

# NORTH HERTS MUSEUM Consultation

Rev B - 27 06 14



# SITE ANALYSIS

## Building & Site Overview

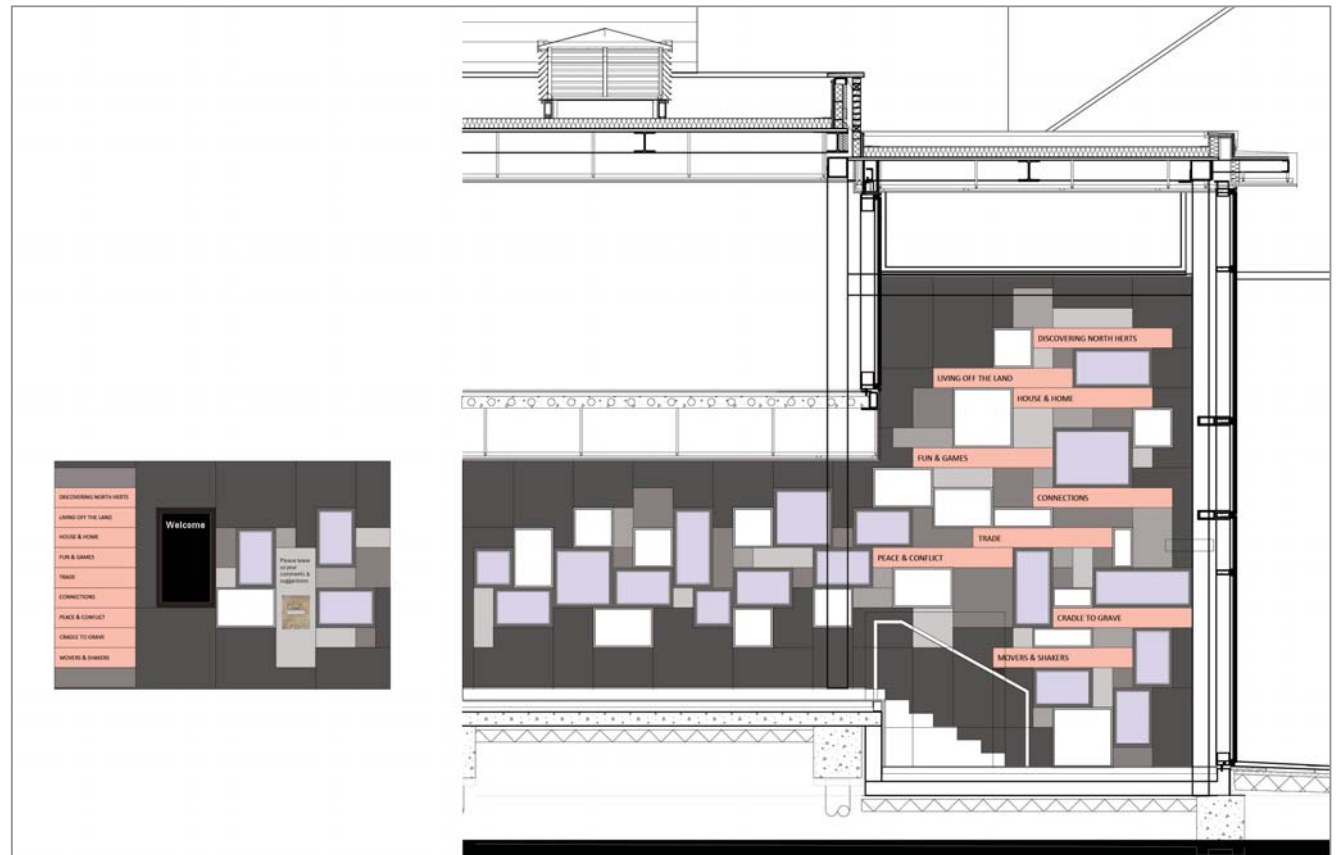
1. Entrance
2. Reception & Shop
3. Ground Floor Gallery
4. Temporary Exhibition
5. Stairs & Lift to First Floor
6. Landing Area & Toilets
7. First Floor Gallery
8. Terrace Gallery
9. Town Hall Balcony



# ORIENTATION & THEMING

## Theming

1. Discovering North Herts
2. Living off the Land
3. House and Home
4. Fun and Games
5. Making & selling
6. Connections
7. Peace and Conflict
8. Cradle to Grave
9. Making a Mark

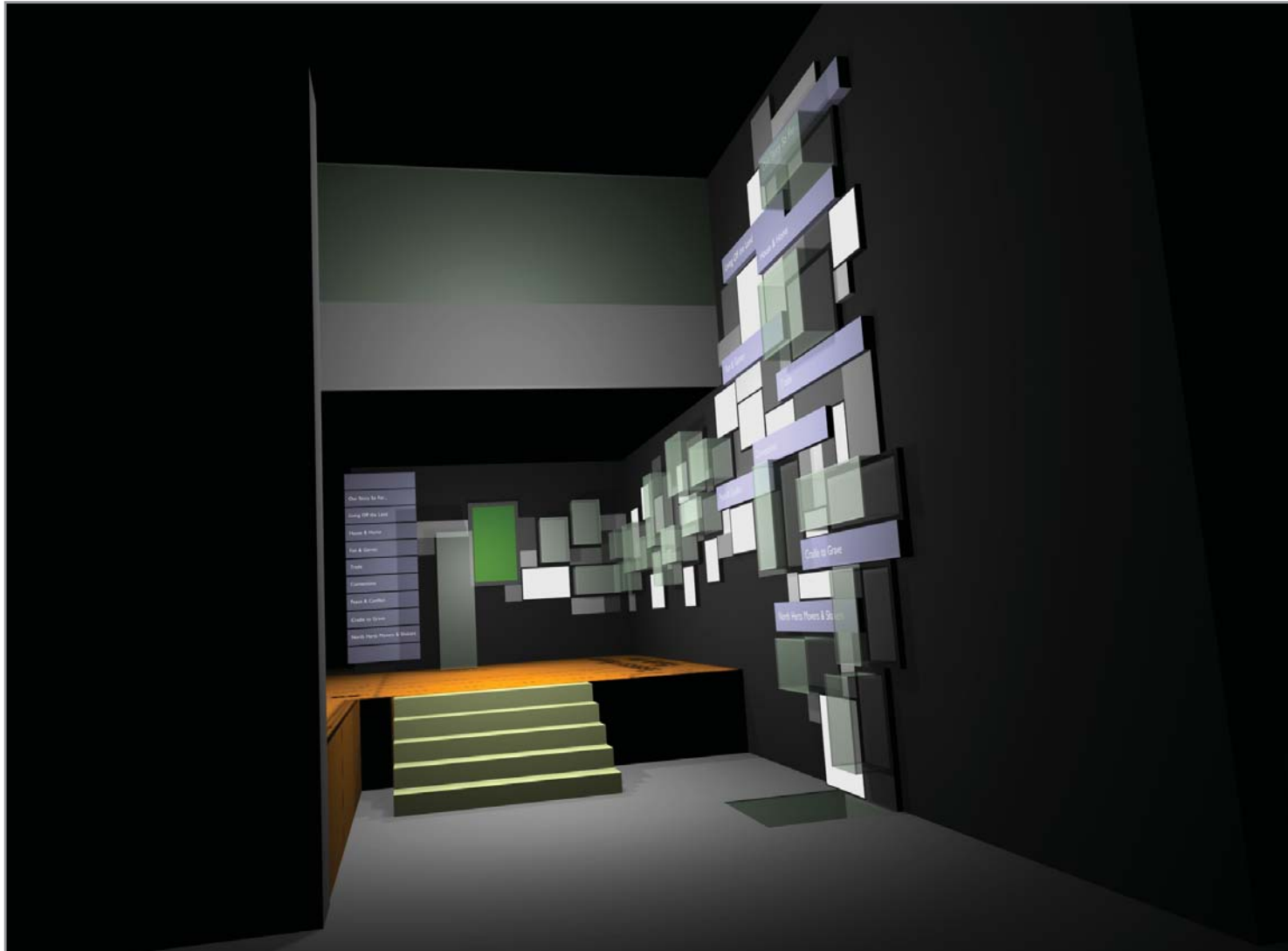


### Example Theme Identities



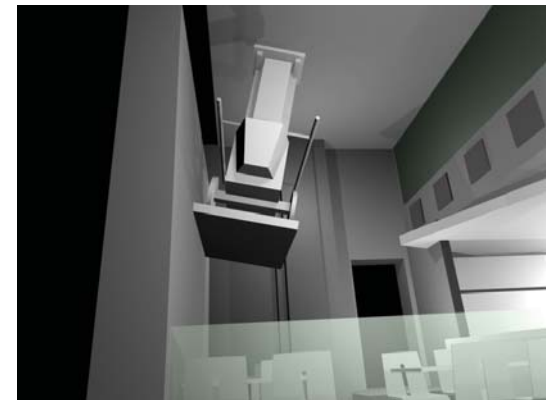
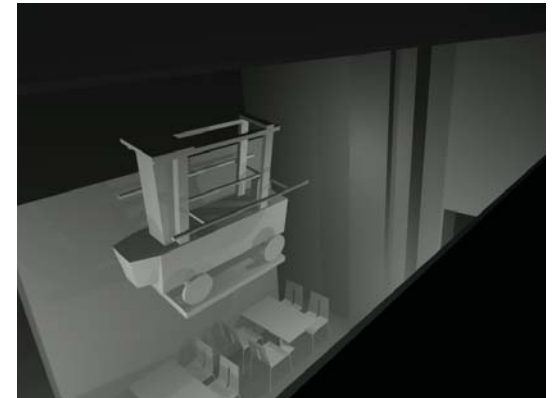
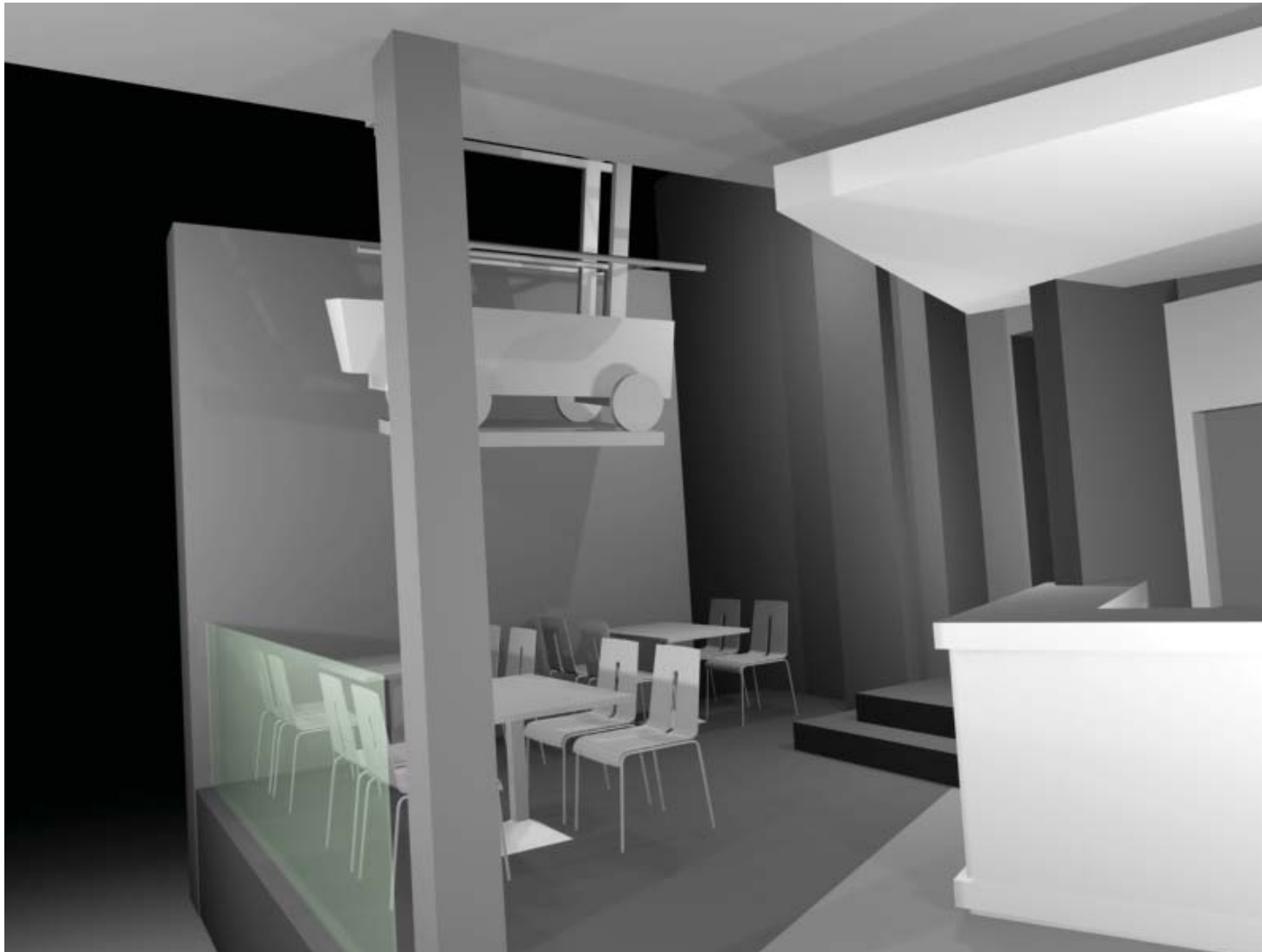
# ENTRANCE

