“Up close to the Vikings”

“Encountering the museum’s magnificent contributions to our global heritage will be the experience of a lifetime.”

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1. Introduction................................................................................................................................. 2
2. Museum of the Viking Age ........................................................................................................... 2
   2.1. General information about the new museum facility ............................................................ 3
   2.2. Social objectives and impact targets ...................................................................................... 4
   2.3. Vision for the Museum of the Viking Age ............................................................................. 5
   2.4. Brand platform ....................................................................................................................... 7
   2.5. Identity as a research museum ............................................................................................ 8
   2.6. Collections ............................................................................................................................ 9
3. Visiting groups .............................................................................................................................. 10
   3.1. Main visitor categories ......................................................................................................... 11
   3.2. Target group break down ..................................................................................................... 11
4. The exhibition concept ................................................................................................................ 14
   4.1. Interpretation profile ............................................................................................................. 14
   4.2. Main narrative and dramaturgy: A changing world ............................................................. 18
   4.3. Varied experiences and dynamic exhibitions ......................................................................... 25
5. Design Strategy ............................................................................................................................. 33
   5.1. Design objectives ................................................................................................................... 33
   5.2. Design platform .................................................................................................................... 37
   5.3. Universal design – a museum for all .................................................................................... 42
1. **INTRODUCTION**

The master plan for exhibitions at the Museum of the Viking Age provides an overarching description of what the Museum of Cultural History (KHM) at the University of Oslo (UiO) aims to achieve through exhibitions and interpretive solutions that museum visitors can expect to experience in the museum exhibitions, the scope of the project’s ambitions and the process for implementation. The master plan summarises the project plans for exhibitions by establishing the conceptual foundations. This document, together with the appendices, will be used as the basis for the detailed design of the exhibitions and will form part of the requests for tender for the procurement of detailed design and production of the exhibitions. The document also forms the basis for further development of other interpretive solutions associated with the new museum.

2. **MUSEUM OF THE VIKING AGE**

The Museum of the Viking Age will be *world’s most important conveyor of knowledge about the Viking Age*. It will be a new type of research museum, where visitors can immerse themselves in the Viking Age or enjoy an outstanding aesthetic experience, or both. The museum will surprise and challenge visitors by providing new knowledge, new perspectives and new discoveries.

History helps give us a sense of identity and purpose: it provides roots to the past and understanding of the present, and it helps steer us how we can think about the future. The Museum of the Viking Age has the responsibility to convey Viking history and Viking cultural heritage to the people in the most accurate way possible. Upon visiting this museum, the story of the Vikings should linger on in the memory of the visitor as brought to them through science and research – a memory that may further inspire and spark interest and understanding of who we are, where we came from and why we are here.
2.1. General information about the new museum facility

The Museum of the Viking Age will be situated on Bygdøy, outside of Oslo, on the same property as the Viking Ship Museum has been since its opening in 1928. The new museum will be an extension to the old museum and become three times the size of the current Viking Ship Museum. In total, the new museum will be 13,100 m², of which approximately 9000 m² will be public areas, including approximately 5500 m² of exhibitions. The new museum will be a living museum with exhibitions that are regularly updated and which will convey the Viking Age in a way that will arouse curiosity and encourage exploration. The entire complex will be well equipped with various services designed to cater for a wide variety of individual visitors and groups, including shops, a café/restaurant, event facilities and a museum park as an integral part of the museum experience.

The Ministry of Education and Research has commissioned the state building agency, Statsbygg, to plan and build the new museum complex. AART architects are responsible for the design. The UiO (University of Oslo) will be responsible for ensuring that the construction project complies with the project objectives and it will have operational and administrative responsibility for the building after completion. KHM/UiO is responsible for the development and funding of public programmes, exhibitions, research activities, interpretive concepts and commercial programmes. Museum staff involved in conservation and collection management will collaborate with Statsbygg under a separate project designed to ensure the safe handling of the ships and artefacts during the construction process and the move to the new building.
The new museum represents a new generation of research museums aimed at creating outstanding educational visitor experiences by combining world-leading research, unique Viking Age collections and visionary architecture with absorbing, dynamic exhibitions and other public programmes. The Museum of the Viking age will be an attractive place to visit, but it will also be an attractive conveyor of the Viking Age in other ways; through excavation activities, partnerships with other museums and organisations and, not least, through digital media. The audience’s first meeting with the Museum of the Viking Age will be a holistic experience, regardless of what type of meeting takes place.

The current Viking Ship Museum is Norway’s most visited museum and saw 570,000 visitors in 2019. The Museum of the Viking Age is planned to have a capacity of 800,000 to 1,000,000 visitors a year. The capacity of the new museum will be restricted to a maximum of 2,000 people in the building at any one time for reasons of fire safety and escape routes.

The construction project received start-up funding in the 2020 state budget and the building is scheduled for completion during 2025. Exhibition equipment such as display cases, audio-visual and ICT equipment and lighting are part of the construction project.

2.2. Social objectives and impact targets

The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research defined the social objectives and impact targets, including indicators, in 2015.

Social Objectives

Ensuring that the population and future generations have access to knowledge relating to cultural history and the understanding of the Viking Age.

Impact targets

1. To preserve the collections for future generations in a proper and professional manner:
   - Little or no degradation of artefacts due to physical and chemical factors
   - Little or no risk of damage to artefacts due to accidents, fire, vandalism, vibrations, etc.

2. To be a world-leading Viking Age museum and research institution, incorporating broad national and international recognition of the production of new knowledge relating to the Viking Age:
   - International publications on the Viking Age at level 2 increased by 50% during the first five years of operation at the museum.
   - The number of visiting researchers in Viking Age studies increased by 50% during the first five years of operation.
3. To have relevant and attractive exhibitions and activities that can enable increased visitor numbers:
   - The total visitor figure will increase by 75% within five years of the launch of the new museum.
   - The number of school classes visiting the museum and taking part in an educational programme is to increase by 100% within five years of the launch of the new museum.
   - Exhibitions and other interpretive activities will be the subject of separate studies for at least five groups from international museums during each of the first five years following the launch of the new museum.

4. To have a structural design that sets out the framework for appropriate area use, logistics and procedures and promotes effective operation of all museum functions in terms of time and costs:
   - The floor plan should result in efficient visitor flow through the facility, whilst achieving a 75% increase in visitor numbers.
   - There should be an increase in visitor numbers during the off-season, from October to April, of 150% within five years of the launch of the new museum.
   - The technical structure of the installation will be designed in such a way that new and replacement elements can be integrated without requiring redevelopment for the first 15 years after opening.
   - Appropriate and robust materials must be chosen in order to avoid rebuilding, improvements or increases in the operating costs of the building during the first 15 years of its service life.

2.3. Vision for the Museum of the Viking Age
In 2017, the Museum of Cultural History developed a vision document that has guided the further development of exhibitions, interpretation and other programmes.

**What**
Museum of the Viking Age will be the world’s leading Viking Age museum. The Viking Age will be explored through new knowledge and outstanding experiences. The museum will surprise and challenge visitors by providing new knowledge, new perspectives and new discoveries. Encountering the museum’s magnificent contributions to our global heritage will be the experience of a lifetime.

**Why**
The Museum of Cultural History is home to the world’s foremost Viking Age collection. The large ship graves are unique and iconic. The collections are developed through excavations and new discoveries.
Research provides interesting knowledge and new perspectives that put local history into a global perspective. As part of the University of Oslo, the Museum of the Viking Age is a world-leading research community of the Viking Age.

How
Authentic, curious, playful, spectacular and evolving.

**Authentic**
The world’s largest Viking Age collection will be preserved and developed by the new museum. The exhibitions will disseminate the latest research and will create a place where the audience and researchers meet.

**Curious**
The new museum will ask the questions we have yet to find answers to and will seek out knowledge through untraditional and interdisciplinary research. The audience will gain an insight into ongoing research and cultural heritage protection. The museum will be inspired and challenged by engaged people and communities.

**Playful**
The new museum will experiment and recreate history in ways that encourage visitor participation. Accepted truths and notions will be put to the test.

**Spectacular**
The new museum will embrace the entire world of the Vikings in one building. Major narratives will be told in inspiring surroundings. Here, the best preserved Viking ship in the world can be experienced and the audience will be faced with unique discoveries spanning everyday life to world culture.

