

SHREWSBURY MUSEUM, SHROPSHIRE



LOCATION: SHREWSBURY, SHROPSHIRE
CLIENT: SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
VALUE: £8.2M
SIZE: 3500M ²
COMPLETION: 2014
SERVICE: CONSERVATION, ARCHITECTURE, INTERIORS
SECTOR: ARTS & CULTURE
CONTRACTOR: ISG
STRUCTURES: CURTINS CONSULTING
SERVICES: SILCOCK DAWSON
COST CONSULTANT: JOHN PIDGEON
LISTING: GRADE II*
AWARDS: 2015 AABC CIVIC TRUST AWARD COMMENDATION

Austin-Smith:Lord was commissioned to sensitively restore and convert the Grade II* listed Vaughan’s Mansion and Grade II* Music Hall, in the centre of Shrewsbury, into a Museum for Shropshire County Council.

The Museum has been created within a unique collection of buildings including the 13th Century Vaughan’s Mansion, the 19th Century Music Hall and Assembly Rooms, a medieval shut, the town’s 18th century prison cells and 20th century nuclear bunker. Vaughan’s Mansion sits on Anglo Saxon foundations and is one of only a handful of medieval defensive houses remaining in the UK.

We have stitched all of the buildings together into a coherent whole by resolving the myriad different floor levels between the buildings and across the site and enabled the museum to increase its use by a wide variety of community and special interest groups. New circulation space has been provided to liberate more usable areas for temporary exhibitions, events, meetings and education and the permanent exhibition spaces now contain more of the County’s collection than has ever been displayed before.



The project is located on a restricted site, at the heart of the urban grain of Shrewsbury. Access is restricted on all four sides as the medieval narrow street pattern prevails in this area.

The buildings are a tight knit configuration and in order to create space, a 1980’s boiler house has been removed from the heart of the complex to give an inner courtyard.

Additional space for the buildings has been created through the provision of a new three-storey extension that provides a new public circulation hub whilst giving views to the newly revealed and restored Norman façade of Vaughan’s Mansion across the courtyard.

The circulation core and clearance of the courtyard, provides access and clarity to all of the historic buildings in the Music Hall putting them back into the public realm areas. Areas requiring higher levels of environmental control have been concentrated close to the new building and a clearly understandable sequence of galleries for the museum visitor has been devised and created.

The palette of materials makes reference to those used in the vernacular of Shrewsbury buildings, while the form of the new build is a thoroughly contemporary and exciting composition which provides a much improved public image of the museum and be fitting as a gateway into Shrewsbury and Shropshire Culture.

The innovative design provides a seamless connection between visitor experience, historic collections, standing archaeology and the visual arts. The Music Hall has enabled Shropshire Council to protect and display its collection and to present the County’s collections in new and imaginative ways.