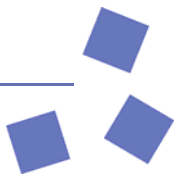


# Darwin Centre Phase 2

---

Key findings from the third formative evaluation



# Darwin Centre Phase 2

## Key findings from the third formative evaluation

---

29<sup>th</sup> September 2008/ Job No564/ Version 2

Prepared for:

DC2 team, Natural History Museum

Creative Research

Creative Research Ltd  
43 Broadway, London W13 9BP

Phone: 020 8567 6974  
Fax: 020 8567 6979

Email: [creative@creativeresearch.co.uk](mailto:creative@creativeresearch.co.uk)  
[www.createresearch.co.uk](http://www.createresearch.co.uk)



# Contents

---

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Overview	1
1.2	A note on interpreting the findings	1
<b>2</b>	<b>WAY FINDING TO THE DARWIN CENTRE</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	Way finding	3
2.2	Names and icons	4
2.3	Recommendations	5
<b>3</b>	<b>EXPLORING THE DARWIN HALL</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1	Reactions to the Space and Way Finding	6
3.1.1	Finding the David Attenborough Studio	7
3.2	Who is this space aimed at?	7
3.3	Encouraging Visitors into the ‘What can I do here’ space	7
3.3.1	Directional sign at the top of the stairs	8
3.3.2	‘Welcome desk’ sign	8
3.3.3	Information panels	8
3.4	Feedback on Information Panels	9
3.4.1	Title and Intro Wall	9
3.4.2	Welcome to the Darwin Centre	10
3.4.3	What can you do here (plus floor plan)	10
3.4.4	Explorer Taster Video text	11
3.4.5	Explore (at lift)	12
3.5	On Exiting the Lifts at the End of the Explore Tour	12

3.6	Further Signage	12
3.7	Recommendations	13
<b>4</b>	<b>'YOU ARE HERE' SIGNS</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1	Recommendations	16
<b>5</b>	<b>SCIENTIST GUIDES</b>	<b>17</b>
5.1	Images	17
5.2	Use of Quotes	17
5.3	Topics Respondents felt were Unclear	18
5.4	Recommendations	18
<b>6</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>19</b>
6.1	Stimulus	19
	Topic guide: Signs Present	19
	Topic Guide: No Signs	36
6.2	Ethnicity	41

# 1 Introduction

---

## 1.1 Overview

The third formative evaluation session was conducted over a two day period from 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> September 2008. Twenty-one adults took part in one to one, paired depth interviews and one triad interview over the course of Saturday and Sunday. Further details of the sample can be found in the appendix.

The evaluation took place in the new Darwin Centre. Four different topics were covered:

- Way Finding to the Darwin Centre from the main entrance at Cromwell Road
- Exploring Darwin Hall – free exploration with and without signage
- ‘You are here’ signs – evaluation of the most effective device to convey where respondents are on the Explore tour
- ‘Scientist Guides’ visuals – evaluation of the visuals and use of quotes to accompany the visuals

Copies of the stimulus materials, the evaluation objectives and the topic guide are provided in the appendices.

The key findings relating to the above topics are set out in the rest of this report.

## 1.2 A note on interpreting the findings

This is a qualitative evaluation which means we have explored the reactions of a small number of people in considerable depth. We record the nature of their reactions and, where appropriate, follow these up to ensure we understand what people are saying and why they are saying it. In most cases, we do not tick boxes or keep counts since our aim is to explore the range of opinions expressed. One reason for this is that people do not always express their answers in such black and white terms.

In analysing the data we look for where there is a consensus of opinion i.e. all/most/many people expressing the same or similar general view but we also look for the range and variety of opinion that is expressed; these might be opinions offered by just a few respondents as well as those opinions mentioned by ‘some’ of our sample

(i.e. more than a few but less than many). We will also report things that may only be mentioned by one or two people if these seem to offer relevant and insightful observations. We would normally make this clear by stating ‘one respondent said...’

## 2 Way Finding to the Darwin Centre

---

### 2.1 Way finding

This was a straightforward task and the majority of respondents did not have a problem finding their way to the Darwin Centre from the main entrance at Cromwell Road.

Respondents quickly realised where the Darwin Centre was using the map key and colour coding. The colour coding was helpful although a few felt that the orange colour did not stand out as strongly as the other colours on the map, and on the directional signs en route to the Darwin Centre. Some of the icons also lacked standout (e.g. the Explore icon on the grey background).

Some respondents felt that it was helpful to have a free-standing directional sign at the junction of the central hall with the main corridor leading to the Darwin Centre. Although they knew they had to find this corridor, it was sometimes difficult to know when they had reached it because it did not stand out from the niches preceding it (the Darwin Canopy banner over the entrance was helpful for a couple). Currently there is a directional sign in the middle of the central hall but this was rarely noticed. This was especially the case if people walked along the left of the central hall. There is a map on the wall near the junction but most respondents did not stop to look at this.

Most people used the dinosaur in the central hall as a point of reference and then mentally ticked off the areas they passed on the map to ensure they were going in the right direction.

Although not mentioned by respondents, a possible source of confusion could be the orange facade of the 'Dino Store', part way along the corridor and a directional sign at this point might be helpful.

Two respondents found the Darwin Centre by a circuitous route (via the Whale Hall), overlooking the shorter and simpler route. They both relied on the colour coding realising they needed to go through the Blue Zone to reach the Orange Zone but took a longer route through the Blue Zone. One of these respondents felt the signage was poor en route, particularly the directional signs to the Darwin Centre. He felt these signs were missing arrows and often had to guess which way to go.

## 2.2 Names and icons

We had feedback from respondents at various points during the evaluation on the choice of names for the various elements of the public offer and their associated icons. We summarise this feedback here.

The Darwin Centre is represented by a butterfly icon but this appears to relate to just one part of the Darwin Centre (the Darwin Hall) whereas, as we understand it, the whole of the Orange Zone represents the Darwin Centre. The butterfly icon also suggested this was what one would find at this location.

When asked what the representation of the Cocoon on the map indicates, the majority had no idea. The fact that the graphic device is not repeated in the Orange Zone key was not helpful. In fact, only when they saw the Cocoon did people make the connection. At this point most respondents had no idea what went on inside the 'cocoon'. Once it was understood they could go inside, people had a range of suggestions as to what they would see for example, scientists at work, an exhibition area, a conference centre, specimens and artwork.

The term 'cocoon' was rarely used by respondents and they sometimes had difficulty knowing how to describe it, although similar terms were used, such as 'egg' and 'pod', and 'dome' was also used. Previous evaluations have indicated that describing it as 'the Cocoon' carries strong positive associations

The Explore name and icon received mixed reactions. Few respondents linked it to a tour of the Cocoon and those who did based this on what they had learned during previous evaluations. A couple of respondents felt it involved learning about Darwin's ship and his journeys across the globe, some thought it represented an interactive experience, others felt it could signify where you went for a guided tour around the Darwin Centre but not necessarily inside the Cocoon. A couple of respondents thought it could be where you receive a navigational tool, such as an audio tour, to guide you through the Darwin Centre.

