

# Biggin Hill Memorial Museum

## Frequently Asked Questions

September 2017

Questions about the museum project
<b>What is the purpose of the Biggin Hill Memorial Museum project?</b>
<p>The Biggin Hill Memorial Museum will tell the story of Britain's most famous fighter station, in particular its role during the Second World War; and provide a sustainable future for St. George's Chapel of Remembrance, built at Winston Churchill's instigation in 1951.</p> <p>The Museum will fulfil a longstanding wish to honour those who served there and the community that supported them. For the first time everything is in place to bring this wish to fruition – funding, land ownership, planning permission and a dedicated team.</p>
<b>What is happening at the moment?</b>
<p>The Chapel closed on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017, and building work commenced on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The building and conservation work, and the installation of the exhibitions, will take just over a year to complete.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the site will reopen in November 2018, to commemorate 100 years after the end of the First World War, and be part of the RAF 100 celebrations. During the site closure period there will be special opening days of the Chapel and garden. To find out when these are visit the website for updates <a href="http://www.bhmm.org.uk">www.bhmm.org.uk</a></p>
<b>Who is the Biggin Hill Memorial Museum Trust?</b>
<p>The Trust will be the site's governing body, and will take ownership of the site from Bromley Council in November 2018 when the new museum opens.</p> <p>The <b>objectives</b> of the charitable Trust are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To advance the education of the public by maintaining St. George's Chapel of Remembrance, and establishing and maintaining an associated museum exhibiting the story of World War II and the Battle of Britain, and</li><li>2. To preserve, for the benefit of the nation, St George's Chapel of Remembrance, in memory of those who served in the royal air force in World War II and for historic interest.</li></ol> <p>The Trust's <b>vision</b> is: Biggin Hill; inspiring generations, remembering the Few and honouring the Many.</p> <p>The Trust's <b>mission</b> is: Protecting, gathering and making known the stories of Biggin Hill and communicating its significant role in shaping the modern world.</p> <p>The Trust is made up of a group of Trustees who live locally and have a range of skills and experience</p>

to successfully govern the new museum. The Trust's patron is Randolph Churchill, Sir Winston Churchill's great-grandson.

**How many visitors do you expect to receive?**

The business plan projects that the museum will receive 25,000 visits per annum.

**What will the museum be like?**

The Biggin Hill Memorial Museum will tell the story of Britain's most famous fighter station, from its role during the First World War to the building of St. George's Chapel of Remembrance in 1951. The exhibitions will focus on relatable and inspiring people stories that are unique to Biggin Hill, Churchill's 'Strongest Link', and present a contemporary perspective on remembrance, conflict and challenge.

The museum will be both a respectful and dynamic space that encourages visitors to think differently and more deeply about the experience of war at Biggin Hill, and enables them to enjoy a full visitor experience through the provision of facilities, including a café. The museum will be accessible to all and engage with younger generations, particularly through a school visits programme.

**Questions about the Chapel**

**What's going to happen to the Chapel?**

The Chapel will remain a place of worship and memorial. It will always be free to enter. The Grade II listed Chapel building will be freed of its 1990s extension and returned to its original 1950s silhouette.

Glass folding doors will separate the main Chapel space from St. George's Room, allowing the room to remain in use for the worshipping congregation during very busy services, and will feature an exhibition that draws on the Chapel's role as a memorial.

**Will worshipping continue?**

To enable the building and conservation works, the Chapel closed for normal weekly services in mid-September 2017. However it will be possible for visitors to access the Chapel during the afternoon on Remembrance Sunday 2017 and on other dates throughout the following year advertised on the website. When the Chapel reopens with the museum in November 2018, normal worshipping provision will resume, and special services (e.g. Battle of Britain Sunday) will continue to take place at the site.

**What access will visitors have to the Chapel post construction?**

The Chapel will be open for longer hours than it has been once the site reopens in November 2018, and access to the Chapel only will be free to visitors. St George's Room will be part of the exhibition space. However a glass screen will still enable visitors who don't pay to visit the museum to see this space and the stained glass windows.

**When will the Chapel close for building works to begin?**

The Chapel closed to general visitors for construction works on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017. The Battle of Britain service on Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2017 was the last public event at the Chapel before construction began. The site is now closed to general admission until the building works are complete.

However, there will be a number of special access days to the Chapel and Garden of Remembrance for local people during the works period, and these dates will be advertised on the website. Access for visitors from far afield with special connections to the site will be accommodated as far as possible.

