



Candidate Brief

Interim Director

Strawberry Hill House & Garden

April 2025

Contact: lynn.beard@strawberryhillhouse.org.uk

BACKGROUND

“Strawberry Hill House and Garden is the home of Gothic – inspiring the imagination through timeless stories of art, literature, architecture and landscape for today and future generations.”

Strawberry Hill House, designed and built by Horace Walpole from two modest houses into his own ‘little Gothic castle’, has been the subject of much interest as a residence and, more recently, as a museum, from the 18th century to the present day. Extensively restored thanks to the Strawberry Hill Trust’s £10m restoration with substantial grants from National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), English Heritage, the World Monuments Fund and generous donations from trusts and individuals, the Grade I listed House reopened to the public in 2010. Today Strawberry Hill House & Garden provides the visitor with a unique insight into the world of Horace Walpole and his friends, whose efforts produced the style of Strawberry Hill Gothic with its mystery, magic and ground-breaking impact.

Walpole’s collection of antiques and curios were sold off by auction in 1842, and widely dispersed, the Lewis Walpole Library of Yale University holds a database which includes his entire collection of art and artefacts. The Trust, working alongside the Strawberry Hill Collections Trust, continues to research and return many of the lost treasures, through a mix of reproduction, loans and acquisition, where possible.

The garden at Strawberry Hill House, although much reduced in size since Walpole’s day, offers five acres which the Trust is working to restore to its original appearance as a romantic garden to complement his Gothic castle. The garden is Grade II listed and of national importance as a reminder of this period in garden history and is open to all for free.

Strawberry Hill House & Garden is the subject of a long-term lease from the Catholic Education Trust which runs St Mary’s University Twickenham and is adjacent to the House. The Strawberry Hill Trust was formed in 2002 to restore Strawberry Hill House & Garden at 268 Waldegrave Road, Twickenham and open it to the public. Today the House and Garden, which also boasts a shop and a café, attracts 28,000 visitors each year, with a need to attract more over time.

Now an Arts Council Accredited Museum and member of the Association of Independent Museums (AIM), it has, over the past few years, had an engaging and successful programme of small exhibitions and Objects in Focus displays. It has also acquired, and continues to seek, some key works for the Collection through the Government Indemnity Scheme.

For more information on Strawberry Hill House, please go to <https://www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk/>

When the pandemic occurred, we had just had our most successful year, with over 35,000 visitors thanks to our extremely successful exhibition, Lost Treasures. We had adequate reserves, following a matched funding scheme from the National Lottery. We also had several regular funders, both Trusts and individuals, and a deep well of local support.

Covid changed our fortunes. We had to make cuts to the staff team, which had long term implications for fundraising. In post-Covid period, visitor numbers have been slow to recover, leading to a reduction in income.

2025 is going to be a pivotal year for Strawberry Hill House as we try to establish a sustainable future. We are half way through a National Lottery Heritage Funded Emergency Resilience Grant which has enabled us to review operational activities, reduce costs and test pilot activities to increase visitors.

Staff and Resources

Strawberry Hill House has a paid staff of 9, 4 of whom are funded by the NLHF, led by its Executive Director. It also benefits from 200 valued and knowledgeable volunteers, including a number who assist in the garden. Working alongside the Executive Director is the Curator, who has wide knowledge of the House, the Collection and the art/heritage world.

The Trust's income of approximately £850k is derived from ticket sales, events, grants, sponsorship, donations and membership fees from Strawberry Hill Members, and our catering concession.

The Trust's wholly owned trading subsidiary, Strawberry Hill House Trading Services Ltd, is responsible for income from the shop and from hire activities, including private hire, weddings and filming.

The incoming Interim Director should have the ability and experience to be an effective fundraiser, maximising opportunities for support, and to maintain and develop partnerships with a wide range of external stakeholders. In particular, they should have grant funding experience to ensure the current grant activity is completed and reports undertaken for the funder, including an audience development and evaluation plan.

Governance

Strawberry Hill Trust is chaired by Anthony Nash with a Trustee Board of 9 members who all play an active part in supporting and developing the work of the Trust.

