PEOPLE'S HISTORY MUSEUM, MANCHESTER



LOCATION: MANCHESTER

COMPLETION: 2010

VALUE: £12.5M

SIZE: 6,000M²

SERVICE: ARCHITECTURE, INTERIORS

SECTOR: ARTS & CULTURE, CONSERVATION, RENEW

CLIENT: MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL AND PEOPLE'S HISTORY MUSEUM

CONTRACTOR: WATES GROUP

STRUCTURES: CURTINS

SERVICES: BURO HAPPOLD

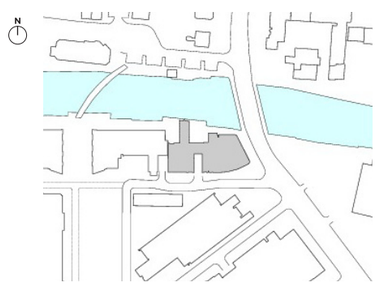
COST CONSULTANT: SIMON FENTON PARTNERSHIP

LISTING: GRADE II

AWARDS: 2011 CIVIC TRUST AWARD WINNER

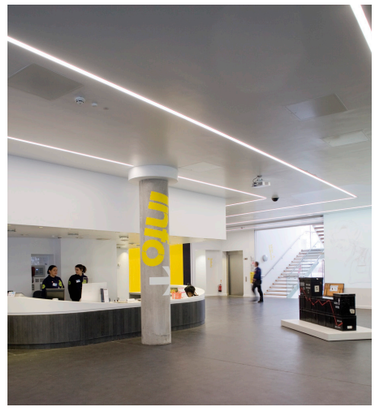
The People's History Museum in Manchester is the national museum of the history and culture of working people, boasting a number of important collections, tracking the development of democracy through the lives of working people of Britain. Austin-Smith:Lord's mission was to consolidate the Museum onto one site and give it a striking new presence in the city.

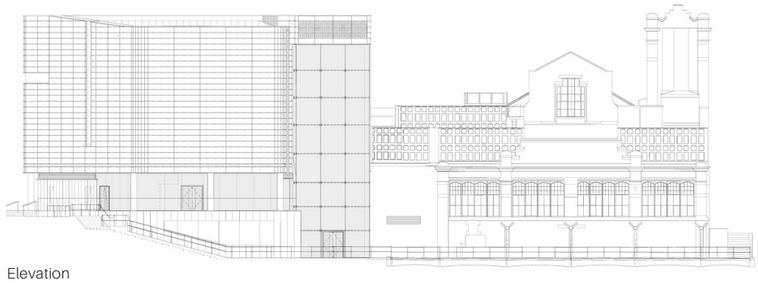
The Museum's existing Grade II Listed pumping station on the banks of the River Irwell was sensitively restored and the dramatic volume was dedicated to temporary exhibitions and events. A landmark extension, its simple sculptural form wrapped in an extraordinary shell of oxidised steel, provided new galleries, a state-of-the-art conservation studio and front-of-house facilities.



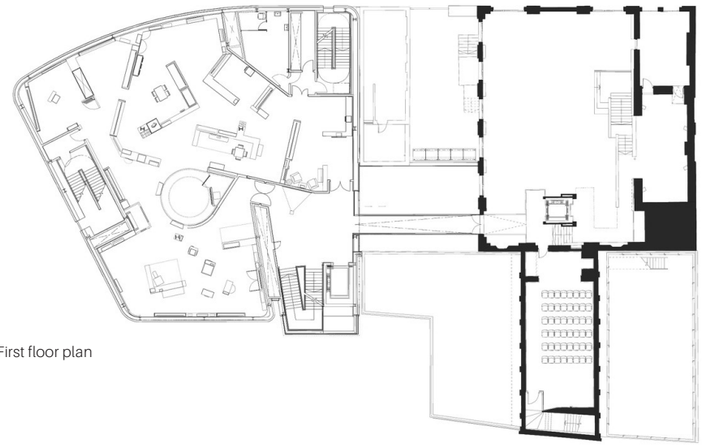
Site plan







Elevation



First floor plan

The brief called for a new extension that would be welcoming and open enough to become the new entrance, but also provide a series of 'closed' environmentally controlled spaces for sensitive collections.

Providing large, windowless volumes in a prominent city context is always an architectural challenge. On this tight city site, Austin-Smith:Lord's solution was to push the big, closed sculptural volumes up into the air, a massing that echoes the bold industrial form of the existing building, leaving the ground floor available for entrance, circulation and amenity spaces which are celebrated through highly glazed facades.

Austin-Smith:Lord's five-storey extension houses two levels of climate controlled galleries carefully dimensioned to allow the hanging of banners.

Low velocity filtered air is introduced at floor level to avoid disturbance to hanging fabric and particularly sensitive items are individually cased. Daylight is excluded from the permanent display areas and lighting levels are restricted.

On the top floor, the layout allows visitors to see 'behind the scenes' into Britain's only Textile Conservation Studio which is dedicated to the preservation of banners. A lower level accommodates a new archive and a Reading Room with river views.

The distinctive colour and texture of the extension's Cor-Ten cladding reflects the Museum's connection with working people and the impact of industrialisation on the development of the county's political history. The natural layer of reddish-brown oxidisation that forms on the steel's surface also forms a suitably sympathetic foil to the red brick of the original pumping station, contrasting with the predominantly silver and glass 'corporate' architecture dominating the area.

As the first public building in the UK to be clad in Cor-Ten, its appearance is suitably revolutionary.