## Entrance Display Feature



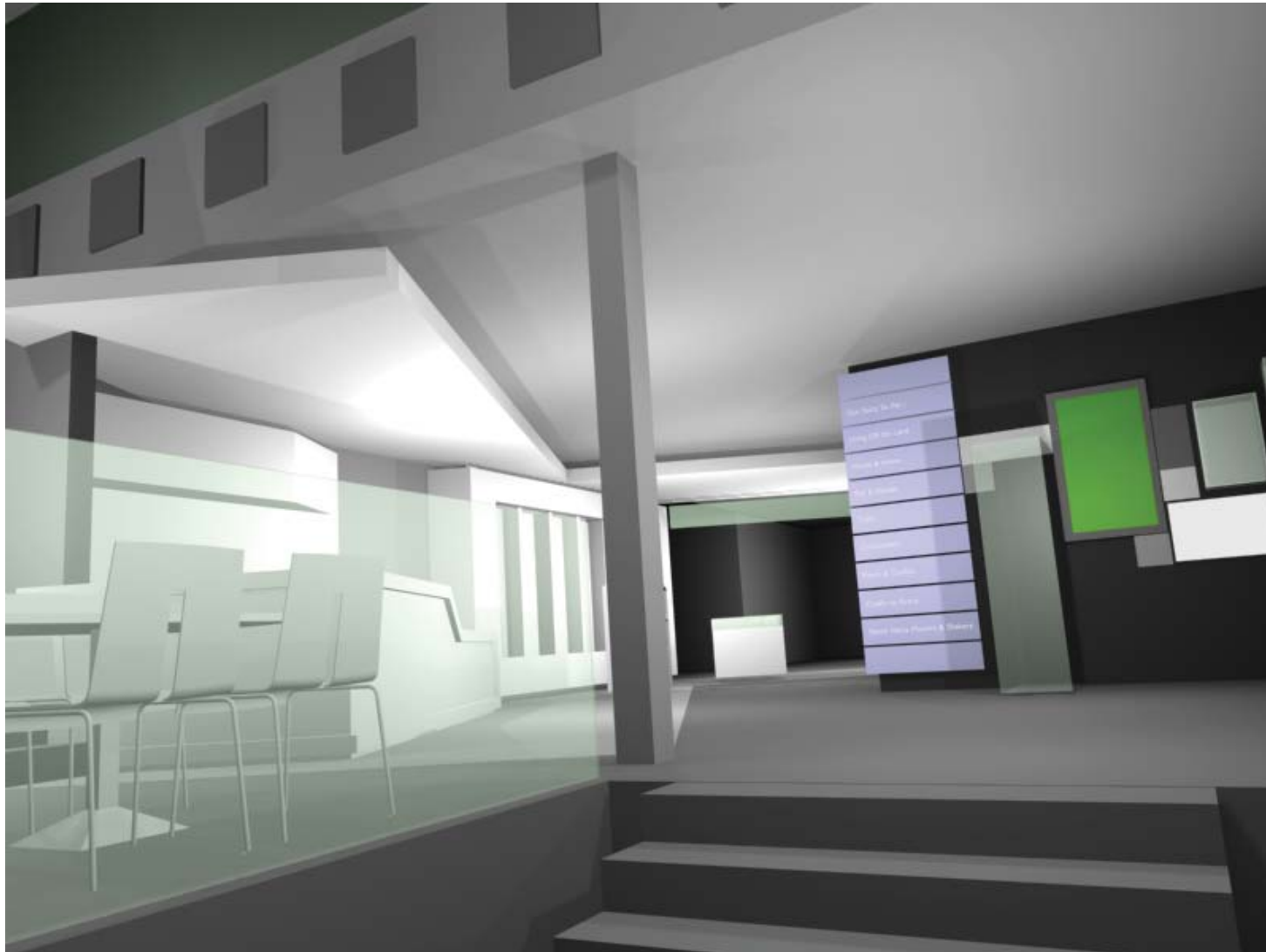
# ENTRANCE

## Offley Fire Engine Display



# ENTRANCE

## Reception



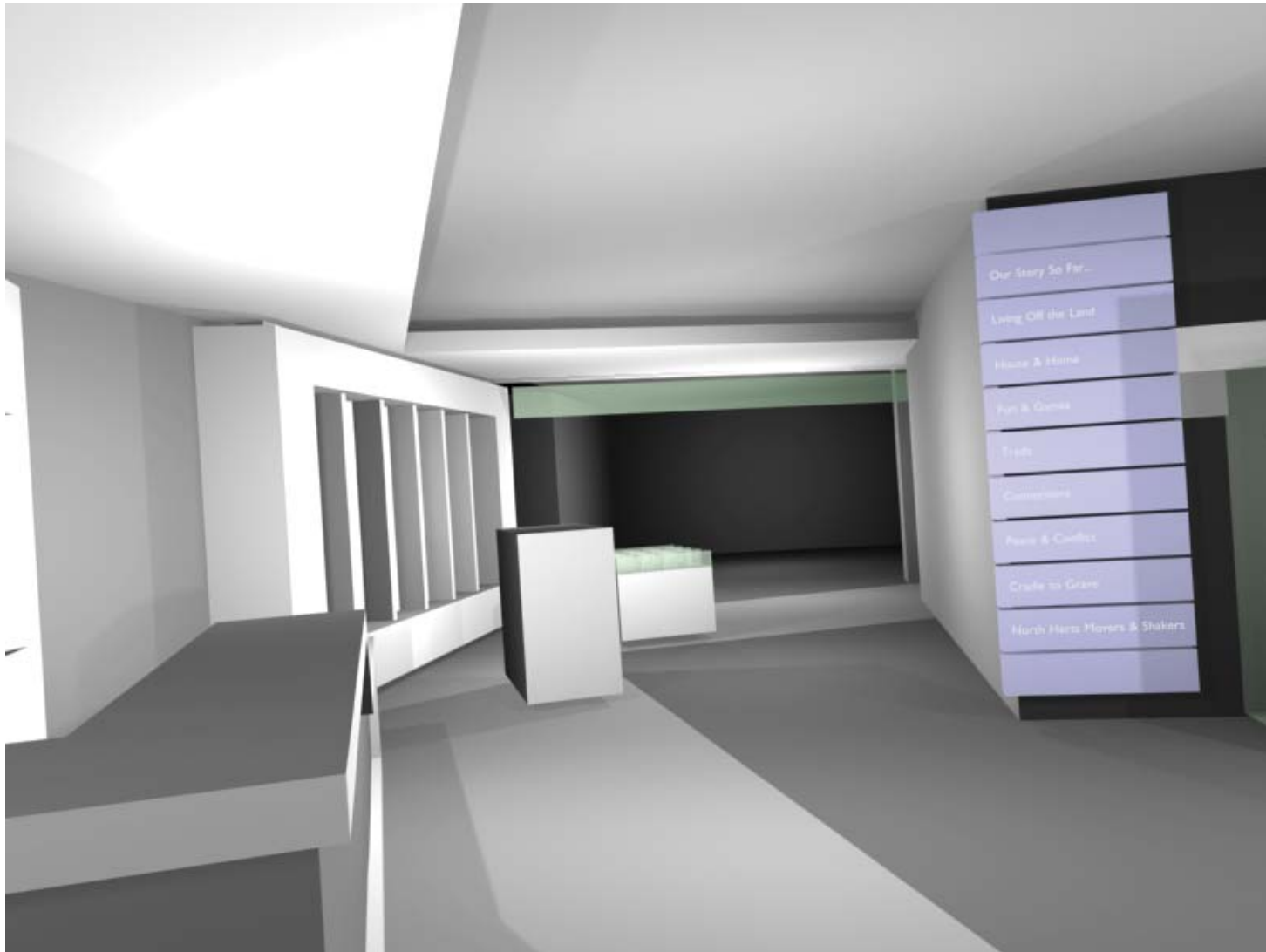


# ENTRANCE

## Reception

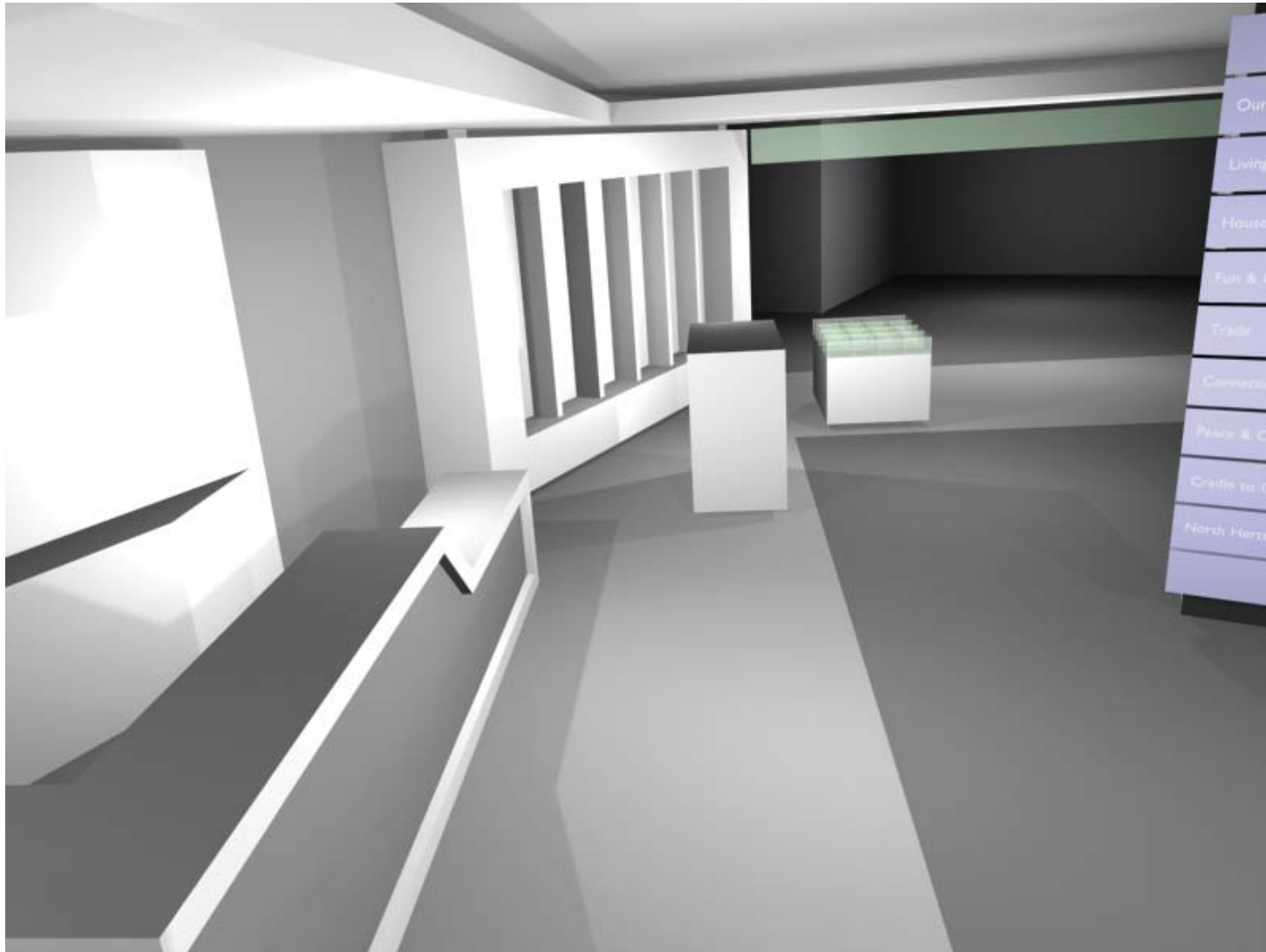


# ENTRANCE Reception





# ENTRANCE Reception

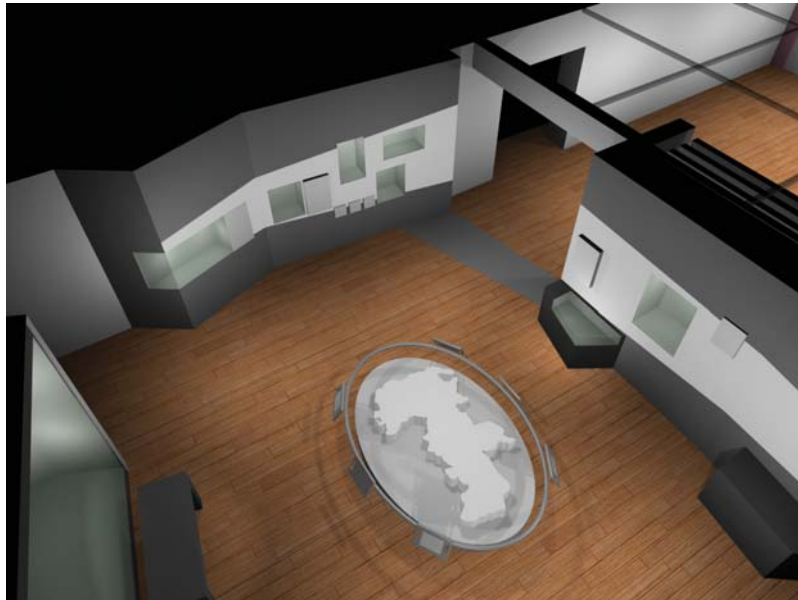


# GROUND FLOOR - Discovering North Herts



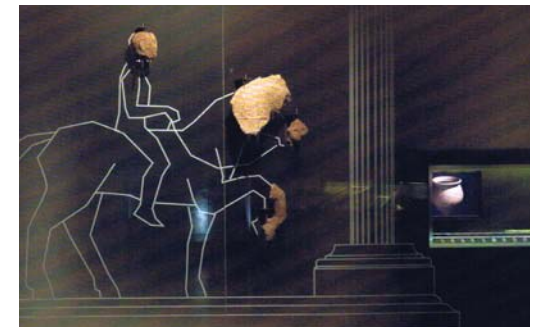
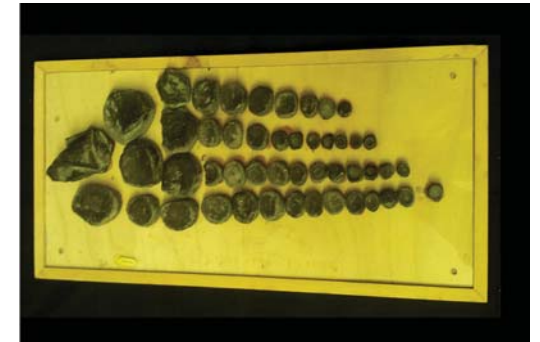
# GROUND FLOOR - Discovering North Herts

## Chronology: Shaping the Land - Our Beginnings



The first wall in the Ground Floor gallery looks specifically at prehistory, starting around 100 million years ago with the formation of the chalk bedrock and North Hertfordshire under 100m of water. Marine dinosaurs, molluscs and fish swim across the wall and are brought to life through their fossilised remains and a stylised graphic treatment. Tactile examples of geological specimens help visitors to understand the different properties of the rocks and sediment beneath their feet.

This section ends with the arrival of the first people in North Herts over 400,000 years ago. A large array of finds from the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic, and Mesolithic tell the story of North Hertfordshire's human past. Visitors will be able to explore and touch the chopper tools, flints and hand axes used by early people to kill and butcher animals for food and resource. They will be presented as a series of lift-up flaps with object displays, touch examples and interpretation on their usage behind.

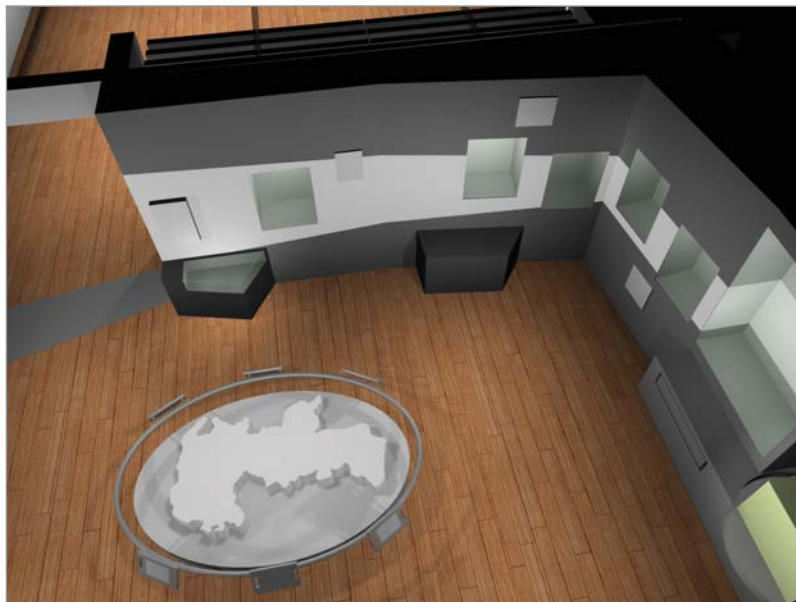


An example of the style of display



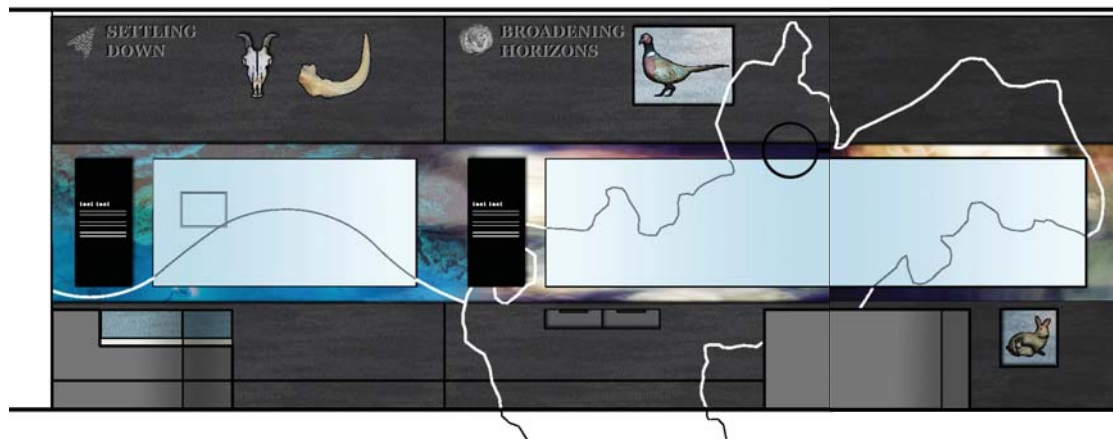
# GROUND FLOOR - Discovering North Herts

## Chronology: Settling Down - Broader Horizons



This section begins around 6200BC when Britain was separated from mainland Europe. Settling Down looks specifically at the move from a nomadic to a more settled human population. A desktop showcase in front of the display allows visitors to explore the finds from the Neolithic to Early Iron Age. They can press a number of buttons to light up certain groupings in the case, and illuminate an accompanying interpretative lightbox carrying an image of the completed object and caption.