The David Attenborough Studio is shown using a black and white icon (which seems to be used for services such as toilets) and does not appear alongside the Orange Zone icons in the map. The David Attenborough Studio name conveyed little by itself (although the information panel in the Darwin Centre clarified what it was about – see 3.4.3).

The Uspace name by itself meant very little (see also 3.4.3) and the icon (bottles) was neither seen as fitting with the name nor suggesting what people might see or do in the space. A couple of respondents took the word ‘space’ literally and imagined an area linked with ‘space exploration’.

The Wildlife Garden name and icon gave rise to appropriate expectations.

## 2.3 Recommendations

1. Freestanding directional signs should be provided at the junction of the central hall with the corridor and possibly outside the Dino Store.
2. Review the use of the names and icons for each element of the public offer.
3. The whole of the Orange Zone represents the Darwin Centre and this should be shown on the map. Consideration should be given to a new name and a suitable icon to represent the Darwin Hall.
4. The Cocoon should be labelled as such or included as an icon in the key under Darwin Centre.
5. The Explore tour could be linked more strongly with the Cocoon, for example, by renaming it ‘Explore the Cocoon’.
6. The DAS name and an orange icon should be shown signifying it is another element of the public offer and included in the Orange Zone key.
7. The Uspace name and icon need rethinking. The choice of name and icon should work together to reinforce what this space is about (from a visitor perspective).

## 3 Exploring the Darwin Hall

---

### 3.1 Reactions to the Space and Way Finding

Respondents had extremely positive comments about the space and there was a definite wow factor: the sorts of descriptions used include amazing, fantastic, beautiful, light, airy, imposing, spectacular, and modern/contemporary. Some spoke of it defying their expectations.

Although respondents had been involved in previous evaluations and had had briefing packs, many did not recognise the Cocoon, understand its storage function nor link it to the Explore tour (see 2.2 also). They wanted to be told at an early stage what the Cocoon is and what is in it. There was also a strong desire to know more about it such as the concept behind the design, the architect and how long it took to build. These observations suggest there is a need for some panels that provide this information, not just about its function but about how it was constructed.

There was a strong desire to touch/tap/stroke the Cocoon. Respondents either did so at the start of their exploration, veering right at the top of the stairs or as they walked along the Darwin Hall.

For respondents who saw the space with signage, exploration was often initially limited to the entrance area, the 'what can I do here' space and the area immediately at the top of the stairs; in some cases, the researchers had to encourage them to explore the lower level. For respondents who did not see any signage, exploration lasted much longer and although the majority still veered left into the 'what can I do here' space, their journey continued down the stairs, along the hall, up the stairs towards the DAS and Uspace, before they came to a natural stop.

The majority of respondents explored the 'what can I do here' space before going down the stairs. Of the 14 respondents interviewed with the information panels on display, only one person did not go into this area first but went down the stairs. Of the 8 respondents interviewed when the panels had been removed, half went into this area before going downstairs (three of these were in a group together).

Overall, respondents who explored the space with the information panels in place had few problems in locating the different areas and could find with little difficulty where the

Explore tour started, the toilets, the Wildlife Garden and the David Attenborough Studio (and Uspace as far as going up the stairs towards the DAS – no further information was provided after this point).

### 3.1.1 Finding the David Attenborough Studio

Respondents who saw the space with signage in place were asked to take the moderator to the DAS. They all did so successfully using the directional signs. The majority of those who did not have signage during their exploration were spontaneously drawn to the area where the DAS is located without knowing what the area is about; they felt a natural curiosity to walk along the Cocoon and towards or up the stairs.

### 3.2 Who is this space aimed at?

There was a strong expectation that the Darwin Centre would be aimed at all visitors including children and young families. This was mainly because the Museum as a whole is perceived to be very family oriented. This was the same for respondents who had not seen any signage; without knowing what was on offer in the Darwin Centre they felt the actual building and the Cocoon would be an attraction for families.

There were very few cues within the Darwin Centre to suggest it was aimed at a more adult audience although some felt the minimalist architecture was more appropriate for adults. Indeed, the names of some of the elements (Explore, Wildlife Garden, Uspace) suggested child friendly experiences. Parents may also make a link between Explore and the 'Young Explorers' activity available at the main entrance. With respect to Uspace, the choice of language (for example, 'chill out') sometimes implied a younger audience.

### 3.3 Encouraging Visitors into the 'What can I do here' space

As we have already noted, the majority of respondents went into the 'What can I do here' space before going downstairs. This includes those who did not see any signage or information panels.

Some mentioned this felt like the most natural thing to do, partly because of the way they tended to navigate spaces; they would prefer to explore the level they were on before moving to another level or if they were right handed they felt it was more natural to go to the left.

Those respondents who went downstairs first said it was because they were drawn towards the Cocoon and wanted a better view of it. They also said it felt natural to go downstairs and look through the large windows of the Darwin Hall especially once the area outside is landscaped.

Although the sign pointing to the welcome desk above the stairs was noticed and used by some respondents during the early interviews, respondents also used other cues so when it was removed<sup>1</sup>, this had no noticeable impact on behaviour.

The cues that respondents used included the directional sign located on the left hand side at the top of the stairs, the welcome desk sign and the information panels.

### 3.3.1 Directional sign at the top of the stairs

This was noticed by almost all respondents. They felt it was in an ideal position at the top of the stairs to be noticed as they entered the Darwin Centre. Some felt it may need to be bigger as it could potentially be obstructed by the flow of visitors. Similarly, respondents felt the text and arrow indicating the Explore Tour, Welcome Desk and Accessible lift should be made bigger in contrast to the arrow to go down the stairs.

### 3.3.2 'Welcome desk' sign

All respondents who were exposed to signage stated they immediately noticed and walked towards the 'welcome desk' sign as they approached the top of the stairs. They felt it was the natural place to go to ask for more information about the Darwin Centre. There was an expectation that the desk would be manned so there would be someone you could go and ask for information. This was felt to be another reason why visitors would gravitate towards the space.

### 3.3.3 Information panels

Respondents noticed a number of different information panels in the area which also drew them to the space. There was a natural curiosity to look at what the images and text were about.

---

<sup>1</sup> It was taken down halfway through the interviews on the Saturday so some respondents explored the space with all the signs except this one on display.

On reaching the lifts, the majority of respondents approached the railings and admired the view of the Cocoon, looking upwards to appreciate the height of the structure. This may be a natural point to have an information panel about the Cocoon such as how it was built, how long it took to build and who designed it.

