

A people-centred Home Front story

The vision

What the exhibition sets out to do

- Bring the Home Front experience of the Second World War to life through people, voices and objects.
- Put personal stories and lived experiences alongside the historical events.
- Use objects, oral histories, archive material and interactive elements to encourage discovery.
- Create accessible, family-friendly spaces alongside opportunities for reflection.

The five themes

- The Home Front: everyday life, family, evacuation, rationing and volunteer organisations.
- The Belfast Blitz: air raids, loss, emergency response and resilience.
- Industry and the War Effort: factories, farms, shipyards and aircraft production.
- Allies and Connections: Northern Ireland's strategic place within the wider conflict, US and other Allied soldiers stationed in Northern Ireland.
- Memory, Remembrance and Legacy: how the war is remembered and how its legacy shapes lives and communities.



Exterior

A sign to draw in visitors

The museum is tucked along Talbot Street, so we're exploring ways to make it more visible.

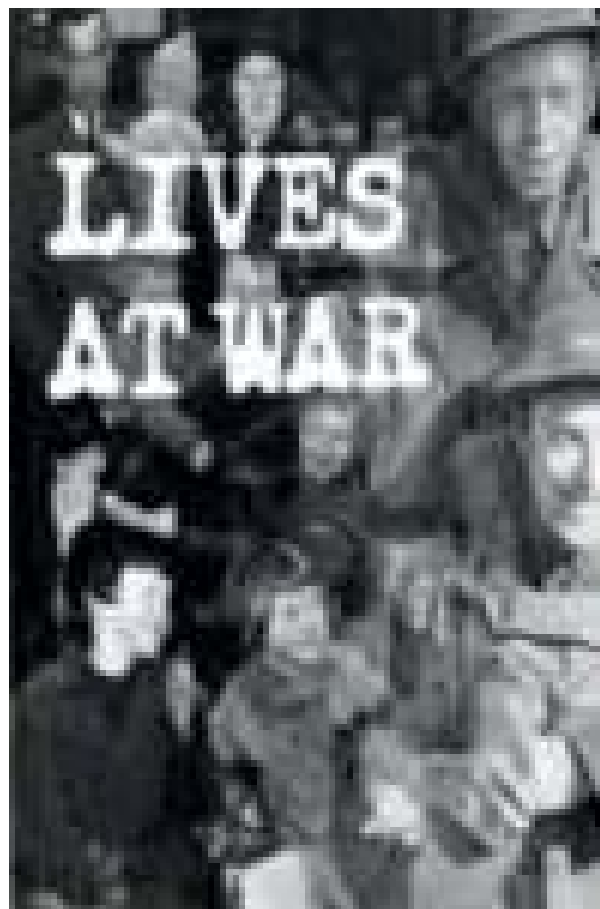
The exterior design draws on visual elements of Northern Ireland's Second World War story, including searchlights, to make the museum more visible and invite visitors in.