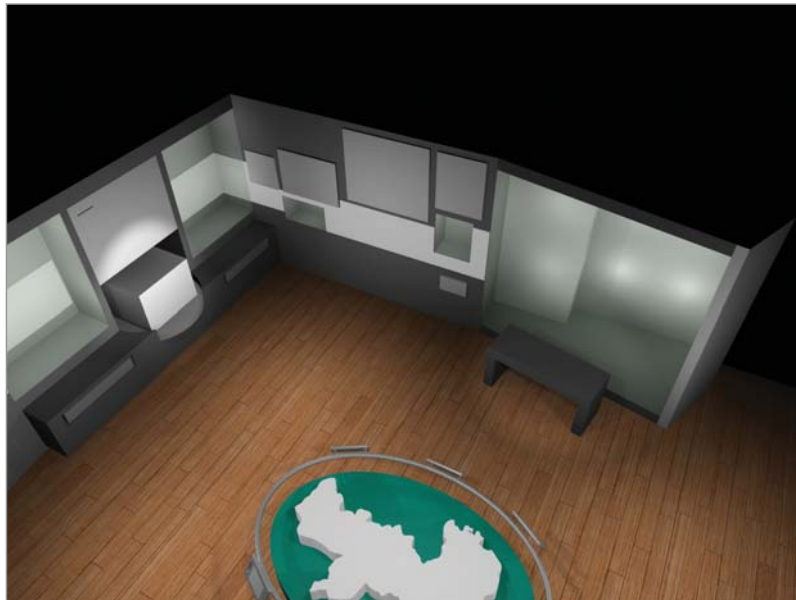
The Broader Horizons section is presented as a large map of North Hertfordshire that stretches across the corner of the gallery and onto the floor. It looks specifically at the influences that different tribes and settlers have had on North Herts – namely Iron Age people, the Romans, Anglo-Saxon settlers and the Normans. Object showcases and other graphic stories will annotate the map, bringing it to life and providing the key messages. This area will also house the low-tech 'What's in a name' interactive, which explores the derivation of place names in the North Herts (e.g. Baldock named after Baghdad).



Examples of the style of display

# GROUND FLOOR - Discovering North Herts

## Chronology: Towns and Villages



This area will look at the later development of towns and buildings in the North Hertfordshire district. 'The Biggin' house in Hitchin will be used as the focus for the wall as it has been a constant in the changing history of the area. The house spans four key periods: Gilbertine Priory (1361-1528), domestic house (1544-1630s), school (1630s-1723), poorhouse and almshouse (1723-1970).

The Biggin will be presented as a physical house model on four sides, on a turnstile. The central viewing area will be fixed and each time the house is rotated and one side reaches the viewing area, a Pepper's ghost character of that period will be activated and describe what it was like to live there and the wider developments in the district. Objects relating to The Biggin specifically and towns and villages in North Herts will be displayed around the model on the walls. Drawers alongside the model will allow visitors to access historic maps and plans of the area.

