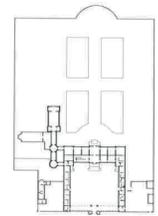


1753

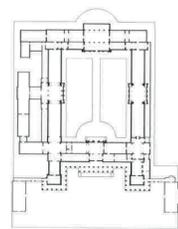
Sir Hans Sloane puts his private collection on display for the public.



1753

1845 1851

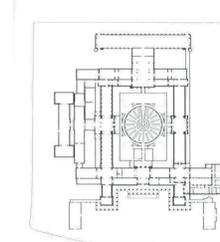
Austin Henry Lanyard excavated many Assyrian sites, now known as Iraq, and the artefacts found were sent to the museum.



1852

1884 1886

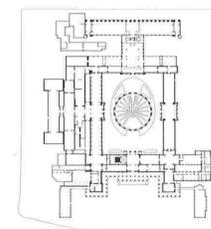
Flinders Petrie excavated the Greek Trading Centre of Naukratis in the Egyptian Nile Delta. 18,000 objects were shared between Egypt, Greece and the UK. 8,000 of the objects were sent to the British Museum.



1899

1900

The museum continues to receive donations, and purchase artefacts from private collections in order to display them to the public.



2000

1810

The museum received the private collection of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles.

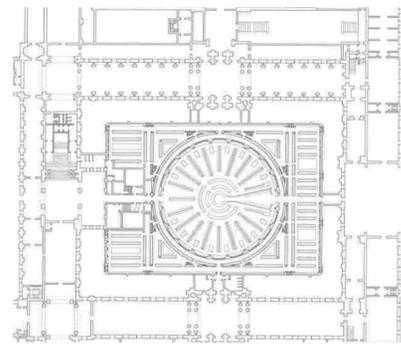
1860

The museum received the private collection of Edward Hawkins who was a curator at the museum and left his collection to the museum when he passed.

1898

Nearly 300 objects were left to the museum by Baron Ferdinand Rothschild.

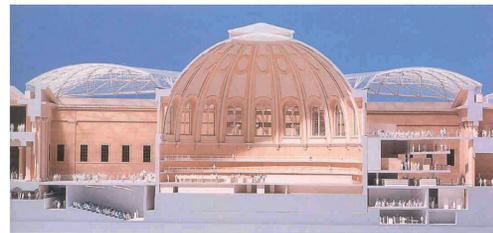
When it was realised that the initial use for the Great Court was unsuccessful it was redeveloped into an open air library with a centralised reading room as a place of study.



The space was completely filled with iron bookcases, leaving minimal floor space surrounding the reading room, like a maze of books.

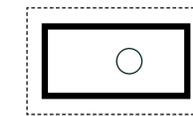
With its final remodel a lecture hall and other teaching spaces were built below the Great Court and reading room and the reading room remains rarely used for special exhibitions

The redevelopment brought the great court to everyone, it became the heart of the museum creating routes to all the collections in the museum.



Why were the education rooms placed below the original place of learning?
Why has this huge space been left dormant, now the largest relic in the British museum?

The court was once sealed off from the public. Put on a metaphorical platform of superiority with one single access point.



Although the Court opened up the reading room became shut off.

The reading room now holds the same sense of superiority the entire court once held, even though it is kept out of use most of the time.



When it was redeveloped the court floor was covered with Balzar limestone from France for both durability and its soft colour palette that reflects the natural light coming through the glass roof.



This makes the space feel even larger than it already is and keeps the space open and bright.

MORNING

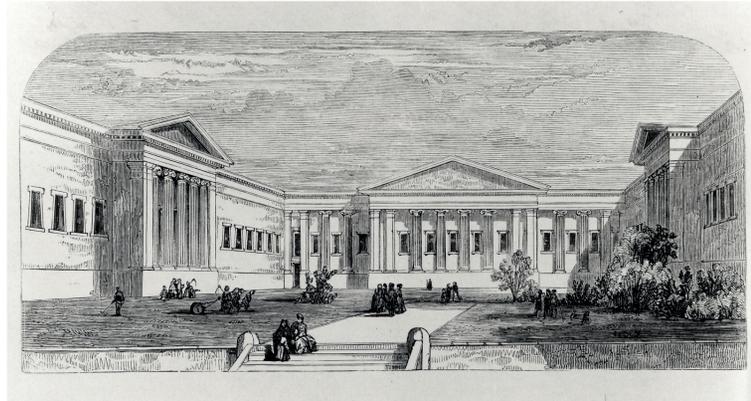
NOON

AFTERNOON

EVENING

NIGHT





The great court was originally designed to be a garden, for public to use as a place to promenade and to be seen as a participating part of the community.

