

VEHICLE CONSERVATION CENTRE

- WORLD CLASS COLLECTION CARE -

REQUEST FOR FUNDING TOWARDS A £5 MILLION PROJECT.

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Introduction

The Tank Museum holds a collection that is "Designated" as being of national importance. The vehicle collection is the most comprehensive of its kind in the world.

Following the successful redevelopment of the customer-facing side of the museum in 2009, the museum's attention now turns to collection care. Of our collection of over 300 vehicles, about 140 are stored either outside or in unheated leaking sheds. In order to keep as many vehicles as possible inside, our Discovery Centre is packed with vehicles which severely limits our ability to interpret the collection effectively, as further exhibition development is only possible by putting more vehicles outside.

We wish to build a modern, accessible, conservation facility in which we can appropriately house our off-display collections. This will preserve our whole collection and enabling a rolling programme of exhibitions in which vehicles can rotate on and off display over a number of years.



Crowded unheated sheds, which suffer from condensation and water ingress

Background to The Tank Museum

The Tank Museum is based in Bovington, Dorset. In 2009 over 170,000 people visited this Designated Collection. The museum employs 55 full time equivalent staff. We also have over sixty active volunteers.

The Tank Museum tells the story of tanks and the people who serve with them. We are the museum of the Royal Tank Regiment and the Royal Armoured Corps. This building will enable us to continue to tell their stories for years to come.

Project Scope

The centre-piece of the project is a 40,000 square foot conservation building. The building will be of modern, well insulated construction and will house static vehicles while they are off display.

The total capacity of the building will be up to 120 vehicles. This will ensure that all the vehicles in the collection can be housed under cover and the ones of historic and technical significance will be in high standard buildings.

The building will not be humidity controlled, but will exploit a conservation heating regime that was developed for our previous development in which radiant panels warm the vehicles themselves which act as heat-sinks to both keep the

overall temperature at an even level and ensure that the vehicles are always kept above dew point, minimising the potential for condensation.

The Conservation Centre will have a viewing balcony which will enable museum visitors to see the off-display collections for the first time.

The entrance area will act as a focus for learning about conservation practices including displays and demonstrations about the way in which we look after these magnificent machines.

"The function of the proposed centre, and its impact upon the overall operation of the museum, including optimising the use of public display space will be of real benefit and should help to ensure the continued success story of the museum"

David Walsh, Economic Development Manager Dorset County Council

"The Museum's vehicle collections provide a unique resource for modern design teams to understand how their predecessors have gone about solving complex problems. The comprehensive nature of the vehicle collection enhances its value greatly and its continued preservation is important and valuable to the current and future Royal Armoured Corps"

Brigadier S Caraffi MBE, Former Director Royal Armoured Corps

"I wholeheartedly endorse The Tank Museum's plans for a new Vehicle Conservation Centre. The current facilities for storage are inadequate and result in the rapid deterioration of important collection items. The museum would be irresponsible in taking vehicles out of its display halls into the existing facilities, which means that development of new displays is challenging in the extreme"

Diane Lees FMA FRSA, Director General Imperial War Museum.

"You have a tremendous resource at the museum for scientists, designers and technicians, allowing us to learn from the past and to test our ideas for the future. We greatly appreciate your efforts in the retention and safekeeping of this unique asset"

Robert Elsley, Programme Manager Defence Science and Technology Laboratory Porton Down.



A functional but over-crowded exhibition space





General view of proposed building from the West

"The earlier phases ... have been well managed and resulted in a step change of the impact of the museum providing a dramatically enhanced ability to tell the story of the tank in a way that both puts it into its historical context and makes it real in human terms.... It is critical to maintain the momentum of recent development at The Tank Museum and for this reason I fully support this bid."

Kelvyn Derrick OBE, Deputy Chair, South West RDA.

Wider programme

The construction of the Vehicle Conservation Centre is part of a wider programme of conservation work at The Tank Museum.

The Tank Museum is at the centre of a Vehicle Conservation Research Group in which academic engineers and material scientists collaborate with museum professionals and MOD engineers to examine how historic machinery degrades and the interventions that can be made to slow or suspend this deterioration. As part of the programme, The Tank Museum is working closely with Bournemouth University's School of Design Engineering and is sponsoring a Ph.D in the Sustainable Conservation of Historic Vehicles.

When the Vehicle Conservation Centre is complete, The Tank Museum will be able to begin implementing the recommendations of the research group and ensuring that the interventions carried out will be appropriately maintained in good conditions in the new building. As this work accelerates, we will expand the Conservation Centre to include new workshops for an expanded team of full time and volunteer staff to become a global centre of excellence in the field.

Project Management

Timescales: Construction of the centre will begin in autumn 2012 and is expected to be complete in time for the installation of new exhibitions ready for the spring of 2014.

Visitor Engagement: Over 30,000 people per year are expected to take the opportunity to view the stored collections with most being able to take part in volunteer-led talks and tours.

Audience: The audience for The Tank Museum has a far broader social and national reach than most other museums. Because of the nature of our collections, and the mix of holiday makers in Dorset, we are particularly strong in the C1, C2 and D social groups.



General view from the East showing future phases 'ghosted'

Project Cost: The total cost of the scheme including VAT is approximately £5m. The breakdown of cost is:

- Construction £4.43m
- Interpretive material £0.1m
- Professional fees £0.5m

Project Management: The Project Sponsor is Richard Smith, the museum Director. The Project Manager is Roy Hicks, the museum Facilities Manager working closely with the same team of professional advisors who guided our previous "At Close Quarters" project to success in 2009.

Project Lifespan: The building will have an initial lifespan of 25 years, but will be maintained on an ongoing basis through our existing lease agreements with the Ministry of Defence.

Grant Sought: We are seeking funding towards the cost of the construction. Applications for funding are being made to interested Trusts and Foundations. Defence companies are also being approached, to assist in the preservation of their industrial heritage. The Ministry of Defence is committed to the ongoing maintenance of the buildings upon construction.

Timing of Grant: The funding is required between now and the end of 2013.

General view of proposals in context from the South