The majority of respondents who did not see any signs and information panels still felt compelled to explore the 'what can I do here' space first. Although there were no signs they felt it was a large enough area to warrant a visit as opposed to the smaller area to the right of the stairs. Some felt it may lead to another section and were curious to explore. Other reasons included exploring areas on the same floor before venturing down the stairs and wanting to get a better view of the Cocoon.

It is important to note that the evaluation does not fully simulate how the space will be experienced, for example, there were no other visitors moving around the space. Seeing where other visitors go will have an impact on someone as they first arrive. Respondents were also paying far more attention to the space than a casual visitor would. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that visitors can be encouraged to visit the 'What can I do here' space before they head down the stairs

### 3.4 Feedback on Information Panels

#### 3.4.1 Title and Intro Wall

These were often only glanced at and seemed to function only to confirm that the area they were in was indeed the Darwin Centre. Respondents felt this was a natural place to stop and read an information panel and although most did this they felt the Intro wall provided no real clues as to what the Darwin Centre is about. There was some expectation that this panel would be more of a focal point as it was the visitor's introduction to the area.

The images used received little or no spontaneous comments. Of those who did comment, a few felt the butterfly image was ubiquitous and did not convey a sense of what the Darwin Centre is actually about. A couple of respondents felt the image of the scientist looking down a microscope implied the area would have an interactive element to it. Overall the images set a mood for people's visit as opposed to being seen as an information panel or inviting them to interpret what they might find in the Darwin Centre. A greater number and diversity of images might convey a more appropriate message;

however, using too many may overload visitors and encourage them to treat them as 'wallpaper'.

### 3.4.2 Welcome to the Darwin Centre

This panel was felt to be a reasonable introduction to the Darwin Centre. Respondents felt it provided some interesting and impressive information. However, respondents felt that it did not give visitors any real understanding of what is on offer or what they can do in the Darwin Centre.

It is important to take care how information is expressed. Some respondents felt the copy gave rise to an expectation of being able to go into the scientists' work spaces rather than just see into them and that the Cocoon housed all the scientists and would be a hub of scientific activity.

It was felt by some that the image of pinned butterflies was too traditional, overused and unoriginal; respondents suggested using a variety of images to reflect the 70 million animals plants, rocks and fossils that are looked after by scientists.

### 3.4.3 What can you do here (plus floor plan)

This is the key information that respondents felt they needed to appreciate what was on offer in the Darwin Centre. All respondents read this panel and some revisited it to double check what each of the areas was about. However, in its current location visitors would only come across this information once they are well into the space. It was suggested that this information should appear as visitors enter the Darwin Centre in the locations currently occupied by the Title and Intro Wall.

Three of the elements of the Darwin Centre were highlighted in orange in the copy; Explore and DAS came across as interesting and respondents had a reasonable idea of what would be on offer. In contrast, respondents struggled to work out what Uspace was offering them. The choice of language (chill out) and the suggestion you can create your own collections implied it was an area where you might sit down and relax and partake in some creative activities. This was often an appealing idea but respondents were unclear just what they might be doing. Similarly there was confusion over what was meant by 'create your own take', take on what? There was limited recognition that this was the original Darwin Centre building and that it housed the spirit collections.

Those who were aware of this only knew this through attending previous evaluation exercises.

The Wildlife Garden was not mentioned even though it appears on the directional signs. Respondents felt it should be included in the copy.

Some respondents suggested that each element should have its own information panel. They felt this would make it easier to identify what you can do in the Darwin Centre and give each element some prominence.

The floor plan was welcomed as a useful way of conveying an idea of the space and where the different elements are located. Although they could work out where they were on the plan, it would be useful to include a 'you are here' label. The orientation of the plan did not correspond to the orientation of the space which can make it harder to interpret<sup>2</sup>.

#### 3.4.4 Explorer Taster Video text

Not everyone understood what was meant by the expression, a 'self-guided tour'. Although some respondents did interpret it appropriately, some expected this to involve an audio tour in the form of handsets or headphones, some felt that they might be given a leaflet/information pack to navigate around the Cocoon and a couple of respondents expected a guided tour either by museum staff or a real scientist. The lack of clarity of the expression, 'self-guided tour', and the fact that it has the potential to convey the wrong idea to visitors, suggests it may need to be reworded so that it more accurately describes to visitors that they will be making their own way down through the Cocoon, at their own pace (one respondent suggested using the word 'trail' to convey this idea more effectively but this might also suggest that Explore is aimed particularly at children, as 'trails' are often family activities).

Some of the copy is also potentially misleading and created a false expectation. 'Behind the scenes' implies being in a working space and some felt they would be seeing scientists in their place of work. The reference to 'stunning views' might also be

---

<sup>2</sup> The comments made at 2.2. in relation to the Museum map also apply to the floor plan.

misleading as it depends what this refers to; there was some expectation it referred to the Wildlife Garden or the London skyline.

Being told the tour will last approximately 40 minutes and there are no toilets was deemed useful.

### 3.4.5 Explore (at lift)

This was popular with respondents and there were fewer issues relating to this panel.

A few respondents felt the image of a person sitting on a desk implied they would be handed some information by a guide either before the tour started or during the tour. Some even felt it implied a tour guide would be available. There were some comments on the image of the desk, it was seen to be fairly dated and not in keeping with the rest of the Darwin Centre; respondents liked seeing the laptop.

## 3.5 On Exiting the Lifts at the End of the Explore Tour

This was felt to be a key decision point. Visitors are likely to be disorientated as they exit the lifts. They start the tour at a different location and it will not necessarily be clear where this is relative to their current location. They will have been walking around in an enclosed space along a spiral route with no cues to help them physically orientate themselves. Some respondents felt they may not recall any information they had read in the 'What can I do here' space and wanted to be reminded of it at this point. It was pointed out that people may think they can enter the lifts on the ground floor and they would need to be discouraged from this.

The glass doors immediately in front of the lifts that visitors will see when leaving the Explore tour encouraged some respondents to want to find out what is behind them. Suggestions as to what this area might be include a shop, café/refreshment area. Overall, most felt that this area would be part of the exhibition.

## 3.6 Further Signage

The importance of reminding people where they are and what is available probably also holds true at other key decision making points such as the northern entrance from the Waterhouse Building, entering from the Gardens (especially if visitors will be able to enter the Darwin Centre from here as opposed to reentering, and as visitors leave either

the DAS or Uspace (i.e. at the top of the stairs at the northern end of the Darwin Hall). Given there were people who paused as they went along the hall and did not immediately head for the DAS and Uspace, further signs along this area could provide useful encouragement.

### 3.7 Recommendations

1. Directional signs worked well but it may be useful to include one or two additional signs along the length of the Darwin Hall to confirm to visitors they are going in the right direction.

