Developing MJM: New Audiences, New Experiences

Brief: Exhibition Design Team
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1 Background

1.1 The Museum

Housed inside the city’s oldest synagogue building, Manchester Jewish Museum (MJM) tells the story of Manchester’s Jewish community. Showcasing material from its social history collection, its permanent gallery explores the growth and development of the Jewish community from the 1740s to 1945.

The museum currently attracts 15,000 visitors a year, including 10,000 schoolchildren. Formal and informal learning sessions are regularly held inside the museum, as are exhibitions and events, helping the museum promote tolerance and understanding of Jewish faith, heritage and culture.

1.2 The Project

In May 2015 MJM was awarded a development grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a major development project. The project will fully restore the museum’s Grade II* listed synagogue building and will create a new museum extension to house new galleries and spaces for learning, events and commercial operations. MJM aims to increase visitor numbers to around 50,000 a year through a range of activities, from improvement of the display of the collection to hosting theatrical performances and cultural events.

The Development Phase began in June 2015 and is planned to end in December 2016, when MJM intends to submit its Round 2 HLF application. As part of this phase MJM will be:

- taking part in the Creative Museums programme, a unique research and development opportunity which will involve artists working with MJM to test out new ideas and approaches (further information at: www.bac.org.uk/creativemuseums).
- working with Cilly Kugelmann, Director of Programmes at the Jewish Museum Berlin, who will be acting as a consultant, offering advice on interpretative techniques employed in successful permanent galleries in other European Jewish Museums.
- working with Manchester Metropolitan University on a feasibility study investigating the potential use of augmented reality inside MJM’s synagogue space.

If successful with the Round 2 application, the project’s Delivery Phase is planned to begin in April 2017 with the aim of re-opening the museum in January 2019.

Total project cost is estimated at £5.7m with the cost of construction work estimated at £2.8 million (Conservation - £500,000; New build - £1.5 million; Exhibition design - £800,000).

1.3 Current Position

The following documents have been developed consistent with RIBA Stage 1 to support a Round 1 HLF submission:
- Building Options Appraisal
- Building Inspection Report (outline condition survey)
These documents will be made available to all tenderers. It should be noted that these were prepared to inform the Round 1 application and are therefore indicative of the museum’s intent rather than definitive proposals. Further investigation and design development will be required during Round 2.

2 Exhibition Design Team

An experienced exhibition design team is required to create an interpretive plan and design proposals to RIBA Stage 3 equivalent and, subject to a HLF Round 2 pass, deliver these proposals.

The following tasks or groups of tasks will need to be undertaken during the development phase of the project. Some are discrete pieces of work that follow on from each other whilst others need to be undertaken throughout the course of the project:

- **Review of interpretive resources**
  Undertake a review of the themes and stories, collections and archives to fully understand and summarise the opportunities for interpretation. Material will be provided by MJM’s Curator but further independent desk research will be required as well as visits to other museums and consultation with other curators, librarians and academics, including Cilly Kugelmann.

- **Understanding of the site and buildings**
  Develop a clear understanding of the site and synagogue building to include both existing and proposed construction and work creatively with the Project Board, architectural design team and theatre design team to understand the opportunities and constraints of the architectural developments and, as appropriate, influence the design of the building and its immediate environs. During this process, communicate the requirements of interpretation, particularly in respect of internal finishes, power and data supply, heating, air management and visitor flow.

- **Understanding of Audience Development plans**
  Develop a clear understanding of MJM’s existing and potential audiences by attending a range of audience development activities, ranging from museum events to community outreach work, as set out in the Audience Development Study in the Round 1 application.

- **Learn from comparable projects**
  Facilitate and join with visits to comparable projects to learn from what works well.

- **Close liaison and reporting meetings**
  Regular reporting meetings will take place on a monthly basis throughout the project. In
addition to these reporting meetings regular working meetings will be required both with
the design team and with museum staff, volunteers, trustees and other partners, particularly
with artists on the Creative Museums programme and Manchester Metropolitan University’s
Augmented Reality team. It is intended that steering groups are established to guide the
project and contribute to formative evaluation. Consultants undertaking the interpretive
plan will need to meet with these groups and facilitate their input during an evening session
once every month.

- **Review future management resources**
  Review the resources available for the delivery of access, learning and activities so that the
  interpretive provision dovetails with operational needs and constraints and contribute to
  operational planning for the future.

