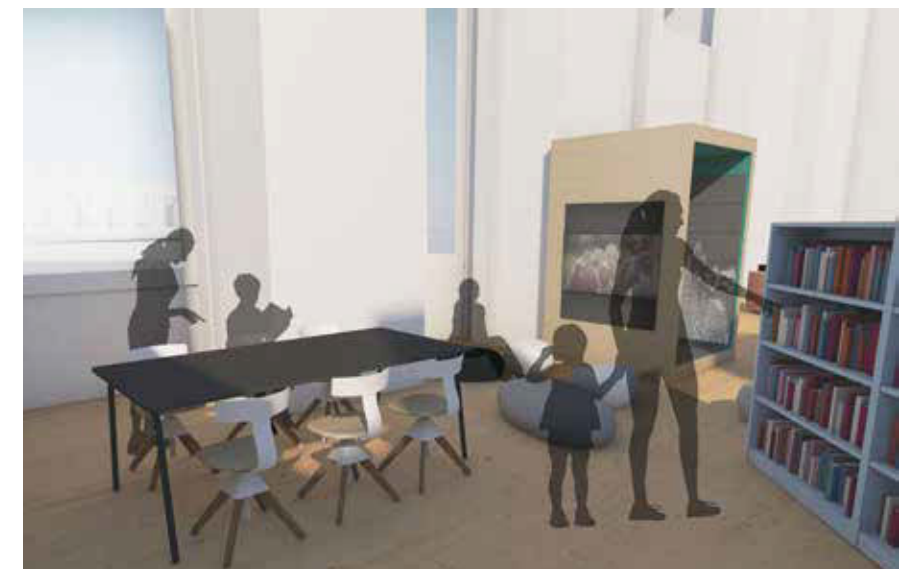
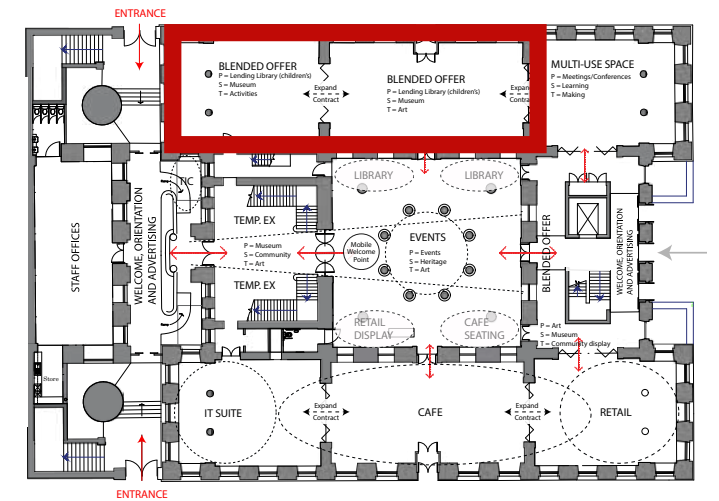
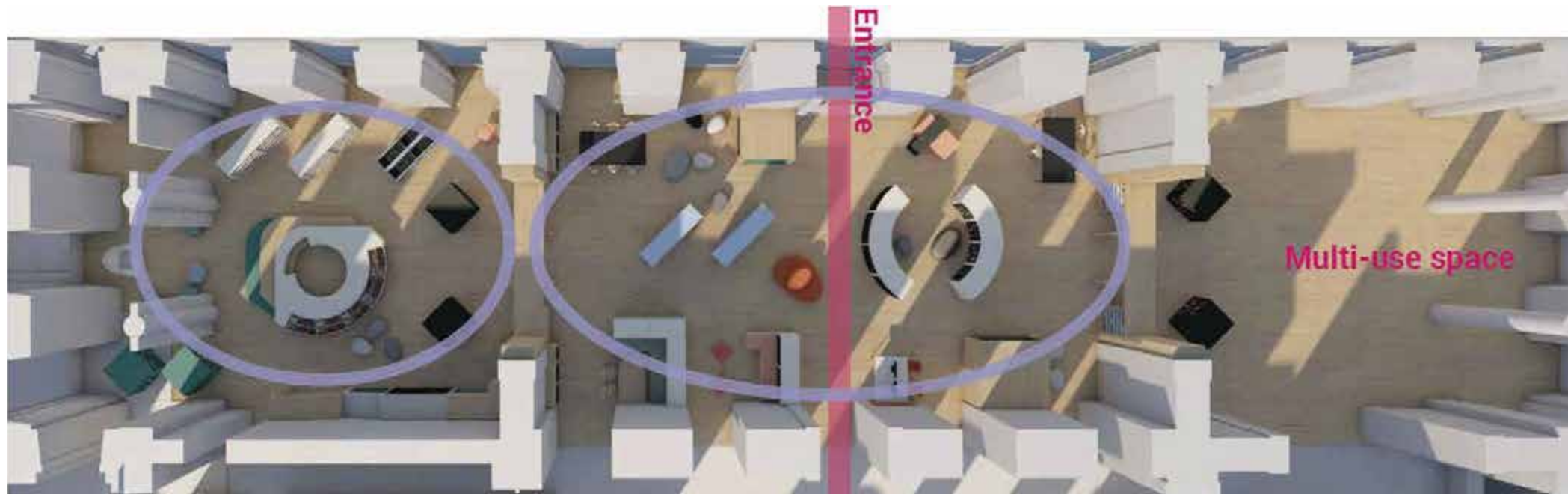
*Sketch show objects blended with lending and historic books*