Welcome and first impressions

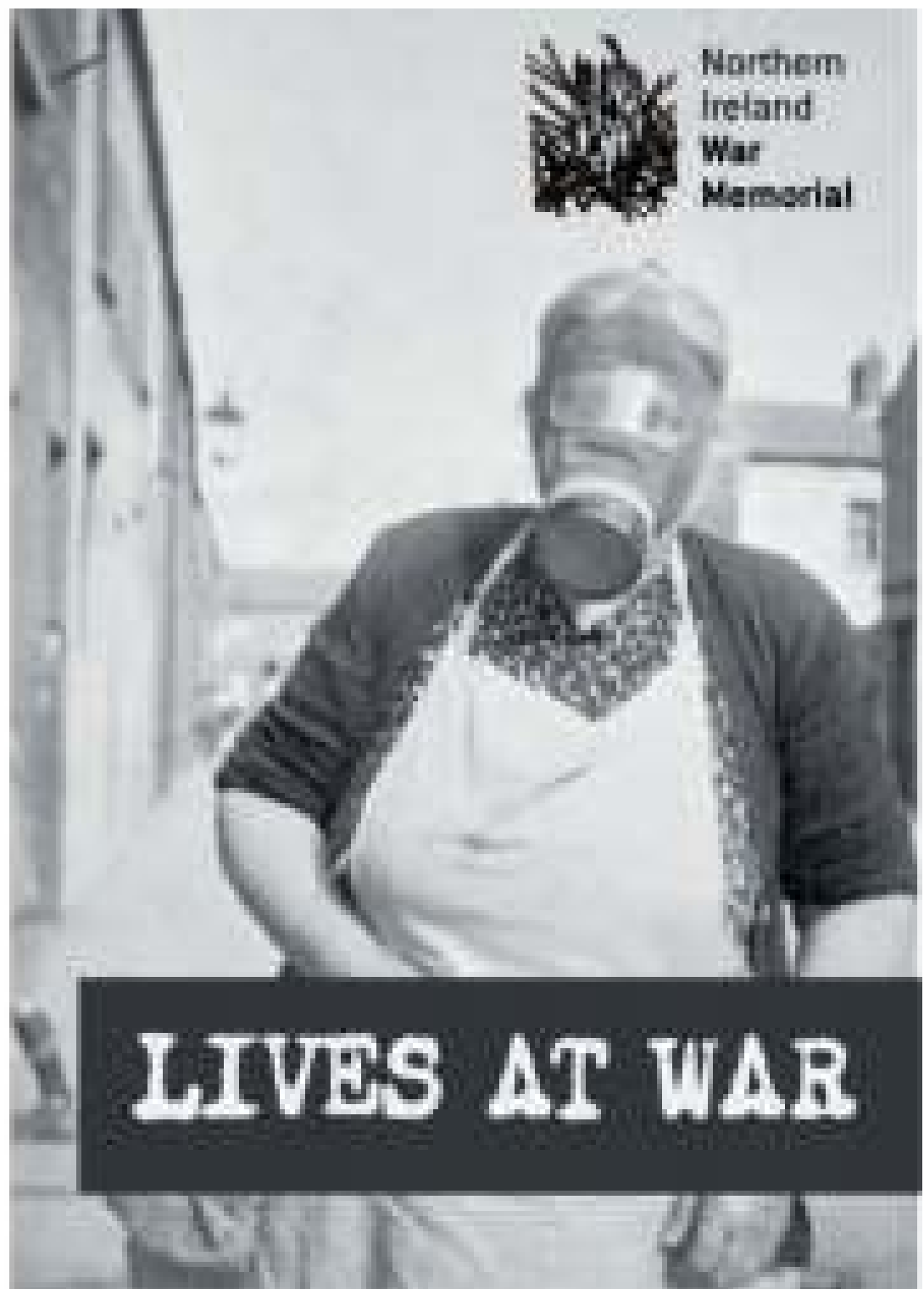
Entrance and lobby

The entrance and lobby will introduce visitors to the stories of Northern Ireland during the Second World War. This welcoming space will set the tone for the museum, inviting people to explore how the war shaped everyday lives at home in Northern Ireland.



