

AISU Lecture

"How a disused late-Victorian Market is finding a new purpose for the people of London"

Thursday 21 October 2021 at 18:00

Sharon Ament, Director of the Museum of London

In spring 2015 artist Grayson Perry unveiled the potential site of a new Museum of London at the North-West edge of the City of London known as West Smithfield. Since that moment, the collective efforts and energies of thousands of people have created an exciting plan that will locate the museum in a campus of buildings that have lain empty for over thirty years. Described by Julian Harrap (Conservation Architect) as; <<the last ruin in London>>, the General Market, Annexe and West Poultry Avenue, together with the Poultry Market, are a set of historic market buildings that are proving to be highly adaptable and ideally suited to culture and the mechanics of being a museum. It is the very nature of the market, in its design, location and intent that enables the core purpose of the Museum of London to be expressed and ultimately delivered as London's Shared Place, in the middle of it all where we enrich the understanding and appreciation of London and all its people – past, present and future.

This lecture is the story of the recreation of the Museum of London or perhaps a better description is the creation of a new museum with London. It is a story in the making, one that will never finish, as London is never finished. It is a story of unexpected delights and discoveries, it is a story of coincidence and crafting, of curation and design, it is a story of intelligence and emotions, and, ultimately one of how a market can shape a museum creating opportunities that exquisitely express new ideals of contemporary museology.