# 

The primary library spaces will be organised into zones, focusing on the experience of the visitor and reflecting the interpretive strategy of The Harris. Flexibility is key, as does allowing the fixtures and fittings to move easily, and reconfigure to blend with museum and art gallery collections and making activity.



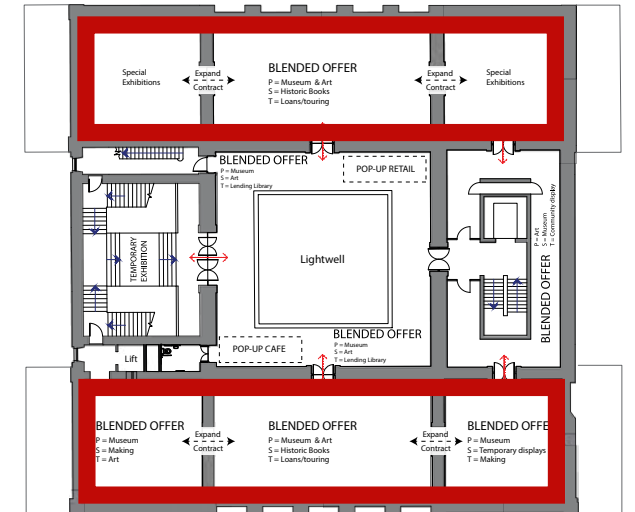


## BLENDED DISPLAY: PRIMARY USE - EXPLORER STORAGE / 2ND FLOOR

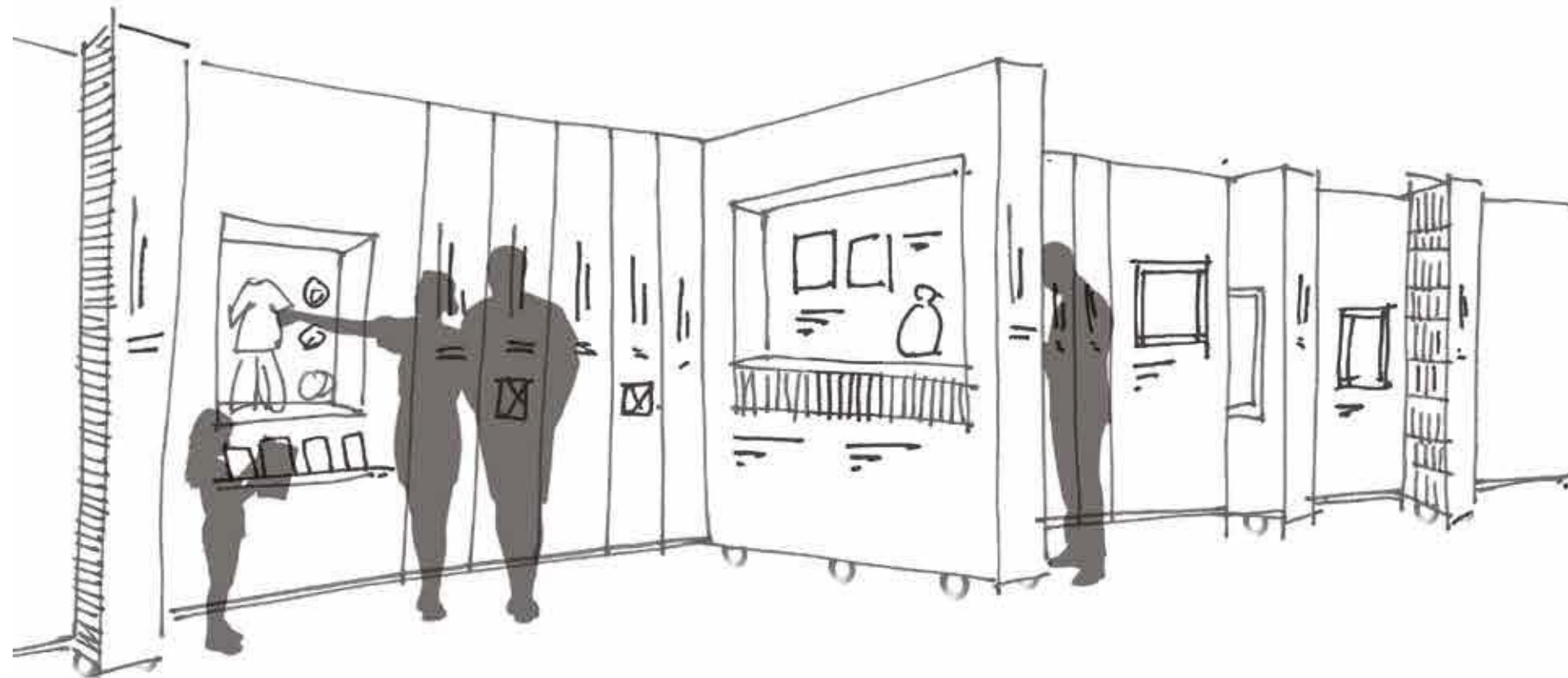
Although this project will seek to improve existing collection storage conditions, the design will seek to find new ways of increasing the amount of collection accessible by the public on-gallery. Innovative storage solutions within the galleries permits more of the collection to be brought out from the store and introduces a fun sense of discovery for visitors.



