



Above: the new steps have become a meeting space



Main entrance
The Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum
 410 m²
 £760,000
 1999-2001
 Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Environment Award 2002



Glass Gallery
Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum
 £1,000,000
 1992-1993

Other projects for the V&A include: Masterplan Studies 1994-1997, Leighton Gallery, Temporary Exhibition Galleries, Textile Reference Collection, Security Accommodation, Indian and South-East Asian Reference Collection, Library Staircase, East Stair.



Secretariat block
Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum
 £1.25 million
 1998-1999

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Above & right: the new steps and slopes curve gently and are illuminated at night

Main entrance

The main entrance to the V & A on the Cromwell Road has been transformed by the creation of a new entrance suitable for disabled visitors. There were many heritage issues to contend with, as this is a Grade I listed building, extensive discussions took place with English Heritage, who were both helpful and supportive of the proposal.

The scheme takes the form of a gentle radius and the steps merge into the slopes with a tapering stone detail. The entrance has been considerably expanded in area allowing a much more generous approach to the Museum and creating a gathering place in front of the doors. The Museum's brief was to provide a graceful entrance where disabled access formed an integral part of the design and would be used by all members of the public. The Museum also wanted to create a place where people could meet and congregate. It was important that the steps became one of the meeting places on the London scene.

The steps and slopes are made from Shirehill sandstone with fibre-optic lighting set behind glass risers both illuminating the Museum at night and providing lighting to the treads. The main entrance was kept operational throughout the works.



“Intelligent planning has ensured that 80 percent of the collection is on view with background information supplied on computer terminals and touchscreen videos. Instead of rows of badly lit, Victorian mahogany cases, the displays have a sparkling transparency which convey the excitement of the material. The result is a simpler, more coherent place to study glass and a wonderful place to visit.”

Terence Conran

Glass Gallery

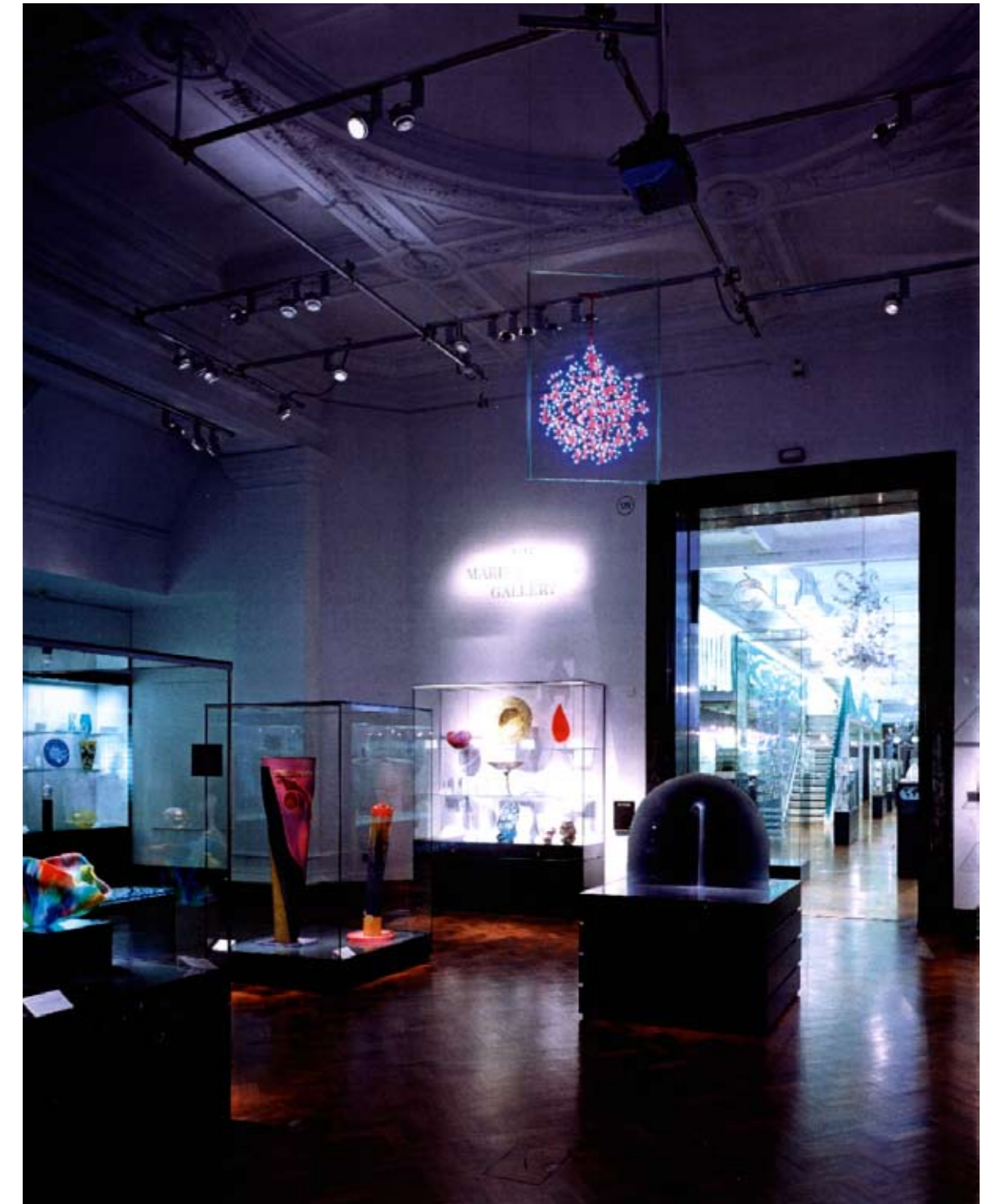
The Glass Gallery was won by the practice as the result of a limited competition.

The commission included the design, display, graphics and layout of the gallery, including the disposition of the display cases, which contain over 6,000 objects from the National Collection of Glass.

The practice was commissioned in 2002 to design an extension to the Glass Gallery for Contemporary Glass. This gallery was created as a response to the large collection of contemporary objects which the Museum had collected since the Glass Gallery had opened. Contemporary Glass was designed as a temporary exhibition space with large display cases which can be rearranged by the curators according to their exhibition theme. A small store adjacent to the gallery allows display components to be kept to hand for new displays.

The lighting uses an overhead rig, which follows the form of the decorative plaster ceiling panels. A large screen, 4 metres wide by 5 metres high can be lowered in front of the window wall to allow films to be shown, demonstrating different studio glass techniques.

Left: Glass Gallery with structural glass mezzanine displaying 4000 objects in a “visual store”
Right: Contemporary Glass Gallery with view through to the Glass Gallery beyond



“English Heritage finds the proposals for improved access to the V & A to be wholly commendable. The design respects the formality of Aston Webb’s façade, whilst also providing a much stronger signal to the principal entrance of the Museum.”

English Heritage