Heritage and Culture Strategy 2017-2022

1. Introduction

The University of Liverpool was established over 120 years ago, in a city subsequently described as “the pool of life” by Carl Jung, and “the centre of the creative universe” by Allen Ginsberg. A truly international University, we continue to find inspiration in the extraordinary heritage and culture of Liverpool, the original global city.

The University’s own pioneering heritage includes the transmission of the first radio signal (1894), the foundation of the country’s first schools of Architecture (1895) and Archaeology (1904), and the creation of the world’s first Planning School (1909). We have produced nine Nobel Laureates and are proud to have contributed to the development of world-leading research and teaching across all disciplines, whilst continuing to strive for future impact and academic excellence, including through our developing Heritage institutional research theme.

Our diverse collections testify to the political, economic and cultural importance of the city of Liverpool, and to the vision of the University’s founders and its subsequent benefactors. Our Museums and Galleries are home to pieces from artists such as J. M. W. Turner, Lucian Freud and Barbara Hepworth, and numerous scientific and archaeological objects, with a particular strength in Egyptology. Our Special Collections and Archives are home to a range of rare medieval, Renaissance and modern literary and historical manuscripts, and a number of specific collections, including: early printed books; children’s literature; the archive of the Cunard Line; and Europe’s largest Science Fiction archive. Sir Alfred Waterhouse’s stunning 1892 Victoria Building – the original ‘red-brick university’ – stands alongside examples of a range of architectural styles, from the Georgian houses around Abercromby Square, laid out by John Foster Senior, to the ultra-modern Materials Innovation Factory, and award-winning Central Teaching Laboratory, by way of 1960s brutalism. We support one of the two outstanding degrees nationally in Archives and Records Management. Our partnerships are numerous and growing. They include links to local cultural organisations such as the Liverpool Philharmonic, the Everyman Theatre, St George’s Hall and National Museums Liverpool; to national bodies such as the Tate; and membership of international groups, such as the University Alliance of the Silk Road.

This Strategy sets out how we will build on our current strengths to advance the objectives of University’s Strategy 2026, to create and transmit original knowledge for its own sake, and to benefit our colleagues, alumni and stakeholders and wider communities locally, nationally and internationally.
2. **Vision**

Liverpool is a world city with a complex history, from the affluence of Empire to economic decline and rebirth. Its regeneration rests on the transformative properties of heritage and culture, and this experience is reflected in our vision:

*An awareness of heritage and culture, and the benefits they bring – intellectual, psychological and physical – should inform every aspect of University life.*

To this end the University will, by 2022, be:-

- A world-renowned centre of excellence for research and teaching in disciplines related to heritage and culture;
- Internationally recognised for its inspiring, challenging and stimulating approach to heritage and culture;
- An anchor institution for the city of Liverpool and the North West, actively and positively participating in the region’s cultural life and the understanding of its heritage, and, by this means, contributing to the regional economy;
- Known for recognising how heritage and culture can provide a physical and intellectual environment supportive of our members’ wellbeing and success.

3. **Ambitions – what we will do**

The University will achieve the vision described above through four related strands of activity:

- Public Engagement;
- Research;
- Education;
- University Environment and Life.

**Public Engagement**

We will:-

- Increase and enhance public engagement with the University through use of our collections, events and estate. We will use these to attract and engage with new audiences and stakeholder groups, including community groups and schools, as well as enhancing existing relationships;
- Promote public understanding of the University’s work and the impact of this around the world;
- Engage positively and creatively with the regional economy and stakeholder bodies (e.g. Liverpool City Council and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority) to enhance the understanding of the region’s heritage and to contribute to and promote its cultural activity.
Research

We will:-

• Create and co-create with our students and partners new knowledge in relation to our institutional research theme in Heritage, and also in relation to other heritage and culture related disciplines, as well as those subject areas that can contribute to the interpretation and curation of heritage, with all three Faculties having a role to play. We will draw on our heritage and cultural collections in our research;
• Develop and maintain world-leading collections for use by the global academic community;
• Use related activities such as exhibitions, festivals, conferences and other events to promote the University’s research strengths and their impact.

Education

We will:-

• Use our heritage and culture related presence to promote study at all levels at the University of Liverpool, including lifelong learning, and support our work in widening access to and participation with the University;
• Use heritage and culture related events to contribute to an environment that is conducive to the retention and success of our students (see Life of Our Members and the University Environment, below). This will include improving the career opportunities for our students through the establishment and exploitation of professional and organisational networks in relevant fields, and by supporting the city region’s cultural economy with a view to increasing graduate retention;
• Use heritage and culture related collections and events as a means of realising research-connected teaching and otherwise enhancing students’ curricula and extra curricula experience;
• Use our collections to promote lifelong learning and enjoyment of heritage and culture.

The Life of Our Members and the University Environment

We will use our heritage and culture related collections and events to:-

• Create better places for our members to live and work in a way that is consistent with the University’s mission - ‘advancement of learning and ennoblement of life’. In this way, we will attract and welcome staff and their families to the University, and enhance our reputation as an employer of choice;
• Increase opportunities for employee engagement, by encouraging them to understand and contribute to the identity of the University, and to feel a sense of pride and ownership of what we are and what we do through attendance at and active participation in relevant events;
• To support positive wellbeing by enhancing the environment for work and study;
• Increase the engagement of our alumni, particularly those from overseas, in the current life of the University;
• Celebrate and bring to the fore the heritage of our own campuses, seeking to inform the University’s Estates Strategy in this way, and finding innovative ways to interpret and communicate the story of the University and the physical and intellectual space it occupies to our colleagues and students.

4. **Underpinning principles - how we will do it**

In pursuit of the above, we will:-

• Communicate to our members and the wider community the University’s cultural and heritage offer;
• Make our collections and events as widely discoverable, accessible and inclusive as possible, including through their creative promotion, and media engagement;
• Care for our collections in line with the highest professional standards;
• Actively seek partnership with appropriate heritage organisations, locally, nationally and internationally;
• Strategically align our activities to benefit from and contribute to the priorities of our partners, the region and cultural and historical timelines;
• Develop a creative approach to borrowing and lending items to achieve maximum impact;
• Actively seek external funding to optimise our activities;
• Achieve or maintain accreditation with appropriate professional bodies;
• Publish an annual report, describing the progress made against this Strategy, and capturing key outcomes, case studies and milestones.