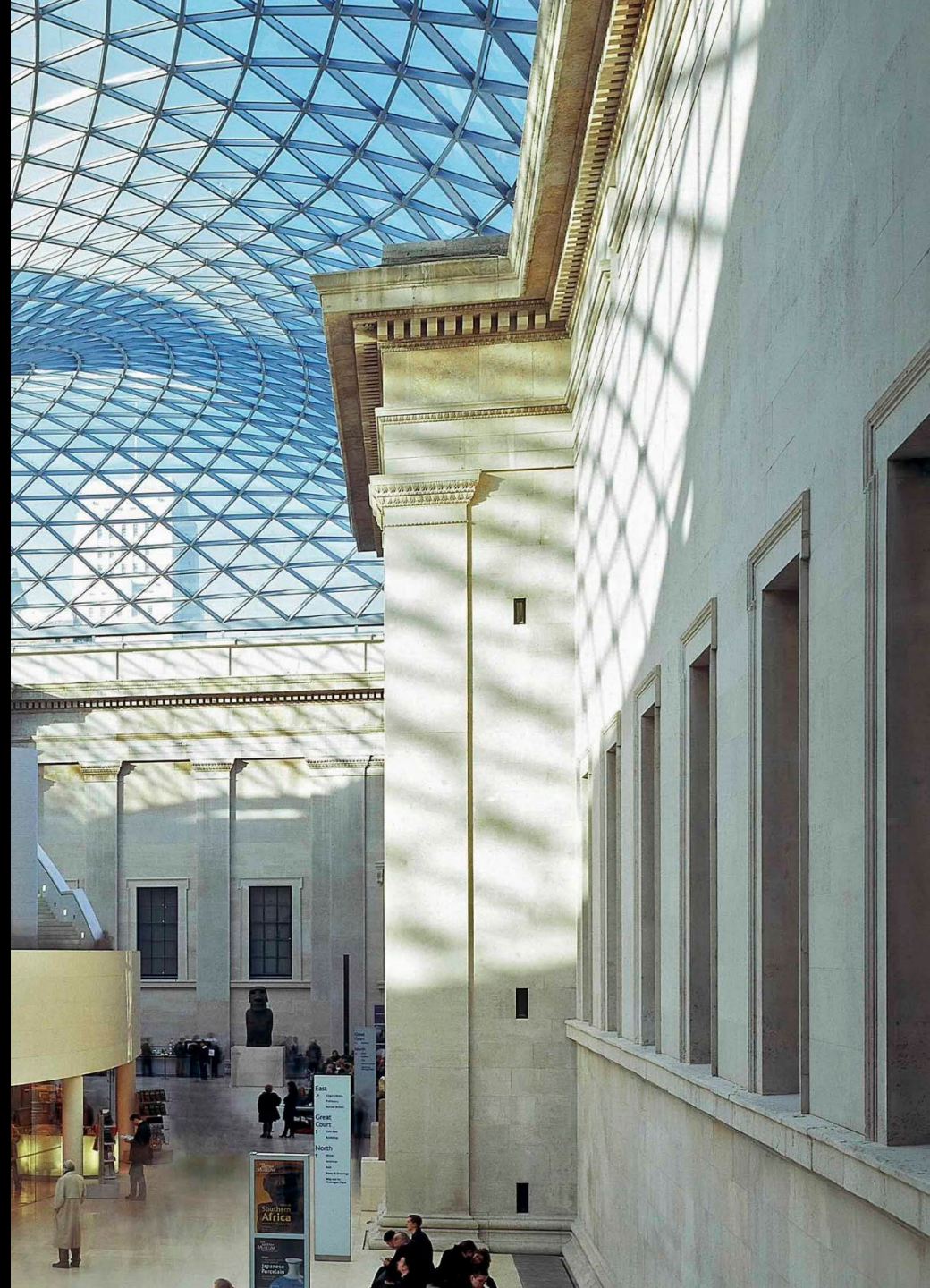


# The British Museum

## Appointment of Director of Collections

June 2024

Saxton Bampfylde



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# The first national public museum of the world.

The British Museum was founded in 1753 and opened its doors in 1759. It was the first national museum to cover all fields of human knowledge, open to visitors from across the world.

The Albukhary  
Foundation Gallery

The Islamic  
world



من رأى

Samarra: an  
imperial city

# Letter from the Director

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for applying to be the Director of Collections at the British Museum, a role that entails being responsible for the management a collection of 8 million objects, from cultures that span human history and come from every corner of the globe.

This opportunity comes at an exciting time for the British Museum. The Museum has undeniably been through a turbulent period over the last year, but it is turning a corner and has a bright future ahead. Visitor numbers have returned to pre-pandemic levels, and at peak times the Museum is busier than ever. By working with partners across the UK and around the world and by expanding its online presence, the Museum is reaching new heights of engagement outside London. This strong public appetite to see the Museum's collection provides the impetus for the Masterplan. Through this Masterplan, the Museum will set out to renovate and rejuvenate its iconic home in Bloomsbury, while also developing new and innovative ways to bring its collection to life, within and outside the walls of the Museum.

This job is fundamentally about people and objects. The people who curate, conserve, display, document, move, protect and research the objects in the British Museum's collection are leading experts in their fields and they care passionately about the collection. You need to be able to guide, inspire and learn from them, while also ensuring that their work – individually and collectively – meets the highest standards. To lead this team of experts, you need to understand what is involved in managing objects, practically and intellectually. You do not need to know more than the experts who report to you, but you need to know how they work with objects, so that you can help to ensure their work is the best it can be.

As Director of Collections, you will lead on some of the Museum's most high-profile priorities, from our engagement with source communities about contested objects, to the development and redisplay of the collection through and beyond the next phases of the Masterplan.