THE ROLE

Job Title:	Interim Director
Reporting to:	Chair and Trustees of Strawberry Hill Trust Board
Salary package:	Competitive, depending on experience
Location:	Strawberry Hill House, Twickenham TW1 4ST

The Interim Director, working closely with the Board of the Strawberry Hill Trust is joining the team at this unique house at a critical time, as it works to build a sustainable future. The Interim Director will need to implement the current plans which are part of an NLHF project and evaluate them as well as looking for further income and funding opportunities with the wider team.

The position is for a minimum 6-month period, with the possibility to extend. It is a full-time role, with some flexibility possible for the right candidate, and will involve some weekend and evening work. It is based at Strawberry Hill House, so easy access to SW London would be an advantage.

The Interim Director's priorities will be to:

- Maximise income generating opportunities, especially fundraising support, and maintain financial control policies and procedures to enable the Trust to work within a break-even budget for 2025.
- Maximise footfall and ticket revenues, for the House and Gardens
- Ensure the activity programme for the year is delivered on time and within budget
- Work with the Property Operations Manager and the Curator to maintain the fabric of the House and the curatorial integrity of the Collection housed within, including those artefacts owned by the Strawberry Hill Collection Trust
- Continue to build the reputation of Strawberry Hill House & Garden as a heritage destination.

The five key elements of the Interim Director's role are:

1 Business Strategy and Financial Management

Implementing the Operation Plan and grant activity deliverables for 2025 and further developing the 3-year Business Plan for Strawberry Hill House & Garden, with the Board, staff and volunteers.

2 Leadership

Providing leadership, coaching and strategic vision by demonstrating a high level of emotional intelligence and excellent communications skills, to a team of professional employees (currently 9) and volunteers (currently about 200).

3 Fundraising and Ambassadorship

Acting as the face and principal ambassador of Strawberry Hill House & Garden both internally and externally, maintaining relationships with key bodies including St Mary's University, the NLHF, the

Arts Council England and English Heritage, local partner organisations, donors and sponsors both in the UK and internationally, local and national government, educational establishments, the Charity Commission and the media.

4 Marketing

With the Marketing and Communications Officer, Curator and Property Operations Manager, overseeing the execution of current marketing and communications plans (including media relations, advertising, listings, sponsorship, signage and PR) to raise the profile and enhance the reputation of Strawberry Hill House & Garden as a major cultural venue and a focal point for the local community across all its local, national and international audiences and demographic targets.

5 Governance

Working with the Board and the team to maintain and develop policies and procedures, based on clear principles and guidelines to ensure Strawberry Hill House has a financially sustainable and safe future, including compliance with the laws governing charities, human resources and Health & Safety.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

In the Interim Director, the Board seeks candidates with strong strategic business skills, collaborative enthusiasm and entrepreneurial insight who can realise the potential of Strawberry Hill House & Garden and secure its longer-term sustainability as a heritage visitor destination. They will be good managers of staff and volunteers with the ability to motivate, lead and inspire. They will have experience of delivering and completing successful grant funded projects.

They will be sound financial managers with excellent and successful fundraising skills and an ability to develop the marketing strategy for the organisation to increase visitor numbers year on year. They will be flexible and sensitive to the requirements of the Trustees and have a strong awareness of the need for good governance at all times.

Specifically, candidates for this role will have the following attributes:

Essential

- Proven leadership skills
- Financially astute and disciplined
- Significant fundraising experience, and understanding of the fundraising climate for cultural/heritage organisations
- Results focused
- Experience of working with, and negotiating with, external stakeholders
- Excellent communication skills
- An eye for detail and excellence

Desirable

- An understanding of the museum/heritage world
- IT literate with an awareness of the importance of co-ordinated IT systems in data-gathering and operational analysis
- Marketing

HOW TO APPLY

To discuss the role and for further information, please contact:

lynn.beard@strawberryhillhouse.org.uk

In making an application, you are asked to submit:

- A comprehensive curriculum vitae (3 pages maximum) giving details of relevant achievements in recent posts;
- A (maximum two page) supporting statement that summarises your interest in this post and provides evidence of your ability to match the criteria outlined in this brief;

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: by close of business on Friday 16th May 2025

Interviews are scheduled for Thursday 22nd May 2025

We would prefer to receive applications electronically and they should be sent to:

lynn.beard@strawberryhillhouse.org.uk