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Natural History Museum awards contract to Mace for new collections, research and digitisation centre

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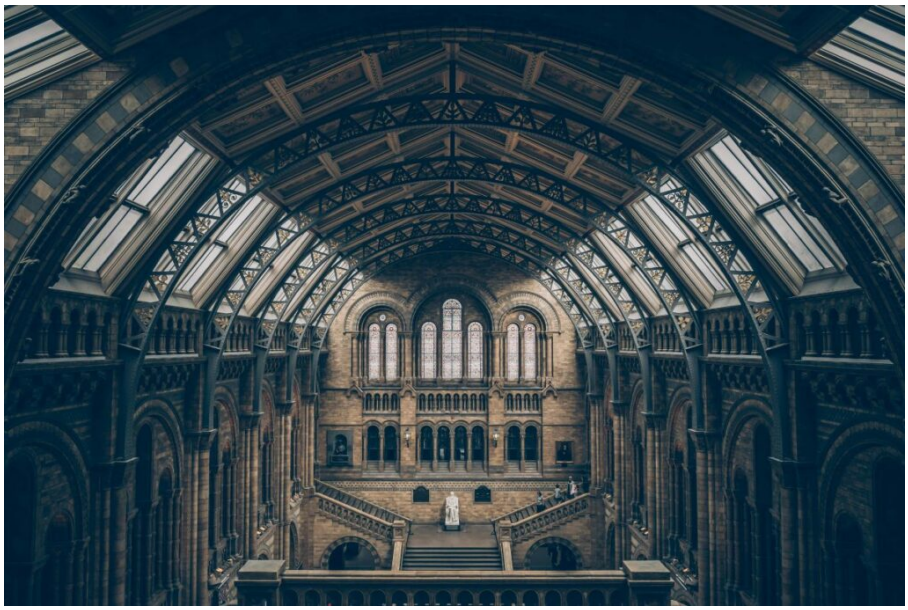

The Natural History Museum has appointed Mace as the main contractor to manage and oversee the building of its new collections, research and digitisation centre with construction anticipated to begin imminently.

Global delivery consultants and construction experts, Mace will lead on the procurement and construction of the new facility and will be supported by CPC Project Services providing project management support and Arcadis consultancy who are providing cost management support. The existing design team, novated to Mace, will be led by the architectural firm Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios and includes the engineering consultancy Ramboll.

This new facility will house purpose-built storage for 28 million specimens, around a third of the Museum's vast collection, as well as provide innovative digital, analytical and genomic technologies and facilities for the scientific community.

Situated in Shinfield at Thames Valley Science Park, the innovation campus of the University of Reading, the facility will span the equivalent of three football pitches, totalling 25,000m2. It is expected to be finished in 2027 and operational by 2031.

Rob Lemming, Managing Director for Public Sector and Life Sciences, Mace Construct, says: "As we embark on this significant project, our focus is on creating a facility that not only protects the Museum's invaluable specimens but also serves as a centre for groundbreaking research. This building will be equipped with

cutting-edge technology, enabling solutions-led research into some of the greatest challenges facing the planet, from climate change and biodiversity loss to health and sustainable resourcing."

The project is part of the NHM Unlocked Programme, generously enabled through a substantial £201m investment from the UK Government as part of its priority to increase investment in science, research and development.

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

"It is fantastic we will soon be breaking ground for such a pivotal project that will transform collections access, physically and digitally, for the scientific community. This increased accessibility will enhance both the research capability of our 400 scientists and researchers from all over the world – ultimately strengthening the UK's position in finding solutions to the planetary emergency."

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. Transporting these specimens to Shinfield will be the largest move of the natural history specimens globally.

The facility will 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.

Sustainability is integral to the Museum's operations. The centre at Thames Valley Science Park will be constructed with the lowest possible environmental impact, using responsibly sourced materials and services. The Museum is committed to achieving a net-zero carbon building in both construction and operations.

The Museum has further bold capital project plans with ambitions to raise £150 million, as it approaches its 150th anniversary in 2031, to transform the South Kensington building. Moving a third of its collections to this new facility will enable two galleries that have been closed to the public since 2004 and 1948 to be reopened. The Museum's NHM150 project will place the Museum's groundbreaking research at the heart of the building, revitalising four existing galleries, opening these two new magnificent galleries and delighting one million more visitors a year with the wonders of the natural world.