**Evolving**
The exhibitions at the new museum will change in line with new research and will seize the opportunities for development and create new experiences. New opportunities, variety and inspiration will be created through international partnerships.
2.4. Brand platform

In 2019, the Museum of the Viking Age project designed a brand platform in which the museum’s purpose, values, offer and vision were summarised using the following model. This provides an overall direction for the further development of the brand and public programmes at the new museum.

**Our offer – what we do**
Museum of the Viking Age will be world’s most important conveyer of knowledge about the Viking Age. The museum will offer exhibitions and activities based on the world’s largest Viking Age collection to everyone who wants to explore the world of the Vikings.

**Our values – how we do it**
Authentic – Curious – Play’ul – Spectacular - Evolving

**Our purpose – why we do it**
As a world-leading centre of research, the museum will ensure that people of today and future generation have access to knowledge relating to cultural history and the understanding of the Viking Age.

The desired position in the market is defined as: “Museum of the Viking Age will be world’s most important conveyer of knowledge about the Viking Age”.

To achieve this position, the museum must be visible, make its knowledge available and willingly share its resources with the outside world. The core narrative that is desired to permeate both internal and external communication is: “Museum of the Viking Age is a generous host on the journey to the magnificent world of the Vikings”.

In 2020, a process was carried out at the University of Oslo to clarify the brand hierarchy for connection between the University and its museums. During the same period, new logos have been developed for the University Museums and the name of the new museum has been decided; “Vikingtidsmuseet” in Norwegian and “Museum of the Viking Age” in English. The brand strategy and visual profile will be developed in 2021.
As a general rule, the logotype should be used together with "Part of the University of Oslo" when there is physical space or when it gives extra credibility to be connected to the mother brand.

2.5. **Identity as a research museum**

The Museum of the Viking Age is a museum that conducts research and where research is visible and guides the way in which the museum will meet the public. Exhibitions are completed, developed and changed through research and the Viking Age is put into a global context. Research questions are formulated through interactions with an international and engaged audience and research community, and traditional thinking and accepted truths are often challenged. Answers are found through untraditional, interdisciplinary research and the museum will become a place where audiences, researchers and artefacts from all over the world meet. Both research processes and new research results will be continuously reflected in the exhibitions and the museum’s other interpretive interfaces. The vision for the Museum of the Viking Age encompasses several dimensions for how dissemination through exhibitions harmonise with the dissemination of research-driven knowledge and how research develops in dialogue with the audience. The following five main objectives and underlying strategies provide guidance on how to achieve this.

**Objective 1: Museum of the Viking Age will surprise and challenge through research-based knowledge, new perspectives and discoveries.**

Strategies:
- Active use of research questions and research results throughout the exhibition.
- Show the audience how researchers work to uncover knowledge relating to the Viking Age.
- Active use of research to confirm or disprove the audience’ relationship to conceptions from popular culture.

**Objective 2: Museum of the Viking Age will be adapted for meetings and communication between researchers and the audience.**

Strategies:
- Facilitate researchers being visible “live” in the museum for dialogue with the audience; through workshop and laboratory programmes and through interpretive programmes in exhibitions and the auditorium.
- Facilitate dissemination of ongoing excavation work.
- Use of digital tools in exhibitions featuring pre-programmed content relating to research.

Objective 3: Cultural interaction at the Museum of the Viking Age will nourish research on the Viking Age.
Strategies:
- Use the audience as a resource for understanding what they want to know.
- Facilitate the audience being able to share their knowledge with researchers.
- Visiting researchers at the Museum of the Viking Age will be able to experience their own areas of interest in new contexts and will get new ideas for their own work.

Objective 4: New research results will contribute towards change and renewal of the exhibitions.
Strategies:
- Facilitate the possibility of replacing and/or changing the content of exhibitions.
- Create separate zones for changing stories and presentations of research projects.

Objective 5: Museum of the Viking Age will be attractive to visiting researchers and PhD students as an arena for the dissemination of knowledge.
Strategies:
- Active networking with research communities and universities.
- Offer opportunities for researchers and PhD students to engage with the public.
- Facilitate a positive environment for collaboration, both socially and academically.

2.6. Collections
The current Viking Ship Museum is home to Norway’s most spectacular collection of cultural heritage. There are around 300 artefacts on display in the current Viking Ship Museum. This includes three well-preserved Viking ships, three sledges, a wagon and other unique burial gifts from the four ship graves (the Oseberg, Gokstad, Tune and Borre graves). These artefacts will also be on display at the new museum, together with a large number of other artefacts that are currently on display at the Historical Museum or located in the Museums of Cultural History’s storage facilities. The other artefacts include a unique Viking helmet, the largest hoard of gold treasure ever found in Scandinavia from the Viking Age, rune stones, silver treasure, tools, a large amount of weapons, etc. The ongoing development of the exhibitions will determine how many artefacts will be displayed in the end, but early estimates anticipate about 4500 artefacts.
3. VISITING GROUPS

Museum of the Viking Age will be a magnet for visitors thanks to its unique artefacts, exciting experiences and professional strengths as a research museum. Museum visitors will be a very mixed group with a high proportion of foreign visitors (the anticipated percentage is 75% to 85%).
3.1. Main visitor categories
Visitors are generally divided into three main categories:

- Individual visitors
- Tourist groups
- School groups

**Individual visitors (1-6 people)**
This category includes tourists who have chosen Museum of the Viking Age as an attraction on their visit, locals, families and professionals, as well as others who are seeking more knowledge and exciting experiences. This category represents the majority of people who will visit the new museum (approximately 70-75%). The majority will be seeking social experiences, activities and the opportunity to immerse themselves. The status of knowledge of visitors in this category is extremely diverse. The visitors will utilise all interpretive interfaces at the museum and generally have a relatively large amount of time set aside for their visit.

**Tourist groups (up to 40 people)**
A large proportion of visitors (approximately 20-30%) visit as part of organised groups. Groups have limited time and want to see the museum’s highlights, especially the Viking ships. Accommodations are being made to ensure that groups with a guide can gather at selected highlights. This visitor category is looking for special experiences they can share. They will enjoy outstanding visual experiences, with introductions to the unique artefacts and excellent photo opportunities. They will learn a little about the Viking Age while generally enjoying an important attraction and a great atmosphere. To satisfy this visitor group, it will be crucial to have separate programmes in place for guides, both in terms of the materials used during tours and in terms of training programmes.

**School groups (up to 30 people)**
School groups consist of schoolchildren in different age groups and their teachers. The groups will make use of all exhibition areas, as well as the teaching and activity areas at the museum. Museum of the Viking Age will be a venue for experiences, learning and growth. Educational programmes with scientific and engaging content about Vikings in cultural history will be presented with a focus on scientific methods, source criticism and how knowledge is generated. This includes programmes that use the exhibitions, as well as activities in separate areas for school activities, as well as outdoors. Activity-based learning will be emphasised and the programmes will be adapted to the level of the pupils. It is estimated that a total of 25-30,000 pupils will visit the museum each year as part of school groups.

3.2. Target group break down
The three main visitor categories shown above include people with highly different motivations for visiting the museum. In order to best facilitate world class museum visits for all visitors, the following break-down of the target groups considers different visitor motivation for visiting Museum of the Viking Age. The focus on motivation puts the visitor at the centre and also highlights the visitor's point of view so that exhibitions can
be adapted to visitors through a conscious choice of experience and learning goals. Common to all groups is the need to make sure they receive an excellent and comprehensive visitor experience. The museum park, museum shop and museum café & restaurant must all contribute to positive experiences that stimulate and engage the visitors.

The target group break down for Museum of the Viking Age is inspired by the research of John H. Falk (2009: Identity and the museum visitor experience) and his definition on different museum visitor categories based on an analysis of visitor motivations (The explorer, The facilitator, The experience seeker, Professionals/Hobbyists and Rechargers).

