

Catering in 2015 and Beyond

Invitation to Express an Interest July 2014

In 2015 a number of exciting catering opportunities will arise within York Museums Trust's portfolio of sites. We are now seeking to put in place partnerships with catering specialists with a view to:

1. offering a range of appropriate, good quality catering options on each of our sites,
2. maintaining and, in some cases, raising our reputation for excellent customer service,
3. generating investment funds, where necessary, to achieve the above, and,
4. generating substantial revenues to support the ongoing work of the Trust.

There are opportunities in both visitor catering and events catering. Branding identity is an important issue for us in two senses:

1. the sites are scheduled ancient monuments with unique features and atmospheres; it is important that they are not seen as extensions of the high-street, and
2. we see catering as one way of extending awareness of the York Museums Trust itself as we seek to grow our base of support.

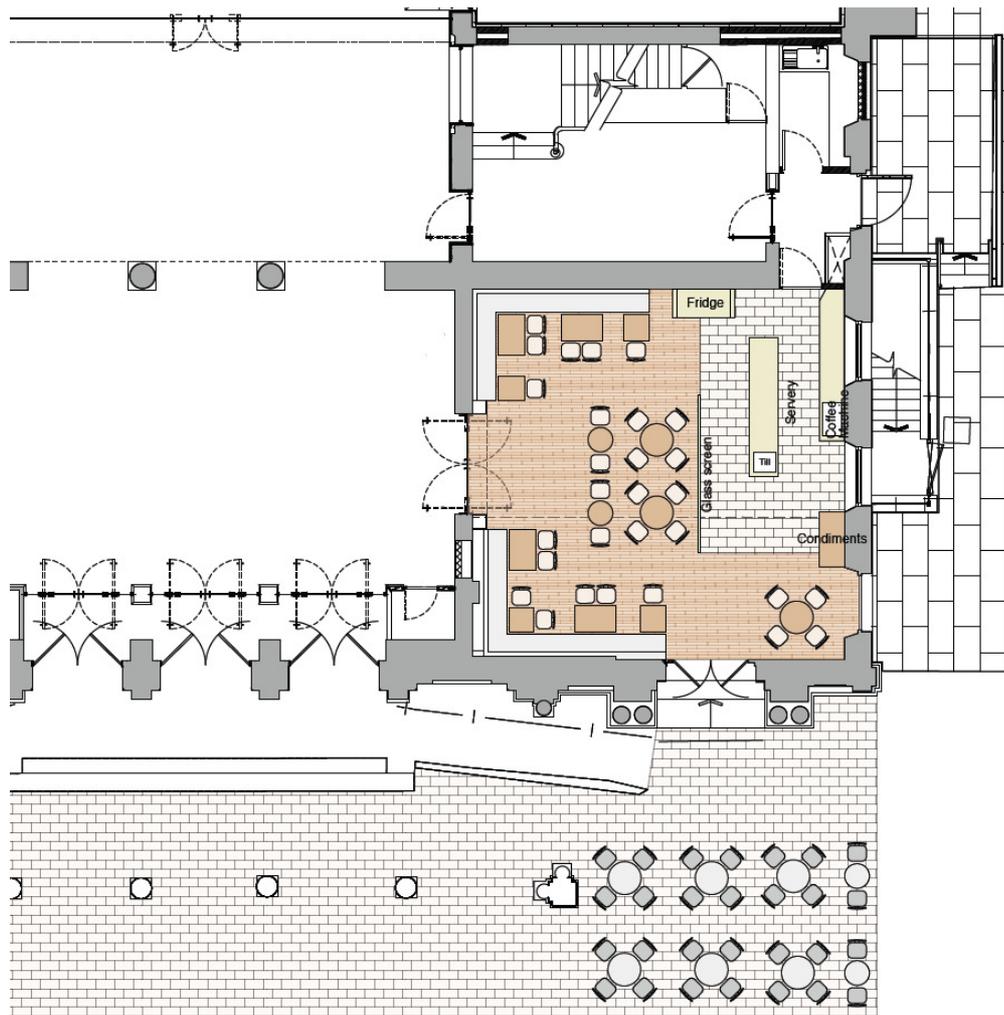
We are inviting individuals and companies to express their interest in running one or more of the outlets or services on YMT's behalf. We do not expect that a single operator will be able to provide the best solutions across the range of catering offers but we will consider all proposals.

