

GARDEN MUSEUM



Consultant Brief: Activity Planner

Project: 'Benton End Revived' – Renewal and Reimagination of a Historic Arts and Horticultural Site

Client: The Garden Museum

Location: Benton End, Hadleigh, Suffolk

Funded by: The National Lottery Heritage Fund (the Heritage Fund) thanks to National Lottery players

Project Budget: £4.9 million (target), including £2.9 million from the Heritage Fund

Contract Period: Development Phase

1. Project Summary

The Garden Museum is seeking an experienced Activity Planner to collaborate with a team of consultants on the renewal and redevelopment of Benton End, a Grade II* listed Tudor property with significant artistic, horticultural, and social heritage. The goal is to transform Benton End into a vibrant, accessible, and sustainable arts and learning centre, reimagining the radical spirit of Sir Cedric Morris and Arthur Lett-Haines's art school and garden legacy.

This commission covers Development Phase of a National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported capital project. The Activity Planner will collaborate closely with the client, stakeholders and wider consultant team throughout.

2. Project Vision and Objectives

The redevelopment of Benton End seeks to:

- Conserve and restore the Grade II* listed house and associated gardens structures
- Create inclusive and accessible facilities for learning, exhibitions, and residencies
- Respect and celebrate the site's layered heritage, including its significance in queer history
- Embed sustainability and environmental responsibility in all design choices
- Enable operational and financial sustainability through a mixed-use business model

3. Activity Planner roles and responsibilities

The Activity Plan will cover community engagement, formal and informal learning, volunteering and training and will be written according to The National Lottery Heritage Fund's Activity Planning Good Practice Guidelines (2024).

In undertaking the preparation of the Activity Plan the successful consultant will:

- Review the existing Outline Activity Plan and supporting documentation
- Review current activities
- Plan, organise and deliver consultation with stakeholders to ascertain the context and aspirations for the project
- Plan, organise and deliver a market assessment of potential audiences
- Undertake desk and face-to-face research of comparator organisations to learn from best practice
- Plan, organise and deliver consultation with potential partners who may help to deliver the programme
- Plan, organise and deliver consultation with the local community (organisations and individuals)
- Plan, organise and deliver consultation with the formal learning sector (schools, Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE))
- Devise, develop and deliver a range of pilot projects to test the ideas in the Outline Activity Plan
- Write an Activity Plan that draws together all the research and makes a cogent argument for priority audiences and the activity programme
- Write and produce a fully costed Action Plan as part of the Activity Plan
- Write and produce a Volunteering Plan and Training Plan for the project
- Write and produce all briefs and JDs relating to activities in the Action Plan and Activity Plan
- Attend the Heritage Fund Mid Stage Review of the Development Phase
- Produce regular progress reports and attend project meetings at key milestones
- Work with the project evaluator to evaluate the pilot programme and build in relevant feedback to adapt the Activity and Action Plans based on this

4. Skills and Experience required

- Proven track record of producing Heritage Fund Activity Plans
- Experience working with Grade II* listed buildings and conservation-led projects
- Experience working with multidisciplinary teams
- Excellent communication and stakeholder engagement skills
- Familiarity with The National Lottery Heritage Fund's Activity Planning Good Practice Guidelines (2024)
- Knowledge of sustainability standards and inclusive engagement principles

5. Project Timeline

Development Phase: Apr 2026 – August 2027

Milestones:

- By end June 2026: Activity Planner recruited to project
- By end July 2026: All consultants recruited and begin work on project

- By Nov 2026: Activity Planning initial research and consultation completed
- December 2026: Client review and sign-off for RIBA stage 2
- By Jan 2027: Target audience identification and needs assessment completed
- By Mar 2027: Development and testing of pilot activities completed
- By end Mar 2027: Activity Plan draft produced
- March 2027: Activity Plan Draft submitted ahead of Development Phase Review with the Heritage Fund
- May 2027: Client review and sign-off for RIBA stage 3
- July 2027: Final Activity Plan and action plan submission and sign-off
- August 2027: Delivery phase application submitted
- December 2027: Decision from Heritage Fund

Delivery Phase: 2028 – 2031

6. Budget

- The project's overall target budget is £4.9 million, inclusive of VAT.
- The Activity Planner's fee, including market research costs, is a maximum of £25,000 excl VAT
- The fee above includes all travel and expenses. Regular attendance onsite at Benton End, Hadleigh, Suffolk is expected
- There is up to £5,000 (excl VAT) allowance for pilot activities in the Development Phase
- There is a budget of £289,650 (excl VAT) for costs in the Delivery Phase Activity Plan, excluding staff costs, marketing and evaluation, which are included elsewhere

7. Deliverables

- Full review of existing draft Activity and Action Plans
- Full review of activities delivered by Benton End in 2024-2026
- Market assessment including benchmarking and competitor analysis, with supporting illustrated report
- Stakeholder consultations, written up and data assessed
- Develop, deliver and evaluate pilot Activity Plan
- Full Activity Plan including 1st draft review and sign off by client; and final draft review and sign off by client
- Fully costed Action Plan including detailed budget and cashflow for Delivery Phase
- Volunteering Plan including detailed budget and cashflow for Delivery Phase
- Training Plan including detailed budget and cashflow for Delivery Phase
- Job Descriptions/Briefs relating to roles in the Activity and Action Plans
- Updates at regular project meetings

8. Application Requirements

Please supply the following by **5pm on Monday 11 May 2026**. Responses should be sent to bentonend@gardenmuseum.org.uk.

Clarifying questions should be sent to bentonend@gardenmuseum.org.uk by **5pm on Monday 27 April 2026**.

- Illustrated examples of recent Heritage Fund Activity Plans at an equivalent level of complexity and heritage significance
- CV(s) demonstrating relevant experience and examples of previous projects
- Fee proposal for Development Phase
- Outline methodology and approach
- At least 2 references from comparable heritage or arts capital projects
- Confirmation of insurance (minimum £1 million Professional Indemnity and £1 million Public/Employers Liability cover, or ability and willingness to obtain)

9. Tender evaluation / weighting

Selection of the successful consultant will be based on:

- a) Proven example(s) of recent, similar work at an equivalent level of complexity and heritage significance **(25%)**. Page limit of 4 sides of A4, including any supporting imagery. Please note this will represent the first sift and tenderers not meeting this requirement will not progress further
- b) CV including previous roles and responsibilities, and any relevant experience not covered by the above. **(15%)**. Page limit of 2 sides of A4, including any supporting imagery
- c) Methodology, including any commentary on the proposed Development Stage programme **(20%)**. Page limit of 4 sides of A4, including any supporting imagery
- d) Understanding of the brief, assessment of key issues and how objectives will be met **(10%)**. Page limit of 4 sides of A4, including any supporting imagery
- e) Value for money: Day rate and volume of work produced in relation to the fee quoted (excluding the allowance for pilot activities and budget for Delivery Phase Activity) **(30%)**

10. Decision making process

- Tenders will be assessed and moderated by members of the Garden Museum Senior Management Team and at least one trustee
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview
- A final evaluation report with a recommended appointee will be submitted to The National Lottery Heritage Fund for approval

11. Appendix

- 'Benton End Revived' Procurement Guidelines; containing further information and appendices relevant to the project

This opportunity is made possible thanks to The National Lottery Heritage Fund and National Lottery players.