Introduction to Omeka.net

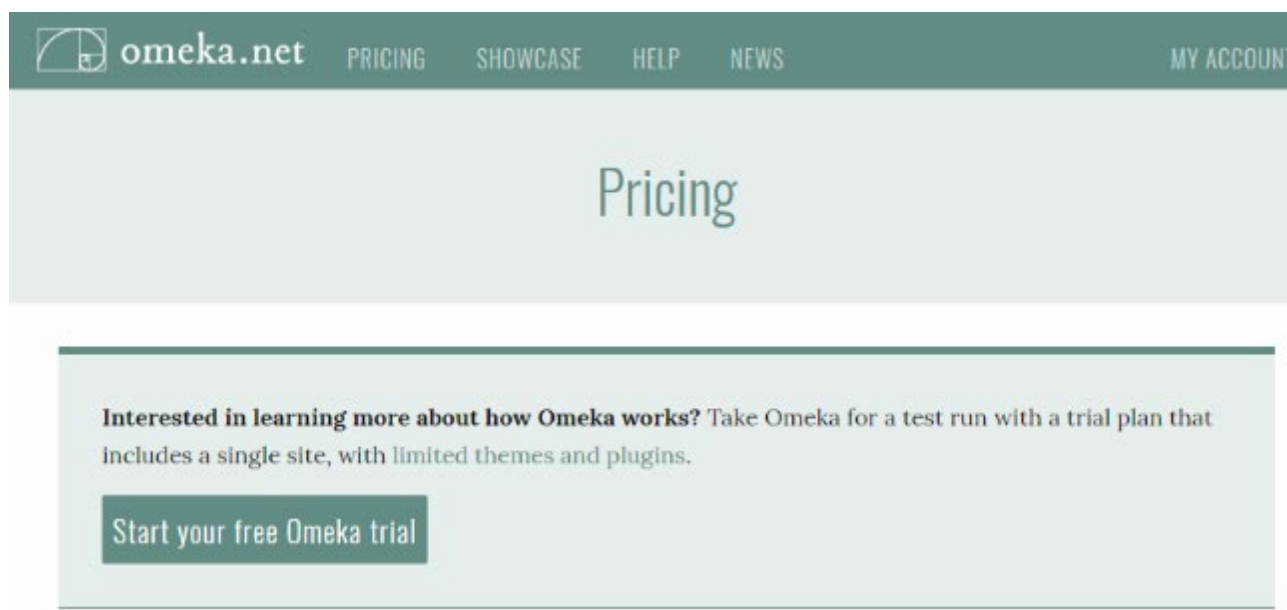### 1. Sign up for an Omeka account

Figure 1: Sign up for a new account screen on Omeka.net

Go to www.omeka.net and click on **Pricing**. Choose **Start your free Omeka Trial**. Fill in the sign-up form. Check your email for the link to activate your account.

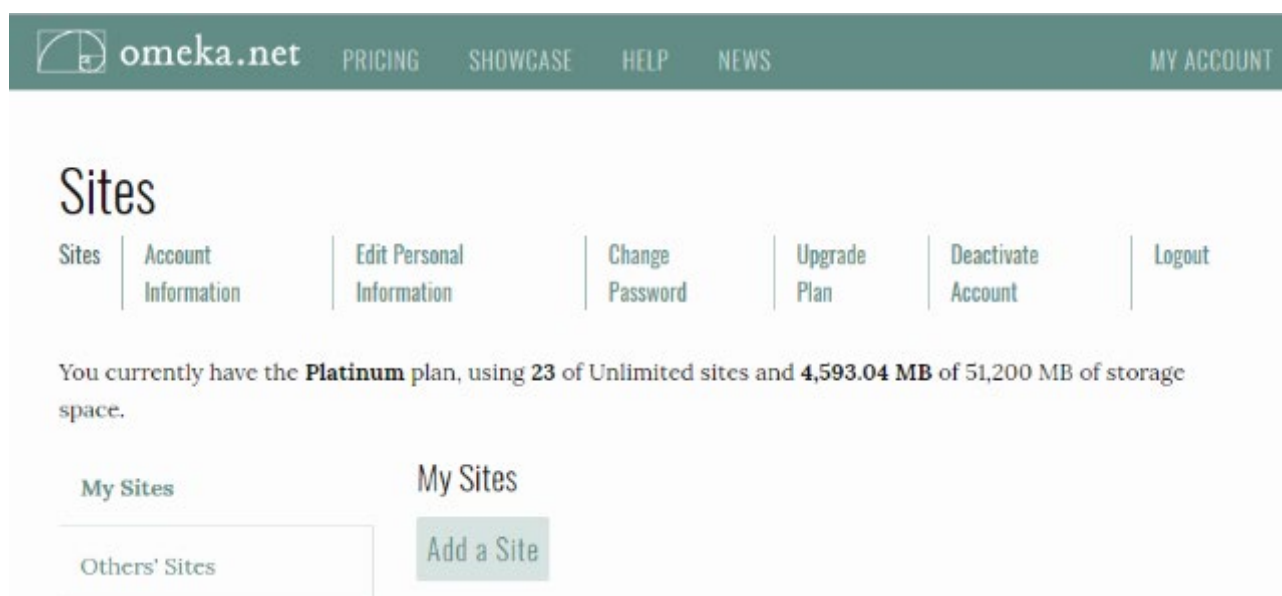### 2. Create your new Omeka site

Figure 2: The Omeka Dashboard, add your site

After you have clicked on the link in your email, click on **Add a Site**. Fill in information about your site's URL, the title you want to use, and a description if you would like. Click on **Add Your Site**.
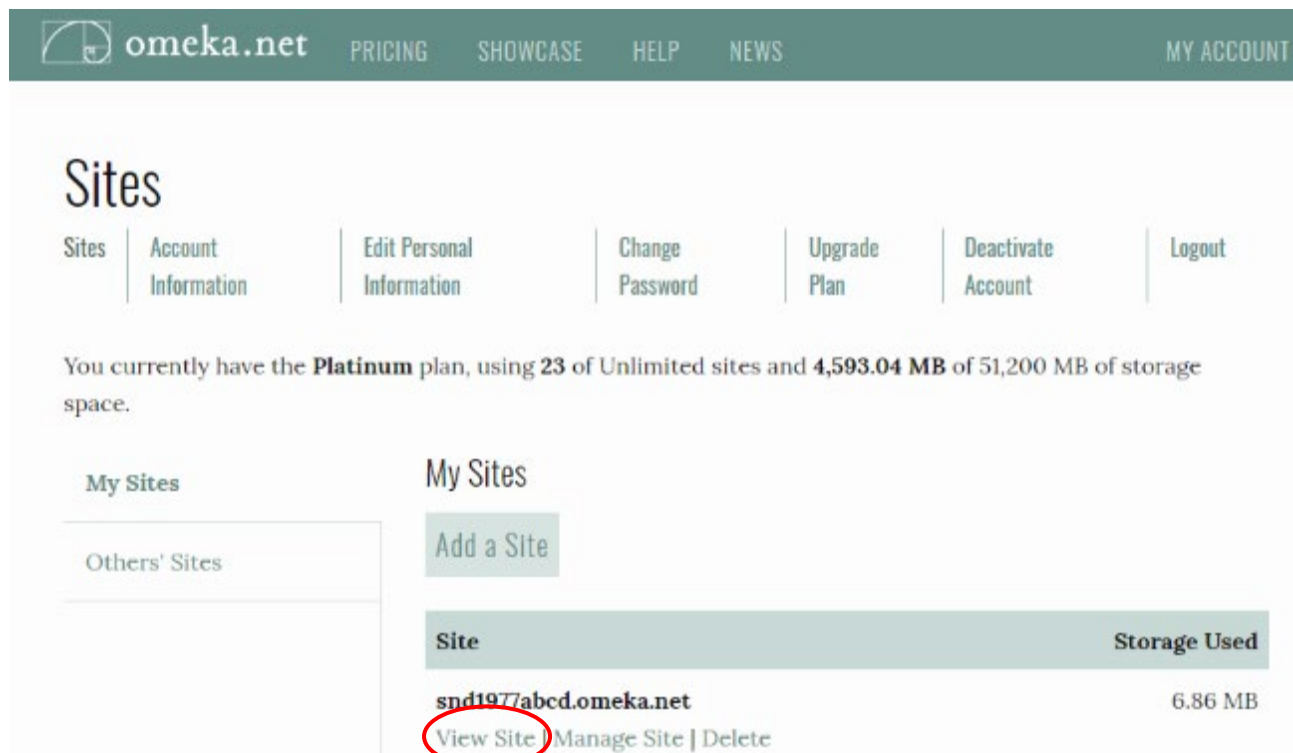
You have a new Omeka site!