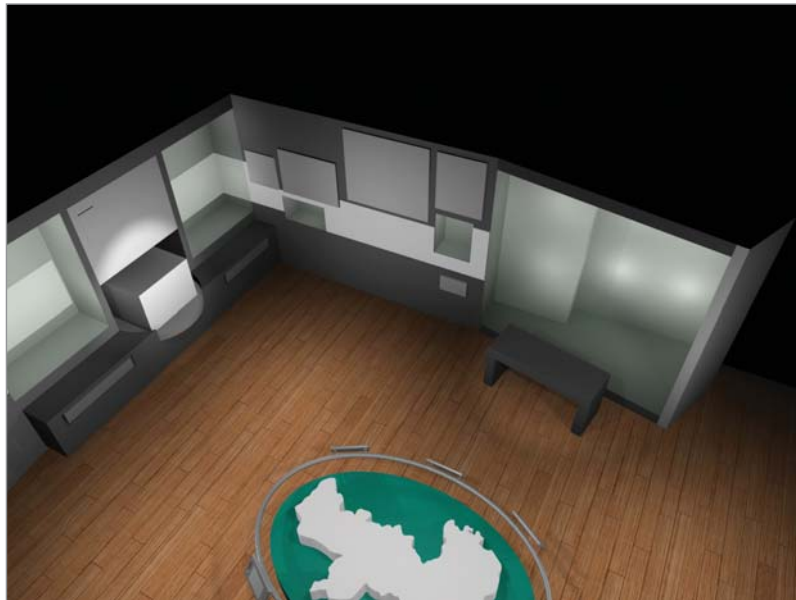


Examples of the style of display



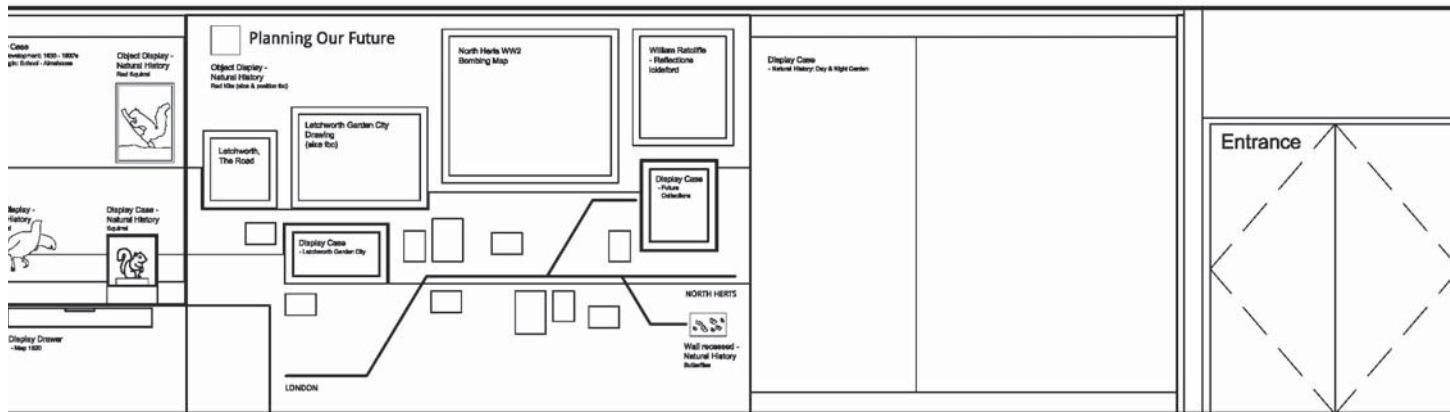
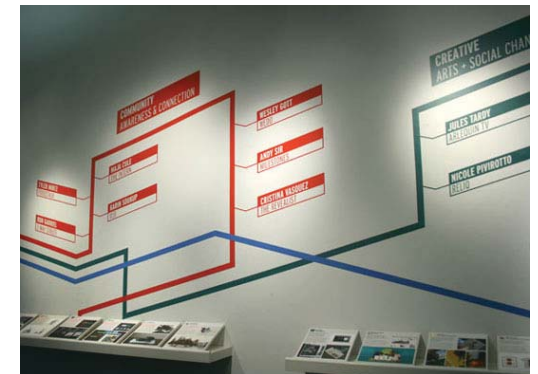
# GROUND FLOOR - Discovering North Herts

## Chronology: Planning Our Future



The last wall in the Ground Floor gallery looks specifically at planning developments in the district, including: the building of the World's First Garden City in Letchworth; slum clearances in Hitchin and prefabs in Baldock.

At the end of the wall, a digital display will showcase images of the towns and villages in the district from the 19th to the 21st century.

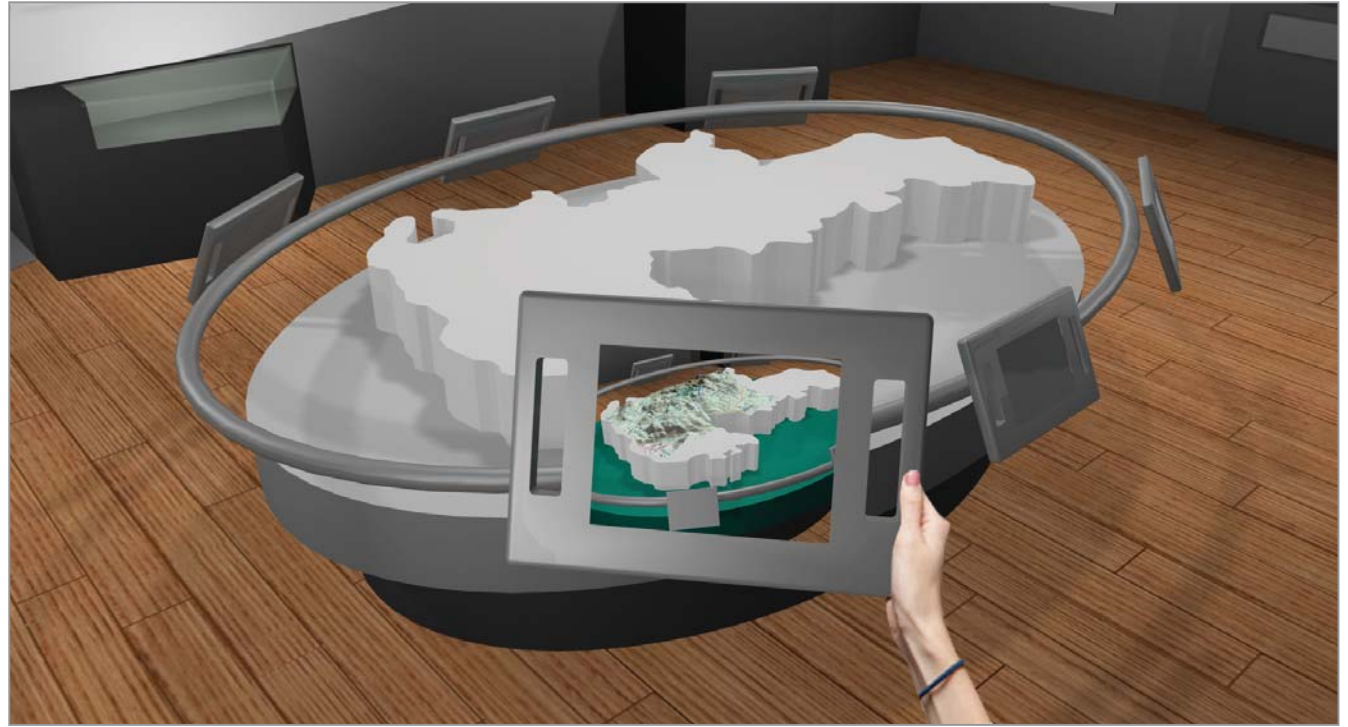
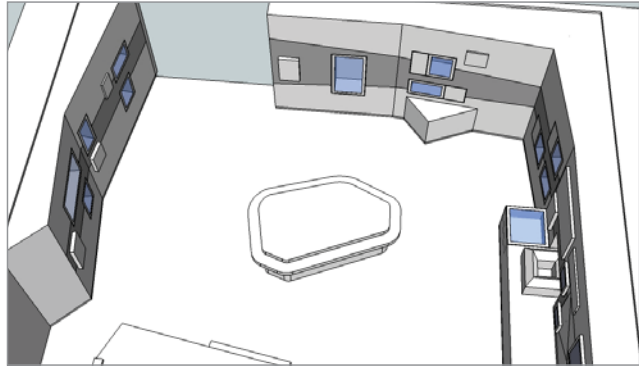


Examples of the style of display



# GROUND FLOOR - Discovering North Herts

## 'Changing Landscapes' Augmented Reality



# GROUND FLOOR - Discovering North Herts

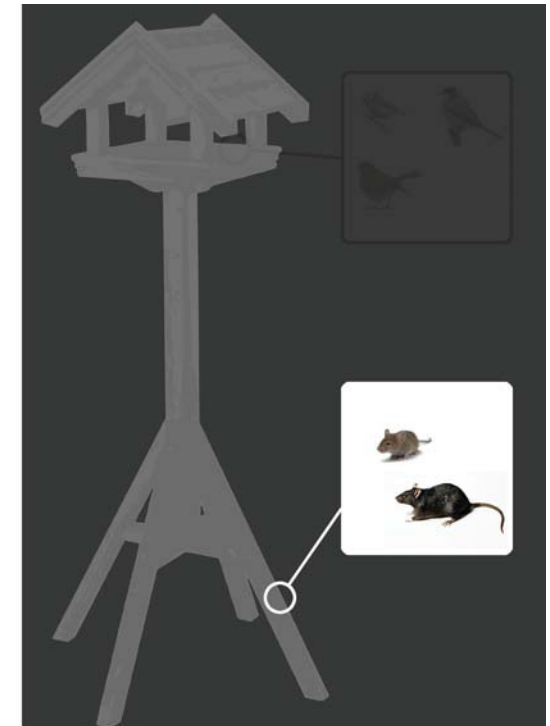
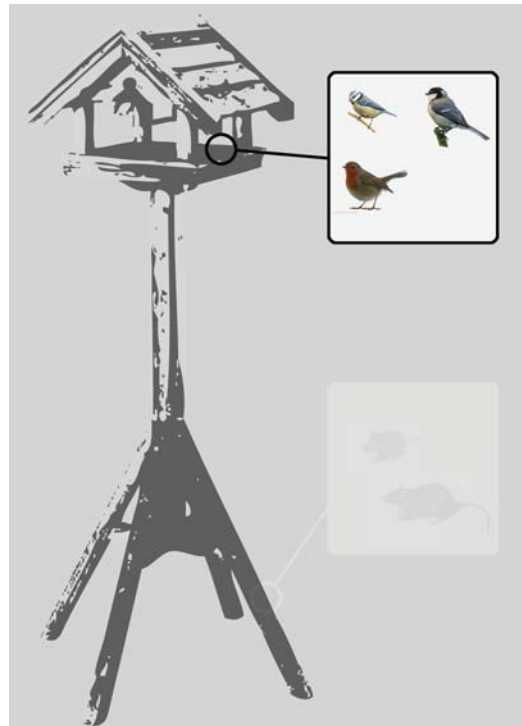
## Natural History

The much loved natural history collection will be used throughout the Ground Floor gallery where specific species fit with the chronology. Stories of extinction, reintroduction, population increases and decreases will be covered, as well as other individual stories such as the last red squirrel in North Herts. They will be displayed in a contemporary way as individual specimens in dynamic poses to bring life and visual interest to the chronology wall.

### In the Day and Night Garden

Species that are indigenous to a typical North Herts garden will be presented in a new, interactive and contemporary way. The showcase will be created like a theatre set of individual habitats, layered in front of one another with integrated specimens. The overall picture will form a typical garden scene with wildlife located where they would normally be found. Clever lighting techniques will allow the visitor to switch between 'day' and 'night' scene settings, which will light up the appropriate species within the case.

A digital interactive station in front of the showcase will allow visitors to delve deeper to understand each species, learn about their behaviour, listen to animal sounds and obtain simple techniques for encouraging wildlife into their own garden. This work-station will also have incorporated drawers that hold smaller species such as insects, and will have magnifying glasses so visitors can see them in detail.



# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY





# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

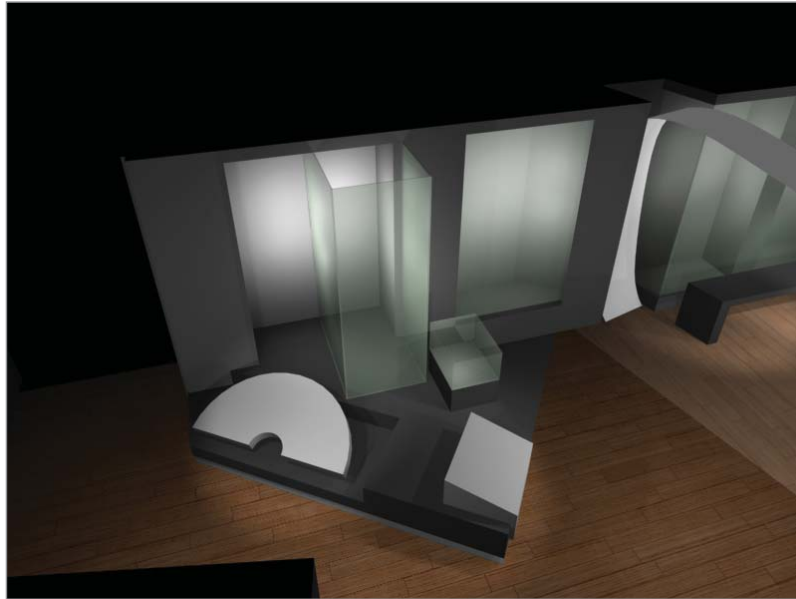


# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY



# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

## Living off the Land



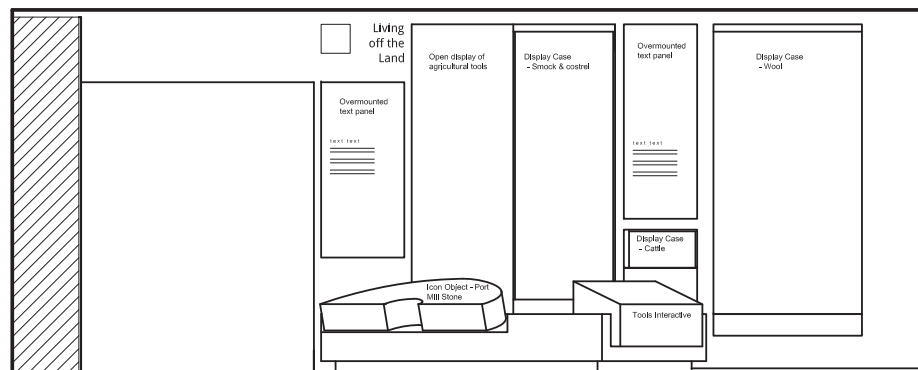
**Icon Object:** Port Mill millstone

North Herts is, and has always been an agricultural area. This theme will explore the different ways in which the people of North Herts have lived off the land for thousands of years. Starting with a showcase of tools and hand-axes from the Lower Palaeolithic to Bronze Age, visitors will be able to see how equipment has developed and progressed to more modern agricultural tools. Other object displays will look at milling, hunting, cattle rearing and the wool trade including a smock worn by a Wallington shepherd.