2. A panel should be displayed at a number of different locations that tell visitors the structure is known as the Cocoon along with some interesting facts and figures about it – not just what its function is but how it was constructed etc. The copy could point out that the Explore tour takes them inside the Cocoon along with information about where to go to take the tour.

3. The Museum should anticipate that the surface of the Cocoon will be touched, stroked, tapped etc by lots of visitors.

4. If some elements of DC2 are not appropriate for younger children/family groups then this will need to be made explicit – for example on the relevant text panels introducing each element.

5. Ensure there is a directional sign on the left hand side at the top of the stairs. Consider giving greater weight/emphasis to the information directing visitors to the left relative to the information directing visitors down the stairs.

6. Ensure that the reception desk has a large sign on/above it describing it as the 'Welcome Desk'.

7. The Intro Wall panel currently serves very little purpose. The key information that people need when they first arrive at DC2 is provided in the 'What you can do here' panels and this need to be given greater prominence by locating it in the position given over to the Intro Wall panel. While it may help to incorporate more images into the current panels to convey a better sense of what the Darwin Centre is about, if the 'What you can do here' panels were to be relocated, visitors will find out what the Centre is about from these.

8. The copy should highlight all 4 elements of DC2: Explore, Wildlife Garden, DAS, and Uspace. Consideration should be given to providing an individual panel for each element. The copy could encourage visitors to go to the Welcome Desk to find out more about what they can do in each area.

9. A clearer description of what is on offer in Uspace is required.

10. Care is needed to avoid raising inappropriate expectations (such as going into scientists' work spaces or spectacular views).

11. An alternative to the phrase 'self-guided tour' and in particular the word 'tour', should be considered to avoid giving rise to inaccurate expectations; alternatively the nature of the experience should be clearly explained (see Recommendation 13, below)
12. The floor plan:
- should include a 'you are here' label
- position it in the correct orientation
- should include a large orange icon corresponding to each of the 4 elements.
- the choice of icon should be consistent with the nature of the experience offered
- the same icons should be used on all information (Museum map, directional signs, even on text panels that relate to just one element – for example, the text panels about the Explore tour should also display the Explore icon)
- the type size of the key needs to be large enough to be easily read
13. The Explore video might be an opportunity to manage expectations further e.g.:
- explain that the tour is not suitable for younger children
- showing visitors that the tour takes them into the Cocoon
- if the expression 'self-guided tour' is used, this would be an opportunity to explain what it entails – e.g. that there is a fixed one-way route through the space and that visitors pace their visit themselves
- that it includes views into scientists' work spaces and for one of these spaces, there is the opportunity to talk to the scientists
- that visitors exit from the Cocoon at the 5 <sup>th</sup> floor and the lift will take them to the ground floor level
14. If the 'What you can do here' panels are relocated there will be more space in this area. One option would be to include 'tasters' of the other elements – DAS, WLG and Uspace.
15. Review the choice of images being used in the panels to reflect the variety of specimens held by the Museum.
16. The exit from the lower lifts should be treated as a major decision making point. Visitors will need information to remind them what they can do in DC2 and where they go to do it. This information is not limited to the WLG, DAS or Uspace but should include the Welcome Desk and Explore tour and the toilets. In other words, visitors arriving at this point should be treated as if they have just arrived in DC2. Consideration

should be given to how notices can inform them they should not enter the lifts at this point.

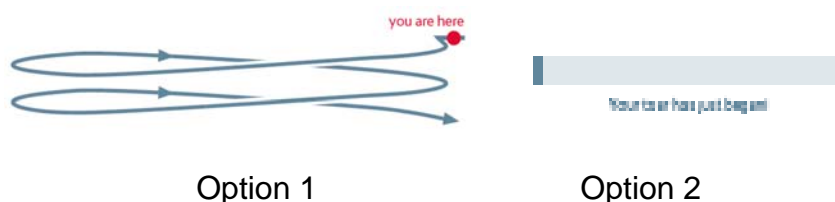
17. The 'What you can do here' panels, including a floor plan (orientated correctly), should be displayed immediately outside the exit to the lifts. There could be two further direction signs. The first of these, immediately outside the lifts, should direct everyone to their left to access all elements. The second directional sign should be at the foot of the stairs with signs pointing in the appropriate directions (up the stairs for the Welcome Desk, the Explore tour and the toilets; to the left for the WLG, ahead for DAS and Uspace).

18. The glass doors opposite the lifts should display information explaining what lies behind them including information that access is for private study and is by prior appointment only. This should serve to satisfy visitors' curiosity while also making it clear this is not an area for them.

19. Consideration should be given to the provision of information at other key decision points. These might include the northern entrance from the Waterhouse Building, at the top of the stairs as visitors are leaving DAS and/or Uspace and in the Darwin Hall if visitors can enter the building directly from outside.

## 4 'You are here' Signs

Two methods of providing feedback on how far visitors had got along the Explore Tour were evaluated. These are shown below.



Option 1

Option 2

The majority of respondents preferred option two because it was instantly recognisable and easy to understand. They often associated the device with downloading information on to a computer (or some other computer-related process) and so did not have to work out what it might symbolise.

In contrast, although the design of option one was popular, it was felt to be harder to understand. While it provides more of a sense of where you are physically in relation to the tour/space, respondents found the overlapping spiral difficult to follow as it crosses over itself. One man made the point that it may reflect where you are physically but may not do so temporally.

Option two was not without criticism however. Some respondents felt that not many people would know what 15% of 40 minutes was, and therefore visitors would still not know how far they had gone.

A number of respondents questioned why there was a need to display any sign showing 'you are here'. They felt that a tour lasting only 40 minutes did not warrant this. Some even felt having such information may put people off the tour; they might feel they will take longer than 40 minutes or they might find the signs anxiety-provoking. It may be that respondents expressed this view because they could not visualise what it would be like inside the Cocoon and how they might feel when making their way through it.

### 4.1 Recommendations

1. Review the need for 'You are here' signs. It may be that a final decision can only be taken at a point when the signs can be evaluated 'in situ' when respondents would have a better appreciation of the space and the need for such signs.

2. Of the two designs, use option 2 although other options may be more appropriate.

## 5 Scientist Guides

---

### 5.1 Images

The scientist guides universally came over as warm and approachable and they certainly challenged most people's views of what a scientist was like. Having said this, many people were aware that the stereotypical image (lab coats, eccentric looking older men with beards etc) is often not borne out in reality and the scientists in the images conformed more to some people's idea of 'bright young people from all over the world with PhDs'.

Some were unsure if the scientists depicted were actors or the genuine article but with the support of their names and titles, quotes (where used) and the paraphernalia of their jobs, the vast majority came down on the side of them being real. When it was confirmed that they were real scientists, respondents often commented that it was a good thing for stereotypes to be challenged. A couple of respondents commented that the scientists were all white however. Another stated she would like to see more scientists as opposed to just four.