Figure 3: The Omeka Dashboard, view your site

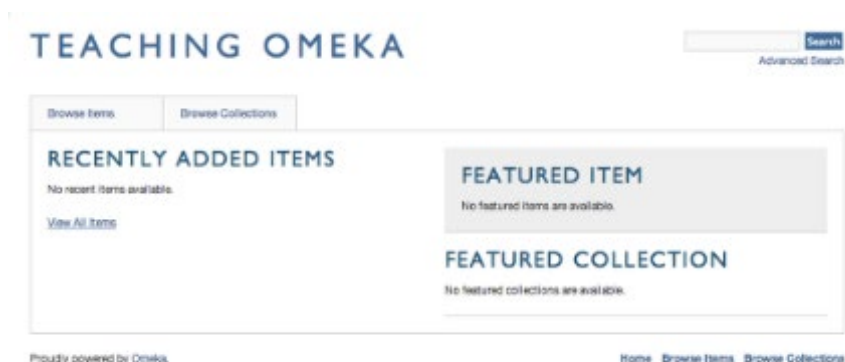To see what the website looks like, click on **View Site**.

Figure 4: The public view of the website

This is the public-facing element of your empty Omeka site. It is currently empty, waiting for you to fill it in. You will need to return to the dashboard to begin filling in the website. To get back to your dashboard, click the **Back** button or enter **http://www.nameofyoursite.omeka.net/admin**. This time, click on **Manage Site**.
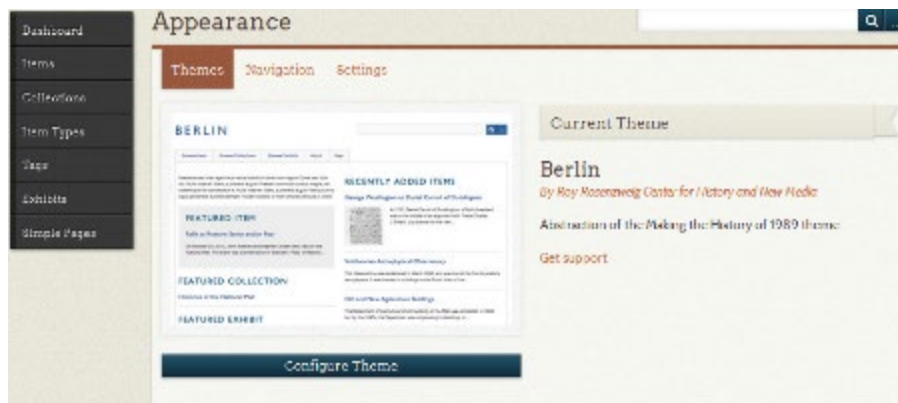
3. **Changing themes**

Figure 5: Changing themes

Omeka allows you to change the look of your public-facing site by changing themes. To do this, click on **Appearance** (at the top of your dashboard). Your free account offers four different themes to choose from. Press the green **Use this theme** button to activate your new theme. Then visit your public site by going to **www.nameofyoursite.omeka.net**. I suggest you do this in a new tab.

If you do not immediately see the new theme, try doing a [hard refreh](#) on your browser.

Once you have checked out your new theme, head back to your dashboard. You can switch back to your old theme, keep this one, or select one of the other options.

The basic Omeka plan offers four themes. More are available via the institutional subscription or paid plans.

4. **Install plugins**
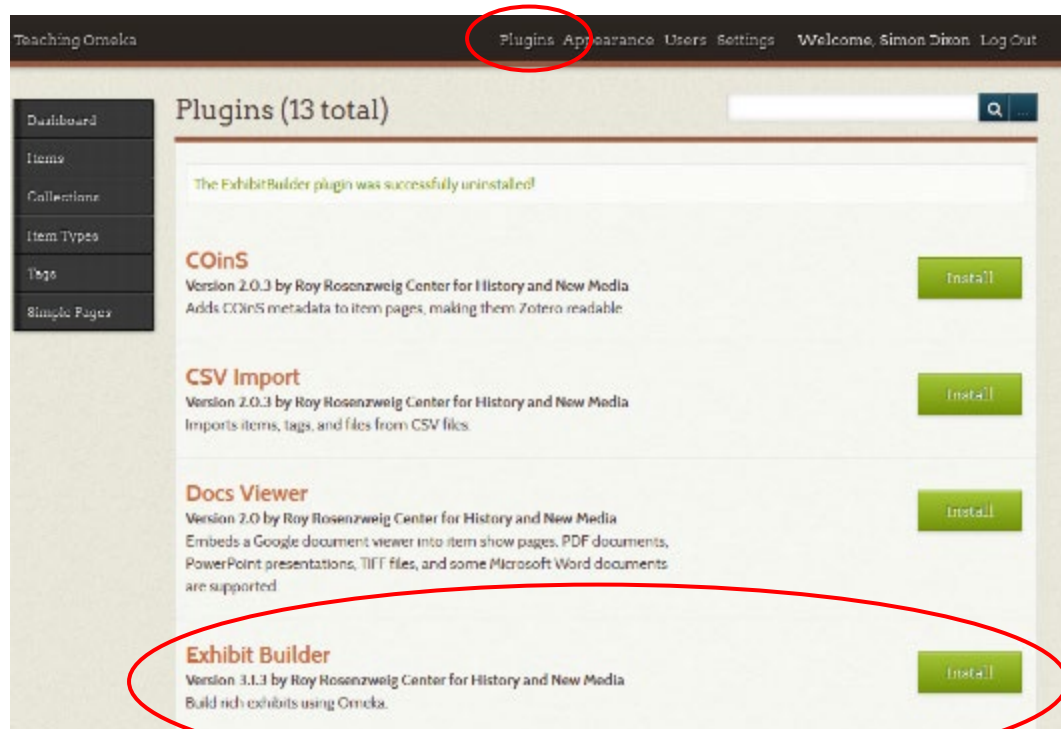
Your Omeka site comes with plugins, which are snippets of pre-written code that offer some extra functionality. These plugins are deactivated by default. If you want to use this extra functionality you need to enable the desired plugin. To do that, click on the **Plugins** button at

the top of the dashboard screen. On the following page, click the green **Install** button next to **Exhibit Builder** and **Simple Pages**. On the following page you will be given additional options. Leave these as they are and click **Save changes.**

There are more plugins available on the paid for plans.