A low-tech interactive focused at the Under-5 age group will allow visitors to match up the object (plough, pail etc.) and what it would be used for. Once all the pairings have been made, a light will come on to show that you are correct.



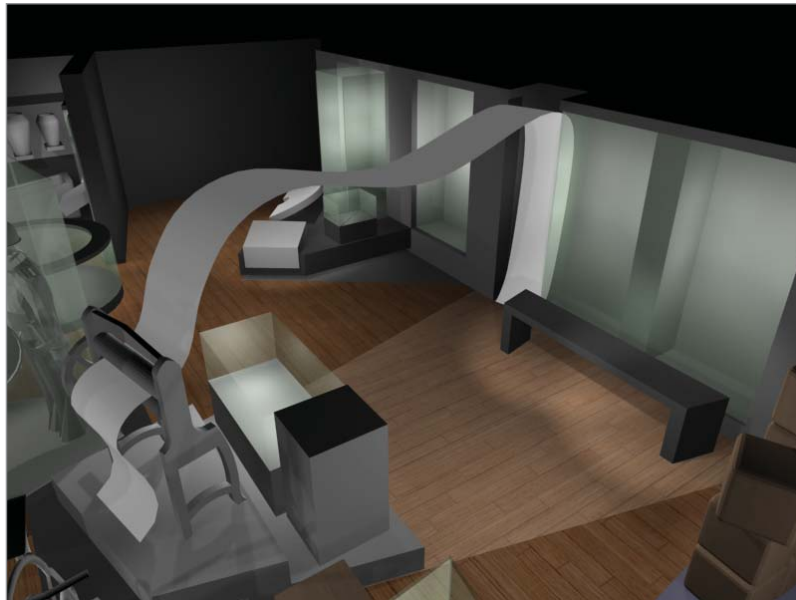
Examples of the style of display





# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

## House & Home



Examples of the style of display

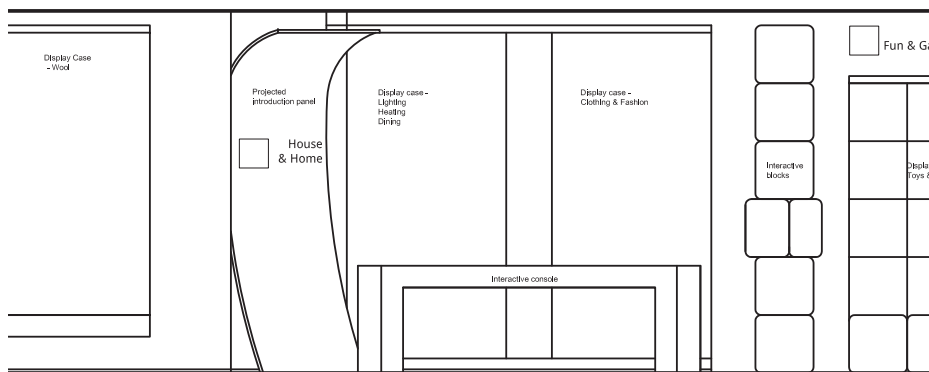
### Icon Object: 19th century mangle

This section will look at how people lived in North Herts over history, and how developments in technology, craftsmanship, decoration and style have changed how we live. Two showcases will look at different themes relating to the house and home. The first will explore **'home and living'** – eating drinking, lighting, heating, housework – and the second will look at **'style and costume'** – clothing, decoration and jewellery. This will bring collections together from across all ages, so comparisons can be made. An interactive station in front of the cases allows the visitor to interrogate the objects, find out more and even animate them (light from lamps, candles and food on plate etc.)

### Mangle Interactive Display

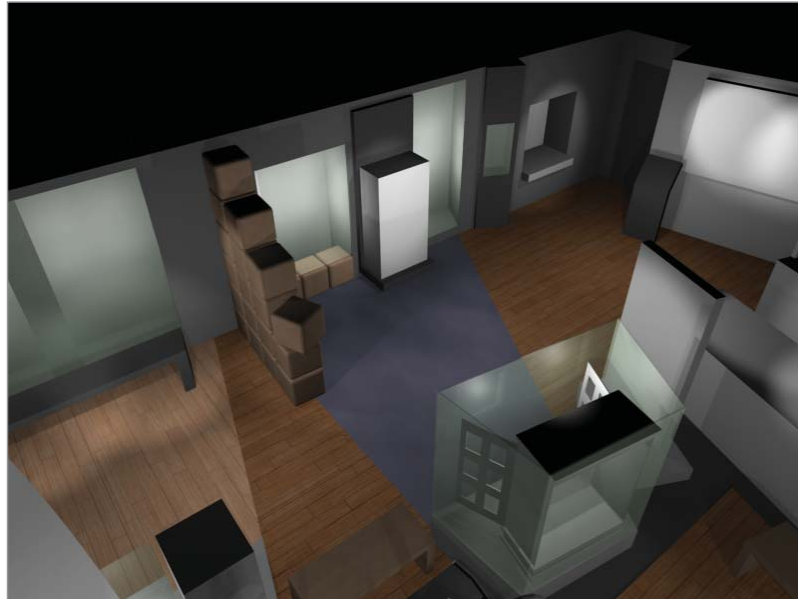
This exhibit uses the 19th century mangle as the central focus point. It will be set within the context of kitchen items from all eras arranged in a contemporary and interactive way, and provide a platform for exploring not only life in North Herts at this time but stretching back to the 19th century.

From the mangle, a sheet of cloth shoots upwards and overhead running down the opposite wall to form a doorway. This tensile fabric structure will provide a digital platform for us to project photographs of homes and quotes from people who lived in North Herts across history. These images will appear and travel over the cloth from one side to the other, creating more of a dynamic environment.



# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

## Fun & Games

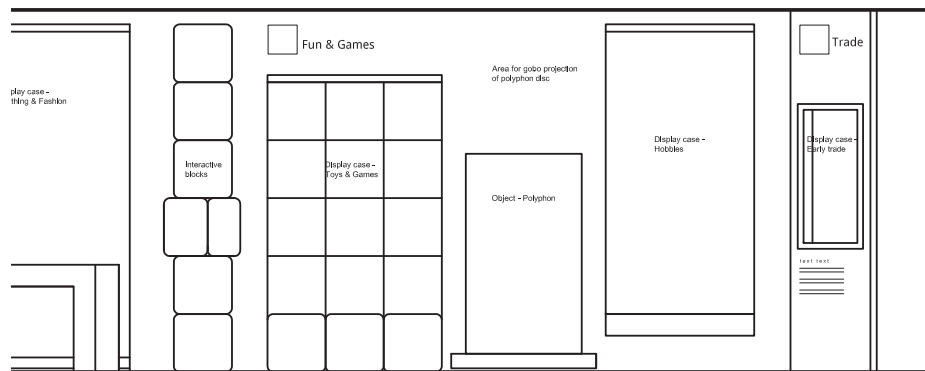


### Icon Object: Doll's House

This theme will look at the wide variety of toys and games that have entertained people in North Herts for thousands of years from bone die from Roman Baldock to toys today. We have used a tumbling toy blocks idea as the basis for the structure of the display. Each block will provide space for objects to be displayed, graphic interpretation or children's physical games and interactives to be integrated. The games will be low-tech and take their themes from the objects on display: automators, reveals, jigsaws etc. and will be aimed at a young audience. Other objects displays will look at music and visitors will be able to engage with the large polyphon and listen to audio tracks which would have been played on the machine. A digital label will provide a visual caption on how it works. A final object showcase will look specifically at sports and hobbies.

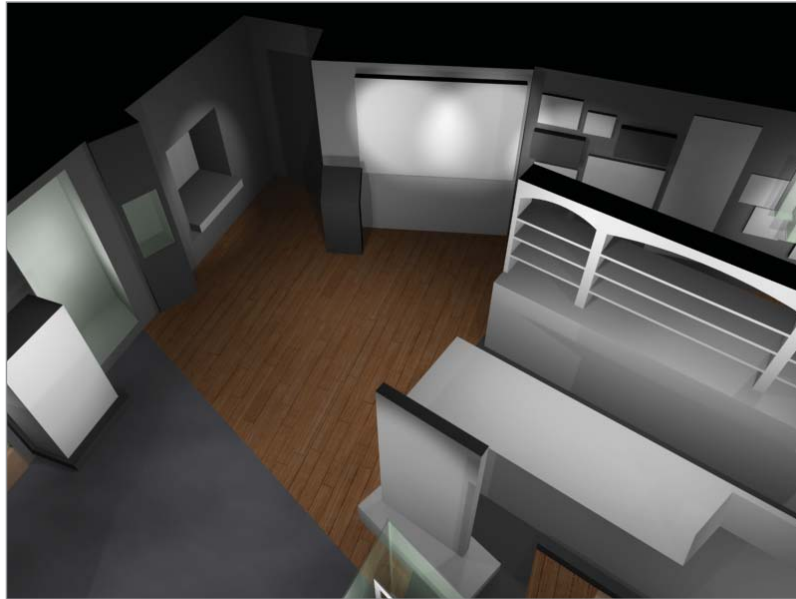


Stock image to illustrate the style of display



# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

## Making & Selling



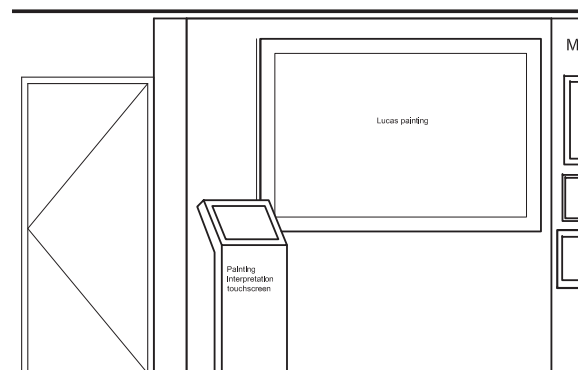
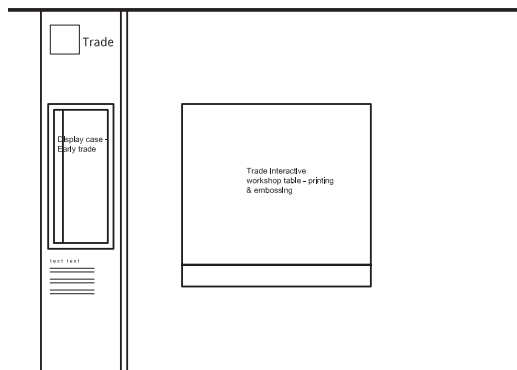
**Icon Object:** Perks and Llewellyn Pharmacy and Door

This theme is the largest within the First Floor gallery due to its impact on the history of North Herts. This area has always been an important hub for trade since the Roman era, and the migration of people from Europe here brought new production methods and goods to North Herts. The first showcase will look at very early trade focusing on the town of Baldock, and later Neolithic and Bronze Age finds including a hoard from Nuthampstead.

