

The Lenox Project

A lasting legacy for Deptford



A project to build and launch a replica of the 17th century ship the Lenox; establish a working dockyard museum to provide employment, apprenticeships and work experience for the local community; create a centre of excellence for historic shipbuilding and a new visitor attraction for Deptford.

www.buildthelenox.org

Our vision



Above: Painting of Deptford Dockyard in 1755 by John Cleveley the Elder; archaeological excavation of slipways by Museum of London in 2012; sailors work at height on a traditional mast (Timaldol Shutterstock.com). Below: Cannon on show at Lenox family fun day. Bottom: The proposed Lenox site on Convoys Wharf.



- To contribute to the revitalisation of the economic, cultural and historic heart of Deptford by establishing a working museum that will focus on the history of the King's Yard and naval shipbuilding at Deptford.
- To work in partnership with educational and government agencies to create a skills and training programme in maritime and manufacturing skills through a series of apprenticeship programmes.
- To establish an international centre of excellence for historic shipbuilding and restoration in line with our aim to create a lasting legacy for the historic dockyard.
- To provide a platform for cultural, historical and educational experiences and collaboration with academic, heritage and scientific groups.
- To build and launch the Lenox, a replica 17th century ship, on the site of the former Royal Dockyard in Deptford, now known as Convoys Wharf, and to create a permanent home for the ship on the site.
- To establish a future role for the ship, both at the site and in an ambassadorial capacity, attracting visitors to the area and representing Deptford, London and the UK on overseas voyages.
- To support further research into the contribution to Deptford's history made by communities and individuals that are currently under-represented.

The project will bring to life Deptford's royal dockyard by building the Lenox, a seventeenth century royal naval sailing ship, in a working dock at the heart of a new museum centred on the history of the naval dockyard and the shipbuilding technology of the time. It will offer an immersive experience for visitors and opportunities for volunteers and apprentices to learn a wide range of crafts associated with historic shipbuilding.

Founded by Henry VIII in 1513, The King's Yard in Deptford was the most significant royal dockyard of the Tudor period. For nearly four hundred years Deptford was the central power house of the nation's navy and it was known across Europe as a centre of shipbuilding excellence. In 1698 Peter the Great visited the dockyard to learn about the shipbuilding technology that was being used, so that he could modernise the Russian navy.





Why the Lenox?

The Lenox was the first of the great Thirty Ship building programme of 1677, instigated by Charles II and managed by Samuel Pepys as Secretary of the Admiralty.

She was built by John Shish, the Master Shipwright at Deptford and launched on 12 April 1678. Every detail of her original construction was recorded and has been collated by historian Richard Endsor in his 20-year study of the vessel, providing a unique opportunity to build a replica 17th century ship to known specifications.

Central to the project is the opportunity to provide meaningful training and employment opportunities, in particular for local people, in collaboration with partner organisations in the area such as Lewisham College, University of Greenwich and the Ahoy Centre.

Both modern and traditional skills will be offered, the former including the creation and manipulation of digital models from drawn plans, and training in the use of computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing software.

In addition to these high-tech processes, the ship will require traditional skills such as carpentry, woodcarving, blacksmithing, sail making, rope-making, block-making, lead working, caulking, painting and gilding. The specialists employed to do the work will also train apprentices in these heritage skills, demand for which is growing in the restoration industry around the country and abroad.



*Above: Visitors see L'Hermione being built; L'Hermione in port with masts and rigging.
Below: Richard Endsor's painting of Lenox passing Greenwich on her 1678 maiden voyage from Deptford to Chatham; L'Hermione at sea.*

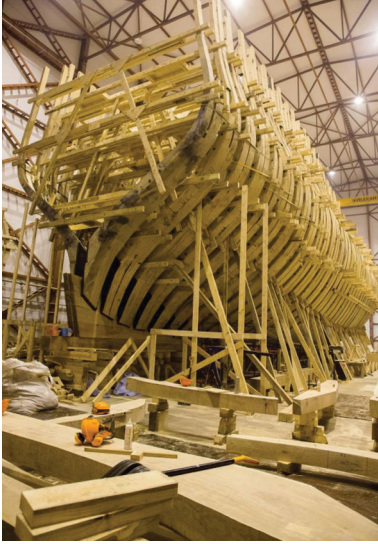


Existing models

Similar replica ship projects exist in several European countries, Russia, Australia and the USA. These include L'Hermione at Rochefort, Götheborg in Sweden, De Zeven Provinciën in Holland and Poltava in Saint Petersburg. The experience that has been gained on these schemes will provide valuable guidance for the development of The Lenox Project business model. This is a unique opportunity for Deptford, which will not only reinvigorate its maritime history but create a global platform for London and the UK, alongside other internationally successful projects.

Project status

The Lenox Project was established in 2011 and achieved charitable status in 2017. It is managed by a dedicated group of volunteers who are all resident in, or have strong links to Deptford. When the Mayor of London granted outline planning permission for the Convoys Wharf redevelopment, he acknowledged the importance of the project by ordering an independent study to establish the most feasible location for it on the site.



From top: The Poltava in Saint Petersburg; carpentry apprentice learning to use a mechanised saw (Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock.com); children painting a model ship at Lenox family fun day.

Cover: Apprentices and volunteers involved in the construction of the Lenox will be trained in a range of traditional crafts as well as use of modern technologies. Middle and bottom right photos copyright Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock.com

The project site

The Lenox Project location was determined in December 2015 by an independent feasibility review commissioned under the terms of the Convoys Wharf outline planning permission. The review proposed a location on the riverfront at the upstream end of the site, in an area ringfenced for wharf use, and also set out the space requirements for the project to incorporate a dock, workshops and visitor centre. The project site will also incorporate a separate dock providing a permanent berth for the ship, as set out in the section 106 agreement.

In January 2020 a decision by the Mayor of London confirmed that this part of the site would retain its designated status as a working wharf. The Lenox Project will operate a working dock for the purpose of historic shipbuilding and restoration under the terms of the designation and the owner of the site is now developing proposals to incorporate The Lenox Project in order to meet these terms.

The layout of the visitor centre and workshops will enable visitors to see historic shipbuilding in action, within a working museum environment, and they will be able to participate directly in the construction process by attending specialist courses. It is important that visitors to the museum will be able to witness all aspects of the work in progress so that the educational benefits of the project can be maximised.

Funding and support

The Lenox Project is a registered charity and has prepared an outline business plan, which will be finalised once the planning process has determined the parameters for developing the safeguarded wharf.

The project is eligible for start-up capital under the Convoys Wharf outline planning permission and further funding will be sought from heritage bodies and corporate sponsorship for the engineering and building infrastructure. The aim of the project is to become self-sustaining as soon as possible, so we plan to open to paying visitors at the earliest opportunity. The experience of other European projects, in locations with far fewer visitors than London, suggests that The Lenox Project will be very attractive to tourists.

The project has a wide range of support not only from local residents, but also from councillors, stakeholders and Members of Parliament, Lewisham Council, GLA, heritage bodies, other maritime museums, naval historians and archaeologists, media and broadcasters, other naval dockyards and related national and international organisations.

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