Five main target groups have been identified for Museum of the Viking Age with examples of visiting types. The categories are assembled because they have the same main underlying motivation. The target groups have been assigned names that indicate the motivation, interest or other key characteristics that can generate interest in visiting/being in contact with Museum of the Viking Age. The target group categories are placed on the diagram below to illustrate what is assumed the main motivation of each target group when it comes to experiencing the museum. Most target groups will have elements of several types of needs and motivations and these may change during the museum visit.
**Explorers** - Explorers can experience the unique and magnificent world heritage of the Viking Age at Museum of the Viking Age. This is the currently most important commercial target group for the existing Viking Ship Museum measured by volume and turnover. Explorers mostly visit during the summer season and are mainly comprised of foreign tourists. There are also many Norwegians in this target group, especially first time visitors, who want to see and experience the unique collections, the Viking ships and the world heritage. Museum of the Viking Age is an attraction many people want to see when visiting Norway. The Viking Age, Viking ships and the unique collection of artefacts from the Viking Age are considered a key attraction by many, and for some it is the sole purpose of their visit to Norway and Oslo. Individual explorers and facilitators differ from the other groups as they feature a higher proportion of younger people. They are particularly important as they are active on social media and contribute to inspire others to visit the museum.

**Viking enthusiasts** – Museum of the Viking Age provides Viking enthusiasts with many opportunities to meet like-minded people and experts, and to immerse themselves in the Viking Age. The common denominator of this target group is that the people are knowledgeable and passionate about their interest or hobby. They closely monitor their field and want to be able to access cutting-edge expertise and the latest in research. They want to be close to the action and to be present where it happens. They are driven by their own interests and approach the Viking Age in very different ways. Some already have a close relationship with the museum, the research and the collections. Others have developed an interest in the Viking Age through metal detecting, gaming, films, TV series or music. Here, Museum of the Viking Age has excellent opportunities to make its research, its narratives and its collection relevant and attractive to this large and growing target group.

**Inspiration and reflection** – Museum of the Viking Age is an inspiring oasis with its stunning architecture, beautiful artefacts, impressive cultural treasures and handicrafts from the Viking Age. The common denominator for this target group is that they can be inspired to visit the museum to practice a hobby or to disconnect from the world around them. The Viking Age is not necessarily a topic they are interested in per se, but the museum can be a brilliant venue and framework for cultivating their own interests, such as painting, crafts, photography etc. The impressive buildings, ships, artefacts, the park area and the sacred atmosphere surrounding the museum can also make it favoured place to wind down, and make time and space to reflect.

**Community and belonging** – Museum of the Viking Age has exciting activity programmes and is a pleasant place to meet, as well as a popular destination for the entire Oslo region. This target group is looking for social experiences, a sense of community and belonging. They are looking for shared memories they can cherish for a long time and experiences that allow them to cultivate and strengthen the bonds of community and friendship. They seek experiences that engage the entire family and want to visit events that are fun to experience together. They participate together in activities about Viking topics and enjoy exciting Viking food and beer, or find shared interests in captivating stories from a fascinating era. A final variation of this type are those who are especially interested in finding a sense of belonging by exploring their roots, identity and history. They want to understand more of their own historical heritage.
Schools and teaching - Museum of the Viking Age brings the Viking Age to life. Here you can learn, immerse yourself in, and become fascinated by, the magnificent world of the Vikings. The facilities are well suited to provide educational programmes within several subject areas in addition to teaching the history of the Viking Age, such as art and crafts, gymnastics, mathematics, sciences, etc.

Teachers are the most important target group when it comes to encouraging more school classes to take advantage of the programmes at Museum of the Viking Age. Many teachers come back year after year with their classes and use the museum visits as an integral part of teaching. Museum of the Viking Age programmes are and will continue to be free of charge to schools. Schools have limited budgets and transport costs associated with museum visits can be prohibitive. The most important target group for generating visits to the museum itself are therefore the teachers at schools that have easy access to the museum using public transport. Other schools will be reached mainly through digital channels and online tours.

For a full overview on the visitor types within the different target groups, see appendix 2.

4. THE EXHIBITION CONCEPT

The exhibition concept provides an overview of what the museum strives to convey to the visitors. The conceptual foundations for the exhibitions form the basis for the further detailing of the exhibition design and audience programmes, and for the development of other interpretive solutions and activities.

4.1. Interpretation profile

Vikings speak to the imagination and curiosity of many people around the world. This museum and its collections serve this interest for discovering the Vikings and their history. The visitor can encounter, absorb, and reflect on this fascinating history through manifold displays, signature objects, and multi-sensorial experiences. To this end, the museum provides a solid research-based foundation for engaging the Viking cultural heritage. Beyond the museum, this heritage and history is very much alive in modern day culture, in music, arts, film, books, theatrical plays, merchandise and more. The museum provides first hand encounters with this rich material and immaterial cultural heritage, which is presented with a broad variety of media and based on the latest scientific findings and scholarly knowledge.

The role of interpretation at the museum is to convey knowledge and understanding of the Viking Age to a broad audience. The museum also aims to place our own time in a wider framework and to encourage our visitors to reflect on how cultural expressions occur over time and are passed down through generations. The exhibition concept will indicate directions to be taken when designing for audience interaction with the exhibitions, and can also be used as the basis for the development of interpretive programmes, activities and events.
The interpretation principles will help to ensure for a dynamic museum, by providing opportunities to change exhibitions and interpretive solutions.

Interpretation types and strategies are generally organised based on the structure of the building. The most playful activities take place within the museum park. Inside the building, interpretation is mainly organised through exhibition presentations and scenographic installations in the outer parts of the exhibition area. Towards the heart of the building, the experiences become more interactive and exploratory. In the arcade rooms the visitors can immerse themselves and explore themed exhibitions. In the Research Workshop Area there will be interactive and hands-on exhibits, while most of the experimentation takes place in the laboratories and the central inner courtyard.

The museum will develop content and interpretive solutions in collaboration with experts from a variety of academic fields to ensure a broad approach within natural sciences, humanities and social sciences. The goal is to provide new perspectives and interesting insights for researchers and audiences alike. Narratives from the exhibitions will also be explored in other interpretive interfaces, ranging from online solutions, social media and special programs for a range of museum partners. The Viking Age stories from the exhibitions will also influence product development for the museum shop, event programmes and the menu at the café & restaurant.

Interpretation principles of the exhibitions

The goal of the exhibitions at the Museum of the Viking Age is to create visitor experiences based on a close bond between artefacts, research, heritage management and the dissemination of knowledge in an attractive environment where research and dissemination interact.

Interpretation based on discoveries and research helps create a culture of curiosity. This will provide visitors with an opportunity to explore the Viking Age by getting close up to new discoveries and perspectives, and that they feel surprised and challenged by new knowledge. A visit to the Museum of the Viking Age will encourage critical thinking. Meetings with the museum artefacts and stories help strengthen the awareness that the present is founded on and formed by history. A visit to the Museum of the Viking Age should provide insights into history, as well as our own time, and inspire our visitors to question “truths”, including the narratives told at the museum.

Six interpretation principles have been developed to create the best possible interaction between the museum’s collections, research and the visitors:
1 - An authentic museum
- Visitors get close to artefacts and narratives.
- Exhibitions are based on authentic artefacts.
- Key artefacts create a clear path of navigation through the exhibitions.
- The way the artefacts are exhibited facilitate profound experiences, social interaction between visitors, as well the possibility of more quiet reflection.

2 - A museum for everyone
- Visitors will feel that they are in control of their own visit to the museum. They will understand the core message of the exhibitions at a level that matches their interests, ability, knowledge and available time.
- Visitors will be able to choose how to interact with the exhibitions.
- Visitors will be able to intuitively grasp the main stories, but also understand that they can choose to go deeper within the various themes.

3 - A research museum
- Visitors can experience multi-fascited research through the exhibitions and interpretive solutions.
- The scene is set for active use of research questions and research results.
- Research will be visible in exhibitions and visitors will be able to engage with interpreters and meet the researchers at the workshops and laboratories.
- Research-based events, lectures and other programs are offered in the auditorium, inner courtyard and the museum park.

4 - An adventurous museum
- Artefacts, scenography, interactions and audio-visual aids will pique the curiosity of visitors and tempt them to explore and make their own discoveries.
- A range of interpretive programmes designed to generate involvement, enthusiasm, and curiosity will offer exciting challenges to the visitors.
- The research area facilitate experiences that provide room for exploration and new perspectives. The visitors are encouraged to participate in meetings with researchers and interpreters, as well as through digital tools and interactive solutions.
- In the large halls surrounding the ships, there is a particular focus on the emotional and the spectacular. Here, visitors will experience unique artefacts and good digital installations.