York Art Gallery

York Art Gallery will re-open in 2015 after an £8m refurbishment. The gallery will be 60% bigger and will be the home of the new Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA).

We anticipate that the gallery will attract around 200,000 visitors per year; the café also has the opportunity of passing trade due to its location on Exhibition Square.

A new café facility will be created in the former City Archives space, opening out onto Exhibition Square. The café will have space for approximately 40 covers internally and as many again outside. However space for food preparation and storage will be very restricted.



York Art Gallery Café (indicative layout only)

There is a precedent for a successful café operation at the front of the gallery building. York Museums Trust is now seeking a catering partner to operate a new café for a number of years to come. There will be an opportunity for the new operator to influence the layout, furniture and fittings of the new space.

Practicalities

The gallery is likely to be open 363 days a year and we would expect the café to be operational every day that the gallery is open.

The menu and prices will be the responsibility of the contractor, within the terms of a Service Level Agreement, to be worked up with the successful tenderer.

The café is highly visible to visitors and will be amongst their first impressions of the gallery.

The menu and prices must not be prohibitive to the gallery's broad family audience.

It will be the contractor's responsibility to ensure the cleanliness of the catering areas.

York Museum Gardens

In parallel with the development of York Art Gallery, York Museum Gardens are being extended to connect up with the space behind the gallery.

The Gardens currently have around 1.7m visitors per year.

There are opportunities to provide catering to the hundreds of thousands of visitors who use the gardens. We are looking for ideas and proposals that fit with the ethos and atmosphere of the gardens.

We expect that in 2015 any offers will be temporary or pop-up in nature, potentially designed to test more permanent propositions for the future.

York Castle Museum

The contract for visitor catering at York Castle Museum is also due for renewal in 2015. The museum is one of the best established visitor attractions in York. It currently welcomes nearly 300,000 visitors each year and we expect that figure to grow this year with the opening of a major new exhibition, "1914 - When the World Changed Forever".

The current café seats 36 indoors, with opportunity for more tables outside.

At peak times the offer is restricted by the space allocated to it in the entrance to the building. Whilst pressures on that location mean that no more space is available there, we would be open to suggestions for creative uses of other spaces around the site for a second catering offer.

Museum visitor numbers in the last year were:

April	31807
May	25354
June	21464
July	25019
August	40265
September	20436
October	28625
November	17238
December	15548
January	14837
February	24997
March	18902
	284492



Practicalities

The museum is open 9.30 to 5.00, 363 days a year and we would expect the café to be operational every day that the museum is open.

The menu and prices will be the responsibility of the contractor, within the terms of a Service Level Agreement, to be worked up with the successful tenderer.

The café is highly visible to visitors and will be amongst their first impressions of the museum.

The menu and prices must not be prohibitive to the museum's broad family audience.

It will be the contractor's responsibility to ensure the cleanliness of the catering areas.

The Hospitium

This timber-framed medieval building in York Museum Gardens has been established as a highly successful venue for weddings and events with an excellent reputation for quality and customer service. The nature of the building and the close working relationship with YMT events staff mean that an exclusive partnership arrangement is preferred.

The venue hosts around 95 weddings plus around 50 other events each year; there is still some opportunity for growth, particularly mid-week and off-season.

The existing partnership is up for renewal in 2015 and the intention is to test the market.

General Notes

Events Catering

All YMT's venues host events and there will be opportunities for the chosen catering partners to service these.

Investment

Potential contractors are invited to make recommendations for improvements in the catering facilities and propose how these might be achieved and funded.

Terms

Income generated by the catering operations on our sites will belong to York Museums Trust. YMT will work up a Service Level Agreement with a preferred catering partner in each venue.

The Trust will pay a fixed % of all sales to the catering partner to cover all running costs of the catering operation, including cost of sales and salary costs, as well as profit.

The agreement will be for a maximum of 5 years.

York Museums Trust is committed to supporting the Living Wage (see livingwage.org.uk) and the successful caterer will be expected to pay this rate as a minimum to all staff working on our sites.

The Appointment Process

Interested parties are invited to contact Jonathan Peters (jonathan.peters@ymt.org.uk) to arrange a site visit and informal discussion during August. We aim to have formal proposals and interviews by mid-September and to appoint preferred contractors soon after.