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Multi-million pound revamp of Ipswich Museum given green light



Jason Noble Local Democracy Reporter



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Ipswich Museum will undergo a multi-million pound revamp. - Credit: Sarah Lucy Brown

Planning permission for a multi-million pound revamp of Ipswich Museum has been granted, paving the way for the second stage Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

Proposals for the HLF-backed improvements have been through several iterations, but on Wednesday morning secured unanimous approval from Ipswich Borough Council's planning and development committee.

Those plans will include ramps and a terrace for outdoor seating, repairs to boundary walls, new stairs and plant room, improved southern side facilities, new lift and staircase, café and new toilets.

The nature of the Grade II* Listed facility - which is effectively three separate buildings dating back to the 1880s, 1900s and the 1920s - has made access tricky for visitors and meant it has developed in an ad-hoc fashion.

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Bosses say the revamp plans, which will be funded from £3m the council put aside several years ago alongside an HLF bid of £4.8m, will bring it up to date while respecting its Victorian heritage.



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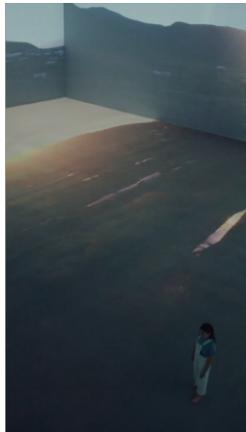
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James Steward, Ipswich Museum manager, said it was an ambitious proposal but significant.

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"One of the first publicly-funded museums in the country, it's a purpose built museum of exceptional quality," he said, adding: "The need for development and the need for preservation has been widely acknowledged".

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