



The renovated lobby at HSBC's Central building took a year to complete and now features a high-resolution digital display. Photo: Martin Chan

Bank's new lobby a walk back in time

Agnes Lam

Customers strolling through the street-level lobby of the landmark HSBC headquarters in Central will in future be treated to historical images on the city's largest high-resolution digital display.

The display is the most striking feature of the renovated lobby, which was shown off to the media yesterday, after construction lasting almost a year. Historical images of the bank and Hong Kong will be on display.

The HSBC Asian Story Wall, which comprises two arrays of 30 flat screens measuring 9.2 metres by 1.7 metres, displays pictures of documents, photographs, paintings and illustrations of the bank's history in Asia.

"All displays are taken from the bank's own collection in Hong Kong and London. We searched the archive and took visual images with historical significance. All these can provide an instant glimpse of the past for the viewers," HSBC archive

manager Helen Swinnerton said. The collection from the archive, which was set up in the 1970s, not only illustrated the history of the bank, but also the history of the city because pictures of "old Hong Kong" were included, she said.

The story wall shows 370 still and moving images that are grouped in five modules, including historic photos of Hong Kong, and sketches of Macau by celebrated English colonial-era painter George Chinnery. A further eight to 10 modules of 450 images will be added to the display.

Architect Greg Pearce, who redesigned the area formerly occupied by automated teller machines, said the concept was aimed at complementing Norman Foster's original building design.

"The design challenge was to meet HSBC's specific operational needs while not conflicting with, nor compromising, the original Norman Foster design," he said.

A bank spokeswoman said the main reason for the renovation was to enhance security.