



# **Candidate Brief**

## **Executive Director**

Strawberry Hill House & Garden

January 2024

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## 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 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. Extensively restored thanks to the Strawberry Hill Trust’s £10m restoration project with substantial grants from the 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, now displaying 20 rooms which appear as Walpole left them on his death in 1797. 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.

Although 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 the entire range of art and artefacts. Between October 2018 and February 2019, the house was repopulated with some 192 exhibits from 50 national museums and private collections including the National Portrait Gallery, the V&A, the Ashmolean Museum, Dulwich Picture Gallery and the National Gallery of Scotland. These were brought back to their exact locations in the house providing a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience the house as Walpole intended it to be seen and drew a substantial number of visitors from the UK and overseas. The Trust is currently working to restore 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 – by the time of his death he had acquired 46 acres of land – offers five acres restored as far as possible to its original appearance, according to Walpole’s plan for 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.

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 around 17,000 visitors each year, with scope for attracting more over time.

### ***Staff and Resources***

Strawberry Hill House has a paid staff of 9 led by its Executive Director and benefits from 170 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.

Its income of approximately £850k is derived from ticket sales, events, grants, sponsorship, donations and membership fees from Strawberry Hill Members, and catering. The Trust has a strong education team, fulfilling an important commitment to community outreach which is central to the Trust's aims.

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 dining, weddings, conferences and filming. An ongoing challenge for the future is to ensure the long-term sustainability of Strawberry Hill House & Garden through the development of its income-generating activities and building new audiences.

It is particularly key that the incoming Executive Director is an effective fundraiser, maximising opportunities for support, and is also able to build partnerships with a wide range of external stakeholders. There is also a longer-term plan to develop and build the current endowment fund to help secure operating income into the future.

### ***Governance***

Strawberry Hill Trust is chaired by Paul Kafka with a Trustee Board of 12 members who all play an active part in supporting and developing the work of the Trust.

Strawberry Hill House had a highly successful restoration, completed in 2010, establishing an important Historic House Museum and heritage destination not just for the local community but for a national and international audience, drawn to the story of the House and Garden, reflecting Horace Walpole's tastes and experimentation with new ideas in the Gothic tradition.

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 Acceptance in Lieu scheme.

This is an amazing time to join this unique house, it continues to fascinate visitors, whether they have come back time and again, or are totally new to the House. There are exciting opportunities ahead for a dynamic and resourceful Executive Director to take this historic house into a new phase and building on the excellent work achieved by current and past staff, and a group of enthusiastic and hard-working volunteers and an experienced and engaged Board.

It is in this context that the new Executive Director will be appointed.

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

## THE ROLE

<b>Job Title:</b>	Executive Director
<b>Reporting to:</b>	Chair and Trustees of Strawberry Hill Trust Board
<b>Salary package:</b>	From £60,000, depending on experience
<b>Location:</b>	Strawberry Hill House, Twickenham TW1 4ST

The role of the Executive Director, working closely with the Board of the Strawberry Hill Trust (“the Trust”) is to develop, resource and execute a long-term strategy to enable Strawberry Hill House & Garden to meet its charitable purpose and ensure long-term financial sustainability.

The Trust’s charitable purpose is the advancement of the education of the public and the advancement of the arts, culture and heritage by:

- preserving for the public benefit Strawberry Hill House, its historical, architectural and artistic heritage, its Collection of paintings, furniture and other objects and its garden (together “the House”) and by providing public access to the House on appropriate terms; and
- maintaining the House for the public benefit as a diverse cultural hub reflecting the enduring values of its creator, Horace Walpole, and his successors as owners, as an educational resource open to everyone and as a focus and venue for community activities of all kinds.

The Trust’s mission is to ensure that Strawberry Hill House & Garden are financially and environmentally sustainable. It places the highest importance on inclusiveness and trust in all aspects of its work. The Trustees and the executive team strive to share their passion for the House and its contents, welcoming the widest possible audience and bringing enthusiasm, creativity and innovation to everything they do, and to work wherever possible with partners and collaborators who share their values.

The Executive Director is therefore responsible for running a well-maintained and financially secure historic house and garden, achieved by:

- maximising income generating opportunities, especially fundraising support, to enable SHH to work within at least a break even budget each year.
- maximizing footfall, and ticket revenues, to the House and Gardens
- running an annual calendar of profitable private and public events at the House

- **with the Curator**, maintaining the fabric of the House and the curatorial integrity of the Collection housed within Strawberry Hill House, including those artefacts owned by the Strawberry Hill Collection Trust
- Continuing to build the reputation of Strawberry Hill House & Garden as a heritage destination
- using this reputation to support a programme of successful fundraising to underpin long-term financial sustainability.

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

## **1 Business Strategy and Financial Management**

Develop and follow a long-term (3 year) business plan for Strawberry Hill House & Garden, from 2024, upholding a strong level of commerciality and business acumen. The business plan will be reviewed twice annually by the SHT Board of Trustees and the Executive Director will adjust the plan as appropriate in the light of the Board's input. The plan will form the basis for reporting progress against forecast at every Board meeting.

## **2 Leadership**

Provide leadership 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 170).

The employees currently directly managed by the Executive Director include the Curator, Heads of Finance and Learning; Community Outreach Manager; Visitor, Volunteer and Retail Manager; Marketing Manager; Operations and Administration Officer and the Head Gardener.

