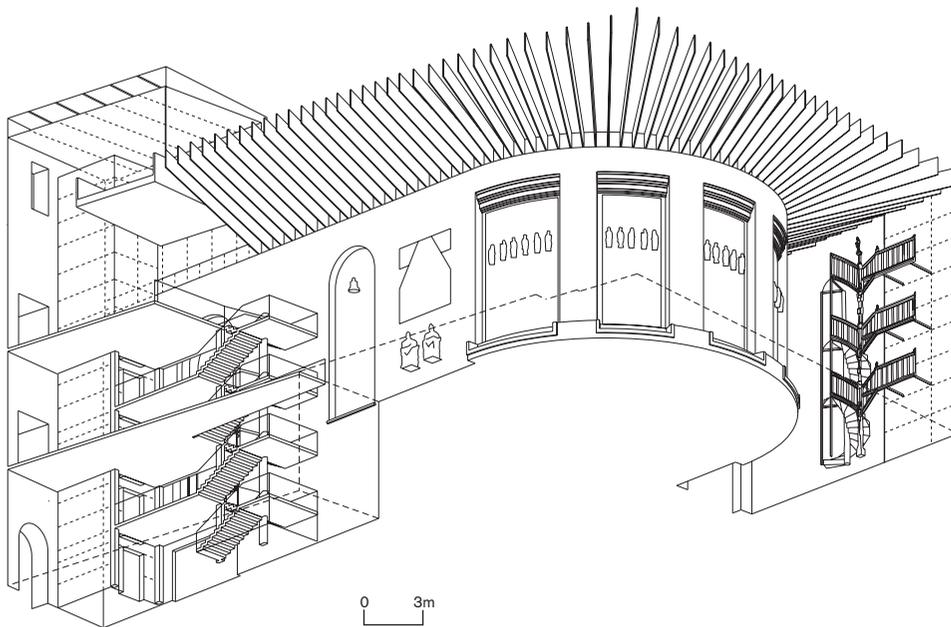


Technical & Practice

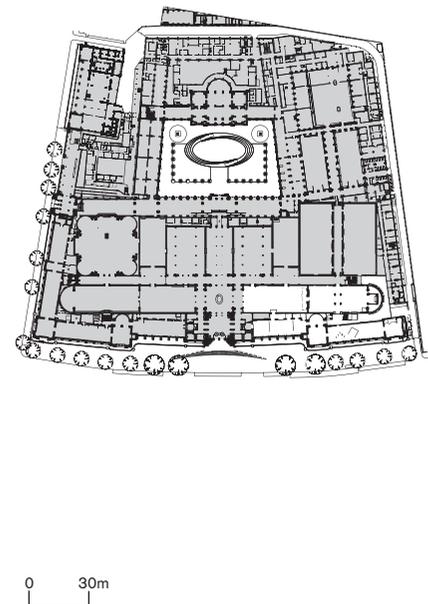
Detailed design

MUMA and Julian Harrap Architects on how they detailed their new Daylit Gallery at the V&A

Section view from south-east corner



Location plan



DESIGN STRATEGY

As part of the V&A's FuturePlan, MUMA, working with restoration specialist Julian Harrap Architects, has relocated the Medieval and Renaissance Galleries to the Aston Webb-designed south-east quarter of the museum. This project has comprehensively transformed this area of the V&A, rationalising its circulation. The new Daylit Gallery is a key component in this process.

The museum's perimeter galleries, in the south-east quarter, were isolated from the rest of the

building, with access compromised by changes in level. They lacked physical and visual connections to adjacent galleries and there was no direct wheelchair access to most of this area. We addressed these problems by removing an existing Aston Webb marble staircase, which enabled us to occupy the interstitial spaces between the various buildings, creating the new circulation Hub and Daylit Gallery. Our intervention resolves the access problems and provides equal access to six levels of the museum.

Our architectural approach is distinctly modern, with clear articulation between old and new. The contrast and spatial tension between the surrounding architectural volumes that define the Daylit Gallery, together with the powerful curved form of the East Hall apse and the adjacent rectilinear blocks, provide the generator for the modern intervention. Translucent glass beams, up to 9.5m-long, are arrayed across the space, reconciling the slightly rotated cubic forms of the surrounding

buildings with the pure semi-circle of the apse to the East Hall, and creating a delicate, undulating roof. The result is an informal, four-storey-high gallery space that contrasts with the formal nature of the surrounding galleries. The modern intervention employs innovative construction technologies that are distinct from the historic fabric, but also, through form and materials, in harmony with it. It is the first new-build public space created at the museum in over 100 years.

Stuart McKnight, partner, MUMA