



## Architectural and Design Concept

**It is with great passion and creativity that the consortium of Hoskins Architects and Ralph Appelbaum Associates have worked together to design the Weltmuseum Wien and its new permanent exhibition.**

The consortium was very fortunate to work with this historical site of extraordinary quality. In close collaboration with the team of the Weltmuseum Wien, a vision for the reopening has been developed that respects the historical character of the building, while integrating a contemporary architectural and exhibition design. With the guidance of the Austrian Federal Monuments Office (Burghauptmannschaft Österreich), the design redevelopment adapted the Weltmuseum Wien to the requirements of today's museum operations.

### Architecture

The architectural design scope encompasses the entire Weltmuseum Wien facilities. A contemporary multifunctional cube in front of the building is the first impression of the revitalised museum inside. As well as offering information, it can also be used as a projection surface, an event stage and an extension of the museum café in the summer months.

The main entrance to the Corps de Logis-Building has been given a new, inviting identity. Once inside, the updated orientation system takes visitors to the newly designed reception area in the First Vestibule. Visitors will then follow on to an interactive orientation area in the Second Vestibule, before leading them into the magnificent Columned Hall that forms the heart of the museum.

A new café and museum shop are carefully integrated into the Columned Hall, which is freely accessible. The ground floor of the hall is made up of 1.400 sqm of temporary exhibition space, updated to comply with modern standards. A highlight of the redevelopment is the completely redesigned 2.500 sqm permanent exhibition situated on the first floor.

A carefully crafted new event space in the neighbouring segment of the Neue Burg is accessible from the Columned Hall and directly from the Heldenplatz, giving both the Weltmuseum Wien and the other KHM-Museums many new opportunities for programming.

The materials for the architectural elements are chosen on the basis of the historical character of the building, creating a consistent formal language with subtle contemporary details.



## **Exhibition Design**

The objective of the exhibition design was to create a series of characteristically independent exhibit halls, tailored to the unique stories of the Weltmuseum Wien, yet still resulting in a coherent visual language.

The design process started with an exploration of the impressive collections of the Weltmuseum Wien, and an inspection of the historical display cases that were installed in 1912. These display cases featured surprisingly complex technology that allows for a very elegant style, despite rather large and heavy glass panes. As they did not adhere to today's museum standards, Ralph Appelbaum Associates decided to restore as many of the historical cases as possible, and to equip them with the necessary technology for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It was very important to develop exhibit halls with a completely new design language, that directly translates the key content messages. Based on the stories and the selection of artefacts, RAA planned a new, purely white display system to contrast with the graphite historical cases. This design also complemented the Weltmuseum Wien's curatorial concept of juxtaposing collection centered exhibit halls with more discursive halls, that convey their content primarily through interactive media and graphics.

Thus the Japanese Hall features the impressive model of a Daimyo residence in the centre of the space, while the surrounding historical display cases compare how Japanese culture was perceived in Europe before and after the country opened itself up to the Western world in 1873.

In comparison, the exhibit hall on the famous Vienna School of Anthropology explores not only a discussion among scientists, but also presents science as a historical process full of subjective perceptions. RAA therefore developed Theme Walls, that present four different discursive positions in the lower part, while using the upper part for a media installation where the protagonists directly confront each other through interviews or quotes.

By working closely with the Weltmuseum Wien – the directorate, the curators and the conservators –, RAA has created individually designed exhibit halls, each uniting content and design in their own way, while still forming a strong and connected visual language for the whole exhibition.



## **Hoskins Architects**

Hoskins Architects (HA) was founded in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1998 by Gareth Hoskins (1967-2016). They quickly became one of the most well-known and successful architectural offices in Scotland. The practice portfolio focuses on public buildings such as museums and cultural facilities, educational and healthcare buildings, and includes framework and masterplanning.

Some of their best known projects include the redevelopment of the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh (2008-2016), the new Culloden Battlefield Visitor Centre near Inverness (2007) and the Bridge Arts Centre in Glasgow (2007). More recent projects include the National Theatre of Scotland's headquarters, the redevelopment of Aberdeen Art Gallery and the Scottish National Gallery in Edinburgh.

For several years now, the practice has worked collaboratively with architectural and planning firms all over Europe on various projects in Ireland, Italy, Germany, Poland and Portugal. Since 2010 Hoskins Architects have had a presence in Berlin, and following a number of successful competitions the Berlin branch was officially established in 2013. The Berlin office is also responsible for the Weltmuseum Wien project.

Hoskins Architects currently have more than 30 staff in their offices in Glasgow and Berlin, including over 20 registered architects. Their projects have won numerous design awards.

## **Ralph Appelbaum Associates**

Ralph Appelbaum Associates (RAA) are planners and designers of award-winning museums, exhibitions and visitor centres worldwide. Subject areas range from natural history and the physical sciences, to cultural and social history.

Founded in 1978, RAA has 35 years experience working for institutions across the United States and in 33 foreign countries. Currently the largest museum design firm in the world, RAA has a staff of over 160 designers, technology and media specialists, architects, writers and editors operating from studios in New York, London, Beijing, Berlin and Moscow. RAA has won virtually every major award for design, including The United States Presidential Award for Design Excellence and the Federal Design Achievement Award.

RAA is best known for cultural projects requiring a marriage of complex educational content with physical environments that are at once compelling and smoothly operational. RAA strives for the optimum balance of sustainability, value, design, and experiential quality. More than 30 million



people visit RAA-planned and -designed projects each year, among the most important are the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Centre, Anchorage, Alaska (2010), the Newseum in Washington DC (2010), the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh (2011), the Hawaiian and Pacific Halls in the Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawaii (2009 and 2013) and the Canadian National Museum of Human Rights, Winnipeg Canada (2014), the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC (2016), the Humboldt Forum in Berlin Castle in Berlin, Germany (2019) and the Barack Obama Presidential Center Chicago, Illinois (2020).