*Concealed storage blends display with accessible storage*



*Mobile storage units can be used both in the archives and on gallery*



*Sketch shows how we could use back of house systems to inspire public exploration and discovery of blended displays*

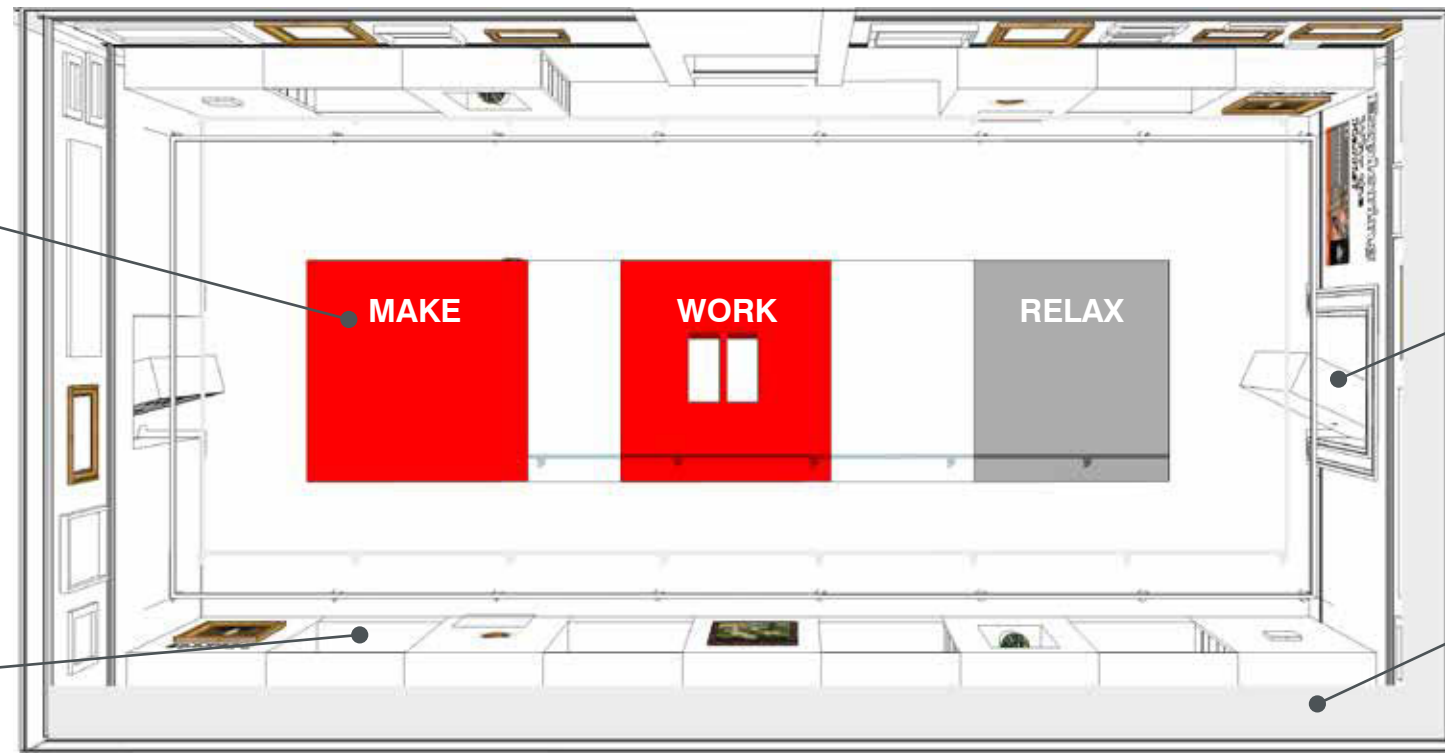


# 

This area will be allocated to the EXPLORING & CREATING themes, and the visuals on this page show how the space planning and display positions have been chosen to provide mass display of museum and art