LIVES AT WAR

Northern Ireland
War Memorial

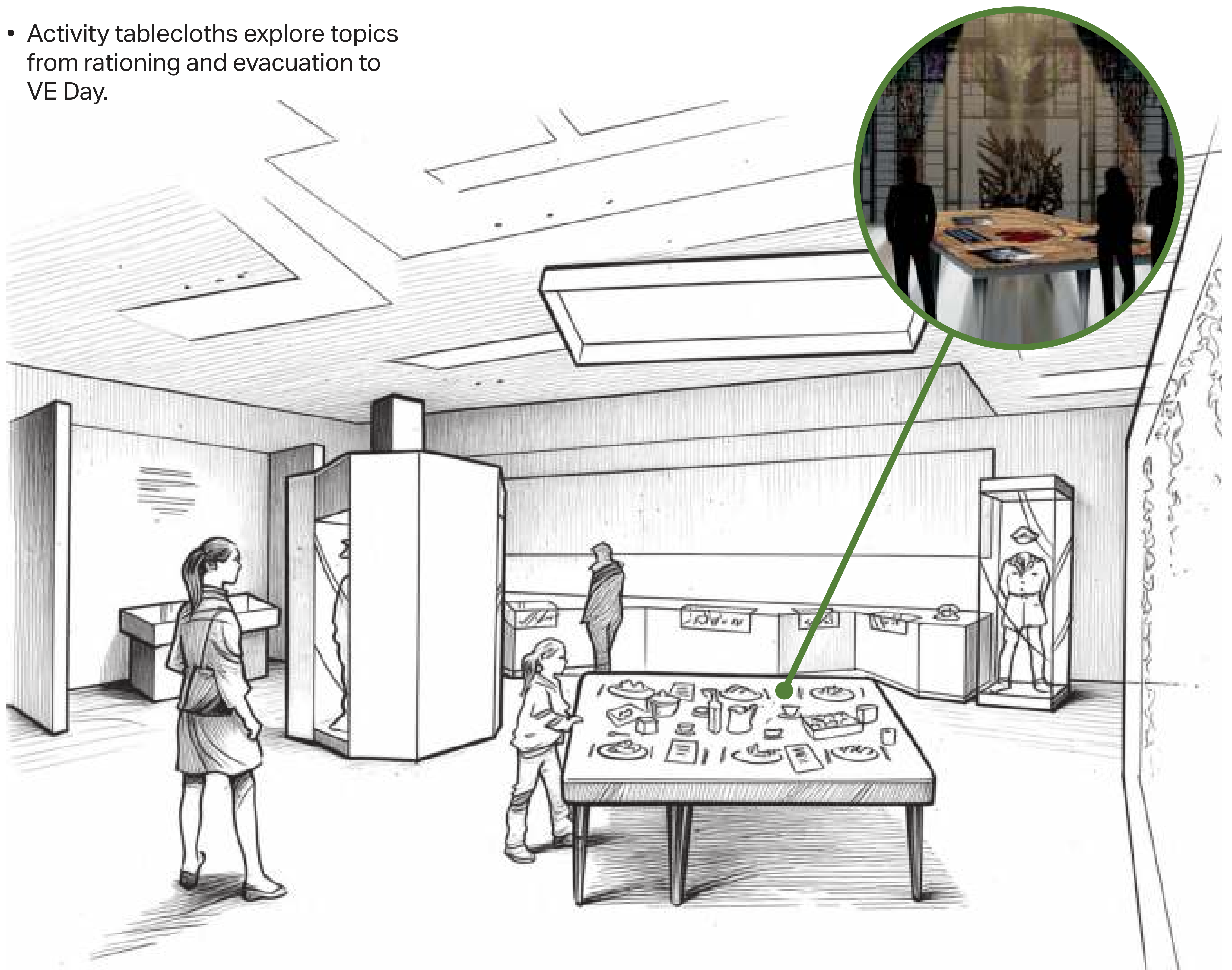


A map to open up the story

Introductory AV and flexible activity space

The introductory AV show:

- A 6 -8 minute map show with archive material, animation, narration and sound.
- Explore the strategic importance of Northern Ireland's wartime role, from Allied airfields and agriculture to the border with neutral Éire and the Donegal Air Corridor.
- Removable tables can also be used for hands-on activities and events.
- Activity tablecloths explore topics from rationing and evacuation to VE Day.