In this role, you will work with and report directly to me. As a key part of the Museum's senior executive team, you will also help to set the general direction of the Museum and ensure that all departments of the Museum work as one to deliver its strategic priorities.

Whatever your background, if you think you have what it takes to shape this collection, we want to hear from you.

We look forward to reading your application.

**Dr Nicholas Cullinan OBE**  
**Director**

# The British Museum

Established by Act of Parliament in 1753, the British Museum is the oldest national public museum in the world. Its mission is to house, curate, conserve, research and exhibit a collection of world cultures. With a collection of around 8 million objects, the British Museum brings together under one roof the cultures of the world, allowing people to explore the extraordinary diversity of human culture, to discover the many forms and expressions human beings have given to every aspect of life, and to realise how closely they are interconnected.

The British Museum is one of the world's most visited museums. In 2022/23, its home in Bloomsbury received 4.5 million visitors, while a further 4 million people saw objects from the British Museum's collection elsewhere, 2.3 million of them outside the UK. That's because as well as the iconic site in London, the Museum has deep and wide-ranging partnerships with other national and international museums, schools and community groups with whom the Museum co-curates the display of loaned objects.

The Museum is entering an exciting new era. Interim Director Sir Mark Jones has announced a plan to complete the documentation and digitisation of the collection, so that for the first time the entire collection will be accessible to anyone who wants to explore it. The Museum is also progressing its

long-term masterplan to revitalise the estate and tell the story of our common humanity. This will improve how visitors experience the collection – physically and virtually – in London, across the UK, and around the world.

The first phase of their masterplan is complete, with the construction of an impressive new Archaeological Research Collection near Reading. The centre, known as BM\_ARC, will open to the public next year and revolutionise how they store and study the collection. It will also be the first completely independent building created for the British Museum since Sir Robert Smirke's neo-classical design was completed in Bloomsbury in 1852.

The next phase will see the construction of a new energy centre that will dramatically reduce their carbon footprint. And on top of that the Museum will launch an international architectural competition in the spring – choosing from amongst the world's most talented architects to redesign around a third of the Museum's gallery space.

But the British Museum is far more than its building in London. It is a museum in the world, for the world, and of the world: a museum that speaks to our common humanity.



The Museum is driven by an insatiable curiosity for the world, a deep belief in objects as reliable witnesses and documents of human history, sound research, as well as the desire to expand and share knowledge.



# The Role

## Main Purpose of the role:

- To lead and inspire the Collections directorate to achieve and maintain excellence in the stewardship of the collection.
- To play a role in the strategic leadership of the museum, including as a member of the Directorate Group, deputising for the Director and contributing to the development and delivery of the Museum's strategy.
- Motivating senior managers to ensure continued excellence in the face of constrained resources, a complex and long-term plan for changes to the estate, and significant external pressures.
- Leading and inspiring high performing teams of specialists.

## Reporting to:

- The Director

## Key relationships:

- Board of Trustees
- Director
- Directorate Group Members
- Heads of Collections departments
- Heads of other Museum departments
- Key external stakeholders

## Key areas of responsibility:

### Stewardship and care of the collection

- To ensure that appropriate strategies, procedures, structures and resources are in place to deliver excellence in the care, development, research and presentation of the collection.
- To ensure an approach to acquisitions and documentation that aligns appropriately with key Museum strategic objectives.
- To establish and maintain museum-wide principles of best practice for object handling, loans, display and storage.
- To lead and develop the research programme.
- To develop a robust plan for the renewal and refreshment of the galleries as an integrated whole.
- To develop and implement an integrated programme for the improvement of storage of the collection.

### Senior leadership of the Museum

- To contribute to the development of the Museum's strategy.
- To deputise for the Director on relevant matters.
- To represent the Museum at the highest level, nationally and internationally.
- To lead and inspire the Collections directorate.
- To ensure that resources are deployed efficiently and effectively.
- To contribute to the generation of income.
- To contribute to the development and delivery of the Museum's masterplan.
- To foster respectful and collaborative working both across the Museum and with external partners.
- To engage with colleagues to ensure they are motivated, feel valued and are nurtured, and that they have the appropriate training and skills to thrive in their roles.

# Person Specification

## Essential:

- Educated to degree level or equivalent
- A good understanding of the museum world and wider academic and cultural world
- A strategic thinking with sound planning skills, including experience of financial and risk management
- Proven excellent judgement
- Evidence of supporting the intellectual leadership of a multi-disciplinary organisation
- A proven track record of delivery in a museum, gallery or comparable institution
- Experience of successfully leading major business development or organisations change projects
- An inspirational leader, able to establish vision and purpose across a diverse team of staff and command respect across the organisation
- Highly developed people management skills and a track record of developing high performing individuals and teams
- An excellent communicator
- Demonstrable ability to articulate and communicate complex messages to a diverse range of audiences
- Able to represent the British Museum nationally and internationally at the highest level
- Proven ability to lead, influence, negotiate and work collaboratively across a complex organisation and lead and motivate staff and peers to work together in pursuit of excellence.

## Desirable:

- Postgraduate degree
- Management qualifications
- A recognised scholar in a relevant field

## Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:

- The British Museum values and respects the diversity of its audiences and its staff; the Director of Collections must embody these values.







# Terms of Appointment

# How to Apply

Location: London

Salary: £120,000

Holiday entitlement: 25 days

Pension: Civil Service alpha pension scheme, with the standard employer contribution rate (currently 30.3%)

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to British Museum on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code EBME.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring\* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July**.

\* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

## GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

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The British  
Museum

Saxton Bampfylde

