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## Mega museum planned for a huge former hospital in Naples

# Italy has begun work on what it claims will be “the biggest cultural infrastructure in Europe” - a new museum complex inside the vast Albergo dei Poveri building in Naples.

The Albergo dei Poveri was originally a hospital and almshouse commissioned by the Bourbon King Charles III in the 18th century. Now largely abandoned, around half of the huge 100,000 sq m building will be transformed.

This will include:

- A new home for the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (MANN), with 10,000 sq m of exhibition space
- Space for Naples' National Library
- Teaching facilities and student accommodation for the city's Federico II University

The new archaeological museum in Naples, known as MANN 2, will have a distinct focus on Pompeii. Approximately 10,000 sq. m of the site will be devoted to the remains of Pompeii and Vesuvius, and their discovery during the 18th century, with a series of rooms covering topics like the excavations, daily life, and the tragedy of the city's destruction. The museum will showcase over 40,000 objects related to Pompeii that are currently in storage at the existing Naples Archaeological Museum (MANN).

The project is seen as a major opportunity for Naples to showcase its rich archaeological heritage and boost its status as a global cultural destination. The €147m project is part of a wider cultural revival in Naples, which has seen its tourism numbers soar in recent years. It is expected to give a new purpose to the long-abandoned Albergo dei Poveri site and attract more visitors to that area of Naples. The city's culture minister Gennaro Sangiuliano says Naples is now a “global cultural capital” due to its history and identity and to support the wider regeneration and improvement of Naples' tourism and cultural offering. It will be a “key cultural coup” for the Naples area that will attract visitors from far and wide, according to the

MANN director. However, there are concerns the projects could price out residents, with 10,000 evictions a year already. Italia Nostra heritage group says the government should ensure free museum access for Neapolitans.

The renovation work began in April and is due to be completed by mid-2026, according to the lead architect Paolo Desideri. He says adapting such a huge historic building has presented many challenges, but the plans will incorporate modern archaeological display elements.

The new MANN museum space will showcase artefacts from Pompeii, the ancient Roman city buried by Mount Vesuvius' eruption in 79AD. This includes items currently in storage, such as statues, household objects and precious metals.