Objects, artwork and hands-on discovery

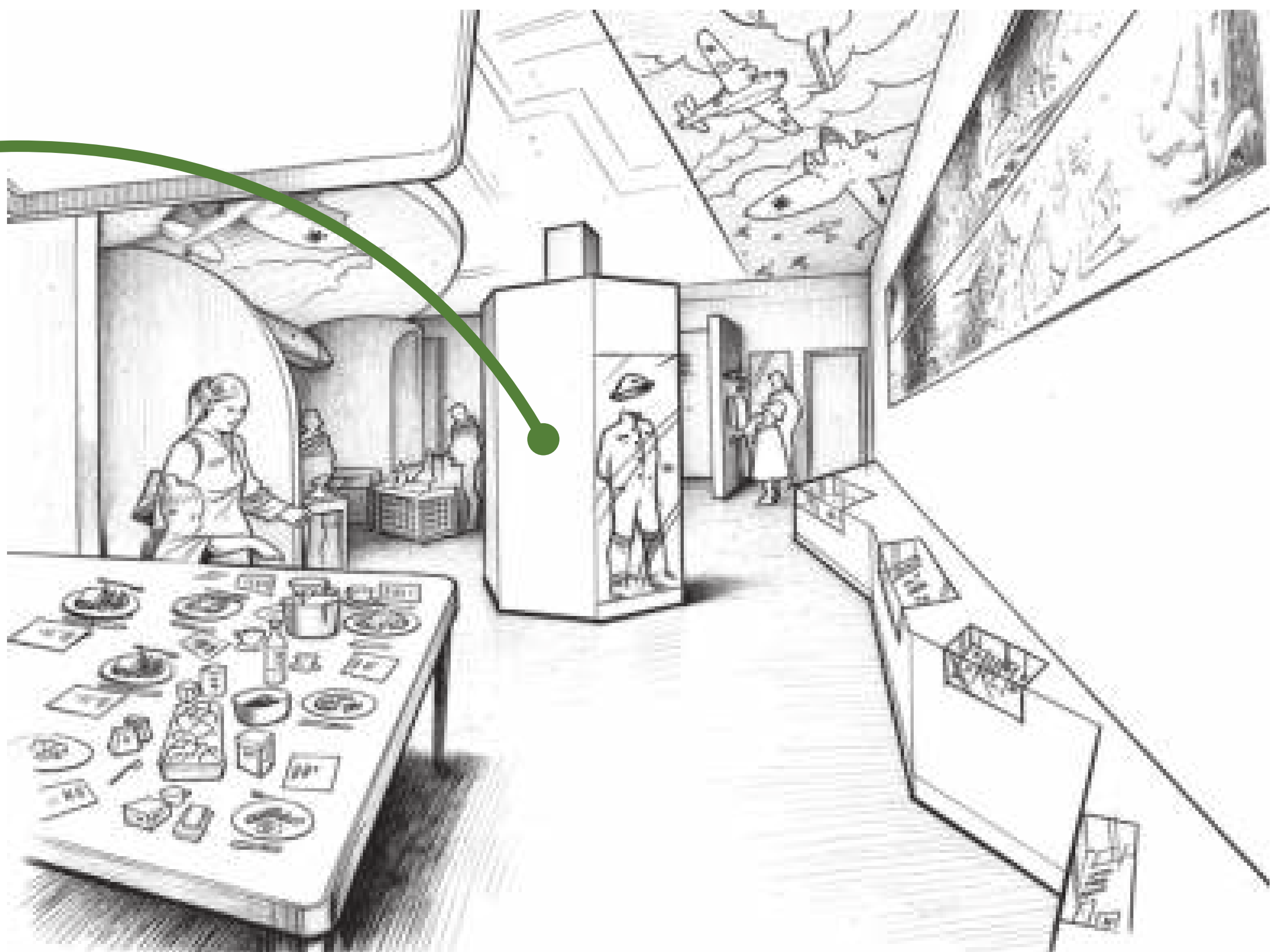
The copper frieze and central displays

Stories along the copper frieze art piece

- Objects and oral histories explore Allied soldiers in Northern Ireland, agriculture and local industry. These stories connect with the stories shown on the copper frieze above.
- Ceiling graphics show Allied aircraft movements.
- Second World War-era telephone playing oral histories linked to the objects on display.