5 - A varied museum
- The content of the exhibitions will be varied and adapted to suit different types of visits. Different types of interpretive solutions will be used to generate engagement.
- The exhibitions will be changed and developed over time.
- An active and varied temporary exhibition programme is part of the concept.
The laboratory area, courtyard and museum park can be used for a varied programme of activities adapted to showcase new research and current themes.

The auditorium can be used for lectures, film screenings and debates – using the museum’s own resources and in collaboration with various partners.

6 - An educational museum

- The museum will offer educational programmes for lifelong learning.
- Interpretation strategies place particular emphasis on activities and experiences adapted for families with children.
- The programmes offered at the museum will interact with school curricula, but can also offer other approaches, including knowledge about culture and society, chronology and use of sources.
- The museum is a research museum and the museum experts will explore history and create new knowledge together with the audience.
- The visitors are invited to get up close and personal with research; not just through the presentation of results, but also through exploring the research process itself.

The role of the artefacts

The artefacts will play a key part in experiences and learning at the museum. They have a central and active role to play in the narratives about people of the past, and provide a link between the past and the present. The artefacts displayed in the Museum of the Viking Age are genuine artefacts from the Viking Age. They generate fascination by themselves and motivate visitors to explore their stories and to look for insights into the research process, which provides us with knowledge. However, some artefacts are also pieces of art and their aesthetic value is an experience in itself.

The artefacts are exhibited in various ways; sometimes alone to highlight uniqueness, other times in relationship with others; for example many similar artefacts may be shown together to emphasise amounts or volume, or as a collection of objects belonging to particular context or story, such as a finds from graves or settlements.

The largest and most spectacular artefacts will play a key role in interaction with the architecture of the building, and the placement of these artefacts is important for creating a natural flow for audiences as they pass through the museum. The exhibition design will actively work to allow the audience to “get close to” both the artefact and the associated research. It will also help to bring the artefact to life and help the visitors to understand the context of the artefact.

All artefacts exhibited at the Museum of the Viking Age originate from the Viking Age. If artefacts from other eras are exhibited, this is done for a specific reason, for example to show the influence the Viking Age has had in other eras.
4.2. Main narrative and dramaturgy: A changing world

The Museum of the Viking Age will provide narratives about culture and society in Scandinavia, as well as Scandinavian overseas activities during the Viking Age. Based on remains from the Viking Age, research can tell us about everyday life, ideas and attitudes, kings and wars and about the transformation of Scandinavia from a host of tribes to three kingdoms. The history of the Vikings is not just one; the phenomenon and period are too varied, complex and dynamic for that. The Museum of the Viking Age will tell narratives that address the entire Viking Age and will show how the Scandinavian world evolved during this period. The main narrative of the exhibitions is “A changing world”. This larger narrative will be told through smaller narratives within a dramaturgy in which rhythm, mood, as well as emotional and rational components contribute to generating curiosity and engagement on the part of visitors. See Appendix 3 for further information about the main narrative. The academic basis for the development of the exhibitions and other dissemination solutions has been described in the synopsis. See Appendix 4 for a complete overview of the synopsis for the academic content.

Narrative technique and storyline

The structural techniques used to involve the audience in the main narrative “A changing world” are narrative techniques that set the framework for the specification of the exhibition development, as well as a storyline to organise the contents.

The museum’s interpretational approach is based around the narrative technique: “Close up”. The “Close up” narrative technique guides how the content is facilitated for visitors and is used to create positive and educational visitor experiences. The technique also expresses the approach used by the museum’s researchers when they look at the Viking Age. Research brings us closer to the past; it reduces the distance and makes the Viking Age understandable and meaningful to the people of the present.

“Close up” invites visitors to engage, intellectually and emotionally. We can recognise ourselves in the shared human experience and we can be surprised and amazed by the strange and unexpected. “Close up” includes specific events and everyday life, from a winter evening in a smoky, turfed farmhouse in Greenland, or a light summer night making iron high up in Hardangervidda.

“Up close” focuses on authenticity: Come up close and look, it’s real! “Close up” also gives us the opportunity to highlight the details and the uniqueness of small artefacts and objects and lets us focus on the best aspects of our collections: the organic artefacts and fine metalwork.

The histories we share with our visitors are told from a distance. It is not we “are” but we see. We observe from the present while also getting up close. Science is also part of this. We place the Viking Age under the microscope. We study the molecules, every rune, every coin. We get under the skin, all the way down to the DNA, but we do it from the outside and with an analytical distance anchored in the present. At the same time, we get closer by using our human insights and experiences to imagine the lives and societies of the
past. We use exhibitions to invite the audience to experience, feel and wonder about how the world gave meaning to different people during the Viking Age and why they acted the way they did.

The exhibition storylines provide a simple and orderly structure for the progress of the audience experience and the organisation of exhibition interfaces. The overall structure of the museum exhibition area is split into eight sections that are, in turn, divided into approximately 30 “experience areas”, described in the experience concepts in appendix 6. In addition, there are two more sections for interpretation and activities, “Education and activity area” and “Outdoor areas”.

Sections and experience areas
Section 1: Welcome
This introduction to the Viking Age includes a spectacular exhibition about where and when the world of the Vikings took place, as well as an introduction to research as a premise for the knowledge we develop about the Viking Age. This section also spans the entire foyer area and the lecture hall.

Section 2: Around the year 800 – A different world
The Oseberg discovery forms the basis for narratives about a society with a world view framed by Norse mythology. It is about people living in a different world, stories which will awaken the visitor’s curiosity and open for reflection.

Section 3: Around the year 900 – The long journey
The Gokstad burial forms the basis for narratives about how different regions fought for honour and resources, the central position held by ships in society and Viking encounters with the outside world.

Section 4: Around the year 1000 – A new order
The final part of the exhibition looks at stories about how the three Scandinavian countries emerged, how new towns were established and how Christianity gained a foothold and the church rose to power in society. Major changes took place during this period of upheaval, greatly affecting the lives of ordinary people. Visitors are challenged to reflect on why the Viking Age came to an end and how knowledge about history influences our views on the present and the future.

Section 5: Research workshop & Cinema
Laboratories and research workshops where visitors can get close to the research and participate in the work to better understand the Viking Age.

Section 6: Temporary exhibition area
Special exhibitions play an important role in addressing contemporary topics, contributing a voice to ongoing social debates, capturing new exhibition trends and/or themes in popular culture.
Section 7: Education and activity area
This area is intended for use in museum education for children and teenagers. Here young visitors can experience immersive multimedia presentations and take part in craft and hands-on activities.

Section 8: Outdoor areas
The outdoor areas is divided in two main activity zones. The museum park is open and free to the public, and offers an open and playful approach to the Viking universe. The inner courtyard is an approx. 620 square meter area in the heart of the building where visitors can “get close” to the world of archaeology and archaeological methods, such as excavations and experimental archaeology.
Dramaturgy

The dramaturgy of the Museum of the Viking Age will help ensure that the exhibitions evoke curiosity and engagement on the part of visitors while also ensuring that the learning and experience objectives are met. The dramaturgical curve alternates between highlights and breaks to maintain the interest of the visitors. This creates a good rhythm and a balance of both academic content, exhibition installations and interactive engagement. The dramaturgy makes use of several techniques and appeals to visitors’ hearts as well as their minds.

The dramaturgy of the exhibitions supports the main narrative “A changing world” as visitors experience a chronological narrative on an overall level from the start of the Viking Age to the end of this era. They also experience changes that took place in Scandinavia, the following being the most prominent and understandable to all visitors:

- The Christianisation of society
- The establishment of the three Nordic kingdoms
- The emergence of the first towns
- The rise of the monetary system
Visitors will experience the story of a changing world, that will hopefully also contribute to the visitors understanding of the changes in their own world. The new knowledge gained about the Viking Age will help broaden their understanding of what the past means for the present. The visitors will also interact with research. They experience the question posed and methods used by researchers to uncover knowledge about the Viking Age. They gain access to research results that confirm or reject beliefs and representations from popular culture. The timeline concept will have a special role in contributing to strengthen the dramaturgy around the experience of a changing world, and to being a structuring element giving a visual indication on the overall chronological narrative.