SOCIALISING RECREATION BEING SEEN PUBLIC

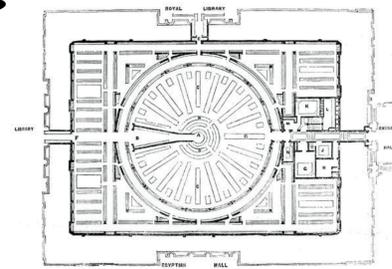
The lawns and plants were not getting enough sunlight due to the height of the museums structure so the garden did not last long within the walls.



1852 - The reading room was built just off centre of the great court.

1857 - The great court was filled with large iron bookcases to house the hundreds of thousands of books the museum now owned.

KNOWLEDGE LEARNING PRIVATE



"A CITY WITHOUT A PARK"

The great court became a private place, with access only for those who were approved.

The identity of the museum changed. It became a place for those who were 'worthy' and the feeling of inclusivity faded.

Once a place for socialising it was now a place of quiet study.



1997 - The court reopened to the public but it remained vacant until a competition was launched to transform the space.

Norman Fosters design won and the glass roof was built, changing the space from an outdoors space to an enclosed space.

RECREATION INTICING INFORMATION PUBLIC



"A CENTRAL CIRCULATION SYSTEM"

The court has no defined purpose, it houses a few artefacts to display what can be found within the main museum, yet the majority of the space remains empty.



What is the future of this space? It has potential to be anything the museum could ever want yet it continues to sit unchanged and its use unclear. It is time to change that.

The great court has swapped between being a public or private space, between being for fun or for learning. Why can't these polar opposites come together?

RECREATION LEARNING CELEBRATION

There is the potential to create a fun exciting place to learn either together with members of the public coming and going as they please or in an area designated for the select few who wish to learn more about the subject.

WHAT'S CAUSING THE CONFLICT?

The British Empire expanded through 1680-1919. During this time the British took precious resources and wealth from countries all over the world including cultural and historical artefacts. Many of these ended up in the British Museum in fact it is said that the British Museum is home to the largest collection of stolen property, most of which is not on display. Lots of the artefacts at the museum are legal but some key pieces are under dispute. There have been accusations of the British Museum exhibiting "pilfered cultural property." This has come from a human rights lawyer who is fighting for all European and US museums to return any treasures taken through looting and war. This includes any artefacts taken by conquerors or colonial masters.

There is a legacy of colonial power which repeats itself again and again. The museum has been accused of telling carefully constructed lies and half truths about how some of the artefacts came to the museum using words such as: saved, salvaged and rescued. It is now showing its face by refusing to return the artefacts to their countries of origin. Countries wanting their artefacts back include: Nigeria, Australia, Greece, Egypt and Easter Island. The requests for return of the artefacts are not just about the objects, it is about national culture and identity and who gets to own it. Only a few people from the artefacts places of origin get to visit these pieces of great importance as these countries tend to be from the poorer countries in our world.

The British Museum claims to be a great facility where anyone can visit and learn about different cultures. However, the majority of the visitors are from the western world. Therefore even those who can visit the museum from the countries whose artefacts the museum displays they are learning about their own culture from the western worlds interpretation of them.

WHY IS THERE CONFLICT?

The British Museum prides itself on taking important work and displaying it in their museum to reflect the diversity and the voices of the people within their collections.

There is some irony in this as the museums collections grew from legacies rooted in colonialism; their collections are from wealthy donors who benefited from the empire. One of them being Sir Hans Sloane, doctor and collector, who funded his collection with earnings from his wife's slave plantation in Jamaica. His collection also profited from the British Empire where collectors and travellers all over the world 'acquired' items for him.

This causes conflict because the museum displays these objects as a proud spectacle of Britains achievements for collecting these magnificent objects from around the world, yet many see the museum as a disrespectful display of all the pieces of history Britain has stolen over the years.