There were a few less positive responses to the images however. Some thought they had a rather old fashioned, possibly 1960's, feel about them (the rather posed look, dated furniture, the general design of the images) that was in stark contrast to the state of the art surroundings. A few respondents suggested the visuals may need to be brought to life with the workplace shown in the background or on accompanying film (these comments are likely to recede in the context of the tour).

### 5.2 Use of Quotes

Half the sample saw the images of scientists with quotes while the remainder saw them without the quotes.

Respondents agreed that seeing the quote along with the name and job title of the scientist guides helped to add credibility and led respondents to believe they were real scientists. Some who saw the visuals without quotes spontaneously mentioned they would like to see the scientist's name accompanying the picture with a quote of some sort.

A few comments were made about the naturalness of the quotes. For the most part, people felt these were the sorts of things that scientists might say, but in some cases, they were felt to be rather ‘manufactured’, as though they had been devised in order to impart specific information.

### 5.3 Topics Respondents felt were Unclear

The use of quotes definitely added to respondents’ understanding of what you might see or do in an area as well as making the scientists appear more personable. Respondents generally found the quotes interesting and some helped convey the enthusiasm that the scientists felt for their work.

The topics that respondents felt were unclear are highlighted in the following table which demonstrates the important role that the quotes play.

With Quotes	Without Quotes
A place for investigations	Our historical heart A place for investigations The collections that never sleep Organising nature The DNA detectives Preparing the specimens Intrepid collectors

It should be noted that some respondents took the visuals too literally. For example, those based on butterflies were sometimes interpreted as describing exhibits that would only be about butterflies. A few respondents also had difficulty with certain terms. For example, not everyone knew what arachnids are.

### 5.4 Recommendations

1. Use the visuals with quotes and job titles.

## 6 Appendices

---

### 6.1 Stimulus

#### Topic guide: Signs Present

There are 4 elements to this evaluation: (approximate timings as given)

1. Way Finding to DC2 (15min)
2. Exploring Darwin Hall (45min)
3. 'You are here' signs (5min)
4. 'Scientist Guides' visuals (15min)

**Respondent names:**

#### 1. Way Finding to DC2

Participants will arrive at museum front entrance, be met by us in Central Hall and given a map of the Museum (with the Darwin Centre on).

Hand respondents the Map and ask them to find their way to the Darwin Centre. Do not provide any more clues/guidance.

Ask respondents to work in pairs and articulate their thoughts as they find their way. In particular, if there are points on the journey where they are unsure of where to go, we would like them to bring this to our attention.

We will accompany them and record relevant behaviour/verbalisation:

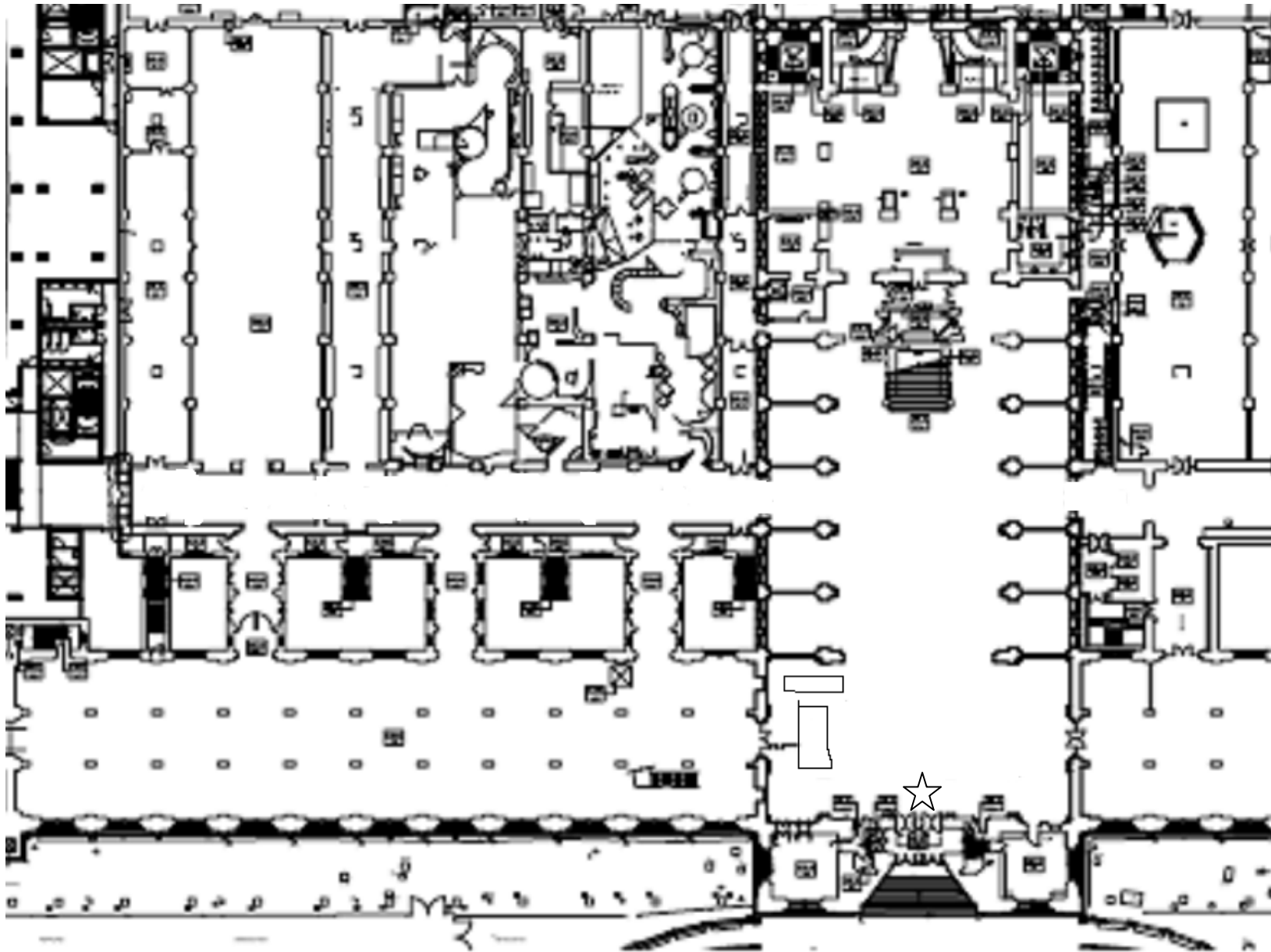
What are the crucial orientation points in the space, i.e. points where participants stop and had to make a decision – is the existing signage sufficient? If/how participants make the connection between the map and the physical signage in the Museum? Are there any crucial points where participants get lost?