collections, whilst providing a variety of different spaces for visitors to make, work, eat and drink or relax in.

3x space pods providing a noise break, lower light levels and some privacy

Along both long walls of the gallery, blended display combines seating, lending and historic books, museum and art collections, as well as IT points for visitors to work



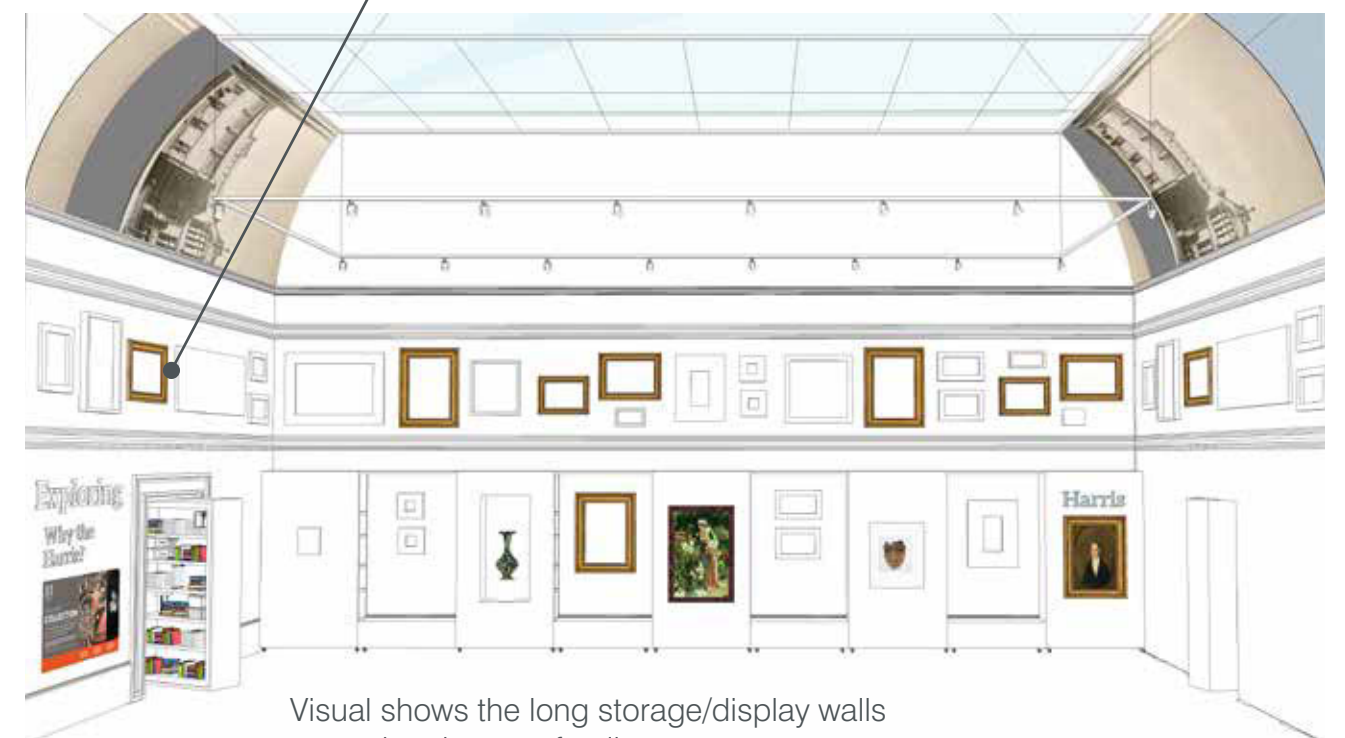
Threshold displays - a display case here in EXPLORING rotates to reveal the next gallery to the visitor