THE CONTROVERSIAL ARTEFACTS

BENIN BRONZES



ELGIN MARBLES



GWAEGAL SHIELD



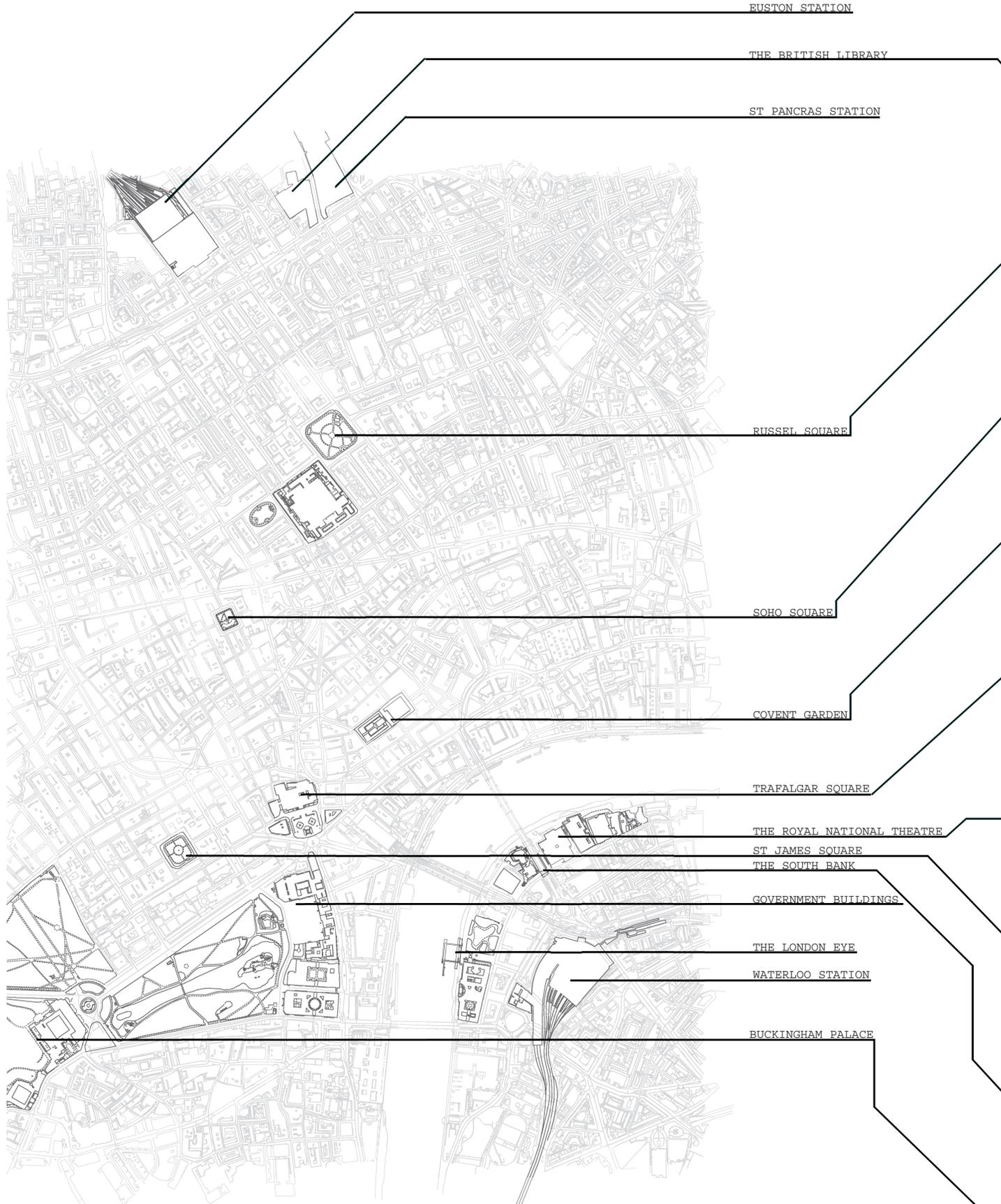
HOA HAKANANAI'A



ROSETTA STONE



SURROUNDING AREA



The home of what was once the contents of the Reading Room the British Library houses the worlds most comprehensive research collection.



London is filled with many beautiful places that hold various activities for those that visit. They range from places



One of the most desirable places to live when it was built, Russel Square became a focal point for the grid structure of the streets surrounding it. The central garden of the square was designed to be an idillic space to people to gather and includes pathways for peaceful walks beneath lime trees.

to learn,
to relax,
to be entertained,
to explore.



A small park where many gather. It has maintained popularity as an iconic location due to the tudor hut that sits in its centre. However, it was built in 1925 to disguise access to an electricity substation.

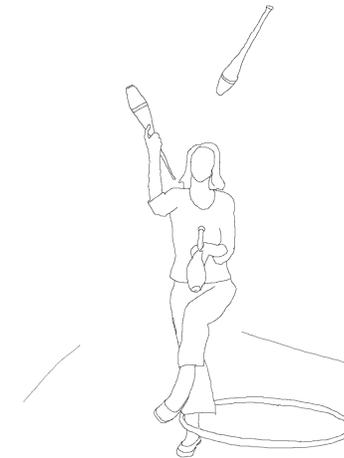
All of these moments should also be found within a museum.



An iconic landmark, Covent Gardens is home to an array of activities from dining at unique eateries and shopping in the market to watching street entertainers throughout the square. It is known as one of the most eclectic squares in London.