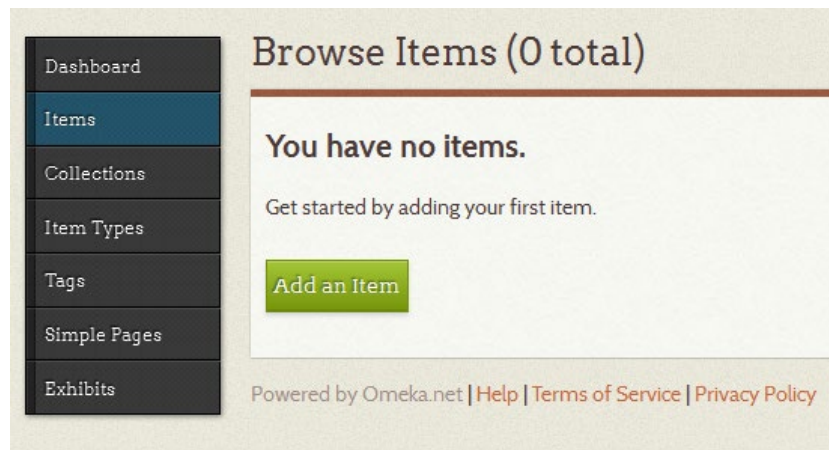### 5. Add an item to your archive

Figure 8: Add an item to your Omeka archive

From the **Dashboard** choose **Items** from the navigation menu on the left.

Then click on the green **Add an item** button.

6. Describe your new item

Figure 9: Describe an Omeka item

Remember, **Dublin Core** refers to the descriptive information you will enter about your item. All of this information is optional, and you cannot really do it wrong. But try to be consistent. (If you are interested in learning about each of the Dublin Core fields and how to use them consistently, read more about them in the Dublin Core documentation.)

Be sure to click the **Public** checkbox so that your item is viewable by the general public. If you do not click that box, only people who are logged into your site will be able to see the item.

To add multiple fields — for example, if you want to add multiple subjects for your item — use the green **Add input** button to the left of the text boxes.

What does the metadata really refer to?

Figure 10: Is the metadata referring to Alexandra House, the building, or the photograph of the building?

I am creating an item record for Alexandra House on Rutland Street, Leicester. But am I describing the *building* itself or a *photograph* of the building? If it is the former, the **Creator** might be Edward Burgess (1847-1929), the architect. If it is the latter, the creator would be Colin Hyde, who took the photo. The decision about whether you are describing the object or the representation of the object is up to you. But once you have decided, be consistent.

As you create your metadata, have in mind who will be using your website and what they will be searching for. For example, your **Subject** terms can be broad or specialist depending on what your website and exhibit(s) are going to be about. Some valid subject terms for this photograph might be:
- buildings
- Victorian architecture
- warehouses [*former use of the building*]
- apartment buildings [*current use of the building*]
- Faire Brothers [*the company associated with the building*]

Here is how I have decided to describe this photograph:

Title: Alexandra House, 2003
Subject: warehouses

Subject: shoe industry
Description: Colour photograph of Alexandra House. The Athena can be glimpsed to the right of the photograph.
Creator: Hyde, Colin
Source: [blank]
Publisher: Unpublished
Date: 2003
Contributor: [blank]
Rights: Copyright Colin Hyde. You may use this item in accordance with the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 UK: England & Wales License: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/uk/
Relation: http://affectivedigitalhistories.org.uk/explorer
Format: image/jpeg
Language: [blank]
Type: Photograph
Indentifier: HydeAlexandraHouse200301
Coverage: United Kingdom -- England -- Leicester -- Rutland Street
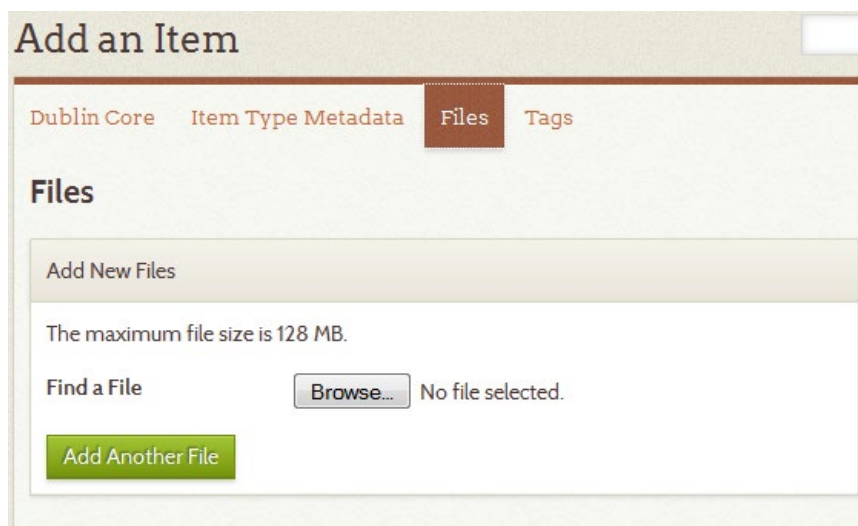**Coverage:** 2000-2009

7. **Attach a file to your record**

Figure 11: Attach a file to an Omeka item

Once you have finished adding Dublin Core metadata, you can attach a file to your item record by clicking **Files** in the navigation menu above the Dublin Core form. (You do not have to click **Add Item** before you do this; Omeka will automatically save your information.) You can add multiple files, but be aware that the Basic plan only comes with 500 MB of storage space.

Once you have added a file or files, you can add **Item Type Metadata**.

Figure 12: Add Item Type Metadata

If you do not see the appropriate item type for your item, do not worry. You can add a new item type later. In this case, choose **Still Image**.

You can choose whether you would like to fill in this information or leave it blank. The photograph we're adding was born digital, and so you could put 'Digital image' in the **Original Format** field.

Once you have added a file or files, you can add **Tags** by clicking on the button.

When you are finished, click the green **Add Item** button.

8. **Your completed item**

Figure 13: A completed Omeka item

This list contains all the items you have added, which so far numbers only one. To see what the page for your new item looks like, click on the name of the item.