The three ships (Oseberg, Gokstad and Tune) will naturally play an important role in the dramaturgy of the exhibition. As a parallel storyline to the one following the development in the Viking Age, there is another story focusing on the life span of a ship. This story is divided into four main parts; The shipbuilding, the sailing ship, the ship burial and the excavation of a ship. This is a timeline in itself going the opposite way, where the visitors meet the excavation in the introductory exhibition, the Oseberg ship as a burial ship, the Gokstad ship as the sailing ship and Tune in the story about ship making. Even though each ship has its own main role in the story, it should be clear that they all have had the four different roles during the ships life span.

The dramaturgical structure begins with an introductory exhibition in which the Viking Age is framed through time and space, and where the visitors are met by the tantalising experience of the discovery of the Oseberg grave in 1903. Not only a unique grave from the Viking Age, it also serves as an image of what the earth conceals, a treasure trove of archaeological artefacts and knowledge about people of a bygone era. Research is introduced through glimpse into different research methods and the audience are challenged by the big question; why are we conducting research on the Viking Age?
Visitors are then transported to the early Viking Age and the staging of a spectacular event; a Viking Age burial in the year 834. From this point, visitors can take a number of paths through different themes in the experience areas. The dramaturgical development is now up to the visitors who can chose the order in which they want to experience the exhibitions and in what depth and level. The experience of the Viking Age develops through narratives about beliefs and cosmology, trade and networks, violence and power, everyday life, raids and discoveries, etc. in line with the visitor’s own interests and choice of involvement. Non-linear narratives can be experienced within an overriding linear framework through the sections “Around the year 800 – a different world,” “Around the year 900 – the long journey” and “Around the year 1000 – a new order”.

When the visitors reach the end of the exhibition, they find themselves at the end of the Viking age. The main iconic object in this part is the Dynna stone. This memorial stone with its runic inscription brings the end of the Viking Age to life, with its layers that shed light on religion, rituals, social structure and human behaviour.
The Dynna stone plays the leading role in the final scene of the exhibitions. Illustration: Atelier Brückner

The stories told and the objects shown in this part all represent structures of power and key changes in society, such as the establishment of the church, the king and towns, but they also represent major changes affecting the lives of ordinary people. The main narrative about “A changing world” is summarised within and around these structures. Research continues as a common thread, showing that the results of research and knowledge continue to change our views on the Viking Age. The exhibition concludes in an epilogue in which we explore why the Viking Age came to an end. In the final part, other big questions are highlighted, such as: Do we now have all the knowledge we need about the Viking Age? How does knowledge about history change our views about the present?

**Audience flow**

Audience flow through the museum is, at an overall level, circular. Most visitors enter through the main entrance of the existing building, receive practical information about the museum and an introduction to the exhibitions before entering the new building, where they experience exhibitions on two levels by following the arched shape of the building. They leave the exhibitions, pass the café & restaurant, pass through the museum shop and exit through the same door as they arrived.

Within the linear structure, there are numerous non-linear possibilities with a “free flow” approach in which visitors choose exhibitions, activities, film screenings and other programmes based on their interests, available time and desired level of immersion in content.
Visitors with limited time, and only interested in the spectacular experiences and the overall content, will have the opportunity to pass through the museum and experience a fully-fledged visit in 20-30 minutes. Those with a greater interest in the Viking Age and a desire to take part in activities together with others, can spend a whole day at the museum. The exhibitions will offer space for up to eight groups of 40 people to be guided simultaneously.

4.3. Varied experiences and dynamic exhibitions

The museum offers a varied experience for visitors based on three main concepts; 1) The highlight track, 2) Themed exhibitions, in-depth areas, laboratories and activity areas and 3) Temporary exhibitions. Depending on which part of the exhibition visitors seek out, they will experience a variety of interpretive solutions, using different methods and techniques. Flexibility is ensured in the structure and exhibitions, allowing us to create a dynamic museum where exhibitions change over time, based on new knowledge, new exhibition methods and the prevailing social climate.

The highlight track

The highlight track provides a path through the exhibition, highlighting a small number of unique artefacts and has been devised for tourist groups and other visitors with limited time available for their visit (approximately 20-30 minutes). The artefacts have been selected to fascinate and to provide a short version of the main narrative of the exhibition. The highlight track is structured chronologically and will be one of
the most permanent components of the exhibition, with little change of artefacts. The highlight track winds its way through the entire exhibition and, visitors following this trail, will feel that they have had a full museum experience, even if they spend a relatively short period of time on their visit.
Example of a highlight display: The Langeid Sword with context. Ill: Atelier Brückner

**Themed exhibitions, in-depth areas, cinema, laboratories and activity areas**

Visitors with more time available will also experience the key artefacts of the highlight track, but in the context of thematic exhibitions. Themed exhibition areas are located both in the open areas upstairs and downstairs, in separate rooms upstairs (the arcade rooms) and within the large ship halls on the lower level.

From the arcade room: “The weavers”. The narrative and design of the fragile Oseberg textiles animated on the wall.
Illustration: Atelier Brückner
On the lower level in the centre of the museum there is a small cinema, and towards the inner courtyard, you will find the Research Workshop with its laboratories and areas for exploration and experimentation. This area facilitates high levels of activity and a dynamic interpretive focus that will be constantly evolving. The laboratories will be able to operate with various levels of access for the audience (completely open, access to information and completely closed). Flexible solutions will be key in these areas, where visitors will get to know more about ongoing research and basic methods. The laboratory area will be filled with life and energy, fulfilling our vision and ambition of being a research museum that surprises and challenges with new knowledge and perspectives. Here answers will be sought to the questions concerning what it was like to live in the Viking Age and what this might mean for our own lives. Knowledge and perspectives and from the humanities and natural sciences will be combined, with a focus on use of available sources and source criticism.

In the Research Workshop area, visitors can gain insights into how the museum uses digital documentation. They will be able to observe the scanning of artefacts in the CT scanner room. They can also work on 3D models using interactive stations in the area and print 3D artefacts that they can then process to make the best possible reconstructions.
The inner courtyard will also be used in extension to the exhibitions and laboratories. In this area, visitors will be able to try their hand at being archaeologists and take part in activities involving experimental archaeology and historical re-enactment.

Temporary exhibitions
The temporary exhibition area is approximately 300 square metres and is found on the lower level of the exhibition area in extension to the Gokstad hall. Temporary exhibitions can play an important role in addressing contemporary topics, contributing a voice to ongoing social debates, exploring new exhibition trends, experimentation with exhibition media and audience participation and reflecting popular culture, etc. The temporary exhibitions will help to expand the universe of the more permanent exhibition allowing us to present and explore aspects of the Viking Age that are not included in the other exhibitions.

The temporary exhibition area can also be used to create exhibitions generated through interdisciplinary collaboration within the University of Oslo, or in collaboration with other institutions and partners. The area also has potential for the development of commercial programmes, as well as giving visitors good reasons to visit the museum again. The goal is to change the exhibitions in the temporary exhibition area once or twice per year. See Appendix 8 for further information about temporary exhibitions.

Dynamic exhibitions
In order to maintain relevance as a leading arena for the presentation of knowledge about the Viking Age and to offer varied programmes aimed at different target groups and generate return visits, the Museum of the Viking Age will put in place measures so that it can be a dynamic museum. This means that exhibitions may change in line with new research, new interpretation techniques and changing audiences.
Since the start of the architectural competition in 2015, emphasis has been placed on creating a flexible structure that meets the need of a changing museum. This need is managed in the building and the equipment project in accordance with the different areas’ need for flexibility (described in Appendix 12).

The further development of exhibitions will facilitate easy replacement of exhibition elements and content. This could include changing artefacts to showcase new discoveries, exhibiting artefacts on loan from other museums, removing artefacts for inclusion in travelling exhibitions or external loans. It also includes replacing narratives in interactive solutions, films, graphic and scenographic presentations, etc. In addition to the flexibility of the actual building and the equipment (display cases, audio-visual and ICT equipment and lighting), this will also require good solutions for easily updating digital content (content management system), replacement of artefacts in display cases adapted for this purpose, adjustment of artefact lighting and changes to scenographic and graphic solutions.