Trafalgar Square is visited by millions of tourists every year who come to see the museums, galleries and historic buildings that encase the square. The square is surrounded by cultural spaces filled with important artefacts and artwork that define the history of the world.



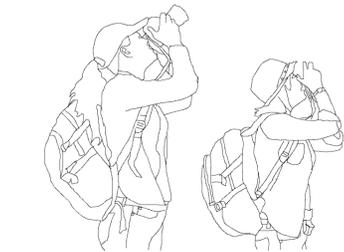
The theatre opened its doors in 1963 and has since produced more than 800 plays with 1000 performances being staged every year. The theatre was designed to encourage people from all walks of life to visit and not just the literate and cultured class.



The square went from being used as a rubbish dump in the 18th century to a privatised garden. This included curved walkways and shrubbery to give the space a new lease of life and it has stayed that way. The garden is still a private space but has opening hours the the public to use it.



Since its rejuvenation the South Bank has become a hotspot for places of art and culture. It now has a growing vibrant community and is home to the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Festival Hall.



Home to the Royal Family and a structure of granduer Buckingham Palace is the most popular tourist spot in London.

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MUSEUM'S
PROBLEM

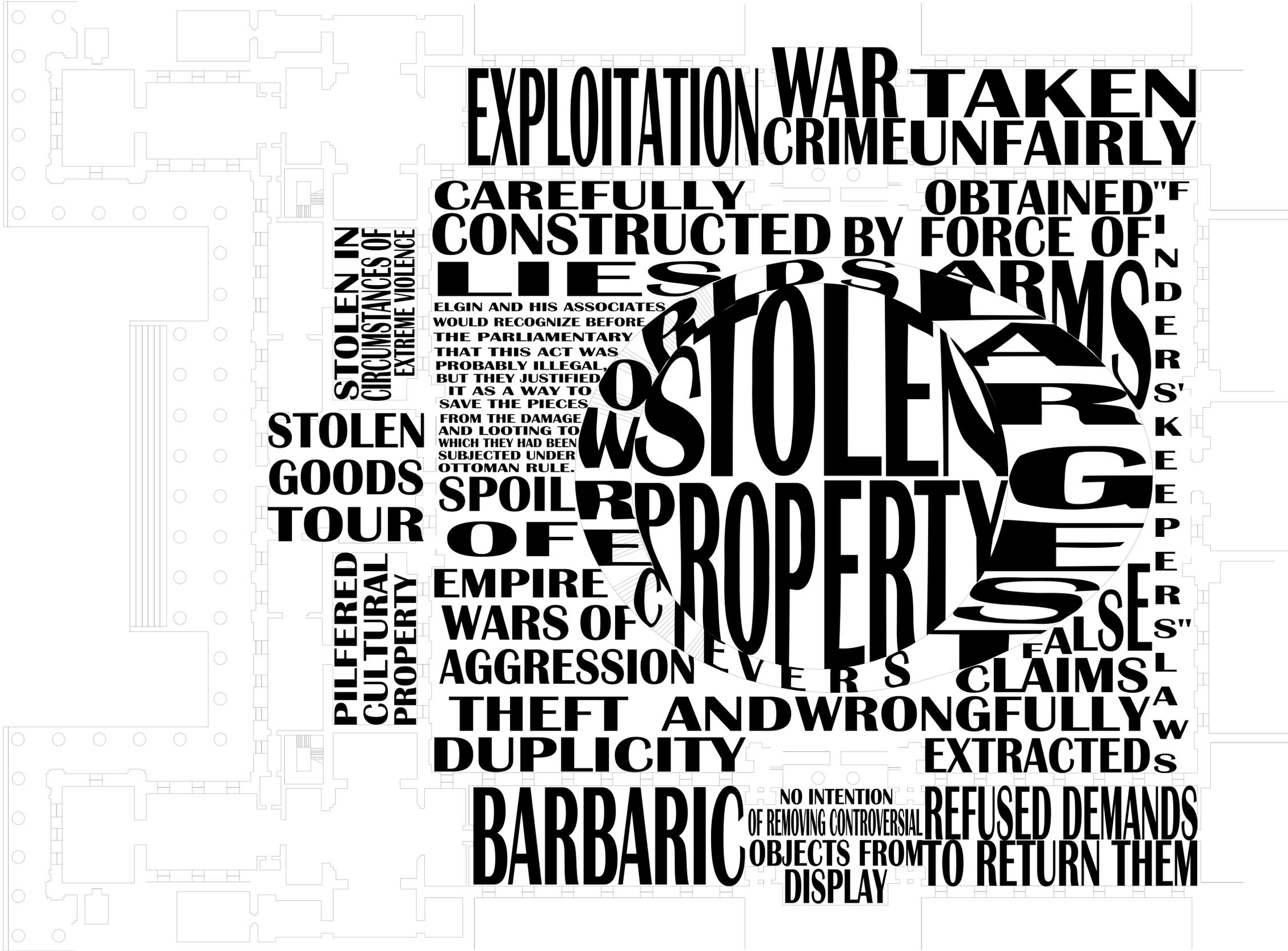
The British Museum is home to many artefacts from around the world which poses the question

'Is the British Museum really British?'

