

VINDOLANDA
CHARITABLE TRUST

Roman Vindolanda Fort & Museum
The Roman Army Museum

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The Vindolanda Trust

Design Brief for exhibition consultancy services

Museum Extensions at Chesterholm Museum, Bardon Mill, Hexham,
Northumberland NE47 7JN

Unlocking Vindolanda's Wooden Underworld



The Vindolanda Brief - Wooden Underworld –Exhibition Design

The Vindolanda Trust is a registered charity founded in 1970, to research, preserve and promote and provide access to the widest possible audience to the archaeology of Roman Vindolanda and the Roman Army Museum at Carvoran which lie at the heart of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. The Trust is administered by a board Trustees who act independently and solely in the interests of the Trust.

Our mission

Our mission is to advance the knowledge and enhance the awareness of Vindolanda through a meticulous investigation of the archaeological record and maintain access to Vindolanda's unique heritage resource and our contribution to the understanding of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site.

The Project

The Vindolanda Trust owns a unique collection of wooden objects from the Roman excavation programme and we propose to house these important artefacts in a fit for purpose exhibition formed by an extension to the present Chesterholm Museum at Vindolanda.

The wooden underworld exhibition at Chesterholm Museum – Vindolanda intends to create a superb introduction to this exceptional collection of Roman artefacts from the Vindolanda archaeological excavations.

The Vindolanda Trust has recently been given permission to apply for Museums Designation for its Roman collections and this category of objects is a key part of this process. The project objective is therefore to create a high quality exhibition and activity facilities that are worthy of a World Heritage Site, to increase physical & intellectual access to The Vindolanda Trust's heritage resources and to create more opportunities for people to actively support the Trust and to provide a successful and sustainable platform that will promote further development and address any future challenges.

The development aims to benefit all users, including general tourists, education groups and over 600 archaeological volunteers per year and to encourage a new range of people to use the project facilities thereby increasing visitor numbers, make a direct contribution to the aims and objectives of the Trust and to the local and regional economy.

The museum as a whole is very well received by the visiting public. Visitor books, Trip Advisor and Facebook etc. abound with praise for the current exhibitions where the objects themselves are allowed to speak and project the past straight into the minds of the visitor.

The new exhibition must meet or exceed the existing standard through design, innovative lighting which meets the required conservation standards and engaging graphics.

An area that is suitable to accommodate the proposed extension has been identified to the north of the current museum building, which is not listed, and which carries no outside the norm planning obligations. A planning application has now been lodged for this proposal.

The new extension will link directly to the main museum area and be fully integrated into the existing utility systems including the solar power provisions.

The Vindolanda Trust has developed a design that complements the existing architecture of the current museum but also reflects the nature of the collection housed within.

The main extension building has very little natural daylight and internal lighting levels will be strictly controlled to protect the nature and conservation requirements of the wooden objects.

The hexagonal shape adds a new dimension to the museum internal and external spaces but this should have no central supporting structure that might inhibit visitor flow.

The overall feel of the space is to enfold, capture and entrance the visitor.

In addition to the exhibition hall there will also be an attached/linked multi- functional activity area. Here, it is envisaged, that the space will look out onto a delightful meadow and avenue of flowering native cherry trees.

There are no light restrictions in this part of the development but the south facing wall will be of solid construction to accept a run of banner rails which will be used for interpretation purposes.

The Exhibition

There are three interpretation areas to consider as part of this brief.

1. The area that links the existing museum to the new extensions will also serve to acknowledge funders and supporters. A design will be established that reflects the nature of wood, is tactile and durable and which could be considered as a work of art in its own right.

2. This transit area leads directly to the main exhibition hall which will be hexagonal in shape. The ceiling height in this area can be the focus of innovative lighting techniques to add a dramatic effect to the room without compromising the light lux levels required for the objects on display.

The objects all require specific environmental conditions that will be built into the case frameworks. Some of the objects are exceptionally large and heavy. All display cases will therefore need to accommodate these factors.

