

The Boyden Observatories Museum – Project Overview

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Abstract: *The planned museum at Boyden about the history of the observatories in Bloemfontein as well as the Roberts archives and all the most important contributors to astronomy in the region will be discussed. The layout, current progress, future plans, the people involved and all relevant information will be shown. A conclusion about the possible impact and the possible events around the opening will then be made.*

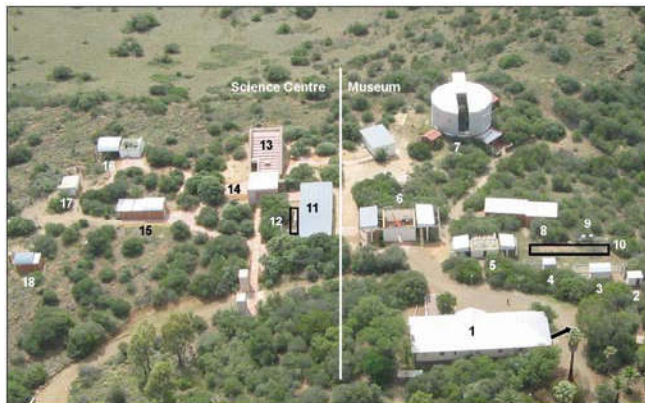
Introduction:

The first official announcement of the Boyden Observatories Museum Project. The Boyden observatory is a unique facility and has a strategic location, therefore the development is important. Boyden not only has strong research, public and educational outreach programs, but also has a strong heritage in terms of its impact on astronomy in the region and internationally. This is one of the main reasons behind the establishment of a museum at the Boyden Observatory, to preserve, display and remember this heritage. A strong team has therefore been taking shape the last year to tackle this prestigious project.

The Team:

- MJH Hoffman, DP van Jaarsveldt, HJ van Heerden, B van Zyl – Boyden Bloemfontein SA
- Keith Snedegar – Utah Valley University
- Allison Doane – Librarian, Harvard Plate stacks
- Owen Gingerich – Harvard
- John Butler – Armagh
- David Andrews – Armagh
- Kevin Schindler – Lowell
- Pat Seitzer – Michigan
- Rudi Lindner – Michigan

Fig.1 Boyden Museum terrain layout



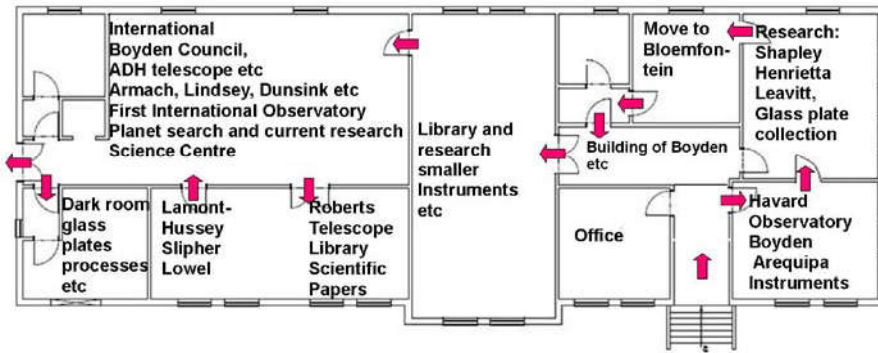


Fig. 2 Boyden Museum main building layout

The Layout:

The museum will have an extended layout in terms of the exhibits. The Boyden Observatory grounds can in evect be split into two specific sections: An Science Centre and The Museum section, with the current research components spaced throughout (Fig. 1). The main building (#1 in Fig. 1) lends itself to a further division for specific exhibits on locations, people, research and instruments (Fig. 2).

The main aim of the project is to not only preserve and recover the heritage and artifacts of the different components involved, but to expand the attractiveness of the Boyden Observatory in terms of its tourist attraction and teaching capabilities.

Milestones achieved thus far are the following:

- Partial cleanup and sorting of “stuff” in the individual store rooms.
- Partial archiving of old journals and magazines.

- Refurbishing of the hardwood floors in the Main and 13-inch Boyden Refractor buildings.
- Recovering of the main camera’s used on the Lamont-Hussy 27-inch refractor telescope.
- Recovering on one of the Roberts telescopes.
- Recovering and partial restoration of a number of smaller instruments.

In Conclusion:

- The museum will attract a lot of local and international tourists and interest.
- Protection of historical astronomical artifacts and documents.
- Recognition of the important heritage created by the different individuals and institutions involved.
- Nice place to be!

Possible International conference/symposium: “The discovery of the universe and its influence on the human race - religion, philosophy, science.” ☆