**Will the funerals of veterans be accommodated during the closure period?**

Yes, the funerals of veterans will be accommodated during the closure period.

**What will happen to the artefacts currently displayed in the Chapel?**

Many of the artefacts will be stored and redisplayed in the Chapel and exhibitions when the site reopens in November 2018.

Other items, such as those stored in the annex to support services of worship, have been reviewed by the project team, Trust, Church and members of the Chapel community in recent months. Adequate storage provision is being made for the required resources currently stored in the 1990 annex, within the new site design.

**What will happen to St George's Room?**

St George's Room will continue to be a space for displaying museum / archive objects and will become a permanent exhibition space. The new glass screen between the Chapel vestry and St George's room is retractable. This will allow St George's Room to still be used for additional seating space on special occasions.

**Will the Garden of Remembrance be disturbed?**

The Garden of Remembrance is consecrated so cannot and will not be disturbed. Special access to the garden will be made available during the construction period and the garden will be reopened as normal to visitors when the site reopens in November 2018.

**What happens if I want to visit interred ashes of a friend or relative during the construction period?**

Special access can be arranged by the team for you, by emailing [hello@bhmm.org.uk](mailto:hello@bhmm.org.uk)

**Questions about the design**

**How was the design for the new museum building developed?**

The museum building design was developed with input from building conservation specialists Donald

Insall Associates, and from a detailed understanding of the historic significance of the site. Many other buildings were researched to inform the design.

The museum building has been designed to frame the Chapel in the style of a garden wall or cloisters. The building sits low in the landscape in deference to the Chapel, which rises up centrally within the site, allowing sunlight to flood the memorial garden. The handmade bricks, the detailing and the museum's proportions all draw on aspects of the Chapel design to enable it to sit quietly around the Chapel, a contemporary building complementing an historic one.

#### **What will happen to the Chapel landscape?**

New landscaping will improve access and new planting will enhance the site, with plants chosen for their connections to peace and remembrance. Some trees, mainly leylandii, are being removed to restore views and allow more sunlight into the garden, drawing in visitors and reconnecting the site with the airfield. The landscaping will also present the Chapel's dignified profile much more clearly from the main road.

#### **Do you have planning permission?**

Planning permission and listed building consent were granted in April 2017 and all planning conditions have now been signed off.

#### **Why is the annex being removed?**

The annex is not a public space and was built in 1990 to house a kitchen, office and storage area. The annex is being removed to restore the historic building back to its original cruciform design as fundraised for by Sir Winston Churchill in 1951. The removal of the 1990 addition from the Grade II listed chapel is supported by Historic England.

The Air Crew Association window housed in the annex, which is designed to be viewed from the outside, will be relocated on site. It is expected it will be placed within the memorial wall.

#### **Will there be enough parking spaces?**

Yes. Acting on a transport impact assessment, we are increasing the current facility of 21 parking spaces to 27 including two designated disabled spaces.

#### **Will there be a cafe?**

Yes, there will be a cafe. This will be free to enter so anyone can use it, not only visitors to the museum. The café has large windows and an external terrace with views over the airfield.

### **Questions about costs and finance**

#### **How much is the project costing?**

The value of the scheme is just over £5.3million.  
This includes the current capital (building) cost of under £1.4million, an endowment fund of £1.55million, the gallery build and fit out, and a museum activity plan.

**How much more do you need to fundraise for the build of the museum?**

We are still working to raise £650k to build the planned learning space and memorial wall.

**Who are the Architects and how much are they being paid?**

Robin Lee Architecture is the lead architect on the scheme and was appointed by Bromley Council. You can find out more about the architect's previous projects by visiting their website: <http://www.robinleearchitecture.com/>  
The architect's fee is £112,900.

**How is the £5.3m scheme being paid for?**

HLF Grant - £2million  
Local Authority - £410k  
Section 106 monies - £914k  
Libor fund grant - £2million

**How will the museum be sustained financially?**

A business plan has been developed, with expert advice from a number of different business planning and retail consultants, including a specialist from the HLF. The business plan conservatively projects the amount of income that will be brought in annually. This income will be supplemented by annual interest from the endowment fund, which will generate approximately £61k per annum.

**How much will it cost to visit the museum?**

Entry to the site will be free, but to access the exhibitions it will cost £7.50 for an adult with concessions for children etc.