The central area of the hall could reflect the Roman use of woods from throughout the Empire by means of a tactile 'sculpture'.

3. Leading from the exhibition hall will be a multi- functional activity area where much use of natural daylight will contrast with the previous room. Here a versatile banner wall will facilitate the changing themes that will reflect the activity taking place at any given time. A holding banner exhibition will complement the artefact exhibition when no activities are taking place.

The designer will work closely with the Vindolanda curatorial, conservation and archaeological team who will provide the necessary support and input to the project.

The developments must be high quality, sustainable and able to stand the test of time to maximise the proposed investment. They will support a wider project that aims to build upon the Trust's ongoing programme of excavation and public engagement that is the hallmark of its work.

As the result of a successful Stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund application The Vindolanda Trust now seeks design consultancy services for the development stages, up to a Stage 2 HLF submission for this museum extension exhibition project. As the works fall into two separate stages a break clause will apply which, subject to satisfactory performance at stage 1 and a successful HLF stage 2 decision being granted, will allow the successful tender to proceed through to the delivery part of the project.

The Client: The client is the Vindolanda Trust.

The Project Manager is: Patricia Birley, Vindolanda Trust Head of Impact & Development

The Assistant Project Manager is: Sonya Galloway, Vindolanda Trust Communications Manager.

The total project exhibition cost (through to completion RIBA 4 - 7) is currently estimated to be £350,000 ex VAT including fees.

The funders: The Heritage Lottery Fund & the Vindolanda Trust

Consultation & team working.

Regular discussion and consultation with the project interpretation panel will be required. Meetings will be arranged to allow full client input into the process so that concepts and plans may be quickly and efficiently reviewed and adapted when necessary.

All ensuing graphics & Designs will be assigned to the ownership of the Vindolanda Trust for copyright purposes.

In addition:

The Vindolanda Trust is a research establishment and appointed consultants will have full and unrestricted contact with the project manager, archaeological, conservation and curatorial staff for the purposes of this project.

The design consultancy work will feed directly into the Project Execution Plan.

Tender Requirements:

The works will fall into two separate stages, a break clause will therefore apply, and separate costs will be required for each stage.

Stage 1 - Development Stage.

The design and interpretation will be developed to RIBA Stage 3 /part 4 equivalent as part of a planned Heritage Lottery Fund Stage Two submission.

In brief, the successful design concept will:

- Respect the authenticity of the Vindolanda wooden artefact research collections.
- Work closely with the Vindolanda Trust Interpretation Panel, consisting of relevant Vindolanda Trustees and senior staff that the interpretation meets the requirements of the Hadrian's Wall Interpretation Framework and the high academic and authenticity standards required by the Vindolanda Trust.
- Respect the need for specific environmental conditions and research access to display casing.
- Be robust, 'timeless' and sustainable & be capable of facilitating future exhibitions of new objects
- Relate to all potential users

The role of the designer.

The appointed designer will be required to:

- Become familiar with the research background to the project and especially the messages from the Vindolanda wooden collection.

- Develop concepts and stimulating interpretation methods that inspire all users and respect the integrity of the heritage assets.
- Consult and work with the internal interpretation panel and develop vibrant options and recommendations for discussion and approval.
- Meet the conservation standards required by The Vindolanda Trust for the display of wooden material.
- Take note of visitor flow, seasonality, capacity patterns & requirements.
- Produce an illustrated design report to RIBA Stage 3 equivalent. (Any minor internal building interface to be developed to RIBA Stage 3 working with the appointed project architect).
- Production of a time chart showing the relevant planning and operational development stages to completion.
- Associated cost plans.
- To produce indicative illustrations of what the visitor experience would be for use in the Stage 2 application documents.
- **The successful applicant would be appointed to take the project to completion subject to the project gaining HLF Stage 2 approval and funding.**

Stage 2 - Delivery (RIBA part 4 – 7)

A separate cost should be given for this tender stage. Tenders for this stage will only be awarded subject to the Vindolanda Trust receiving a successful Stage 2 Heritage Lottery Application.