## **3 Fundraising and Ambassadorship**

Act as the face and principal ambassador of Strawberry Hill House & Garden both internally and externally, developing relationships for this purpose with 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 Manager, devise and execute an appropriate marketing and communications strategy (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 Vision**

Work with the Board, using a clear set of principles and guidelines, to articulate, communicate and reinforce to staff, volunteers, supporters and the wider community the mission, vision and values of Strawberry Hill.

## **Principal Responsibilities**

### **Management**

The Executive Director is responsible to the Board for the recruitment, training, motivation and leadership of a team of employees and volunteers to execute the business plan. Key areas requiring effective management and, where necessary, appropriately qualified volunteer support include (but are not limited to):

- Ensuring Accredited Museum status is maintained.
- Fundraising, working with appropriate staff to drive forward opportunities to support SHH through projects, fabric support, individual giving programmes, legacy giving and more
- Planning with the Curator an engaging programme of exhibitions and displays
- Event management, including those specifically with income generating opportunities, including, for example, wedding hire.
- Ensuring a successful and cost-effective Marketing and PR strategy
- Financial management, producing budgets and delivering on business performance – revenue generation and cost control.
- Education and Community, ensuring links with schools both local and national and maintaining a successful outreach programme
- Retail management, including catering (café) and shop
- Garden/landscape management
- Front of House, garden guides and other volunteers
- **With the Curator**, Museum and Collection management, maintenance, conservation and caretaking, including the relationship with Strawberry Hill Collection Trust (SHCT)
- General administration and compliance with Charity Commission best practice and all legal requirements

The Executive Director will:

- develop job descriptions and remuneration packages for each role in the team and review them annually.
- set clear and measurable goals for each member of the team, also to be reviewed annually
- devise roles and an organizational structure and encourage a motivating and inspiring workplace for all volunteers, ensuring that the wellbeing of all who work at SHH is a key priority.
- ensure a commitment to diversity and inclusion across SHH
- develop effective KPIs for all functions within the SHH&G operation.

- ensure that management tools, such as co-ordinated IT systems, files and records, are kept at appropriate levels of efficiency and functionality to ensure effective data-management operations and analysis within Strawberry Hill House at all times.
- Ensure the Staff Handbook is updated as needed and HR best practice applied.

### **Finance**

The Executive Director will:

- work closely with the Trust Board's Finance Committee to ensure best practice is applied in all cases.
- ensure a level of income generation that allows SSH&G to at least break even at year end.
- ensure the House remains financially sustainable through delivery of the business plan, making adjustments to expenditure and costs as appropriate.
- report monthly to the Board of Trustees on the finances of the House from a P&L and Cashflow point of view and assume responsibility for producing the annual accounts.
- ensure that no activity incurring costs is undertaken unless a realistic business case is prepared and approved beforehand.
- maximise footfall, paying particular attention to the local environment, ensuring that this crucial performance indicator is tracked and monitored consistently to grow revenue in a profitable way.
- manage the catering contract to maximise revenue generation and ensure the highest quality of service and visitor experience.
- where possible, generate sufficient financial surplus from the operation of the House to provide funds to contribute to the long-term endowment fund to help keep the House financially secure.

### **Fundraising**

The Executive Director will:

- advocate the case for support for Strawberry Hill House & Garden, working with the Curator, by stewarding existing stakeholder relationships and developing potential new supporters from a wide range of individual donors and organisations
- secure revenue and capital income (primarily from trusts, foundations, individual donors and Government agencies)
- manage and promote Members and Patrons schemes
- safeguard the Endowment Fund and increase in the long-term to £1m+
- manage and effectively maintain a long-term organic relationship with St Mary's University, including annual financial support and mutually beneficial operational collaboration

### **SHT Board**

The Executive Director will:

- attend SHT board meetings as appropriate, and work closely with the Chair and the Board to ensure the structure and constitution of the Trust are fit for purpose and in accordance with best practice.
- work with the Board to maintain and evolve an appropriate sub-committee structure where necessary.
- organise appropriate induction and training for all Trustees.

### **Strawberry Hill Collection**

The Executive Director, in close collaboration with the Curator and the Trustees of SHCT, will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the House and its collection of artefacts and objects, which are owned by Strawberry Hill Collection Trust (SHCT) or on loan to SHT from other bodies or individuals. The Executive Director will attend Strawberry Hill Collection Trust (SHCT) meetings as appropriate and work to ensure that SHT and SHCT are working productively in tandem. Together, the Director and the SHCT will ensure that comprehensive records of all objects are maintained and updated as necessary and that all objects are fully insured.

### **Risk Management**

The Executive Director will ensure the Trust's policies and procedures on security, fire protection, emergency planning, Health and Safety and safeguarding are updated as necessary and always followed; and that staff and volunteers are trained and kept up to date in such requirements. The Executive Director will provide a risk update to each Trustee Board meeting, via the Risk Register.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

In the new Executive Director, the Board seeks candidates with strong strategic business skills, 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 a collaborative and open management style.

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 always show a strong awareness of the need for good governance.

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 system in data-gathering and operational analysis

### **HOW TO APPLY**

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

Lynn Beard

[applications@strawberryhillhouse.org.uk](mailto:applications@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: Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (by close of business)**

Interviews are scheduled for: Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024

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

**[applications@strawberryhillhouse.org.uk](mailto:applications@strawberryhillhouse.org.uk)**