The people of North Herts have also used the land for resource and trade, and traditional skills are as important today as they were thousands of years ago. The next exhibit will look at these skills that have been crucial to industry in the area such as straw-plaiting, milling, printing and tile production. A workshop table will allow visitors to have a go at a printing interactive, and learn about the local printing industries including the Royston Crow.

### Marketplace Painting Interactive

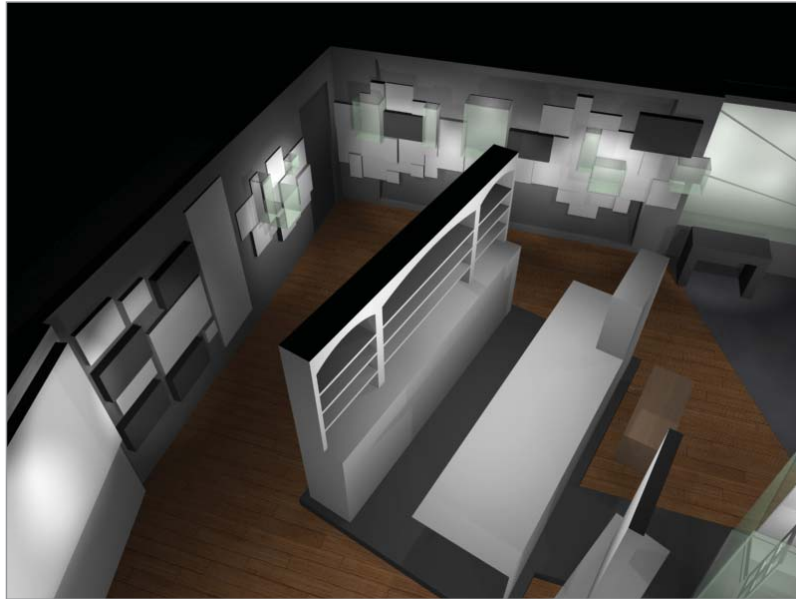
This exhibit will use the Samuel Lucas 'Hitchin Marketplace' painting as a starting point for exploring markets in the 19th century. The painting will be dissected digitally so visitors can look at the different shops in the market place (fishmongers, butchers, pub etc.) and also learn about the people who are in the scene (e.g. Dr Mansell, Dr Niblock, Gypsy Draper)



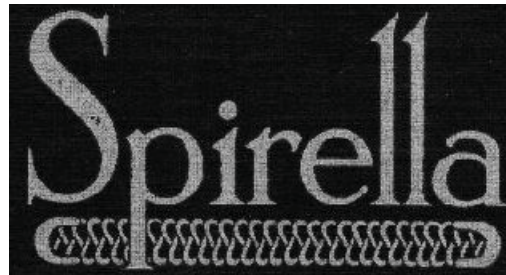


# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

## Making & Selling



Example of the style of display



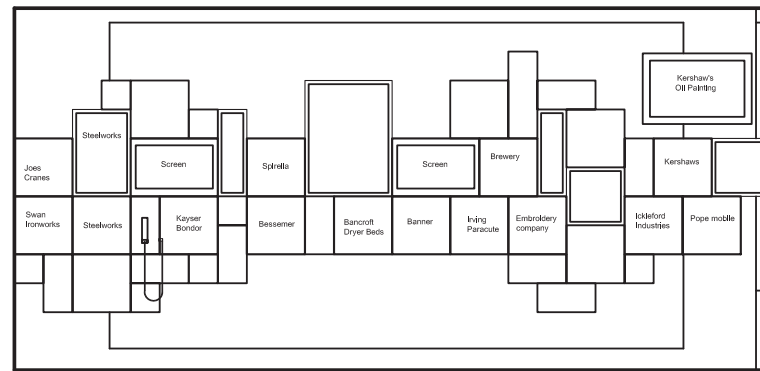
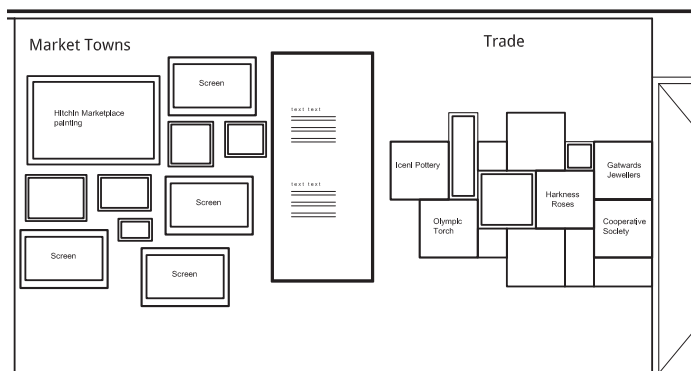
### The Pharmacy

The striking pharmacy interior from Perks and Llewellyn is the focus of this section. The counter, rear shelving with bottles and front door will be installed within the space for visitors to explore.

At the rear of the pharmacy, there will be a new interactive addition, where visitors can open drawers and lift up flaps to reveal facts, smells, and touchable objects that reflect the workings of the pharmacy, medicines and the importance of lavender.

### 'Market Towns' Object and AV display

This display will use objects, photographs and AV to explore the development of markets in this area. It will focus specifically on four market towns in North Herts - Ashwell, Baldock, Hitchin and Royston – as well as other smaller stories.



### Trade display

This exhibit will explore some of the key businesses and industries that were set up in the North Herts area in the 19thC and 20thC. It will explore, amongst others Harkness roses, Kryn and Lahy steelworks, Gatwards jewellers, Bessemer, Icenl Pottery, Spirella, Irving parachute factory, Kayser Bondor, Ickleford Industries and Kershaw's. It will be presented through personal accounts, objects, film, oral histories and graphics.

# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

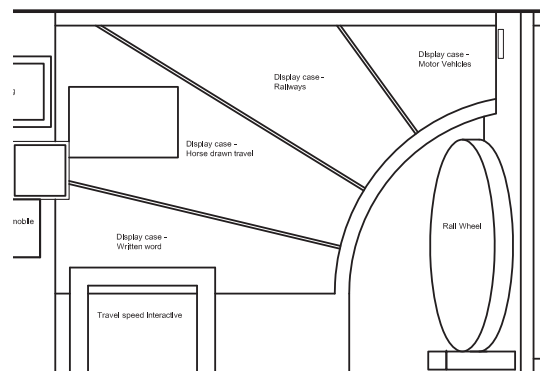
## Connections



### Icon Object: Penny Farthing

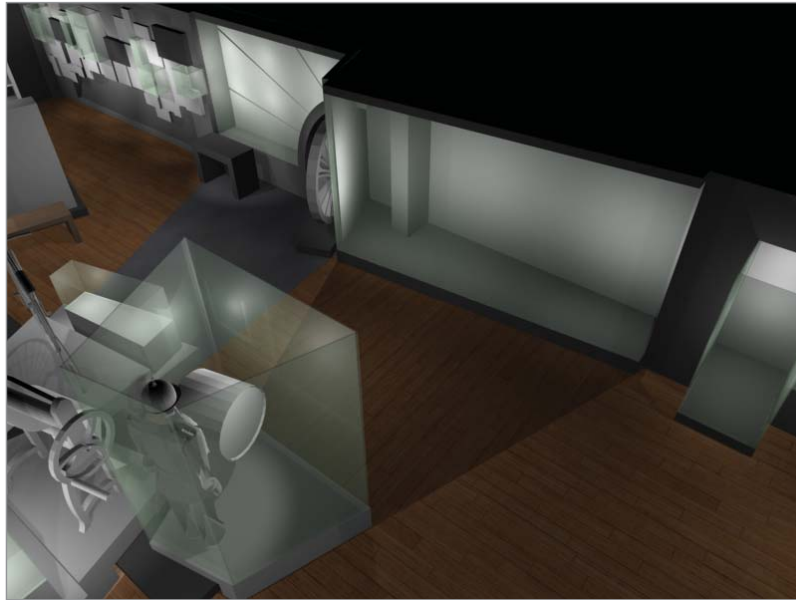
This section looks at how people have connected and moved around over history, and how this has developed and changed over time. On one side of the space a large railway wheel pattern from K&L, Letchworth becomes the focus object, and from this a series of different stories radiate outwards looking at correspondence, motor transport and the development of the railways. These subjects form segments within the showcase, and related objects will be displayed there. A low-tech interactive for younger audiences in front of the case will look at developments in transport speeds and communication channels.

On the opposite side, the penny farthing leads visitors into a display on cycling with supporting display plinth showcases and graphics.



# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

## Peace & Conflict



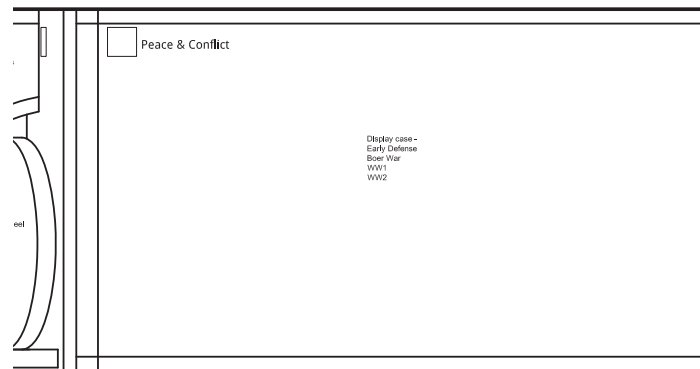
**Icon Object:** Hertfordshire Yeomanry uniform and drum

This section explores peace and conflict in North Herts at local, national and international level over thousands of years. It looks at how war has affected people's lives and changed the way they behave, live and feel. We have developed this area as a large-scale, floor-to-ceiling showcase with minimal interactivity due to the impactful nature of the collections. It will house displays on all periods from 4000BC to the 20th century, and focus in particular on the First and Second World Wars where the collections are strongest. This includes the flute and postcards sent home by a young Private from Whitwell.

On the opposite side, as part of the central display, will be housed the Hertfordshire Yeomanry display including the uniform, drum, sword, helmet, swordsmanship cup, flag and handmade dominoes made in a PoW camp in a collective display.



