

## Museum appoints Mace for new Collections, Research and Digitisation Centre in Reading

3 years ago



The Natural History Museum (NHM) has appointed [Mace](#) as its preferred main contractor to build a new 25,000m<sup>2</sup> Collections, Research & Digitisation Centre at Thames Valley Science Park in Reading. Mace has been appointed to deliver pre-construction services including design and procurement.

Other members of the project team include CPC Project Services as Project Managers, Arcadis as Cost Consultants, Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios as Architects, and Ramboll as Mechanical & Electrical and Civil & Structural Engineers.

Subject to planning permission, which has recently been submitted to Wokingham Borough Council, in 2024 the Museum will begin constructing a sustainable new facility at Thames Valley Science Park, the innovation campus of the University of Reading in Shinfield. It is expected that the construction of the building will be finished in 2027. The project is generously enabled through a substantial £201m investment from the UK Government as part of its priority to increase investment in science, research and development.

By 2031, the centre will be operational, equipped with cutting edge laboratories, space for Museum scientists and purpose-built storage for 28 million specimens. Transporting these specimens to Shinfield will be as big as any move of natural history specimens globally.

Gareth Lewis, Mace's CEO for Construct said:

*'We're very proud to have been appointed to deliver this landmark scientific facility on behalf of the*

*Natural History Museum. Together with our supply chain we will be raising the bar on sustainability and apply the latest digital thinking to deliver the project to the highest quality and safety standards.'*

Keith Jennings, Director of Estates, Projects and Masterplanning at the Natural History Museum, said:

*'This new site will enable us to secure irreplaceable collections in a purpose-built storage facility, provide new scientific infrastructure to accelerate research and digitisation, and act as a base for new collaborations and partnerships.*

*'We are very excited to see the project reach this stage and look forward to working with Mace under a pre-construction services agreement to further develop the project and prepare for the construction phase.'*

As advocates for the planet, sustainability is integral to how the Museum operates. The centre at Thames Valley Science Park will be constructed with the lowest-possible environmental impact, using responsibly sourced materials and services, aided by Mace's team of sustainability experts. The Museum is committed to achieving a net-zero carbon building in both construction and operation.

Housed at the new centre in bespoke storage will be the Museum's collections of mammals, non-insect invertebrates (such as corals, crustaceans, molluscs and worms), fossilised mammals and invertebrates, molecular collections and micropalaeontology. The facility will also include an imaging and analysis centre including digitisation suites; state-of-the-art molecular biology laboratories including ancient DNA labs; cryo-facilities for tissue storage; conservation labs; and specimen preparation labs including quarantine facilities.

The Museum's new facility will further open up its collections to researchers for scientific innovation, strengthening the UK's position in finding solutions to the planetary emergency.