A large percentage of the artefacts within the museum have been collected from around the world. Many of these have been collected through donations and excavations of sites agreed upon by the countries involved. However, the history of how the museum has collected has been a item of contrevsry for the last couple of decades. There have been accusations of items being removed illegally in the past due to war, misunderstanding and ignorance of those who took the items.

The countries accusing the museum of stealing artefacts have been fighting to have them returned to their homes and are fed up with the museum teaching others about their history.

Although there are legislations in place to prevent the return of these artefacts there is perhaps another way the museum can react to the problems caused by them keeping hold of them.



**EXPLOITATION WAR TAKEN
CRIME UNFAIRLY**

**CAREFULLY OBTAINED
CONSTRUCTED BY FORCE OF**

**STOLEN IN
CIRCUMSTANCES OF
EXTREME VIOLENCE**

**STOLEN
GOODS
TOUR**

**PILFERED
CULTURAL
PROPERTY**

LIES IN ARMS

STOLEN

PROPERTY

**EMPIRE WARS OF
AGGRESSION**

**THEFT AND WRONGFULLY
DUPLICITY EXTRACTED**

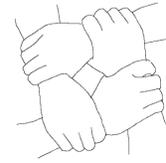
BARBARIC NO INTENTION OF REMOVING CONTROVERSIAL OBJECTS FROM DISPLAY **REFUSED DEMANDS TO RETURN THEM**

GIVING SOMETHING BACK

PROGRAMME

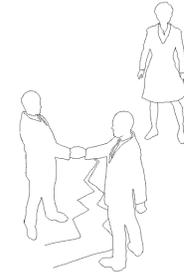
SAYING SORRY

REPAIRING RELATIONSHIPS



REBUILDING BRIDGES

OPENING UP COMMUNICATIONS
BETWEEN COUNTRIES THAT WERE
WRONGED



BRINGING OTHER COUNTRIES
TOGETHER TO PROVIDE THE BEST
EDUCATION OF HISTORY

PATRONS LEARNING TRUE HISTORY

WORKERS LEARN HOW TO PRESENT
WORK CORRECTLY



TEACHING A NEW RESPECT FOR THE
ARTEFACTS

PROVIDING RESOURCES TO OTHER
COUNTRIES SO THEY CAN LOOK
AFTER THE ARTEFACTS TO THE SAME
STANDARDS AS THE BRITISH MUSEUM



SENDING THE ARTEFACTS HOME, EVEN
IF ONLY FOR A SHORT WHILE

CREATING A FOUNDATION TO HELP
PRESERVE HISTORY CORRECTLY



REPLACING THE ARTEFACTS WITH
REPLICAS

MAKING AMMENDS

RECONNECTING

COOPERATION

RE - EDUCATING

DONATION

CHARITY

PHYSICALLY RETURNING

LECTURES

DISSCUSSION GROUPS

PRESENTATIONS

CURATED BY SCHOLORS AND
HISTORIANS FROM THE SAME COUNTRY
OF ORIGIN AS THE ARTEFACTS

RESPECTFUL DISPLAYS SENSITIVE TO THE CULTURE

CELEBRATION OF THE CULTURES
ROOTS AND NOT JUST AND
INFORMATIVE REPRESENTATION

RITUALS

REINACTMENTS DANCES

FOOD PREPERATION

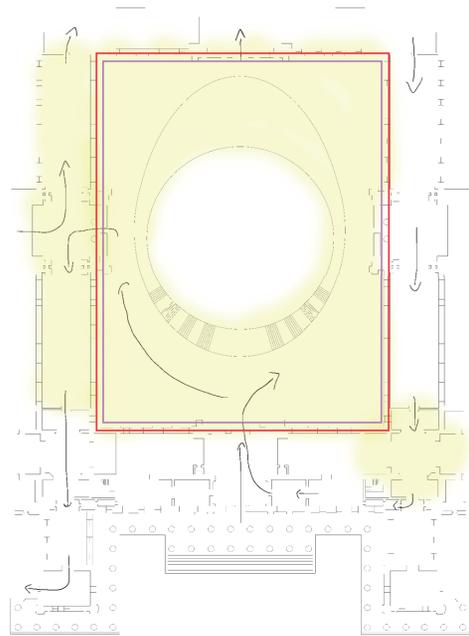
ANCIENT WEAPONRY HOW THEY WERE MADE
HOW THEY WERE USED

WORKSHOPS HOW THEY WERE USED
TOOLS THEY HAD
HOW THEY WERE MADE

COOKING METHODS USED

We cannot take back our history
and the deeds that were committed.
But, we can respond to what
happened and create a positive
future.