**[Record the route they take and any crucial points on the following floor plan]**

**NB inform respondents there are no toilets for the next 30/45mins.**

#### Before starting off

Once respondents have studied the map ask if they have worked out where we are and if they have worked out where the Darwin Centre is. Without prompting, note if they used the colour zoning.



☆ = START

### **At the Entrance to the threshold to DC2:**

Ask respondents to give general feedback about their journey from Central Hall and finding their way.

- How easy/difficult was it to find their way to the Darwin Centre?
- Was the map easy to follow?
- Were there sufficient signs on the route?
- Are there any improvements that could be made to make it easier?

### **Before going into the Darwin Centre:**

Ask respondents what they understand by the following symbols/information on the map and what they would expect to see/do at each one. Point in turn to:

- **Darwin Centre:**
  - **Uspace:**
  - **Wildlife Garden:**
  - **Explore tour:**
  - **C.building (point to it on map do not name it)**

## 2. Exploring Darwin Hall (Atrium)

Participants will arrive at the threshold to DC2

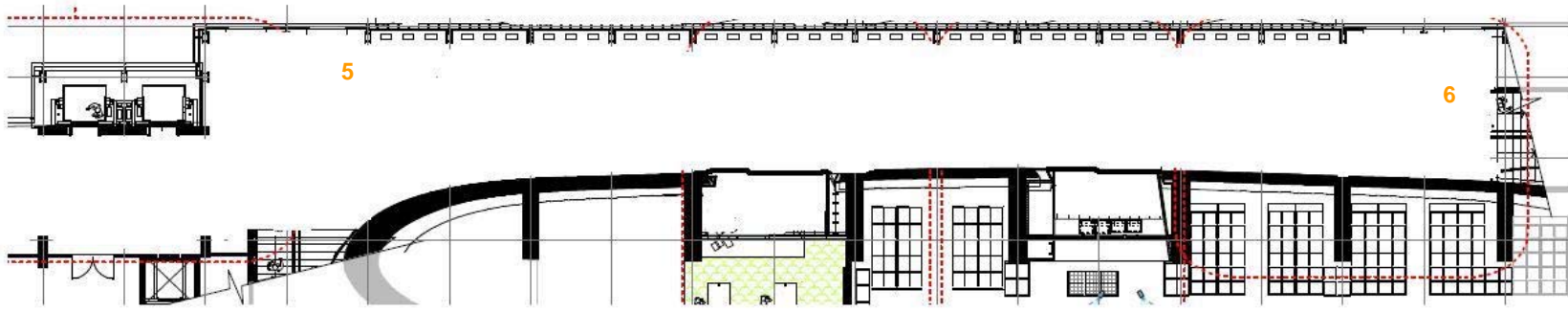
Ask respondents to imagine they're arriving to the Darwin Centre for the first time and explain that we would like them to explore the space in the way they would if it were finished. Explain that a number of information panels and signs have been mocked up; in other words they are not the finished versions but are intended to give a sense of what information will be on display when it opens.

Ask respondents to work in their pairs and articulate their thoughts to you as they explore i.e. talk us through what they see; what the different spaces make them feel like, why they are choosing to go a certain way.

Record where they go on the map below.

### **NB.**

**Uspace** is the working title for the public offer on the ground floor of what is DC1 today. It will be a relaxation space for adults where visitors can also browse through our collections, send comments - and there will also be a rolling programme of small exhibitions showcasing projects that present new perspectives on our collections (e.g. art or community projects)



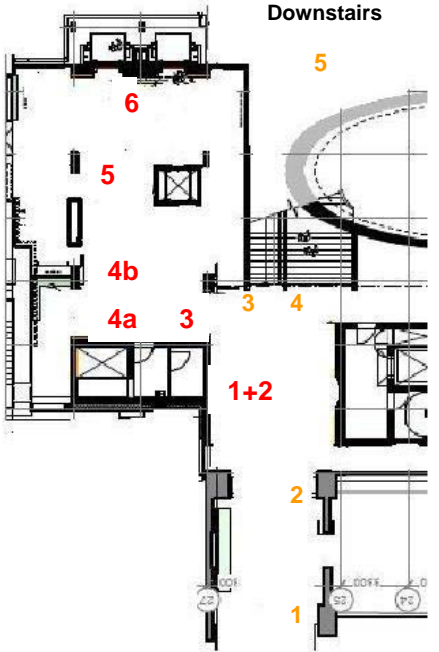
Moderator use the following symbols to record:

\_\_\_\_\_ = route taken

① ② ③ = places people stop



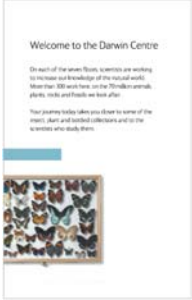


? = points when they have questions



Use the space to record comments/observations as respondents go round:



Darwin Centre Phase 2: Key findings from the third formative evaluation

Record below any observations/comments:

No. on map	visual	comments
1		Title/intro:
2		Intro wall: (important to get feedback on)
3		What you can do here: (important to get feedback on)
4a		What you can do here column: (left of reception)
4b		What you can do here column: (next to welcome desk)

<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Explore</b></p> <p>Your self-guided tour behind the scenes. Enjoy the stunning view from the top of the building.</p> <p>Explore the cocoon that houses our millions of plants and insects. Hear from the scientists who work here and peep into storerooms and laboratories.</p> <p>Take the #100 sign to start your journey. The tour takes approximately 45 minutes. Please note that there are no lifts on the Explore tour.</p> 	<p>Replacing explorer taster video:</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Explore</b></p> <p>Your self-guided tour behind the scenes starts here.</p> <p>The tour takes approximately 45 minutes. Please note that there are no lifts on the Explore tour.</p> 	<p>Graphic at lifts:</p>
<p><b>NB. for following signs record which one's visitors look at/comments on:</b></p>		
<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>Orange Zone</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ Darwin Centre</li> <li>⊕ Explore tour</li> <li>🏠 Uspace</li> <li>🌿 Wildlife Garden</li> </ul> <p>↑ Welcome desk ⓘ</p> <p>David Attenborough Studio ⓘ</p> <p>Toilets ⓘ♿</p>	
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Orange Zone</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↑ Darwin Centre</li> <li>⊕ Explore tour</li> <li>🏠 Uspace</li> <li>🌿 Wildlife Garden</li> </ul> <p>↑ Welcome desk ⓘ</p> <p>David Attenborough Studio ⓘ</p> <p>Toilets ⓘ♿ →</p>	

3	<p><b>Orange Zone</b></p> <p>← 🌐 Explore tour  Welcome desk ⓘ  Accessible lift. ♿</p> <p>👉 🏠 Uspace  🌿 Wildlife Garden  David Attenborough Studio 📺</p>	
4	<p><b>Welcome desk</b></p>	
5	<p><b>Orange Zone</b></p> <p>↑ 🌿 Wildlife Garden</p> <p>🏠 Uspace →  David Attenborough Studio 📺</p>	
6		

**At the end of their exploration**

Initial reactions to the space

What you believe *the Cocoon* is (do not refer to it as such)

If you were offered a tour of *the Cocoon*, where do you think this would take place?