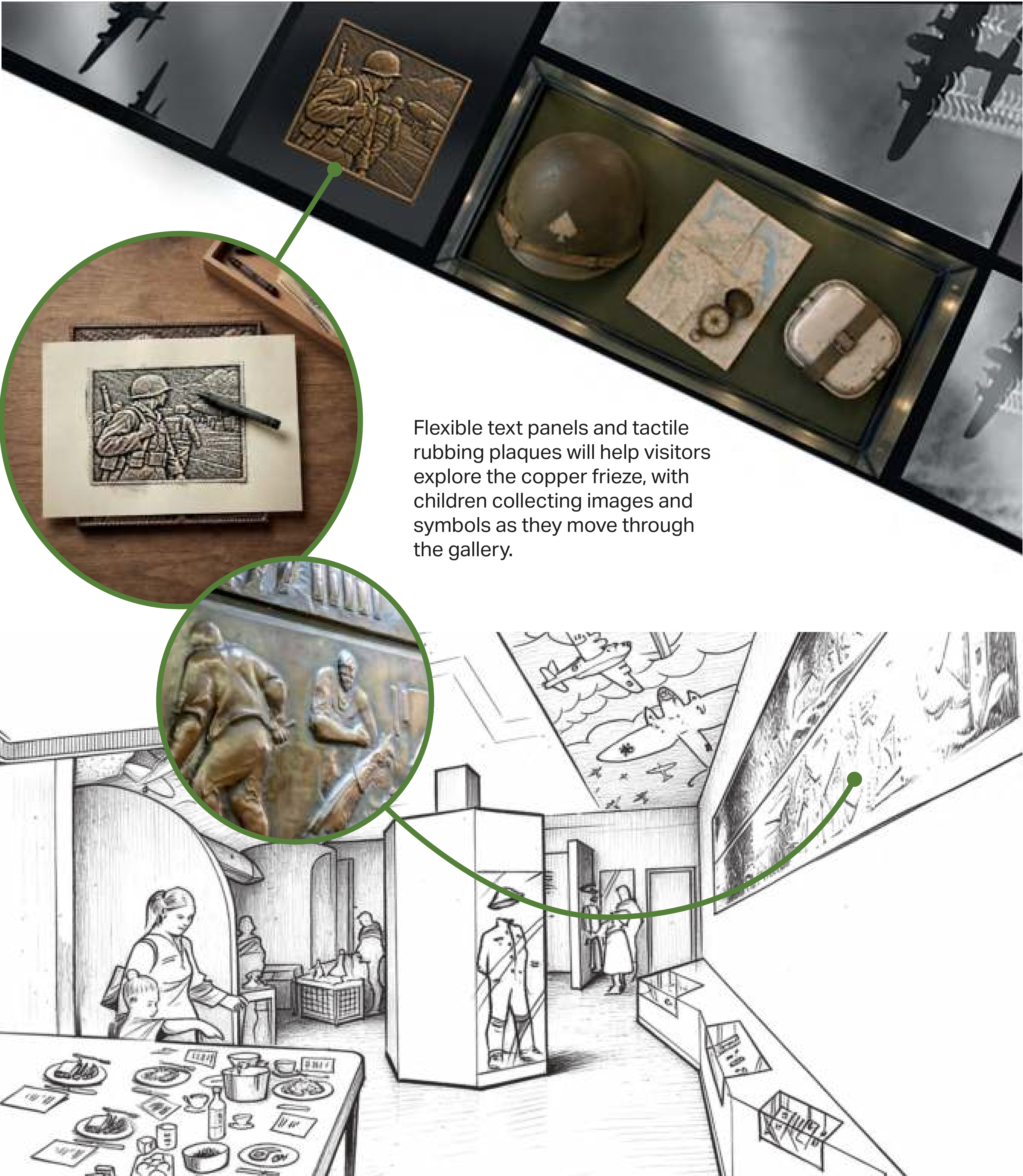
Central Column

- Uniforms of the people who worked, volunteered and cared for others on the Home Front, including organisations like the Home Guard and Air Raid Wardens.



Objects, artwork and hands-on discovery

The copper frieze and central displays



Flexible text panels and tactile rubbing plaques will help visitors explore the copper frieze, with children collecting images and symbols as they move through the gallery.

The Blitz, remembered through lives

Personal stories and the visitor journey

- Explore evacuation, family life and loss
- Oral histories, objects, images and a research hub with an interactive screen bring personal stories of evacuations and the Belfast Blitz to life.
- Then-and-now images of Belfast and VE Day footage connect wartime Belfast with the city today.