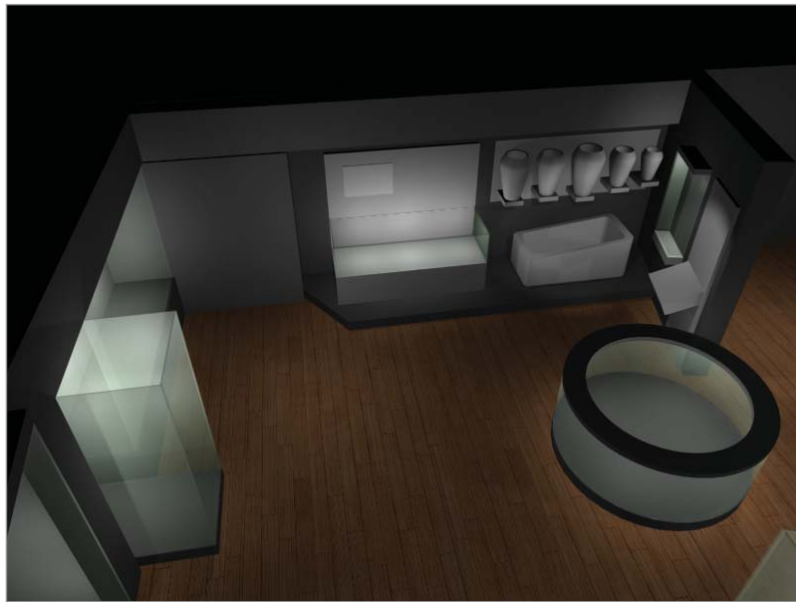
Examples of the style of display





# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

## Cradle to Grave



Examples of the style of display

### Icon Object: Baldock Chieftain's Burial

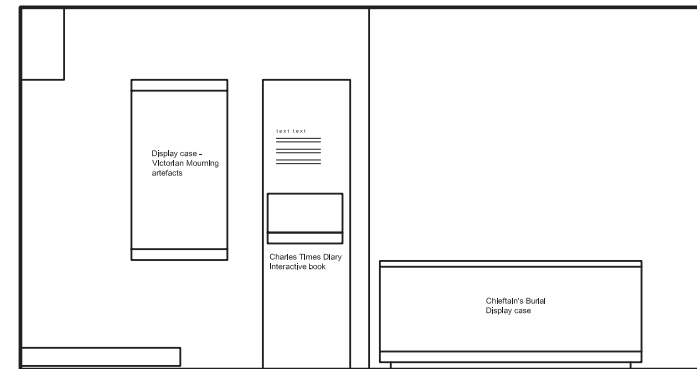
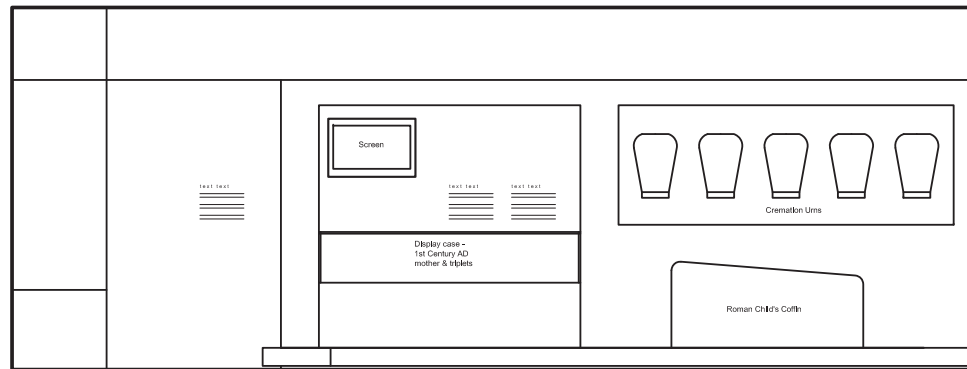
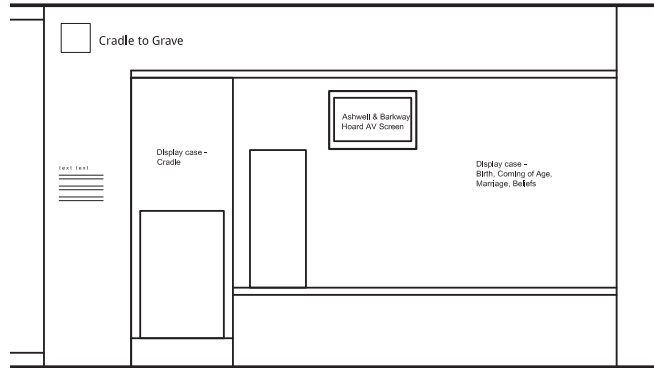
This final theme looks at all aspects of life from the cradle to the grave, spanning thousands of years. It will explore the different beliefs and traditions people in North Herts have had both in life and death. The area starts with a large showcase of objects relating to birth, coming of age and marriage, and moves into another one looking at beliefs. Objects will be displayed individually and beautifully lit, and visitors will be able to explore the interpretation of each. A separate AV screen will show an edited sequence relating to the Ashwell and Barkway Hoard and its significance in wider archaeology and understanding.

The second section will explore death, and the different rituals and traditions people have relating to burials and mourning. The Chieftain's burial will be the icon object in this space, within a bespoke circular case so that the entire archaeological context can be recreated accurately and to scale. Visitors will be able to walk around almost the entire edge of the display.

Due to the sensitivities of the subject, we have installed a wall partition at the entrance so the exhibits are shielded from immediate view, and visitors can opt to walk past. Objects installed in this area will be the 1st century AD mother and triplets with its accompanying film, the child's coffin, cremation urns and other mourning ephemera. A final, quirky interactive centres around the diary of Charles Times, who recorded the deaths of people in his town over many numbers of years. It is an interesting insight into life in the 19th century and the often bizarre ways that people were killed.

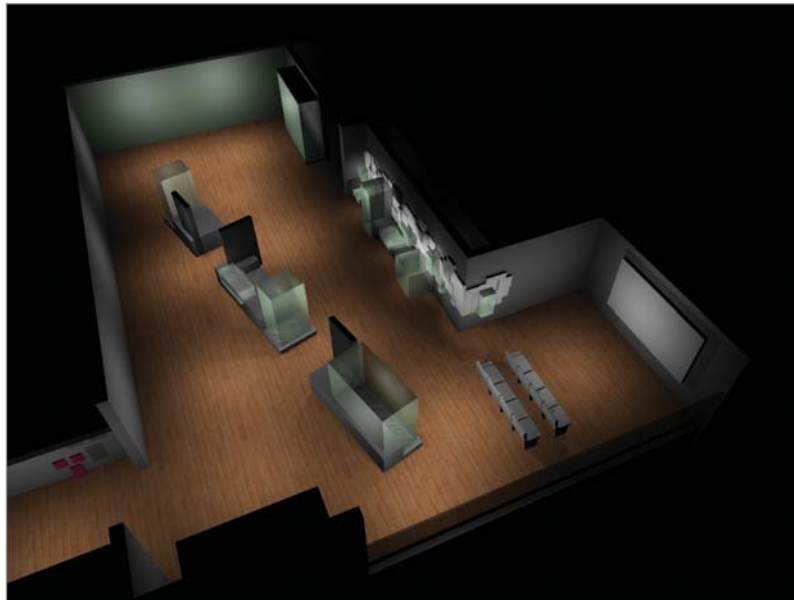
# FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

## Cradle to Grave - Elevations



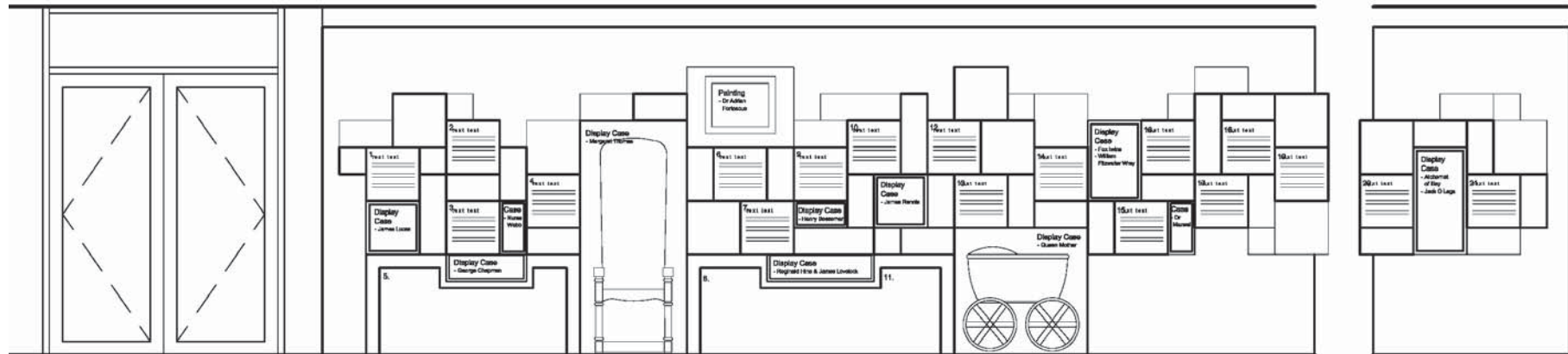
# TERRACE GALLERY

## Making a Mark



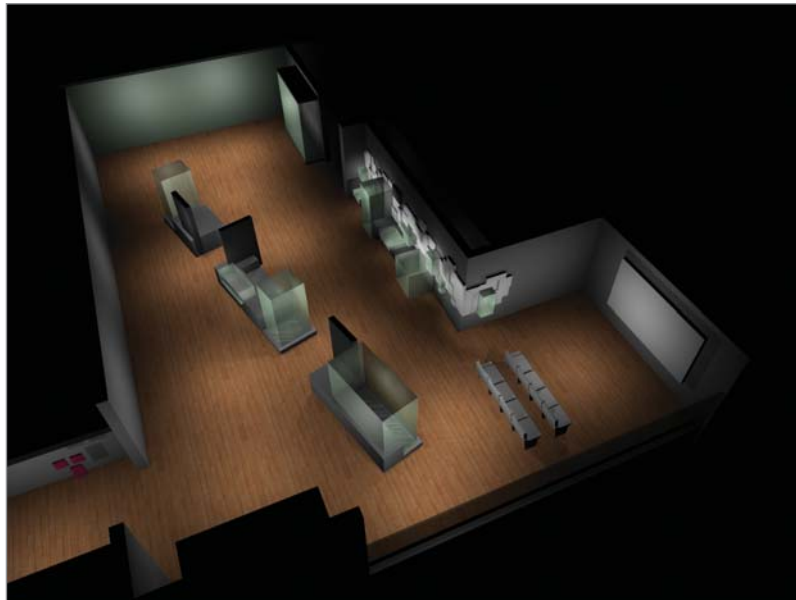
Examples of the style of display

This wall display will look at some of the key historical individuals from the area that have influenced the region or country, or become legendary in the area. It will incorporate images, graphics, objects and AV where appropriate. People will include amongst others James Lucas, Mary Martha Webb, the Fox Twins, Henry Bessemer, George Chapman, Margaret Thomas, Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, George Orwell, Aethelgifu, Joseph Beldam and Joseph Lister. The design will become a patchwork of people from across the ages, with surprising objects – a great talking piece during functions and events in the space.



# TERRACE GALLERY

## Shadow Theatre and Character Costume

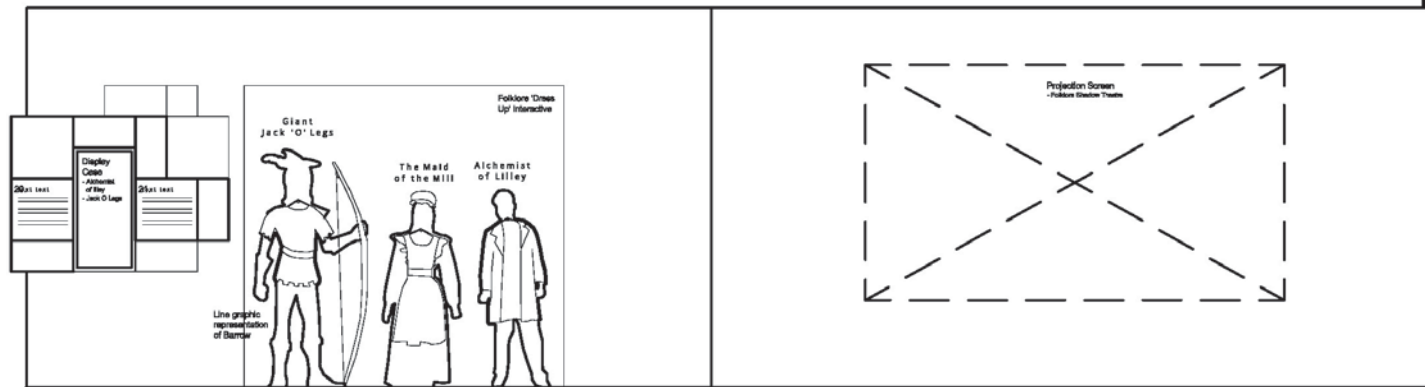


At the end of the Terrace Gallery, overlooking the entrance wall display, is a natural alcove that we want to repurpose as a projection theatre. We will re-use a number of the original Hitchin Town Hall balcony seats to act as theatre seats, and include the original 'picturedrome' sign within the area.

This projection theatre will interpret and bring to life a number of William Gerish's folklore tales such as The Alchemist of Lilley and Jack O'Legs in the style of an animated shadow theatre. We want to develop this as a mainly visual experience but a short narration will tell the key elements of the story. Alongside this, we are going to provide a number of character costumes that visitors can get dressed up in. This will be a visually stunning and engaging way to engage difficult audiences with North Hertfordshire's heritage. It also actively promotes literacy and creativity, which can be supported with additional informal and formal learning programmes and story-telling sessions. The space can also be used for film viewings when required.



