York Castle Museum Project Overview

York Castle Museum is embarking upon a major capital project to completely reimagine the museum site, deepen audience engagement and fully embed the museum within the regenerated Castle Gateway wider area. The Castle Capital Project (CCP) will be transformative, creating a 21st Century visitor experience with: high quality visitor facilities; future proofed infrastructure; sustainable sound buildings; full physical and intellectual accessibility; improved commercial opportunities; improved community and school facilities; temporary exhibition space to show more of the collections; and double the display space for the core offer. The project will conserve or restore the most important historic fabric of the building and the historic significance of the scheduled ancient monument.

The Trust has identified a number of key objectives for the Castle Capital Project, set out below. Some of these needs further refining with input from other stakeholders and the public. Ongoing consultation is a key principle of the project and York’s awareness of their potential will be supplemented as they find out more about what interest’s future visitors.

The YMT’s **objectives** for the York Castle Museum capital project are as follows:

* Establish the York Castle Museum as the home of a national collection of everyday life, presenting and interpreting objects to engage diverse audiences;
* Create a sense of place by increasing understanding of the site's history and archaeology underlining the importance of the Eye of York and Castle and Prison history in the national story;
* Provide a must-see experience, delivering a welcoming and accessible attraction for the city of York with world class visitor facilities;
* Deliver a high quality architectural and landscape intervention in the site that transforms it into a destination in its own right for residents and visitors.

The YMT’s **guiding principles** for the York Castle Museum capital project are that everything the Trust does will aim to preserve the integrity of the heritage assets (site, buildings, collections) for future generations by:

* As part of a building & site masterplan, delivering an environmentally sustainable and architecturally innovative combination of historic refurbishment, new build, and landscaping working towards BREEAM standards;
* Conserving the listed buildings to ensure that the heritage is in better condition;
* Ensuring that all architectural interventions are to conservation standard;
* Providing appropriate environmental standards for museum collections display and storage;
* Providing good working conditions for staff working to some of the qualities outlined in the well building standard;
* Developing an economically sustainable business model with increased capacity for commercial activities and low running costs;
* Creating innovative learning and engagement opportunities connected to the collections, site and buildings;
* Involving and listening to communities, taking their views into account at every stage.

This radical development will be undertaken hand in hand with York Museum’s communities and visitors to create an experience that retains the magic of the much-loved existing museum whist providing a significantly enhanced 21st Century visitor experience. One key challenge for the project is retaining the magic of York Castle Museum with its Victorian Street and nationally important social history collections, whilst creating a greater coherence of visit and telling a more comprehensive and compelling story of the Castle site and prison buildings using innovative and appropriate interpretive techniques.

The York Castle Museum project will create an experience which:

* Reveals the significance of the site, and it’s at times challenging history;
* Visually and practically enhances the existing buildings;
* Offers porosity for residents and visitors to make connections between the river, the museum and the wider castle site;
* Better display more of our extensive designated National Collection of Every Day Life;
* Displays our rich and diverse collections to engage as wide an audience as possible;
* Embeds York Castle Museum at the heart of a major regeneration project for the city of York.

The revamped museum will demonstrate York Castle’s history as a power base for the crown across the North for many centuries. It will underline York’s status as a place of historic national importance.

The Castle Capital Project sits within a broader strategic regeneration programme for the Castle Gateway area, led by the City of York Council.