AVOID THE BRITISH EMPIRE



CURRENT LAYOUT OF THE MUSEUM

- NOISY SPACE
- STRONG SMELLS
- NATURAL LIGHT

There are strict rules to follow in the museum:

-Talking must be kept to a minimum and not disturb others in the museum.

-Pointing at the artefacts with any item that could potentially cause damage is not allowed, e.g umbrella, walking stick

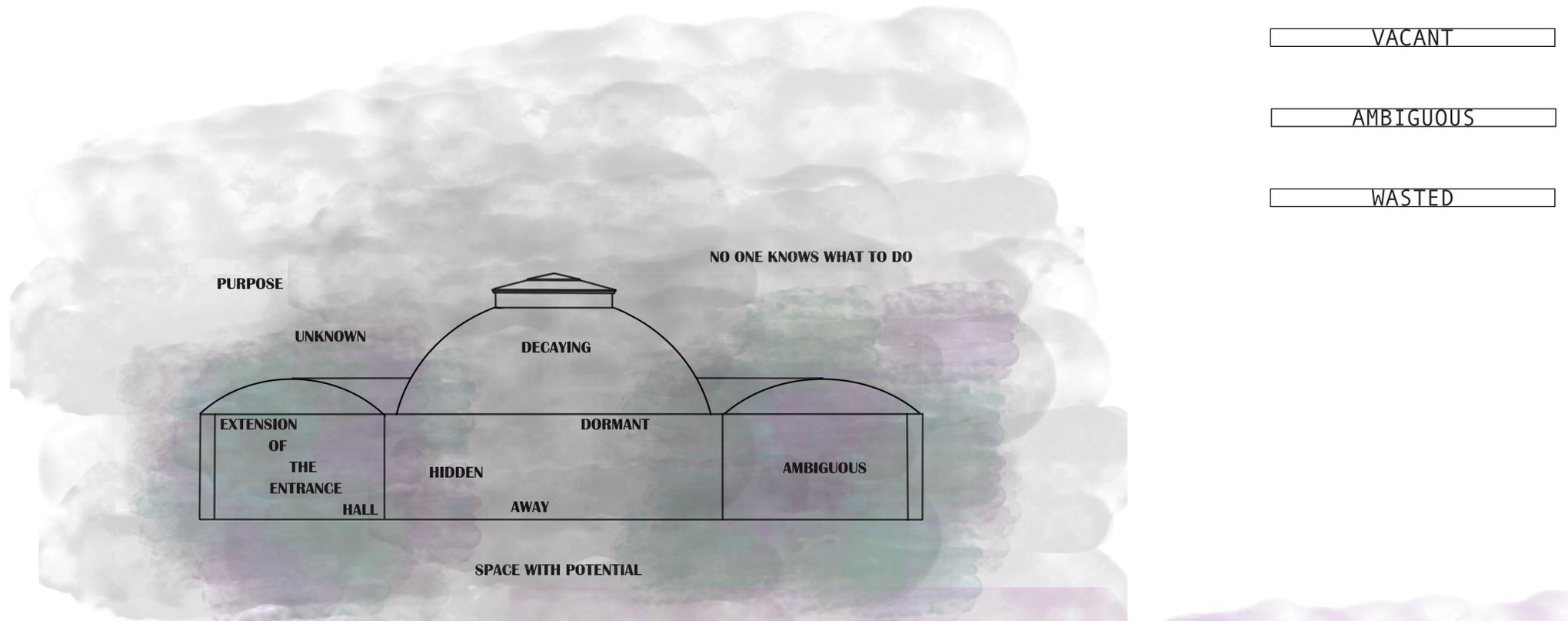
-Photography is restricted so the artefacts are not damaged by flash photography

- There is one entrance and one exit to the museum unless you are part of a tour group, they have a separate entrance so they can meet with the tour guide.

-There is a structured way to move through the museum that must be followed.

-The majority of the artefacts are kept in cabinets or behind glass to prevent visitors from getting too close and potentially causing damage.

There are a few spaces exempt from some of the rules above, the Great Court being one of them. There is less enforcement to be quiet in this space as it has become the inbetween space for the museum, it has no specific purpose it is just an area for visitors to pass through.



WHAT IS THE SPACE NOW?