Figure 14: The private view of your item page

It may look like it, but this page is not what a non-logged-in user will see when she navigates to the page for your item. To see what a user would see, click on **View Public Page**. (Or you can continue to edit the item by clicking on **Edit** at the top right.)

Figure 15: The public page of an Omeka item

This is what general user will see if they navigate to your page.

The metadata record appears at the top of the page. Scroll down to see a thumbnail of the item. Click on this to see the full image.

Note that Omeka has automatically generated a citation for your item.

Files

Citation

Hyde, Colin, "Alexandra House, 2003," *Teaching Omeka*, accessed March 11, 2015, http://uolspecialcollections.omeka.net/items/show/2.

Figure 16: Files and citation information

9. Hiding empty metadata fields

If you scroll up and down the metadata record you will see that there are several fields that we haven't used. These display with [no text] beneath the field name.

This isn't particularly helpful to the user, so let's hide it.

If you're logged into Omeka while you're viewing your public site the Omeka Admin link appears at the top right. Click on this to return to the Admin interface.

To hide the empty fields do the following:

a. Click on the Appearance button in the top navigation.

b. Select the Settings tab

c. Towards the bottom of the screen are a series of Display Settings:

Figure 17: Appearance > Settings > Display Settings

Uncheck **Show Empty Elements** and then **Save Changes**.

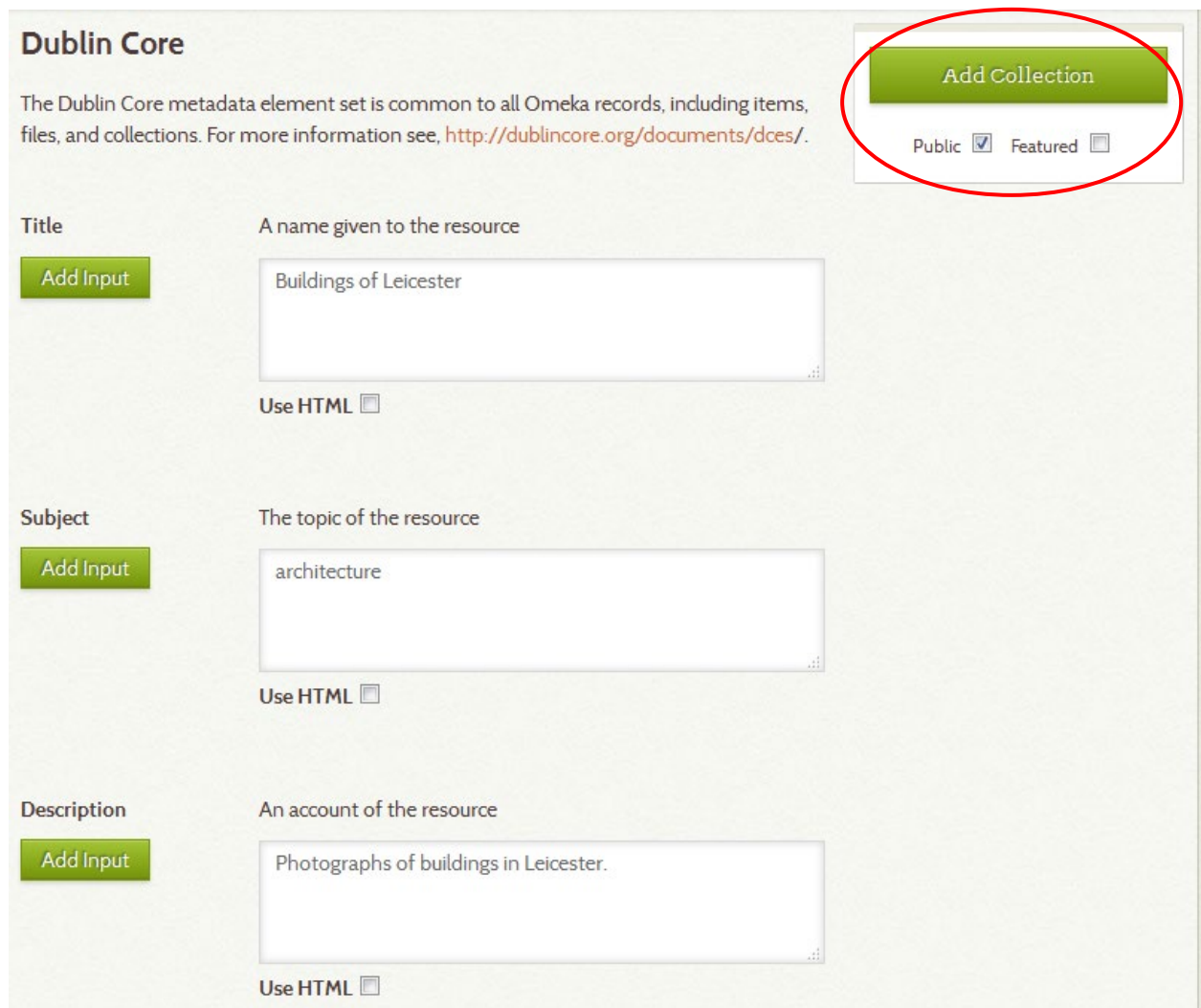d. Now return to the public view of your item, and you will see that the empty fields are now hidden.

10. Create a collection

Figure 18: Create an Omeka Collection

Once you have several items, you can begin to bring order to those items by grouping them together into collections. To do this, return to your dashboard, click on the **Collections** link in the navigation bar, and click on **Add a Collection**.

11. Enter information about your collection

Figure 19: Enter information about your Omeka collection

In Omeka, metadata is key. Enter some information about your new collection, and remember to check the **Public** box near the top right of the page. When you have finished click the green **Add Collection** button. You now have an empty collection.
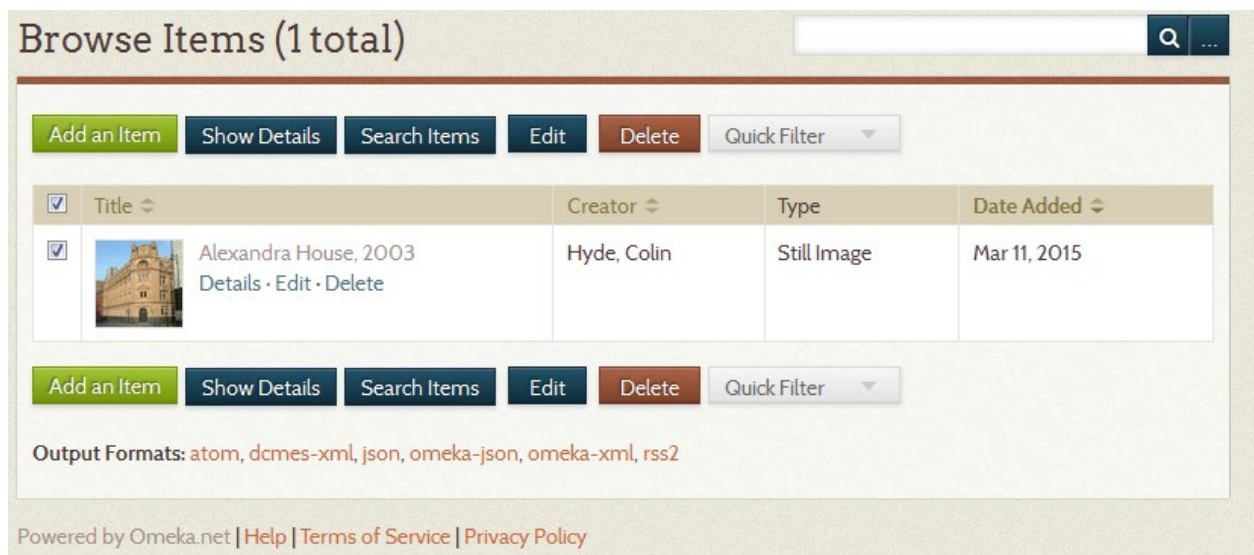
12. Add Items to your Collection