- **Support the Activity Plan**
  Complement the opportunities identified by the Activity Plan for increased activities with
  specified target groups, and develop an interpretive infrastructure to support these activities
  and respond to the same audiences.

- **Ensure maximum flexibility**
  Develop interpretive concepts which enable spaces to be used flexibly and interpretation to
  be refreshed to reflect the changing views of visitors and users so that a conversation can
  continue between the museum and its users.

- **Agree interpretive approaches and guiding principles**
  Develop and agree interpretive approaches with the Project Board and steering groups to
  create mood boards and colour and finishes boards which illustrate the overall approach to
  design and exhibition work. Then hold a workshop or series of workshops to agree guiding
  principles for how information is presented, how objects are displayed and how visitors
  engage with the stories and collections.

- **Concept visualisation and broad brush costing**
  Produce concept plans and visuals to describe the main areas and methods of interpretation
  and undertake broad brush cost check.

- **Formative evaluation**
  Undertake formative evaluation with steering groups and other target audience groups

- **Design team liaison**
  Liaise with the architectural, theatre design and technical teams to agree M&E requirements
  of interpretation which will impact on the design of the building.

- **Stage 2 review**
  Produce detailed design proposals to include: developed visualisations of the interpretive
  proposal with running elevations and perspective visuals, provide showcases specifications
  and details of interactive and digital media. Also produce detailed capital and maintenance
costs and a detailed construction and implementation programme, all to RIBA stage 2 equivalent for review and discussion with HLF.

- **Value engineering**
  Revisit proposals as required to ensure budgets fit.

- **Final report**
  Produce RIBA stage 3 equivalent detailed report with a full rationale of the interpretive proposals together with plans, visuals, specifications, programme and detailed costing, with appendices documenting the research and consultation process in line with HLF requirements.

## 3 Selection Criteria

The museum is seeking a design team with fresh ideas and practical and workable solutions which can bring creativity, imagination and experience to this high profile and exciting project.

The following **skills** will be required within the Exhibition Design team:

- Internal project management and coordination to ensure one point of contact and reporting
- Research into themes, stories, collections and images
- Interpretive planning matching communication techniques and media to target audiences
- 3D, interior and furniture design
- Graphic design and art-working
- Digital media and augmented reality
- Lighting
- Visualisation
- Technical drawing
- Design of interactive exhibits
- Detailed specification abilities for reconstructions and set design
- An understanding of the conservation needs of collections

We require demonstrable understanding of and **experience** in:

- Working on HLF funded projects
- Working with sensitive and fragile collections with a sound understanding of conservation needs
- Creating flexible environments that deliver engagement and activity
- Team working with other consultants
- Undertaking research and consultation
- Bringing emotive stories to life which are for different people and focus on people stories
- Understanding of diverse audiences, ideally with experience in developing interpretation about diverse communities and different faiths
- High quality design that wears well and is people friendly
4 Terms of Contract & Fee

The Exhibition Design Team will be appointed in December 2015 and will work on a part-time freelance contract until January 2019. The contract will be for two phases of work:

i) Development Phase (January-December 2016). The total budget available for Exhibition Design Team fees over the development phase work is £33,600 plus VAT.

ii) Delivery Phase (April 2017-January 2019). The total budget available for Exhibition Design Team fees over the delivery phase work is £62,400 plus VAT.

A break clause will be included in the contract, whereby the contract will terminate if the museum is unsuccessful with its HLF Round 2 application

5 Next Steps

If you would like to be considered for this work please supply the following information:

• A proposal that:
  - explains a thorough understanding of the challenges and potential benefits of this project
  - introduces a capable and experienced team that can provide all of the skills identified in Section 3
  - includes a methodology for how the work will be undertaken and completed
  - includes a table showing exactly who will deliver each set of tasks, their day rates and the number of days allowed

• CVs and appropriate team track record information

• Please also include an illustrated case study of less than 1,000 words to explain the successful completion of a comparable project and how this might be applied to this project

Proposals will be assessed in accordance with the following scoring: Skills (40%), Experience (40%) and Financial Offer (20%)

Interviews will be held during week commencing 14th December 2015.

Post or email your response to museum CEO, Max Dunbar, by Monday 23rd November 2015 at: ceo@manchesterjewishmuseum.com

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If you have questions about the consultation please contact Max Dunbar at the above email or on 0161 834 9879.