



Re-Form Heritage: Re-Evaluating Past Practice for a Resilient Heritage Future Education & Learning Consultancy Brief

Introduction

Re-Form Heritage is an independent charity which specialises in the restoration and rejuvenation of heritage buildings at risk of decay or demolition. Re-Form Heritage's objective is to transform historic buildings into local assets, creating job opportunities and catalysing wider social and economic benefit. Re-Form Heritage owns and manages Middleport Pottery and Harper Street in Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent. It also owns the Old Duchy Palace in Lostwithiel, Cornwall, which is operated by our partners at the Cornish Buildings Preservation Trust.

Middleport Pottery, situated on the Trent and Mersey Canal in Stoke-on-Trent, was built by Burgess and Leigh in the late nineteenth century. The Grade II* listed pottery is the last working Victorian potbank in continuous production in Stoke, the traditional home of the British ceramics industry. After 130 years, Middleport Pottery remains home to world-famous 'Burleigh' pottery. Middleport Pottery is now an award-winning visitor destination based in the heart of the Potteries.

Re-Form Heritage is inviting proposals for an education and learning consultancy as part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund-funded project "Re-Form Heritage: Re-Evaluating Past Practice for a Resilient Heritage Future". This grant will allow Re-Form Heritage to undertake a comprehensive top to bottom review of several key financial and operational activities in order to re-establish financial sustainability while also strengthening our operational resilience in the wake of the Covid pandemic. While the need to establish long-term financial sustainability in a post-lockdown environment is the immediate driver of the timing of the project, we also intend to address staff operational capacity and the outdated nature of several aspects of the visitor engagement offer, many of which have not been updated or reviewed since the site opened to the public in 2014. The charity believes that financial sustainability, operational capacity, and visitor engagement are interlinked, and need to be reviewed as part of an integrated whole rather than in isolation.

Consultancy Details

The education and learning consultancy will lead a review of the existing learning programme at Middleport Pottery, a Grade II*-listed 19th-century ceramics factory and visitor attraction in Stoke-on-Trent. The goal is to work with the Heritage & Learning Manager and other relevant staff to increase the net income from the site's education and learning programme, whether through expansion or redevelopment of the existing formal and informal learning offers. The current formal learning programme consists of delivering hands-on educational content to planned school visits during the school term. The informal learning programme consists of child- and family-oriented educational activities outside of the school term. The formal learning programme is meeting

current targets, but has not been reviewed in detail for some years and needs further development to grow income. The informal learning programme is not meeting targets, and staff have limited capacity to develop this without additional support.

The core tasks of the consultancy will include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Consulting with local schools to gain feedback on the Middleport Pottery formal learning offer, and understand expectations on its future development
- Reviewing current learning programme delivery capacity, including use of volunteers
- Making recommendations over marketing of the learning programme
- Designing and developing concepts for an improved informal learning programme
- Making recommendations on immediate steps that can be implemented to develop the site learning offer
- Supporting implementation of immediate changes to the learning offer
- Making recommendations on longer-term steps to update the education and learning offer

The consultant will be expected to write a report summarising their review and recommendations. The report should clearly outline and differentiate between recommendations on immediate changes to the heritage offer and recommendations on longer-term steps that will be delivered outside the time frame of this project. We already anticipate that the longer-term changes will require additional funding applications to support delivery.

Consultancy duration: 40 days (across a 9- to 10-month period, depending on consultant start date); the consultancy must be completed by the end of July 2024

Consultancy Fee: Up to £400 per day (plus expenses); maximum available budget (including expenses): £20,000

Location: A mix of on-site and remote working; the consultancy will require some visits to Middleport Pottery in Stoke-on-Trent.

Contacts: Head of Operations & Engagement Lucy Siebert (lucy.siebert@re-form.org) and Heritage & Learning Manager Victoria Astridge (victoria.astridge@re-form.org).

Queries should be directed to Lucy Siebert (lucy.siebert@re-form.org)

The Selection Process

Consultants will not be selected solely on the basis of price as other factors will also affect the success of the project. The following, in no particular order, will be taken into consideration in the selection process and should ideally be addressed in any tender document:

- Relevant experience
- Price
- Quality of work
- Financial management
- Ability to complete on time and within budget
- References
- Flexibility of approach

- Approach to working with the client
- Current workload and capacity to undertake this project

Competitive tendering exercises will be used to ensure value for money is achieved, taking into consideration proposed fees and quality of service. Tenders will be received and reviewed by relevant members of the management team. There will be shortlist of candidates selected for interview with tours Middleport Pottery available on request, to support shortlisted candidates in their preparation for the interview process. A final decision will be made following interview; it is anticipated that interviews will include a presentation on the tender proposal.

Initial tenders to be received no later than Friday 22 September. Tenders should offer a clear outline of how the consultant proposes to approach the work and a proposed initial timeline of work.

Tenders should be submitted to Head of Operations & Engagement Lucy Siebert (lucy.siebert@reform.org). Any enquiries about this project should also be directed to Lucy Siebert.

Selection Timeline

22 September - Deadline for tenders

27 September - Shortlisting completed by Dr Alasdair Brooks (Chief Executive), Lucy Siebert (Head of Operations & Engagement), Victoria Astridge (Heritage & Learning Manager), and Lynne Hancock (Learning Officer)

6 October - Interviews with Lucy Siebert (Head of Operations & Engagement), Victoria Astridge (Heritage & Learning Manager), and Lynne Hancock (Learning Officer)