Figure 20: Batch edit items

To add items to the collection you have just created, click on the **Items** navigation button. From your **Browse Items** list, click the boxes of the items that belong in your new collection. Then click on the blue **Edit** button.
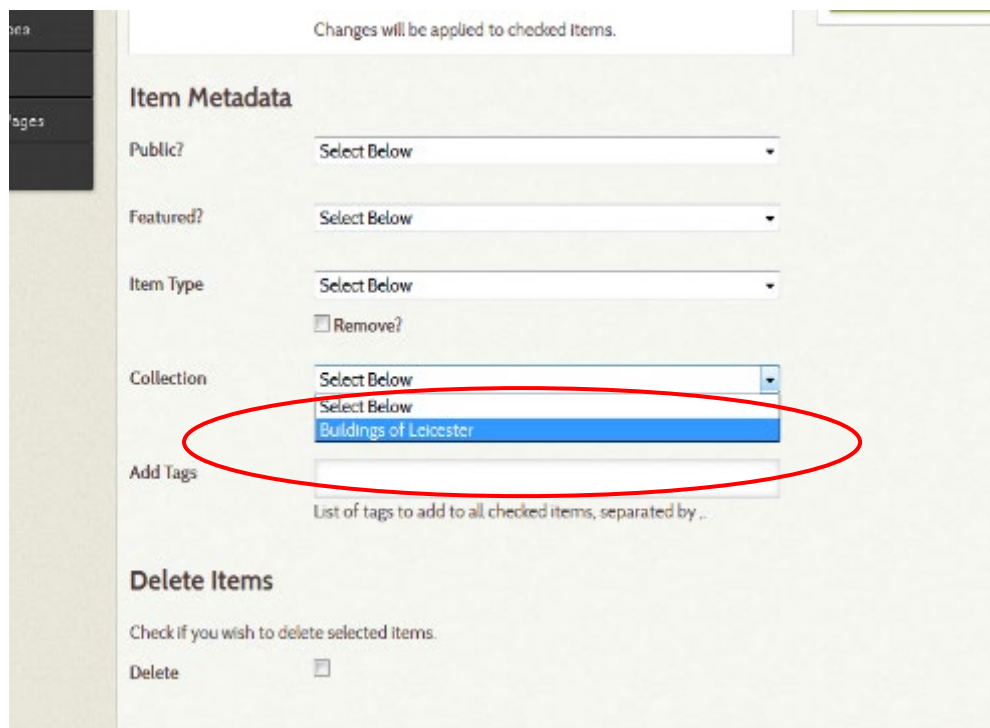

Figure 21: Choose the Omeka collection to which you wish to add your item

On the **Batch Edit Items** page, select the Collection you would like to add your items to. (Also, take note of all the other options you have on this page.)

Remember to save your changes.
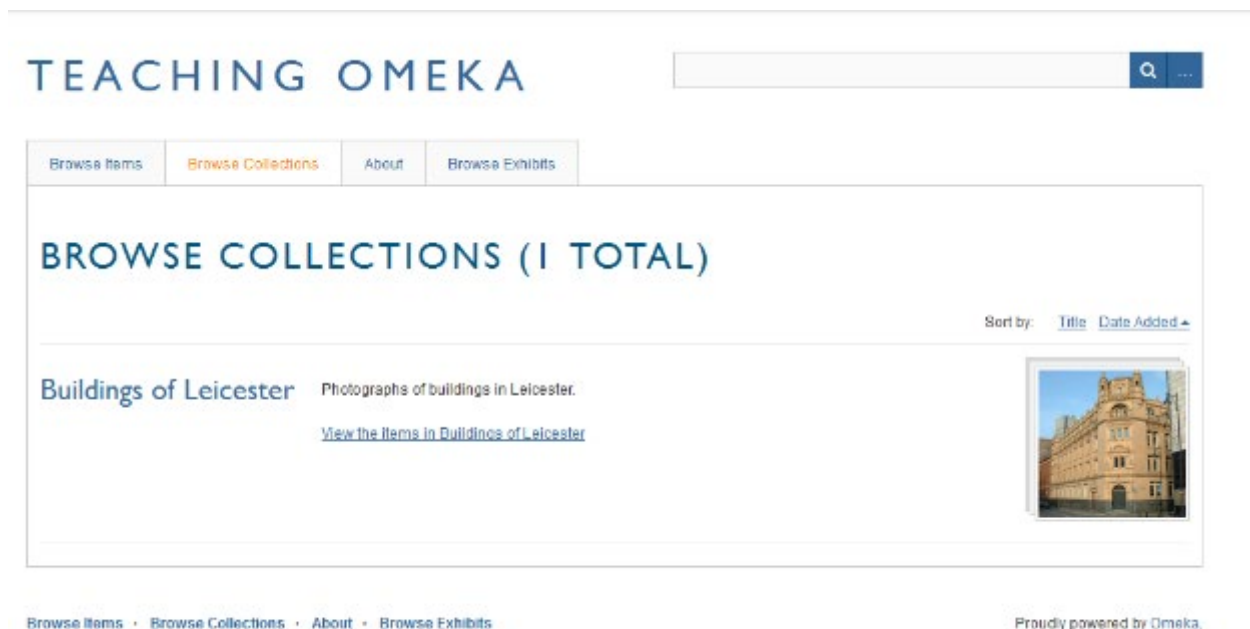
13. View your new collection

Figure 22: View the Omeka Collection

To view the new collection, return to the public site. If you click on the **Browse Collections** tab on the public-facing site, you should now have a new collection containing your item.

14. Building your collection

The photograph of Alexandra House that you have added to your collection is from the Library's Special Collections Online website.

