

CASE STUDY

THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM - OXFORD

THE CLIENT

The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford opened its doors for the first time in 1683 and is one of the oldest public museums in the world.

THE CHALLENGE

During a planned, major refurbishment programme temporary accommodation was sought for its many and varied collections. A three-storey building was acquired for off-site storage, which would become the repository for the museum for a period of three years. This temporary repository consisted of 40 rooms, all of which had to be fitted out with suitable storage.

Metalrax Storage was successful in being awarded the contract to supply and install an adjustable storage system to comply with the museum's brief and specification. Widespan shelving was recommended as the most appropriate product for the project.

THE SOLUTION

Metalrax Storage surveyed the 40 rooms within the three-storey building and supplied and installed Widespan bolt-free adjustable shelving to accommodate the museum's artefacts. A combination of different heights, widths and depths of shelving, to maximise the storage potential within each area, was proposed and implemented. At the same time Metalrax Storage provided spreadsheets detailing the cubic capacity of each room and unit prices for each different bay elevation. This enabled the Ashmolean Museum's Project Manager – Mr Andy Bramwell - to be in control of any variations in the overall project cost.

In addition to the main contract and as a consequence of providing cubic capacities for the rooms, Mr Mark Norman - Head of Conservation and his colleague Ms Elisabeth Gardner, were able to identify the need for more rooms within the building to be allocated for storage. Metalrax Storage was requested to visit these rooms and provide additional storage equipment for specific collections. In particular, the Eastern Arts Organics collection comprised a very complex range of items requiring something other than standard shelving. Trays of brass rubbings, carpets, rolls of materials, scroll boxes, hanging Thangkas, and framed paintings were housed in shelving with storage accessories specifically designed for these items.



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THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM – OXFORD CONTINUED

Parts of the Ashmolean Museum building were also adapted to provide additional storage and Metalrax Storage was requested to design shelving units to accommodate mixed collections including sculptures and casts. To provide an extra element of security, Metalrax Storage provided mesh partitioning with lockable doors to both individual shelving bays in the basement and also above and below an existing mezzanine floor.

The unusual and diverse nature of the museum's artefacts made this project one of the most challenging in Metalrax Storage long association with the Heritage sector. The successful conclusion was due to an understanding of the museum's long-term aims, the relationship between the client and supplier and the suitability and quality of the storage system provided.