Initial reactions to the information/signs; in particular any points where they needed more information

What are the main things visitors can do in the Darwin Centre; prompt till exhausted

Unprompted: (write in)	Prompted: (what do they understand by these:  Explore:  David Attenborough Studio:  Uspace:
------------------------	---

If you want to go on the explore tour what do you do/where do you go?

If you need to go to the toilets where are they?

If you wanted to go to the Wildlife Garden how would you do it?

**Bring them back to the entrance of DC2**

Is it clear what there is for visitors to do in the Darwin Centre and where you need to go?

**Get comments/feedback on Information panels 1&2 (red) and record at pg 6/7/8  
note any comments on directional signs (orange)**

What audience is the Darwin Centre suited to? (If respondents feel DC is suitable for families, ask what could be done to convey the idea it is more for adults?)

**Ask them to look at graphics 1&2**

**In the 'what can I do here' space**

- If respondents visited this space before going down the stairs, was there a particular reason?
- If respondents went downstairs first without visiting here, why was this?

What do you feel is the purpose of this area?

**Is it clear that this area:**

Explains what visitors can do in the DC?

Is where you go when you want to go on the Explore Tour?

Do respondents feel that more needs to be done to draw visitors to this space before they go down the stairs, if so how might this be done?

**Get comments/feedback on Information panels 3-6 (red) record at pg 6/7 note any comments on directional signs (orange)**

**Take respondents to the lifts on the lower floor: explain that this is where one ends up at the end of the explore tour**

What information do you need at the exit from the lifts?

**Ask respondents to take you to the David Attenborough studio:**

### 3. 'You are here' signs

This evaluation can take place with participants sitting down at tables.

The 2 sets of symbols convey the same idea – telling visitors how far they are in their journey through the Explore Tour

Show respondents the cross section/drawing of Explore to give participants an idea of what the route looks like

Show them the options - Which one is the clearest? Why is this?

#### Option 1



#### Option 2



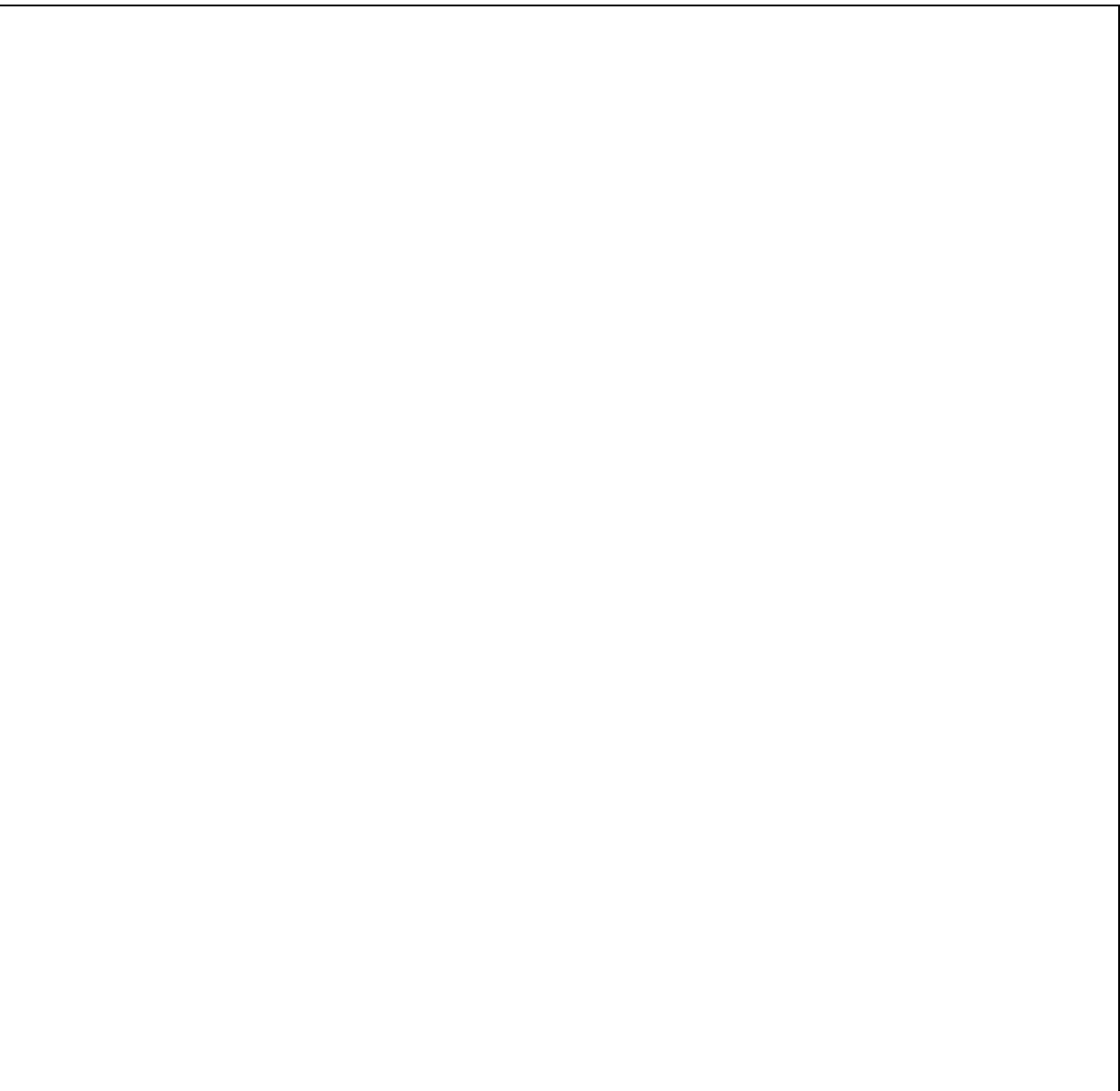
### 4. Scientist guides visuals

There are a series of pictures featuring 'scientist guides' holding different props. The images will appear on large panels introducing different areas in Explore

Show half the sample the set of visuals with quotes and half the sample the set without quotes (display all pictures from any one set) – **SEE ROTATIONS**

**NB – place cards face down after use – ready for next group.**




- Do people perceive them as real museum scientists or just actors?
- Are the pictures successful in making the scientist guides look friendly and approachable?
- To what extent do the images conform or challenge people's perception of scientists?



- What do you think each area is about – what are you going to find here – are there any that are less obvious?

**NB there won't be time to ask about each photo so should concentrate on identifying those which respondents are unsure about**

- Do the visuals help to convey clues as to the content of the different areas?
- Do the quotes that accompany them help in this regard? Do they read naturally?