The following links will take you to a series of other photographs of industrial buildings in Leicester taken at different times. Download the images from the website using the **Download** button above each photograph and save them somewhere on your Z: drive. To save time today, choose the **medium** file size option.
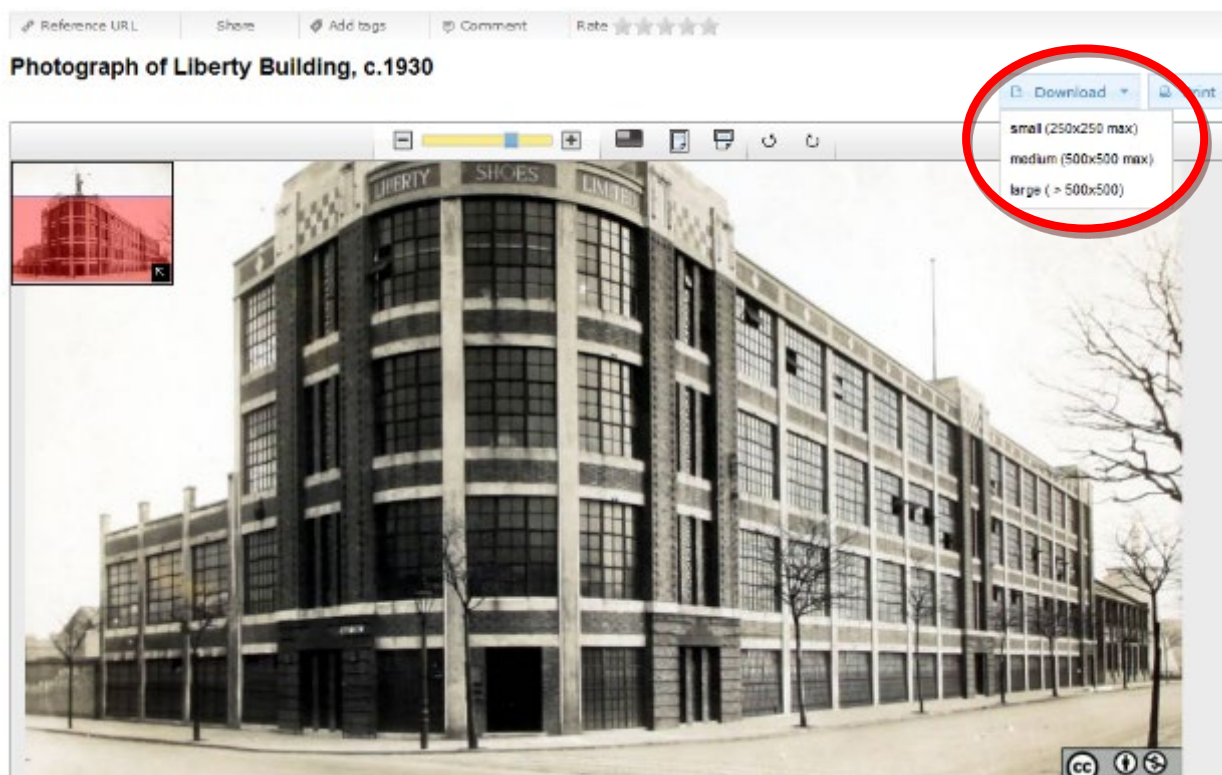
Figure 23: Downloading images from Special Collections Online

Liberty Building - http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/cdm/ref/collection/p16445coll2/id/688

Johnson & Barnes factory -
http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/cdm/ref/collection/p16445coll8/id/114

Benjamin Russell & Sons Ltd -
http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/cdm/ref/collection/p16445coll2/id/1963

Alexandra House, c. 1900
http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/cdm/ref/collection/p16445coll8/id/85

Once you've done this, add as many images as you can to your Omeka collection. You can use the metadata records from Special Collections Online to create your Omeka item records. There's no need to fill in all of the metadata fields. For today, just copy across the title and description for each item.

Creating an Omeka.net exhibit

It pays to do some thinking before you launch into creating an exhibit. You have a number of options for organizing your content, and you will need to give some thought to the argument you want to make and how you intend to make it. For today's workshop, we're using the example of industrial architecture in Leicester. But what if you were discussing, say, silent film? My sections might be thematic (comedies, romances, dramas), chronological (early silent film, the transitional period, classical era), or stylistic (modernist, impressionist, narrative). It all depends on the message I want to convey to the site's visitors. You might draw out a map of your exhibit, showing where you want to put each digital asset.
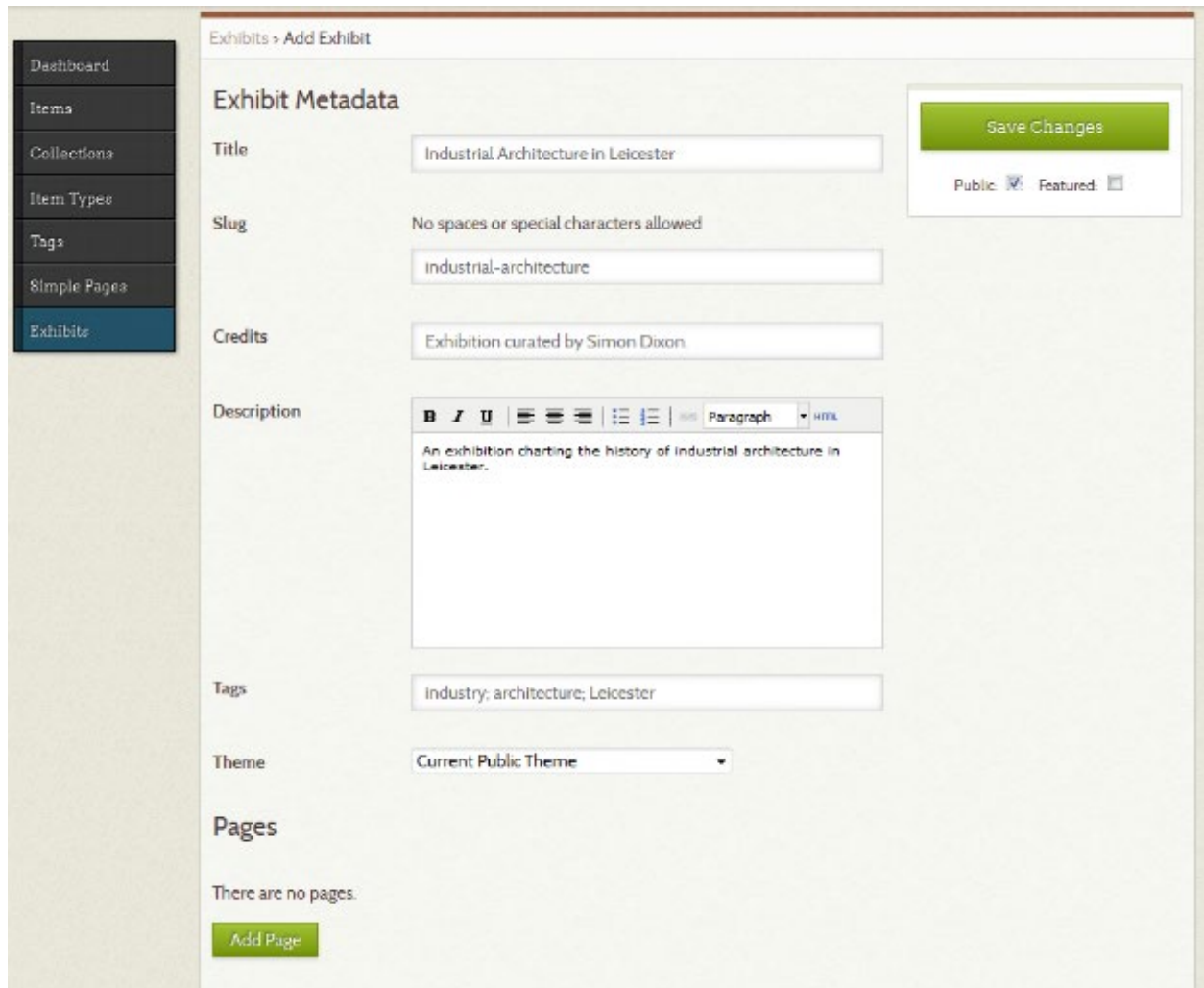
15. Add an exhibit

Figure 24: Creating an Exhibit

A collection is just a list of objects. An exhibit, on the other hand, is a guided tour through your items, complete with descriptive text and customized layouts. To create one, click on the **Exhibits** button and then **Add an exhibit**. Fill out the form on the top half of the page. A **slug** is a machine-readable name for your exhibit and will become part of your URL. The slug of this lesson is "industrial-architecture" which you can see in the URL at the top of your browser.

