

Unlocking the Geffrye

Work is well under way on the *Unlocking the Geffrye* development project. The Geffrye Museum is dedicated to the history of the home and is best known for its series of period rooms representing the homes of London's 'middling sorts'. It is set in a beautiful eighteenth-century almshouse building surrounded by gardens. The scheme, designed by Wright & Wright Architects, will open up the Geffrye's building, gardens and collection by creating a new entrance from Hoxton

A cross-section of the almshouse building showing the new home gallery on the lower ground floor, the period rooms on the ground floor and the library and collections study room on the first floor. © *Wright & Wright Architects*





The new library and collections study room. © Wright & Wright Architects

Street, improving circulation within the building, developing new galleries and improving the museum's learning and events spaces.

The museum closed to the public early this year. Since then we have finished packing and moving the collections into temporary stores, constructed on site at the museum. The contractors started work in earnest in early July. In the main wing of the almshouse building, they are excavating the basement floor, to lower the floor level and create the new gallery space and installing the steels that will support the new first floor. They have altered the exterior of the 1990s extension (designed by Branson Coates Architecture) in preparation for the construction of the new entrance from Hoxton station. Work is also progressing rapidly on the restoration and extension of the former pub building on the corner of Hoxton Street and Geffrye Street, which will house the new museum café. So far, the construction work is going well and we are on schedule to reopen in spring 2020.

While the building work progresses, the curatorial team are working with the exhibition designers ZMMA and graphic designers Why Not Associates to finalise the content and designs for the new Home Gallery. The gallery will explore what home means to a wide range of different people, reflecting diverse experiences of domestic life. It will look at how people make home, from setting up home in a new place to acquiring furnishings and making choices about decoration, the work involved in maintaining a home, what makes us feel at home - and how that can be disrupted. It will include many previously unseen objects from the museum's collection and feature photographs and

first-hand testimony about real homes from our Documenting Homes Collection. There will also be some smaller changes to the ground floor displays, including a new Victorian period room and updated interpretation for the existing period rooms.

New collections stores and a library and collections study room will improve conditions for the collections and make them more accessible for research and study.

The overall budget for the project is £18.1 million and we have raised £17 million to date, including a £12.3 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. To keep in touch with what is happening or to make a donation to support the project please visit the museum's website here: <https://www.geffrye-museum.org.uk/aboutus/unlocking-the-geffrye/>

While the museum is closed, the restored almshouse is still open for tours on certain days and we are running a programme of events and activities in the museum's front garden. Again, please visit our website to find out more: <https://www.geffrye-museum.org.uk/whatson/>

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