Imperial War Museum North – Teacher Notes

An architectural competition for the new museum was held in 1997, with the winning design being that of Berlin-based [architect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architect) [Daniel Libeskind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Libeskind). Born in Poland, in 1946, Libeskind's family had suffered during the [Second World War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_World_War) and dozens of his relatives had died in the [Holocaust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocaust).

At the museum's opening, Libeskind said that he sought to "create a building ... which emotionally moved the soul of the visitor toward a sometimes-unexpected realization"'. Libeskind envisaged a *'constellation composed of three interlocking shards’ with* each shard being a remnant of an imagined globe shattered by conflict.

**These shards in turn represented air, earth and water, and each formed a functionally distinct part of the museum.**

The 55m high air shard, provides the museum's entranceway and a viewing balcony above the [Manchester Ship Canal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchester_Ship_Canal) with views of the Manchester skyline. The construction of the tower leaves viewers exposed to the elements and one reviewer considered that it reflected "the aerial perspective of modern warfare and the precariousness of the life below".

* The earth shard houses the museum's exhibition spaces.
* The water shard accommodates a cafe with views of the canal.
* The air shard provides the entranceway and viewing balcony.

Originally budgeted at £40 million, the museum was eventually completed for £28.5 million after anticipated [National Lottery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Lottery_%28United_Kingdom%29) funding was not forthcoming. The museum was funded by local, national and European development agencies. The [European Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union)'s [European Regional Development Fund](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Regional_Development_Fund) contributed £8.9 million, [English Partnerships](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Partnerships) and the [North West Development Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_West_Development_Agency) £2.7 million, and £2.8 million was provided by Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council. [Peel Holdings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peel_Holdings), a local transport and property company, contributed £12.5 million;this was reportedly the largest single sum ever given to a UK cultural project by a private enterprise.

The reduction in budget forced a number of changes, the substitution of metal for concrete in the construction of the shards, the removal of a planned auditorium, and a change of exhibition content. The site's external landscaping also had to be reduced.

In 2009, following an international design competition, Berlin-based company Topotek 1 were appointed to complete this landscaping.Despite these economies, the fundamental "shattered globe" concept remained intact.A final £3 million was raised by a fundraising campaign led by [BBC News](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC_News) [war correspondent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_correspondent) [Kate Adie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Adie). Construction of the museum, by structural engineers [Arup](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arup) and main contractor [Sir Robert McAlpine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Robert_McAlpine),began on 5 January 2000and the building was [topped out](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topping_out) in late September that year.

Exhibition fitting started in November 2001

The museum opened to the public on 5 July 2002, shortly before the [2002 Commonwealth Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002_Commonwealth_Games) which were hosted in Manchester that year.