Tenders are invited for professional services to:

- Prepare all production information as required by the exhibition contract.
- Hold pre-tender briefing for identified display case and fit out contractors.
- Issue production information to the appointed sub- contractors.
- Administer the contract during operations via an agreed schedule of regular on site visits to inspect progress and quality of work to ensure that it meets specification.
- Prepare any requests for variations for resolution by the project manager.
- Attend & report to monthly progress meetings.
- Administer contract to completion and provide client with a set of design specifications and suppliers lists.
- All ensuing graphics & designs will be assigned to the ownership of the Vindolanda Trust for copyright purposes.

Timetable & Outputs for Stage 1

Issue of Tender Brief: 24/05/16

Deadline for tender submissions: 14/06/16

Tender interview date: 17/06/16

Appointment of consultant: 22/06/16

Inception meeting at Vindolanda: 28/06/16

Progress meeting at Vindolanda: 21/07/16 - 1st payment meeting

Progress meeting at Vindolanda: 12/08/16 – 2nd payment meeting

Deadline for RIBA Stage 3 / up to part 4 compliance: 15/09/16 – 3rd and final stage 1 payment meeting

Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed in the Hedley Building at Chesterholm Museum, Vindolanda.

Tenders must include the following information.

- Your understanding of the brief.
- A description of how the brief will be delivered to achieve our outcomes, including an indicative programme and timetable for the work.
- Qualifications and experience of the personnel delivering this project and an identified project leader.
- Details of specific knowledge & experience in the provision of this type of project.
- Full contact details of two referees (who we will contact as part of the selection process).
- Any relevant supporting information.
- Your full contact details including a primary email address and, company web address if applicable.
- **Your separate fees for project stages 1- development & Stage 2-Delivery including all expenses and disbursements.**
- Your VAT Status and registration number if applicable.
- All fees should be quoted exclusive of VAT.
- **Evaluation**
- A shortlisting panel will evaluate tenders by applying an internal assessment matrix.
- Tenders will be evaluated on cost 30%
- Quality 30% : Evidence of an effective plan to deliver the requirements within the timescale provided.
- Proven experience and successful track record of delivering comparable projects. Effective communication & professional style. References. 30%
- Extra characteristics or added value 10%

Tender submission:

One hard copy of the tender proposal and one copy on disk **to be received by the Vindolanda Trust by 4pm on June 10th 2016**. The tender should be submitted in a plain envelope marked **Building Consultancy Tender** and addressed to Patricia Birley, Head of Impact & Development, Chesterholm Museum, Bardon Mill, Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 7JN.

Late tenders will not be considered.

Canvassing of any Vindolanda member of staff, board member or closely associated person will render a tender to be invalid.

Important Notes: To ensure equality between applicants The Vindolanda Trust will not enter into any correspondence or discussions with applicants during the preparation period for submissions

except for any clarification on general matters up to 5 working days before the tender deadline. Questions and answers will be shared with all potential tenders. No person making a submission will be remunerated for any expense incurred in preparing a submission or for travel to interview if required.

Payment terms for Stage 1 (Development). - RIBA Stages to part 4

Payment terms, after signing of a contractual agreement, will be 3 equal and separate payments.

Payment terms for Stage2 (Delivery) - RIBA STAGES part 4 to 7

Payment terms will be monthly in arrears throughout the project.

Award of Contract.

The successful tender will enter into a contract based upon the above Stage 1 with break clause to Stage 2 criteria

Contact for general enquiries should be made by email to: Patricia Birley – Head of Impact & Development: patriciabirley@vindolanda.com or Sonya Galloway Assistant Project Officer sonyagalloway@vindolanda.com

Attachments:

Copy of the proposed floor plans