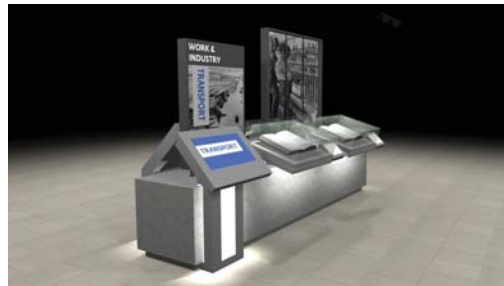
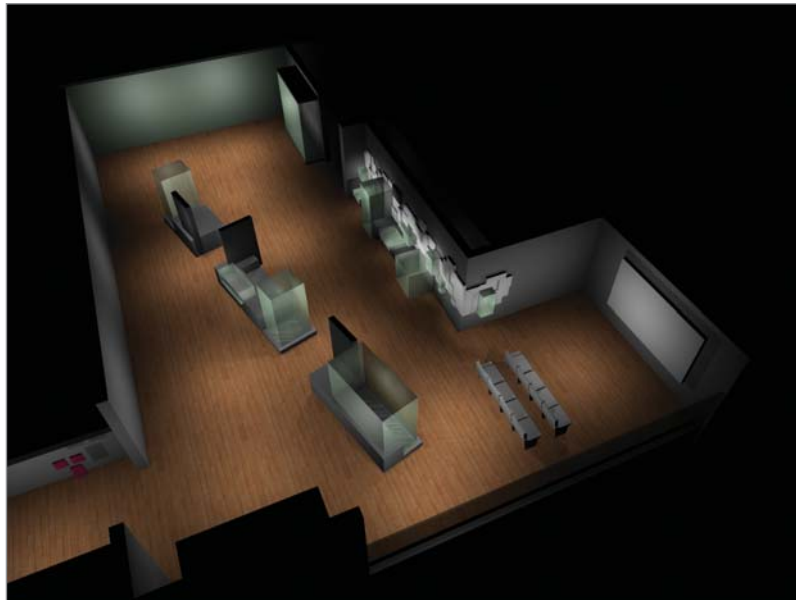
Images illustrating the style of display.





# TERRACE GALLERY

## Island Displays

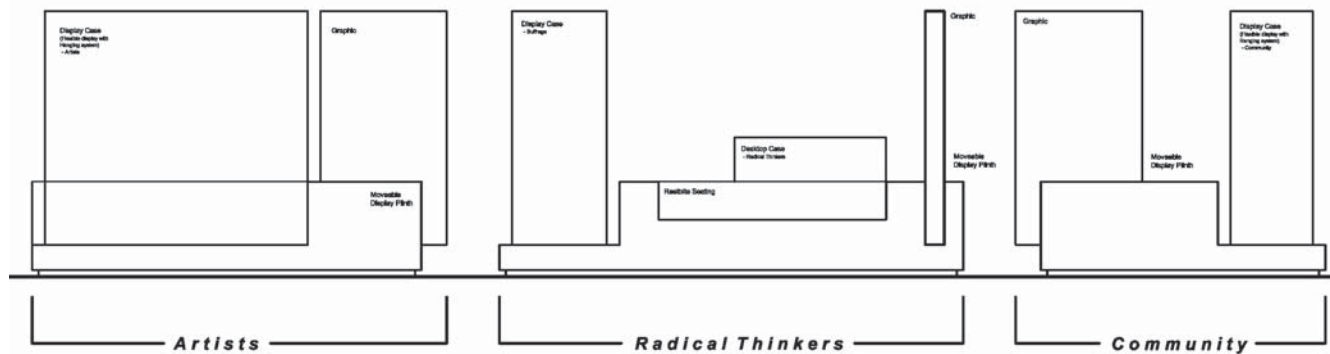


Examples of the style of display

In the centre of the room and around the perimeter of the space, we have introduced five exhibition units (2 fixed, 3 moveable) on different subjects relating to the Making a Mark theme.

The units will include:

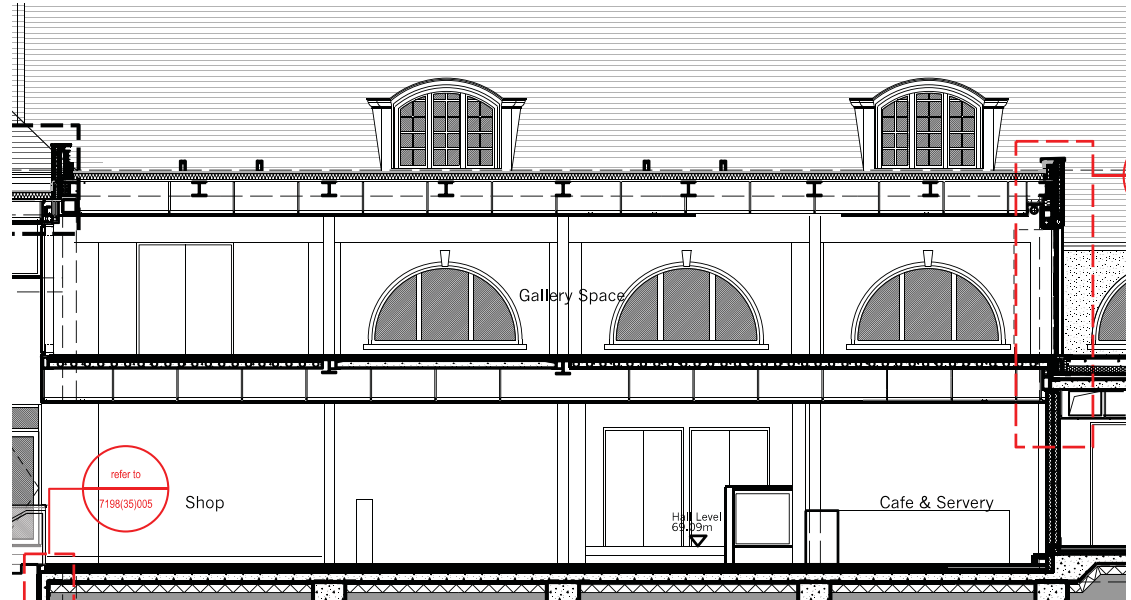
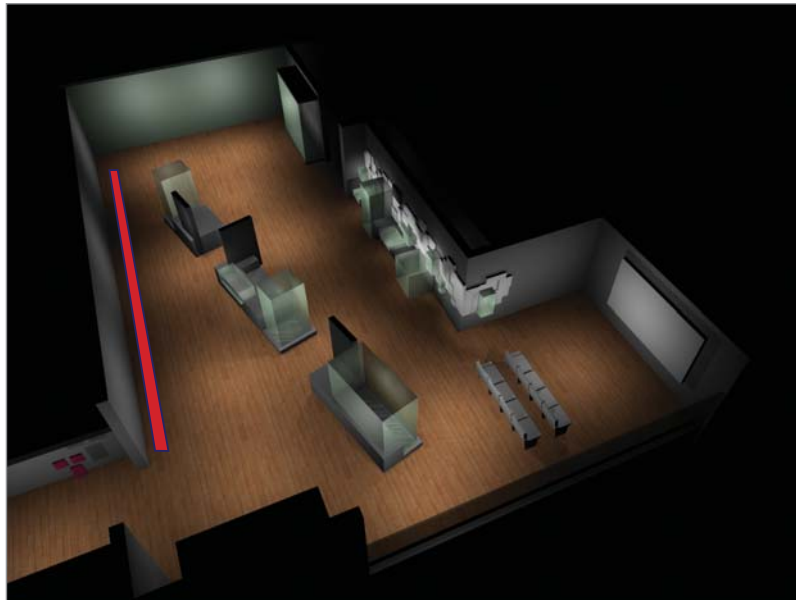
- **Local Focus Case** – This will be designed as a flexible unit as it will regularly change to focus on a certain village, community or topic in North Herts.
- **Radical Thinkers** – This case will explore a number of different causes and beliefs that North Herts people have been actively involved in: Temperance, Anti-Slavery, Suffrage, and Christian Communism.
- **Artists** – This case will provide an opportunity to display some of the art collection including pieces by William Ratcliffe, Frederick Landseer Griggs, Gerald Ceunis, Abdo Nagi, Samuel Lucas, Margaret Thomas, Alive Neeve and Hilda Kidman
- **Collecting the World** – This case will display examples from the ethnographic and other collections and be interpreted through the eyes of the collector themselves.
- **Football** – This case will look at the man behind the first national football museum and local and star footballers covered in the collections.



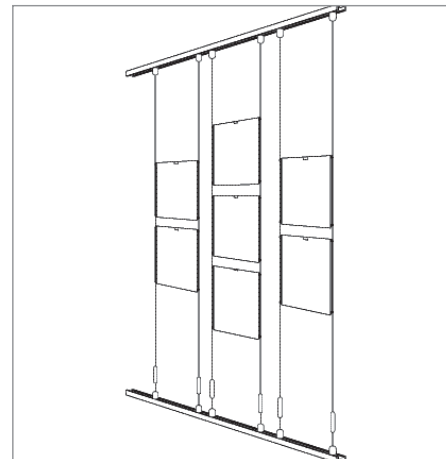
The central three units will be designed as moveable to allow flexibility if the space is to be used for events or weddings. They will all include space for objects and graphics, and the mounting will be considered in full at Stage E to ensure the protection of all objects. How frequently these units need to be moved will have an impact on their final design - daily operation would require smaller, lighter units with fewer objects.

# TERRACE GALLERY

## Temporary Exhibition Display



Examples of the style of display



To the West of the Terrace Gallery the main feature of the space will be the arched windows formerly on the exterior of the Town Hall building. In front of this wall will be a flexible free-standing picture hanging system to allow a range of picture hanging options without obscuring the view of the existing wall.

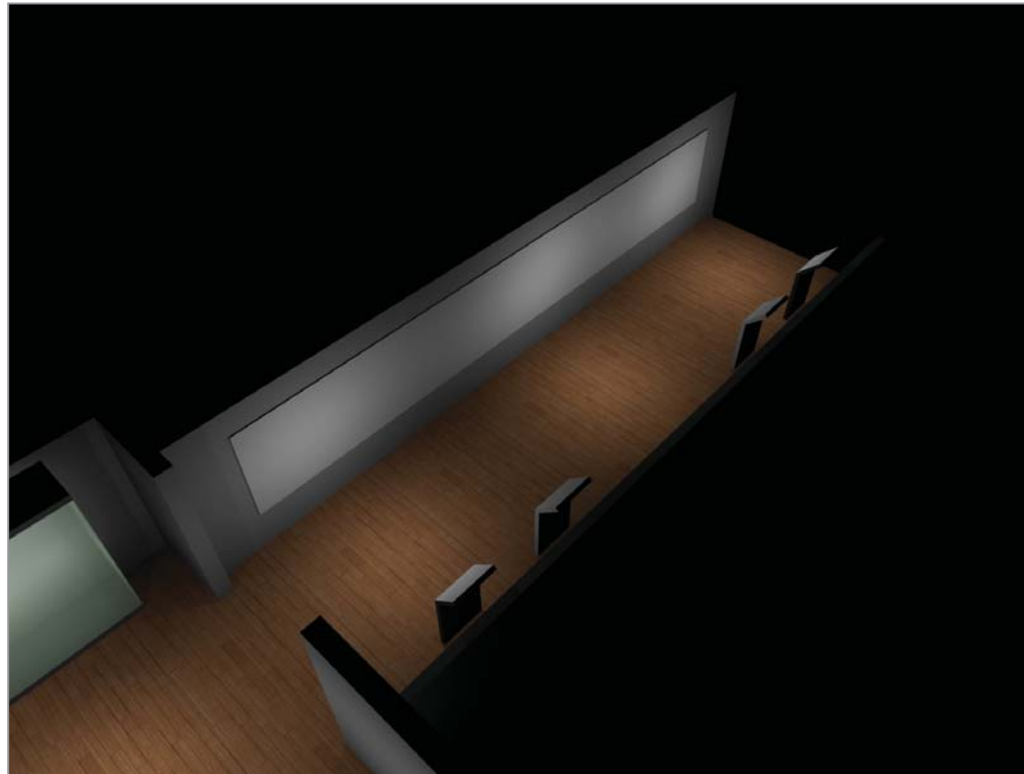


# TOWN HALL BALCONY

## History of Hitchin Town Hall

On the town hall balcony, we propose a photographic and documentary-based exhibition on the history of Hitchin Town Hall. As the Town Hall will be used for events during museum opening hours, we cannot use this space as a traditional exhibition gallery as it may not be available when the main hall is in use downstairs. In this way, it provides an appropriate place to celebrate the heritage of Hitchin Town Hall, the building at the very heart of the project.

Content will include the original building of the Hall including historic photographs and documents relating to the Town Hall. It will also show the various usages of the building across the years for community events such as dances and performances with oral history testimony from the local community. The final chapter will look at the redevelopment works undertaken as part of this project which aims to give the building a 21st century lease of life as a museum and community hall. The area will also support projection equipment to be used in the Town Hall itself.



An example of the style of photographic display. This installation is at Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Club.