Other aspects of creating dynamic exhibitions are the development of interpretation programmes that use the exhibitions in different ways and are adapted for different target groups. An example of this is the development of a separate programme for children and young people in which they can experience and explore artefacts and narratives at the Museum of the Viking Age (see the description of “The Great Viking Journey” in Appendix 7). Programmes that generate variation in the museum experience will also be developed, e.g. activity programmes for the laboratory, courtyard and museum park, as well as different programmes for lectures and film screenings.

Dynamic exhibitions do not mean that everything is dynamic all of the time. Parts of the exhibitions will be permanent; particularly the iconic artefact displays in the highlight track and some larger display cases that have been specially designed.

**Use of interpretation techniques and presentation types**

In order to achieve the museum’s objectives in terms of audience experience, a varied use of interpretation techniques and presentation types will be used. Naturally, the artefacts have their central place in the experience and will be supported using both digital and analogue techniques. Lighting and large projections will enhance the feeling of the “spectacular experience”, while interactive digital solutions and films allow the audience to get closer to the exciting stories in which they can choose their own levels of immersion. The museum has high ambitions for top level audiovisual presentations and digital solutions, as well as the use of lighting, interactive exhibits and scenography. Large projections are planned for the vault near the burial procession, in the vaults in the ship halls and on the large wall at the end of the exhibition area. Large digital holographic visualizations and other display solutions are planned for the large walls between the Oseberg and Gokstad halls. Options for lighting and projection are planned for the areas below the ships.
A balance of analogue and digital techniques will be used in the Museum of the Viking Age. Analogue solutions will be central in the visualization of the authentic, and in defining the space. Here, genuine artefacts will interact in harmony with the architecture and exhibition design. Exhibition lighting will be actively used to create atmosphere, to direct the attention of the audience and to emphasize the details of the artefacts. The digital aspects are central when it comes to bringing stories to life, making the narratives accessible and meeting the audience’s need for various levels of content. Generally speaking, content should be conveyed using digital interfaces that can easily be updated and adapted for different target groups. This also applies to information linked to artefacts in display cases.

The Museum of Cultural History will work actively to borrow artefacts that support the various museum narratives. However, there will be many areas where there will be a need for artefacts that the Museum of Cultural History does not have in its collections and which cannot be borrowed. There will therefore be a strategy for exhibiting artefacts as holographic representations, as this will allow us to exhibit artefacts that we do not have without using replicas.

The part of the exhibition area that places the greatest emphasis on visitor participation is the research workshop. This area facilitates extensive use of activities, participatory analogue interfaces and interactive solutions.
In addition the museum plan to offer various forms of visitor guides (analogue and digital) to provide extra layers of information, for example in-depth information for those with a special interest, or as a “children’s trail” through the exhibition.

Languages and text strategy
All the texts will be in Norwegian and English. In the presentation of graphic and digital texts, both languages will have equal representation. The users will choose one language for the text or sound at the interactive stations. Other languages will be available on the visitors’ own digital devices.

5. DESIGN STRATEGY

One important task of the new exhibitions is to provide the audience with spectacular experiences and the opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of the Vikings and Viking research. A rich and varied range of artefacts, narratives and discoveries from the Viking Age will be experienced in a dynamic universe designed especially for this purpose. The supporting aesthetic principles associated with the overall interpretation concept and the aesthetic and methodological design choices will also reflect research values such as curiosity, transparency and verifiability thereby actively contributing to the design of a vibrant research museum and not only be an artefact museum. Another key objective is that the design solution must maintain and continue to build on the existing aesthetic qualities of the Viking Ship Museum as it is today.

At the same time, the exhibition design will contribute to solving many other important objectives of the museum. It will accommodate large groups of visitors who have limited time, while also being able to provide smaller groups with a cohesive but varied all-day experience. It will accommodate visitors with highly different interests and will create good physical and digital meeting places where the audience and the researchers and conservators can meet. Along with other visitor areas such as the outdoor space, teaching and activity area, museum shop, auditorium and café & restaurant, it will create a holistic universe of experiences, exploration, play, learning and recreation.

5.1. Design objectives

Experience the architecture

The introductory part of the exhibitions in the new museum can be found in the northern wing of the old Viking Ship Museum. From here the audience joins the start of the story of a time of transition as they head through the arched entrance to the large circular area in the new building.
The existing building is linked to the new building by a glass extension. This is not only an elegant architectural solution, but also allows the exhibition design to reinforce the initial experience concept. Nothing is more “in the moment” than being able to stand under the sky in daylight before being cast into a different world, more specifically a late summer afternoon in Oseberg in the year 834.

Variety in rooms and levels
The exhibition experience start on the upper level and the architecture continues to play a prominent role here. The large vaults create a natural space for the ships and the way artefacts are displayed on the upper level will largely follow the dynamic lines and changing levels of daylight in the building.

Nevertheless, there is plenty of room for variation and in-depth experiences here too: A number of arcade rooms can be found towards the courtyard. Here you can choose whether to face the courtyard, the halls or create a completely different universe of your own. The size of the rooms are between 31 -33 m² and provide the opportunity to delve deeper into the themes, get carried away, reflect or rest.

The lower level consists of the ship halls and an immersion area. While the ship halls continue the majestic and sacred atmosphere from the upper level, the immersion area, cinema, laboratory and research workshop provide plenty of opportunities for a curious and active approach to exploring both artefacts, narratives and science methods.
Safety and conservation
The exhibitions are designed in such a way that the artefacts are displayed under excellent conservation and safety conditions, while also allowing the audience to experience the artefacts at close hand.

The authentic museum
The exhibition design will reinforce the impression that the museum displays genuine artefacts and verifiable research. This should not be understood as though everything can be verified at a laboratory or that we have all the answers. Humanities and social science research largely consists of using source materials, finds and theories to work in a creative, visionary and methodical way to put together the pieces of puzzle into images that the rest of us can understand and apply to our own understanding of the world.

In terms of the design, it will be important to establish interfaces for different levels of information, allowing the audience to differentiate between what can be documented through research and what are broader interpretations, e.g. be clear and honest on what we know, what we think and what we don’t know. For partially reconstructed artefacts, it must also be made clear to the audience which parts of the artefacts are original and which parts are reconstructions.

Scenography and exhibits will be used with a clear purpose to convey research-based knowledge. The presentations may be spectacular or provocative, but the content must be verifiable.

Atmosphere will be created through meaningful scenography and design in line with the main narrative and
not purely through the use of decorative elements.

**Flexibility – function and value**
The exhibition design will accommodate easy replacement of many of the exhibition elements and large parts of the interpretation content. This will ensure that the exhibition can be renewed on an ongoing basis to allow the museum to maintain relevance as the leading arena for the presentation of knowledge about the Viking Age.

The need for flexibility in the exhibitions can be seen on different levels, from the low flexibility represented by the ships and the most fragile wooden artefacts, to the highest flexibility in immersion areas and in the temporary exhibition area. For all levels of flexibility there will be a need for replacement of artefact information and other physical or digital content that take pertains to current discoveries or research.

A key aspect associated with flexibility is the possibility to transport artefacts through the exhibition spaces and close zones when renewal is needed. The dimensions required for the transport paths through the exhibition areas are defined by two different volumes (10x2x2 meter and 4x2x1 meter) for different areas. For a detailed description of transport of exhibition modules, see appendix xx “Logistics”.

**The spectacular**
The exhibition design must generate spectacular visitor experiences that are based on research. Artefacts must be curated in a manner that showcases the spectacular aspects of the collection, aspects that can be found in the size, quantity and the degree of uniqueness. The Oseberg and Gokstad ships are natural candidates, but the collection also comprises numerous finds that have spectacular characteristics that we want to help the audience recognise through the exhibition design. An example is the peacock feather that is part of the grave goods found with the Gokstad ship. The feather may not be spectacular in itself but how incredible is it to imagine a peacock spreading its wonderful ornamental feathers against the backdrop of a Viking landscape – a sight so exotic and full of tales of travel, discovery and fascination with the unknown.