VACANT

AMBIGUOUS

WASTED

WHAT WILL THE SPACE BECOME?

CELEBRATION

RESPECT

MEANING

WHAT DOES THE SPACE NEED?

EXCITEMENT

OPPORTUNITY

EDUCATION

HOW WILL THE SPACE CHANGE?

MULTIUSE

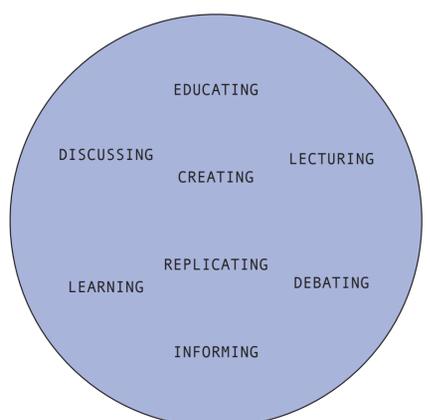
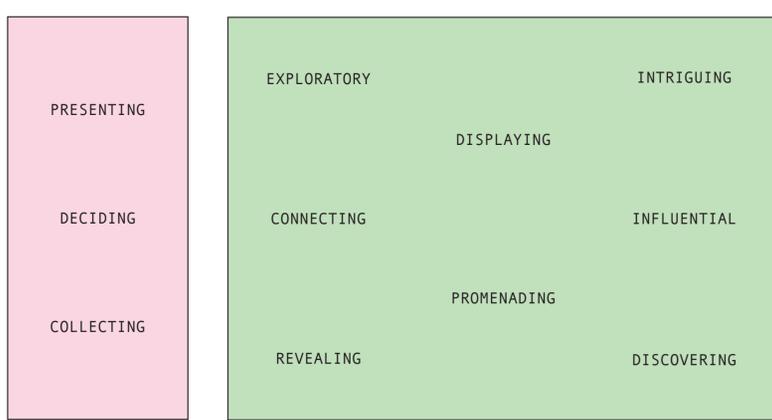
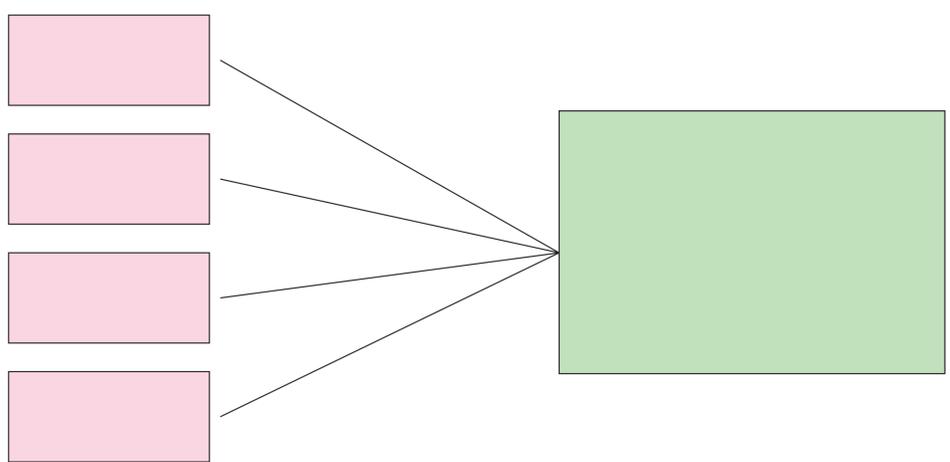
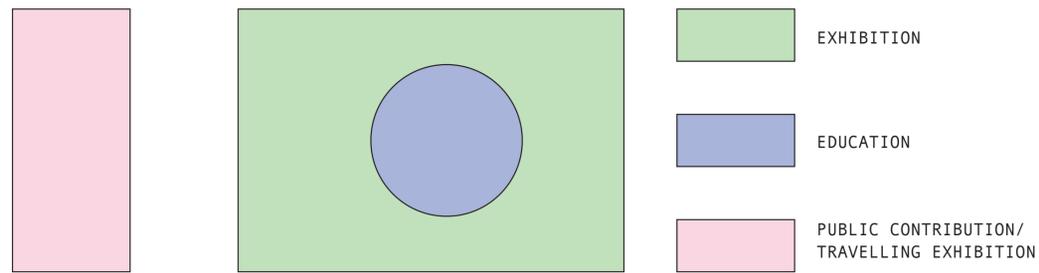
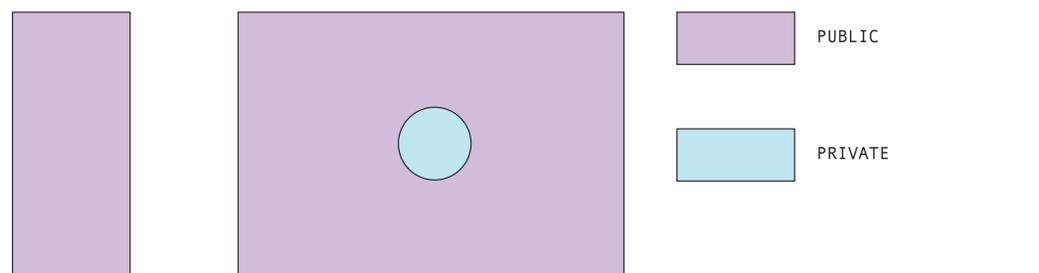
ADJUSTABLE

