

# CASE STUDY

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## THE WEALD & DOWNLAND MUSEUM

### THE CLIENT

The Weald and Downland Open Air Museum is a collection of 50 historic buildings dating from the 13th to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Rescued from destruction, the buildings have been dismantled, conserved and re-built to their original form.



### THE CHALLENGE

An acquisition of funds allowed the Weald and Downland Museum to embark on a project to centralise their extensive collection of farming implements, agricultural machinery and artefacts together with a wide range of architectural items. The collection was stored in less than ideal conditions in a variety of off-site barns and sheds. The new location was to be the purpose built "Grid Shell Building", with archive space and offices on the lower level together with an exhibition area on the upper floor.



The brief was to provide a safe and versatile storage area for a collection of farming artefacts from architectural items to heavy horse harnesses and collars together with miscellaneous small items.

### THE SOLUTION

Metalrax Storage was nominated to carry out an audit of the existing archives. Careful consideration was given to the correct and most efficient way to store the items, with preliminary audits and inspections carried out to establish maximum sizes, weights and quantities, and to ensure that the proposed storage solution would meet the strict criteria for housing this diverse collection. In order to meet the Museum's expectations, a combination of static and mobile shelving was recommended which in addition to the design criteria would maximise the efficacy of the proposed storage area.

Working in conjunction with the Main Contractor rails were laid prior to the installation of the under floor heating and screed to provide a track system that was flush with the floor surface, thus eliminating any trip hazards and facilitating the easy use of trolleys in the storage area.

The two recommended storage systems were Widespan Wide Access and QB2 Short-span shelving mounted on to heavy-duty static and mobile bases. The ends of all runs were fitted with mesh panels allowing farming tools to be stored and displayed. Widespan, both on static and mobile bases provides storage for the larger and heavier items. One specially adapted bay was fitted with heavy-duty rod dividers for the storage of a collection of doors.

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## THE WEALD & DOWNLAND MUSEUM - CONTINUED

Because of its strength and adaptability, QB2 was used for the storage of smaller items. A range of solid dividers and hanging garment rails made it very efficient for the storage of the bulk of the general items.

Sliding mesh panels and louvred panels fitted with a variety of Metabin plastic containers and wire spigots were used to hold a wide variety of horse harnesses, straps and small items.

Special consideration was given to storage of heavy horse harnesses, smocks, small building tools and architectural items such as window frames and doors as well as the more common items associated with farming, allowing the collection to be stored in a logical and straightforward way.

The shelving supplied meets the requirements of BS5454 and allows high-capacity storage together with easy access and visual inspection to all areas of the collection.

The unusual and diverse nature of the items to be stored made this project one of the most challenging in Metalrax Storage long history within the Heritage sector. The successful conclusion was due to a thorough audit of the collection, an understanding of the Museum's long-term aims, and the robustness and quality of the storage systems offered.