**Return visits**
As a part of the objective to be top-of-mind- destination for the population of south-eastern Norway exhibition design will pursue to make it attractive for visitors to return to the museum: At the same time, as the visitors are being given a holistic story of the Viking Age, it will also become evident that the indoor and outdoor programmes and activities on offer are interesting and varied enough for many enjoyable return visits; for learning, play or recreation.

**Uniformity and synergy between the different areas of the museum**
The display cases and other exhibition elements must have a design and materiality that contributes to the holistic interior design of the museum while also creating synergies with other visitor areas such as the museum shop and café & restaurant.
5.2. Design platform

Design solutions are often used to simplify, unite and create a whole. But design can also be used to create interruptions, diversity and surprises. The exhibition design in our new exhibitions will create new interfaces for interaction and communication – some familiar and some completely new.

Overall concept
The conceptual choice for the overall design concept is “change” and “movement”. Within this concept the three main elements of the exhibition experience; artefacts, interpretive design and architectural space will unfold. And even though the exhibitions will meet a generous amount of immersive experiences engaging both emotions and imagination, the facts and science will not be hidden in the shadows.

Transparancy is a key value in the design platform and the exhibitions will in a number of different ways invite the visitor to lift, layer by layer, his or her experience to understand what lays beneath it; the sources to our knowledge and sometimes the different interpretation of these sources.

The full design concept is thoroughly described by Atelier Brückner and Gagarin in the appendix xx.
“Change and movement”: Display cases from the experience concept “From the living to the dead” III: Atelier Brückner

Exhibition design following the dynamic lines of the building in the Oseberg funeral. III: Atelier Brückner
**Artefacts**

Many of the artefacts found in the museums’ Viking Age collection are extraordinary in terms of the craftsmanship of the era. The elegance of the ships, the woodcarving, metalwork, carved amber figures – there is a great deal of power, movement and expressions in the creation of the artefacts themselves.

**Daylight**

Daylight will be limited in the new Viking Age Museum but it will be a key part of the overall light situation, which, through its natural variations, will contribute to the mood and the visual dynamics of the museum. With reference to the passing of time and timelessness alike, daylight has many qualities other than just providing light. Natural light reinforces and clarifies the architecture and, in a circular building like the new museum, daylight from both sides will also provide good reference points in terms of direction and will ease navigation for the visitors. This is important when it comes to universal design and helping the visitors understand what is an exterior wall, while also providing the opportunity to understand the different points of the compass.
Daylight also contributes to reinforcing authenticity and represents the present, thereby enhancing the synergy between the Viking lives of the past and current research. Looking out at the beautiful nature in the museum park, seeing what happens in the courtyard or catching a glimpse of the sky sets the scene for reflection and contemplation, activities we want to accommodate, as this is important to several of our audience target groups. The museum wishes to highlight the breadth of its programmes and considers it a positive thing that the visitors get to discover the courtyard as they wander through the museum so that they can plan to continue their visit there, often in combination with a stop at the museum café & restaurant.
The role of the architecture
On the upper level, the natural light and dynamic architectural lines will help carry the narratives of change and movement. The dynamic architectural lines are highlighted through lighting, and even vaults of concrete weighing several thousand tonnes appear lightweight when natural daylight shines across them. The two large halls that link the upper and lower levels together have been designed especially for the two main objects, the Oseberg and Gokstad ships, and the lines running down towards and around the ships are designed precisely to emphasise the power and potential of movement in the ships’ own design.

Wayfinding
The exhibition design will maintain the natural flow of the circular structure of the building and utilises the ease with which the direction of the exhibition can be understood. Through the design project a balance of the wayshowing / wayfinding will be established. To facilitate integration between building, interior and exhibition is of great value for a successful wayfinding strategy.

Digital interfaces and spaces
Digital solutions help provide great flexibility for many kinds of content. But large numbers of screens, with their many limitations in terms of size and appearance, may appear both flat and fragmentary, especially at great numbers. The exhibition design must therefore seek to integrate digital content with architecture or scenography to the greatest extent possible and in such a way that the physical universe is experienced as a whole with regard to materials and tactility. By integrating the digital experience of the existing physical space or by expanding the physical space using digital areas rather than interfaces, the unique aspects of our artefacts and narratives are reinforced.

The content of “The timeline” displayed on LED screens integrated in transparent concrete. Illustration: Atelier Brückner
Acoustics
It is crucial that the good acoustic conditions are maintained as well as possible throughout the entire museum to ensure a positive overall museum experience. Interpretation solutions in the different parts of the museum must be adapted to the acoustics and aftersounds, which will vary depending on the architectural conditions.

Sound design
Hearing is a sense that we use both consciously and subconsciously and sounds form an important part of how we perceive our surroundings. Sound, and the absence of sound, is therefore consciously used in experience concepts as a technique to enhance the experience and clarify the message. Through the exhibition design, spaces can be made for experiencing spectacular sounds as well as silence. Sound design will also strive to achieve healthy surroundings for the museums employees.

5.3. Universal design – a museum for all
We envisage Museum of the Viking Age as a state-of-the-art museum in its genre. The project is a national priority, and the Norwegian government has defined access to cultural history and the Viking Age as its main objective. Aiming at 800,000 to one million visitors a year, it goes without saying that the people we promise spectacular experiences to will be a varied one, also with regard to physical or mentally capacities. We also know that the ratio of elderly in the population will grow in coming decade and that improved medical treatment will mean that people live longer lives, increasing the numbers of museum goers with special demands when experiencing artefacts and research in the museum. The success of the museum will be tested on how strongly its design and interpretation solutions are adapted to such individuals needs.

The Master Plan for the exhibitions ranks “A museum for everyone” as one of its main interpretive principles. Other cornerstones are experiencing the authentic, getting involved, and choosing your own level of immersion. When developing these concepts further, universal design will always be prioritized. This will also create more sensible and richer experience for everyone. National Universal Design standards will of course be attended to, but we will also systematically consult user groups with special experiences and competences in this field. In addition, we will make use of handbooks and checklists developed for new large-scale museum projects comparable to our own. Universal design requirements for the museum building itself are attended to by Statsbygg. The following guidelines make up the core of our own universal design manual, securing exhibitions that create playful and spectacular museum experiences for all.

6. MUSEUM LEARNING
Curious people with a thirst for knowledge have flocked to the Viking Ship Museum since its opening in 1928 in a search for experiences and learning. The Museum of the Viking Age will continue to amaze and be
a source of new knowledge for new generations. In order to succeed in achieving the position as “world’s most important conveyor of knowledge about the Viking Age”, the museum strives to be “A generous host on the journey to the magnificent world of the Vikings”. The Museum of the Viking Age will offer news from the research front and excavation sites. This requires visibility in a number of arenas and channels, and make it easy for the public to navigate and find knowledge. Museum of the Viking Age strives to be a museum that makes information accessible, themed and searchable so that the world of the Vikings can reveal itself to the public.

The Museum of the Viking Age will inspire learning and personal development and will open doors to engagement and participation. The museum learning will be based on human interaction, and will help ensure that the individual situation and needs of each visitor are seen and understood. Museum learning can take place both through open learning and through museum teaching. Open learning refers to independent learning at the museum, alone or together with others, in the exhibitions and open activities. Exciting exhibitions create opportunities for dialogue and interaction, and the social aspect is often a key element of open learning. Experience, exploration, amazement and discussion bring people together and open up doors to learning.

Museum teaching consists of structured programmes, run by mediators, either at the museum or on digital platforms. The central element of museum teaching is, in addition to the knowledge presented and the artefacts, the role of conveying knowledge, either through personal guidance at the museum or by developing
resources for learning. The programmes include knowledge about the Viking Age, scientific methods and source criticism. The combination of artefacts, exhibitions, knowledge and research puts the museum in a position to offer different types of expertise and other settings than those of learning institutions.

6.1. Children, youth, learning and curiosity

The University of Oslo is committed to future generations and considers it its task to provide free educational programmes for schoolchildren and youth. Children are an important target group for the Museum of the Viking Age, both when they visit as school children and in other contexts. The museum will reach out to a large range of children and youth, with research-based and engaging knowledge about the Vikings and their world. Children and youth often visit the museum together with friends and adults. Therefore the museum must facilitate discovery and learning that will create shared experiences across age groups, as well as being stimulating and socially engaging.