<p><b>Meet your scientist guides</b></p> <p>"Welcome to these world-class collections stores. My fantastic job is to look after the arachnids, things like spiders, scorpions and mites."</p> <p>Jan Beccaloni, arachnid curator</p> 	
<p><b>Our historical heart</b></p> <p>"Here we keep some of the oldest specimens. It's amazing to see plants that were pressed more than 350 years ago."</p> <p>Mark Spencer, plant curator</p> 	
<p><b>Organising nature</b></p> <p>"Biodiversity is like a big jigsaw. We have collected many pieces but need to organise them and fill the gaps."</p> <p>Bianca Huertas, butterfly curator</p> 	

### The DNA detectives

'Here we study differences in the molecules of living things. This helps us tell species apart and understand how they are related.'  
Mark Spencer, plant curator



### A place for investigations

'It can take hours of patient analysis to make a breakthrough. We then publish articles to make our findings available to everyone.'  
Blanca Huertas, butterfly curator



### Intrepid collectors





'Amazingly there are still little-explored places and unknown species. Two of us can collect 20,000 insects in three weeks of fieldwork.'  
Max Barclay, beetle curator



### Preparing the specimens

'Here we pin insects and mount plants. Once properly mounted, a specimen can last for centuries in the collections.'  
Max Barclay, beetle curator



<p><b>The collections in close-up</b></p> <p>Here we study tiny details of specimens. It's amazing to examine things as small as hairs on a mole's back. Jan Beccaloni, arachnid curator</p> 	
<p><b>Looking after the collections</b></p> <p>"As a curator, I keep the arachnid collection safe and develop it for future generations." Jan Beccaloni, arachnid curator</p> 	
<p><b>The collections that never sleep</b></p> <p>The collection is a working resource. Every year we have about 100,000 insects out on loan with specialists all over the world. Max Barclay, beetle curator</p> 	
<p><b>Goodbye for now</b></p> <p>I hope you enjoyed your visit and now share our passion for things natural. See you again, here or online. Mark Spencer, plant curator</p> 	

## ROTATIONS

### Saturday 13th September

Timeslot	Interviewee	Signage	Rotation
10:15-11:45		Y	Quotes
10:30-12:00		Y	No quotes
11:45-1:15		Y	No quotes
12:00-1:30		Y	Quotes
1:45-3:15		Y	Quotes
2:00-3:30		Y	No quotes
3:15-4:45		Y	No quotes
3:30-5:00		Y	Quotes

### Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September

Timeslot	Interviewee	Signage	Rotation
10:15-11:45		Y	Quotes
10:30-12:00		Y	No quotes
11:45-1:15		N	No quotes
12:00-1:30		N	Quotes
1:45-3:15		N	Quotes
2:00-3:30		N	No quotes
3:15-4:45		N	No quotes
3:30-5:00		N	Quotes

## Topic Guide: No Signs

Section 2 of the topic guide was amended for those respondents who explored the space without any information panels on display.

### **2. Exploring Darwin Hall (Atrium)**

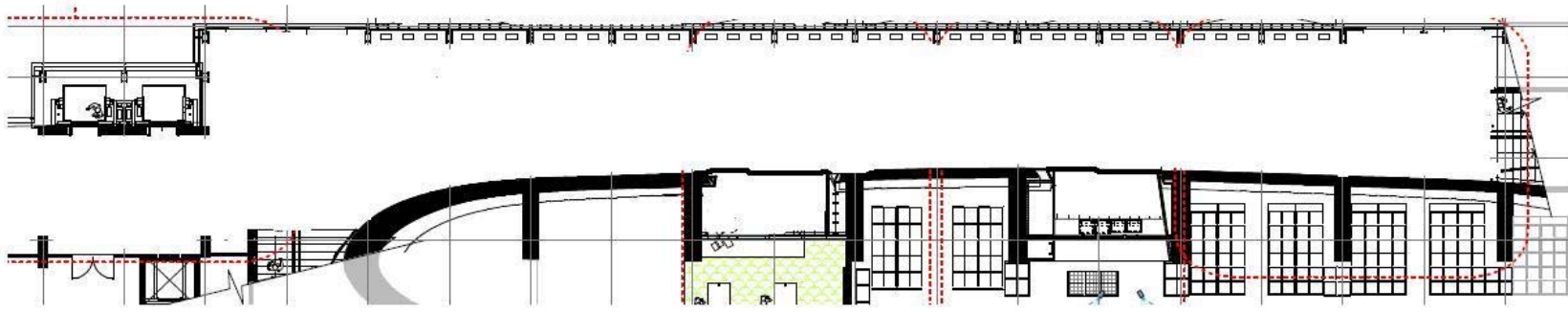
Participants will arrive at the threshold to DC2

Ask respondents to imagine they're arriving to the Darwin Centre for the first time and explain that we would like them to explore the space in the way they would if it were finished.

Ask respondents to work in their pairs and articulate their thoughts to you as they explore i.e. talk us through what they see, what the different spaces make them feel like, why they are choosing to go a certain way.

Record where they go on the map below.

For those not seeing signage, prompt on/record thoughts on where they would expect to see signage.



Moderator use the following symbols to record:

\_\_\_\_\_ = route taken

① ② ③ = places people stop

? = points when they have questions

Use the space to record comments/observations as respondents go round:



Darwin Centre Phase 2: Key findings from the third formative evaluation

**At the end of their exploration**

Initial reactions to the space

What you believe *the Cocoon* is (do not refer to it a such)

Any points where you needed information/ would expected to see signs?

Any areas you were naturally drawn to?

What are the main things visitors can do in the Darwin Centre; prompt till exhausted

Unprompted: (write in)

If you want to go on a tour through the Cocoon, where do you imagine you would go to do this?

If you need to go to the toilets where are they?

**Bring them back to the entrance of DC2**

When would you expect to see/find signs telling you where you can go/what you can do?

What audience is the Darwin Centre suited to? (If respondents feel DC is suitable for families, ask what could be done to convey the idea it is more for adults?)

### In the 'what can I do here' space

- If respondents visited this space before going down the stairs, was there a particular reason?
- If respondents went downstairs first without visiting here, why was this?

What do you feel the purpose of this area might be?

**Explain that this is going to be a reception area where visitors can find out what they can do in the Darwin Centre. This is introducing where you would go to go on a tour through the Cocoon.**

Do respondents feel that more needs to be done to draw visitors to this space before they go down the stairs, if so how might this be done?

How can we make sure we draw visitors back to the reception (and Explore) if they have decided to look at the Hall or the garden first?

**Take respondents to the lifts on the lower floor: explain that this is where one ends up at the end of the explore tour**

What information do you need at the exit from the lifts?

## 6.2 Ethnicity

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Total white	16
Total BME	5
Total Asian/Asian British	3
Total Black/Black British	2