Double height display of art and collections around perimeter of room

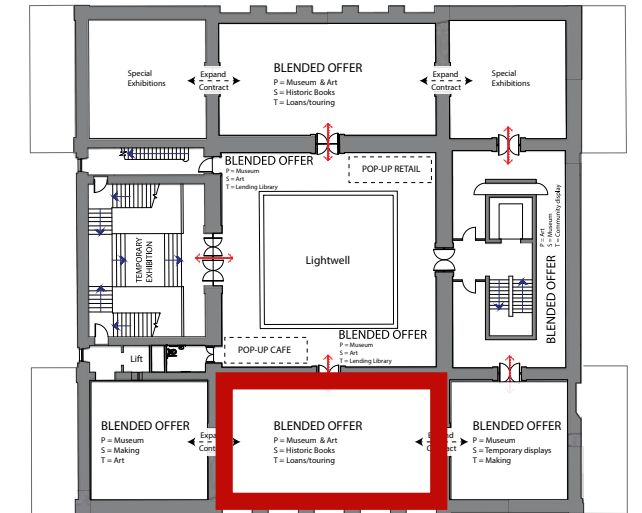


The two short end walls feature projected images and film footage from the Harris archives.

This technology can also be used for events or hire.



Visual shows the long storage/display walls around perimeter of gallery





BLENDED DISPLAY:  
PRIMARY USE - MUSEUM & ART : 2ND FLOOR





# DIGITAL STRATEGY AND ENGAGEMENT

Digital technology will be used to enhance the visitor experience at The Harris. It will help bring content to life, and provide ways for people to explore further if they wish to. It will also provide a way of revealing more of the museum collection, and allowing it to be seen in new and different ways, making connections between art, museum, books and people, both historically and today.

Game based interactives, film and audio will all be used to engage the senses and appeal to a wide range of visitors. Examples on this page show how digital technology can be used to work really hard in achieving all the above ambitions.

Search digital  
reference library



Explore connections between  
objects, art, books and making  
via digital interactives



Allow visitors to explore art  
on a macro scale



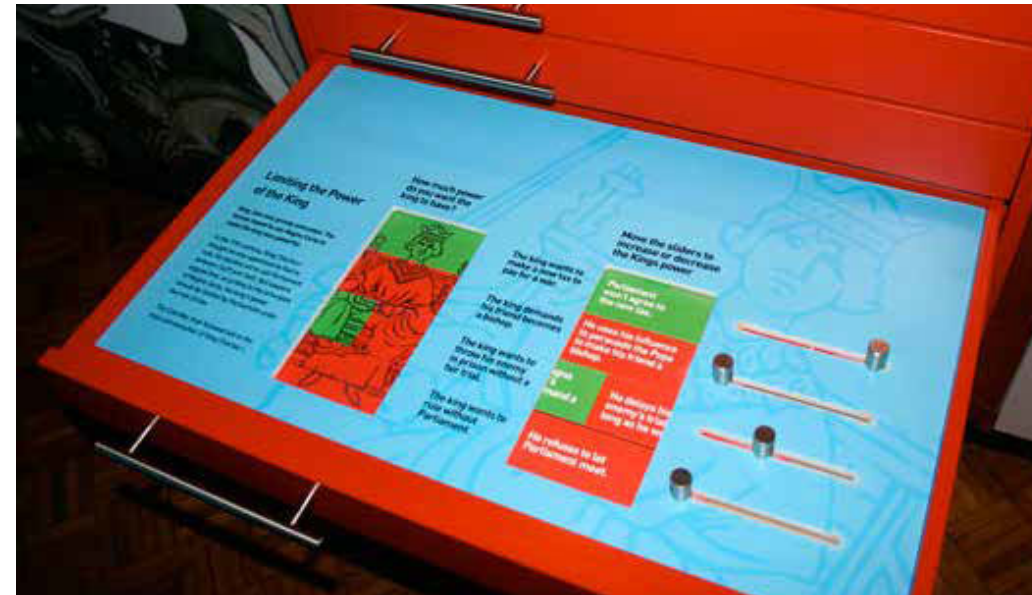


# HANDS-ON ENGAGEMENT - HAVE A GO!

Low tech and mechanical interactives will be used alongside digital and making opportunities to ensure The Harris has something to offer all visitors. Wherever possible, visitors will be encouraged to have a go, or contribute to a conversation or story.



Opportunity for visitors to contribute to narrative



Opportunity for visitors to contribute to narrative

Making and assembly activities linked to stories