School children

The curricula of Norwegian school emphasise historical awareness, exploratory history, historical empathy and the ability to see contexts and different perspectives, as well as the importance of source criticism. The museum teaching will correspond to the school’s curricula but will also offer other approaches, for example in the context of ongoing research projects. The programmes must be adapted for different age groups and must facilitate experiences and learning based on pupils’ curiosity, educational principles, and learning activities.
Children and youth outside of the framework of the school system

Interested children and adolescents must also be able to visit the Museum of the Viking Age outside the framework of the school system. The museum will develop learning programmes and courses held in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays. This type of learning takes place during the children’s leisure time, and it is particularly important that the children perceive museum visits as fun. Special programme will be developed, in which children and youth, families and groups of friends with different backgrounds and experiences can meet to discuss history, historical sites, sources and methods with a critical eye. The main programme for children and adolescents is described in the concept – “The Great Viking Journey,” see Appendix 7 for further details.

6.2. Areas for learning and activity

At the Museum of the Viking Age, the exhibitions will be the primary area for learning and visitor experiences, but other areas in and outside the museum will interact with the exhibitions to create a holistic and attractive visitor experience. Other areas for learning and activity include:

Entrance hall, vestibule and tower

This area can be used for small pop-up exhibitions or activities, and will have a function in many of the organised activities and events held at the museum. For organised activities and events, this is where many of the participants will arrive, meet representatives from the museum and get information. In several occasions, the area will also play a role in the event, for example as a place to mingle before events in the auditorium, café & restaurant or elsewhere. Other times, the vestibule may be used for receptions in connection with exhibition openings, press conferences, award ceremonies, etc.

The auditorium

The auditorium will be in frequent use on all weekdays, both during the day and in the evening. The auditorium has three main functions for the core activities of the museum:

• Seminars, lectures, teaching and social gatherings.
• Film screenings, performances and re-enactments as part of the programme for museum visitors.
• Conferences and larger events. This type of event can be combined with other areas of the museum, inside and outside.

Café & restaurant and associated outdoor space

The café & restaurant will be a natural part of the overall museum experience at the Museum of the Viking Age and function as a meeting place outside opening hours, primarily as part of events. Located in a popular recreational area in the city of Oslo, the café & restaurant at the museum will be an attractive place in its own right. The concept and menu are developed based on inspiration found in the exhibitions.
The museum shop
The product range in the museum shop will reflect the content in the exhibitions and feel as a natural extension of the stories the visitor have met in the exhibition. The shop can be used as a venue for smaller events such as book signings, product launches or activities in which you can try games and props, etc.

The teaching and activity area
This area is primarily intended for activities suitable for children and young people on school visits or others who visit on weekends, holidays and in the evenings. Summer schools, evening courses, etc. can also be arranged here, as well as parts of larger events such as storytelling and arts and crafts activities. The teaching and activity area can accommodate three school classes at the same time, or the equivalent number of people when not in use by school classes. The area has its own cloakroom and there is an experience room featuring an immersive multimedia option. There is a junior researcher workshop where children and adolescents can experiment and explore the craft techniques and material of the Viking Age and do follow up work after a visit to the excavation site in the inner courtyard. There is also a seminar room used for teaching and lectures.

The museum park
The museum park facilitates recreation and experiences. The path running through the park surrounding the museum is an experience in itself. Along the path, there are three “interpretation spots” where museum park users can utilise the different information about the Viking Age.

Children use the area at the entrance next to the teaching and activity areas during weekdays as part of school and kindergarten visits. This area function both as a waiting area, for breaks and for organised activities. The seated amphitheatre is used for gatherings, as well as for various performances, often by and with the children themselves. The campfire sites are used as a place to eat and for interpretive sessions with e.g. food as the theme. In addition to children visiting in connection with school and kindergarten, this will also be an attractive area for families with children, often in combination with visits to the outdoor area associated with the museum café & restaurant.

Events such as Viking markets, games tournaments, archery and similar will also be arranged in the museum park. These are important activities for reaching key target groups and bringing life and engagement to and around the new museum.
Illustrations: AART Architects
Inner courtyard
The inner courtyard is an approximately 620 square metre area at the heart of the facility. Here, users can participate in experimental archaeology and re-enactment, try their hands at being an archaeologist in the field or participate in small concerts or similar. The courtyard is arranged with three different activity zones:

Zone 1 – This area encourages users to try their hand at being an archaeologist. The activity is predominantly aimed at families with children and adolescents, as well as school children. An excavation site is recreated here, in which museum visitors can explore archaeologists’ methods. The excavation site is open during opening hours in summer (April – September).

Zone 2 – This area facilitates historical experimentation such as forging, boat building, etc. These activities will often harmonise with activities that take place in the researcher workshop in the exhibition. The activity will be programmed and alternate for limited periods.

Zone 3 – This zone facilitates different performances such as concerts, “battle re-enactments,” film screenings or theatre.
6.3. The virtual and disseminated Museum of the Viking Age

The Museum of the Viking Age will reach beyond its own walls and make appearances in national and international settings through various interfaces. The Museum of the Viking Age will be a natural place to seek out knowledge, both in the physical building, in other physical arenas and through digital interfaces within and outside of the museum. Digital techniques cannot and will not replace human contact, but are important and useful tools that provide opportunities beyond those that can be offered through more traditional types of interpretation. Digital interfaces make it possible to learn through various channels and open doors to collaborations with various parties.

Through the use of digital tools, the museum archives and research results can be made available to a variety of users, such as researchers, children or adolescents who have a thirst for knowledge or authors, journalists and filmmakers. Schools and other groups who are unable to visit the museum may find digital interfaces to be great ways to access the museum.

The Museum of the Viking Age will strive to work together with other parties and will be present in other physical arenas and digital interfaces. This could include collaborations on exhibitions with other museums, travelling exhibitions, or at other places such as airports, train stations, shopping centres and elsewhere.

The physical Museum of the Viking Age, as well as the museum’s presence in other arenas and digital channels will be natural places to access knowledge and learning about the fascinating Viking Age. This is the case for the museum’s own target groups as well as for key partners in tourism, research, attraction development and popular culture. Through interpretation, the Museum of the Viking Age will be a generous host to the magnificent world of the Vikings.

Photo: T. Kolstad
7. PLAN FOR THE DETAILING AND PRODUCTION OF EXHIBITIONS

The descriptions in this “Masterplan for exhibitions” document and its appendices form the basis for the detailing and production of exhibitions at the Museum of the Viking Age.

The exhibition project is organised by the Museum of Cultural History at the University of Oslo, who will contract external supplier(s) for detailing and production of the exhibitions. The building project and the equipment project are both organised by Statsbygg, on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Research.

The exhibition project will work in a close cooperation with Aart architect and the project team at Statsbygg regarding the interaction with the architecture and the integration of solutions in the building.

Exhibition equipment such as display cases, AV- and ICT-equipment is part of the equipment project, as well as lighting. In the detailing phase, there will be close cooperation between the exhibition project and the equipment project to design and specify equipment.

The financing to realize the exhibitions is coming from different sources.

- The building structure, technical infrastructure and exhibition equipment is financed by the National budget.
- Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo finance basic exhibitions, including: Artefact-based exhibitions with basic dissemination solutions, school programs, activities and dissemination programs to outdoor areas, digital visitor guide, website and temporary exhibitions.
- The visitor experiences beyond the basic exhibitions are divided into a number of experience packages financed by donations. This includes e.g. most of the projections, films, interactive and scenographic solutions, and other spectacular and immersive experiences.
Overall timeline (yellow indicates the building- and equipment projects, green indicate the exhibition project):

For more information about the project plans for detailing and production of the exhibitions, see appendix 17.
8. **APPENDIX**

The list of appendices to the “Masterplan for exhibitions” includes the documents that are important for gaining an understanding of the entire conceptual foundation of the exhibitions and the documents that provide a broader understanding of the various aspects of the project at the start of the detailing phase for the exhibitions.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Floor plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Target Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>The main narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Synopsis Academic Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Highlight Track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Experience Concepts 1-30 + index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX</td>
<td>ATB + G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>The Great Viking Journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Temporary exhibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Activity and event areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Universal design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Daylight policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Seating areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Requirements for technical solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Display cases, lighting and audiovisual and ICT equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Project plans for detailing and production</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>