EXPLORATORY

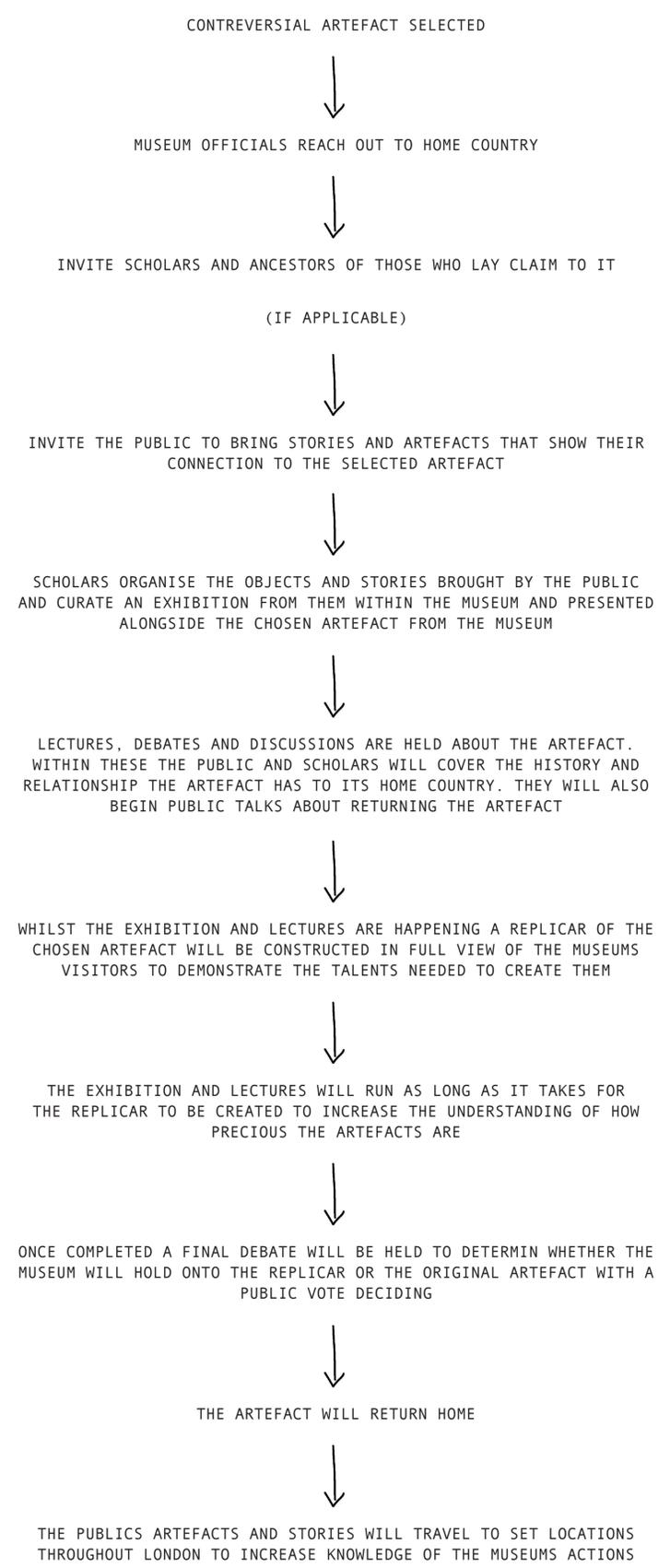


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MASTER PLAN



PROGRAMME



PROPOSED USE

Celebration Space:

- Organised between the British Museum and a selected country/ area the artefacts are from.
- Curated only by the team from the same country as the artefacts.
- Potential for performances of traditional dances/ancestral rituals that the curators wish to convey to the visitors.
- A celebration of the culture on display.

Teaching Space

- Guest speakers from the country.
- Decendants from those who once owned some of the artefacts come to tell the stories as they heard them passed down to them.
- Group discussions for small parties/school groups.

VISUALISING
THE SPACE