An exhibit is a series of pages, displaying items from your collections and text about those items. In this exercise, we will cover:
- adding pages
- page layouts
- reordering pages and creating a page hierarchy.

16. Add a page

Click on the green **Add Page** button. We're going to create a page for our exhibition called 'Factories'. Fill out the **Page Title** and **Page Slug** fields as below and **Save Changes**.

Figure 25: Add a page to an exhibit

Pages consist of one or more **Blocks** of content, which can be organised using a choice of layouts.

The **File with Text** block allows you to pair full size or thumbnail files of your items with a block of text. The item files will all be the same size. Text will appear either to the right or left of the item(s). You can use a single item file paired with text, or have multiple item files to the right or left of a block of text.

The **Gallery** block creates a gallery of item files, generally large square thumbnails. You can add text to the gallery, which will display left or right of the gallery. In a gallery block, you can specify a showcase file, which will appear full size either to the right or left of the text. The other gallery images can be placed below the showcase image or beside it, over the text.

The **Text Block** allows you to create a section of text which spans the width of the entire page.

Choose the **Block** type **File with Text**, and click **Add new content block**.

Figure 26: Add Content block (File with Text).

Click on **Add Item** to display a list of the items that you have added to your collection(s):
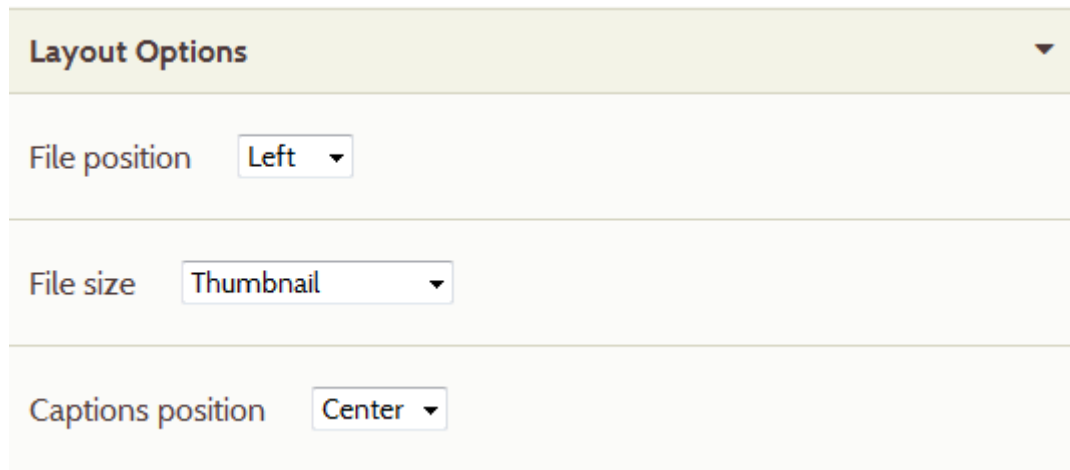
Figure 27: Add item to Exhibit

Click on one of the items on the list. **Select item** will appear to the right of the item. Click on this to add the item to the exhibit.

On the next screen, choose a **caption** for the item and then click **Apply**.

Figure 28: Add text to the content block

You can then add some text to the content block. This will appear opposite your item. Either enter some of your own, or copy and paste the following (written by Tom Hulme):

Perhaps the most architecturally distinguished building in the St George's area of Leicester, and Grade II listed, Alexandra House was built in 1898 as a shoelace warehouse for Faire Brothers and Co. Ltd – at one time one of the most prominent firms in the city. It was designed by Edward Burgess and completed in 1898, it is clad in ornate buff terracotta with a polished marble plinth. Other details include the merging of the road name into the terracotta on the side of the building; Atlantes figurines supporting the brackets on the main cornice; and windows embossed with a floral design incorporating the name of the firm. In 1960 the noted architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner described Alexandra House as the finest warehouse in Leicester and one of the finest in the country.

Source: http://empedia.info/maps/170

Next, click on **Layout Options.** You have several options controlling how you would like your page to appear. I suggest you choose **File size: Thumbnail** and leave the other options as they are.

Figure 29: Layout options

Now **Save Changes.** Now click on **View Public Page** to see how your page is looking.

Figure 30: Exhbit – public view

Perhaps we'd like our page to have some introductory text without any images.

Return to the dashboard and add a new content block using the **Text** layout:
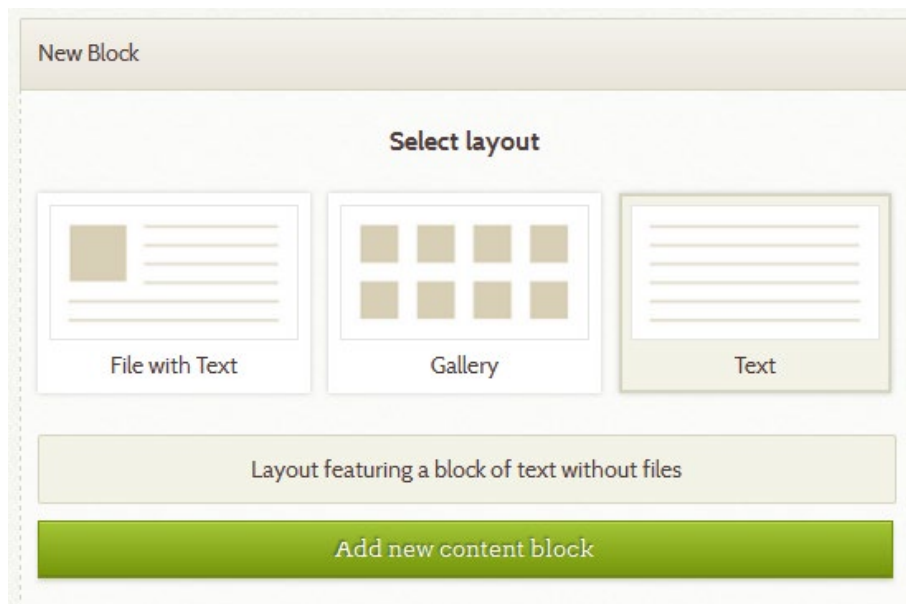

Figure 31: Add text block

You can change the order of the blocks on a page by dragging the bar at the top of a block and moving it up and down. Move **Block 2** above **Block 1**.

Add some text to your new text block, or copy and paste the following:

> *The Victorians were as keen on pulling down old buildings as they were on putting up new ones so there is little of industrial Leicester that predates the middle of the 19th century. After sympathetic refurbishment the 1840s Pex building (sock manufacture) survives as the Land Registry, but Friars Mills (also known as Donisthorpe Mills), which dates from c.1800 suffered a terrible fire in 2012 and awaits redevelopment. On a smaller scale, on Darker Street, there are the last remaining 'master' hosier's workshops, which are in a poor state of repair. Also notable from this period is Maker's Yard, a very early factory (1850s) which has fared much better and now contains artist studios and a gallery.*
>
> Source: http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/lc/storyofleicester/cityheritage/atwork/industrybuildings/

Save the changes and then have another look at your public page. You can see how you can easily create pages using blocks of content.

17. Creating page hierarchies

An exhibit in Omeka can have multiple pages. You can reoder these pages by dragging and dropping, and you can use drag and drop to set up an exhibit hierarchy.

Add two or three more pages to your exhibit. We won't have time today to add content to them, so you don't need to add content blocks to the pages.
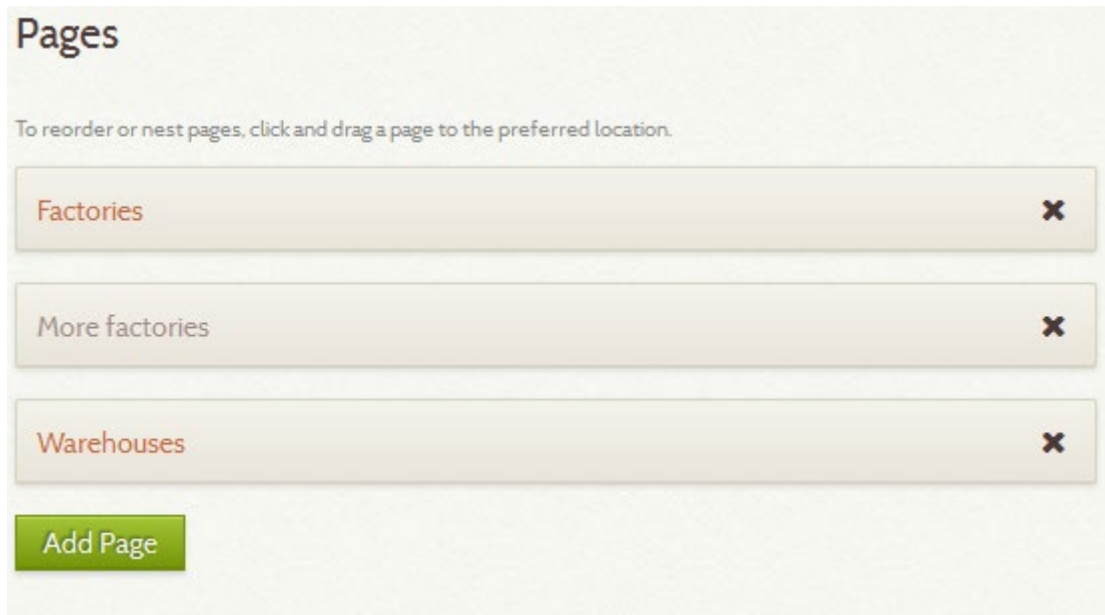

Figure 32: Adding extra pages

If you click and hold on one of the pages you'll find that you can easily reorder them.

Now try dragging the 'More factories' page slightly to the right beneath the 'Factories' page until it looks like the below screenshot.
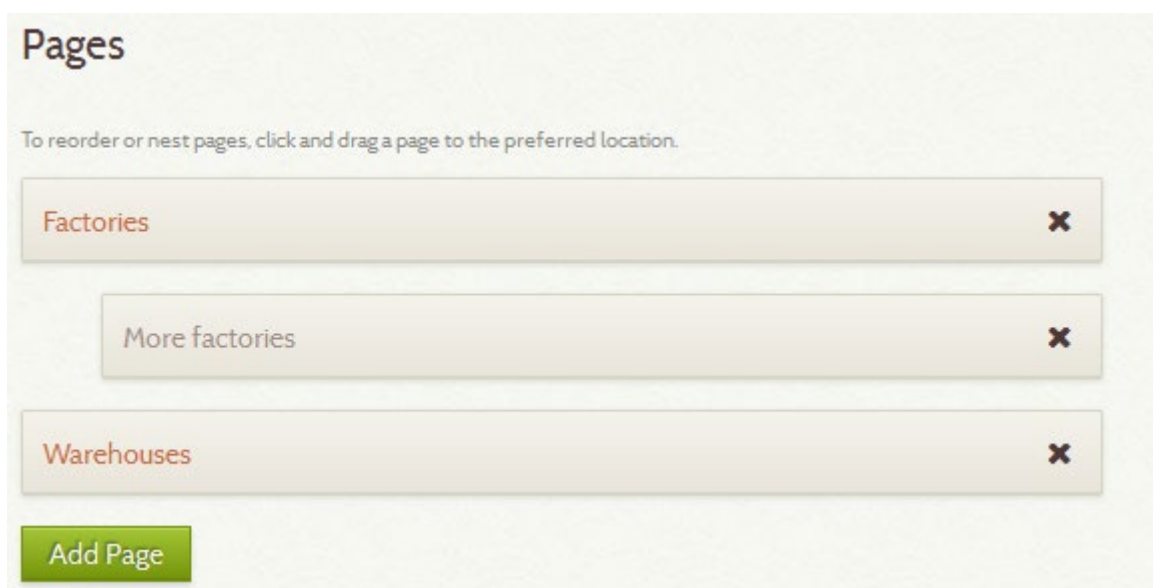

Figure 32: A simple page hierarchy.

Save the changes and then view the public page again.

Figure 33: Public view including your new pages

You'll see that on the exhibit homepage just two exhibition pages appear on the right. However, if you click on the Factories link you'll see the 'More factories' page nested beneath the 'Factories' page in a hierarchy.

Now your site has items, collections, and an exhibit — all the basic units of an Omeka site.

Further resources

The Omeka team has put together great resources on the software's help pages: http://info.omeka.net/

The **Basic Plan** has a limited number of themes and plugins, and is ideal for small projects. More plugins, such as **Geolocation**, are available by creating a site on the Library's instutitional Omeka subscription.

Contact Simon Dixon for further information. e: snd6@le.ac.uk / t: 0116 294 4871

Acknowledgements

This tutorial is adapted from Miriam Posner, 'Up and running with Omeka.net', Programming Historian http://programminghistorian.org/lessons/up-and-running-with-omeka <accessed, 16 March 2015> and Miriam Posner, 'Creating an Omeka Exhibit', Programming Historian http://programminghistorian.org/lessons/creating-an-omeka-exhibit <accessed, 16 march 2015>

Additional information from 'Help for Omeka.net', http://info.omeka.net

Simon Dixon
16 March 2015

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