

Invitation to Tender for Exhibition Design & Fit-out

Shaping the Body

York Castle Museum

York Museums Trust

Responses to be returned by: 12 noon Monday 6th July

Please send to: Alison Bodley, Castle Museum, Eye of York, York YO1 9RY alison.bodley@ymt.org.uk

1.1 Background to York Museums Trust

York Museums Trust (YMT) is an independent charity which manages some of the most important York attractions;

- York Castle Museum
- Yorkshire Museum and Gardens
- York Art Gallery
- York St Mary's

YMT Chair is Professor Sir John Lawton and Chief Executive is Janet Barnes.

1.2 York Castle Museum Collections

York Castle Museum's History collections have all been awarded Designated status for their national and international importance.

The Costume and Textile collection is one of the largest in Britain. It includes men's, women's and children's clothes and accessories, household furnishings and needlework, and covers over two hundred years.

The textile collection includes examples of the many different craft skills which were popular among ladies in the 19th century. There are patchwork quilts, samplers, lace and embroidery.

Supporting material includes 19th century women's magazines along with their modern counterparts, dressmaking patterns, fashion-plates, shop and mail-order catalogues and photographs. All of these are valuable as records of the clothes that people have worn, and the way that they wore them.

The doll collection is particularly comprehensive ranging from the 18th century to the 1990s, from elegant wax and china to homely rag dolls, and from Sindy to Tiny Tears.

The Military collection includes the best collection of swords, the most comprehensive collection of firearms and the finest collection of 16th and 17th century armour in a regional British museum.

There are around 600 items in the edged weapons and poll arms collection. One of the earliest swords was found in France during the 100 years War between 1337 and 1453. The firearms collection has around 600 items, from the mid 1500s to the present, including service and civilian weapons, sporting and hunting weapons and firearms accessories. The European armour collection dates from around 1550 to the present.

Most of the rest of the collection is from regional part-time or volunteer units, including the Local Militia of the Napoleonic Wars, The Rifle, Artillery and Engineer Volunteers, The Territorial Army and the Yorkshire Yeomanry. Items include letters and other documents, artwork, photographs and uniforms

The Social History collection has more than 98,000 items relating to the everyday lives of people in Britain and is one of the best in the country. Most of the items date from 1700 to the present, some date back as far as 1600. The collection is particularly strong in objects from the Victorian period. Many items are from Yorkshire and the North East and give a fascinating and accurate picture of everyday life in the region. The collection is loosely divided into different areas, domestic life, personal life, working life and corporate life. The largest of these is working life, but the collection has particularly fine examples of household items and domestic life. It also contains collections of medical and scientific instruments, glass and ceramics, photographs, and documents such as programmes, political material and adverts.

This exhibition will be based on the Castle Museum collections but will also draw on York Museum Trust's art and archaeology collections, which also both Designated.

1.3 Castle Museum Visitor Profile

Around 300,000 people visit the Castle Museum every year and the museum is perceived as one of the leading tourist attractions in York. Visitors are predominately families or older couples. Around 85% are visiting tourists. Feedback from visitors indicates that although some visitors appreciate text heavy exhibitions, many others enjoy the more immersive exhibition offered by exhibitions such as Kirkgate, the Victorian Street.

1.4 YMT Design Team

Project Leader	Ali Bodley
Project Champion	Mike Woodward
History Team	Katie Brown
Castle Museum Manager	Lisa Rawcliffe
Head of Learning	Amy Baggaley
Head of Marketing	Lee Clark
Building Services Manager	tbc

2. The Brief

A design company is required to develop and deliver the **Shaping the Body Exhibition** to open mid March 2016.

2.1 Background and Budget

This project has been awarded £200,000 funded by the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund. YMT will provide match funding so that the total project budget is £350,000.

Within that, the budget for the actual exhibition design and build is £250,000.

It is important to note in this context that the project is an extensive refurbishment and reinterpretation rather than a complete new installation. To this end the project will include:

- Refurbishment and re-use of the 15 year old Click cases in Cradle to Grave (to introduce LED lighting).
- Reinterpretation of the fireplace gallery which is a an original gallery installed by the museum's founder, Kirk, in 1938
- Programming the demonstration kitchen as an activity space to tell part of the Shaping the Body story
- Careful treatment of the barn gallery, the basic barn style also thought to be a feature included by Kirk

2.2 Exhibition Location

Permanent galleries on the upper floors of the female prison building of the Castle Museum:

Current Name	STB Name
Cradle to Grave	Gallery 1
Waterloo Gallery	Gallery 2
Hearth Gallery	Gallery 3
Barn Gallery	Gallery 4

Electrical and mechanical services in the area are old and require some refurbishment. The budget for this is outside of the £250,000 exhibition budget but the appointed designer will be expected to co-ordinate this work as part of the fit-out.

2.3 Exhibition Concept

The shape of the human body in Britain has varied considerably over the last 500 years as people conform to cultural norms, follow fashion, or rebel. Starting with the agricultural revolution through to the changes in food production people have become less aware of the source and content of what they eat and the importance of the seasons. Office work, sedentary jobs and the rise in car use means that people need to actively exercise to burn calories and keep in shape. As consumers we navigate our way through complex and contradictory media messages telling us to look a certain way and buy certain products.

Using collections from across York Museums Trust, *Shaping the Body* exhibition will reveal the many factors that impact on our body shape; some are conscious decisions whilst others are created by the society we live in. Costume, art and archaeology will demonstrate how height and weight have fluctuated in different periods, and how economic circumstances and cultural ideas impact on fashion and how we should look. Once being thin was associated with poverty, famine and disease and being 'stout' with wealth and health. Today these concepts are reversed and society wrestles with an obesity problem. We are amazed by late Victorian fashions where corsets shaped ribs, whilst every year women pay for breast and buttock implants. The exhibition will use the past to challenge the public to think about their own lifestyles. It will not preach or tell people what to do but help them to understand the external factors that influence their own body shapes.

2.4 Exhibition Themes and Suggested Structure

Gallery 1

- **Keeping up Appearances**

Changing fashions from 18th century bum rolls, through to the Victorian hour glass figure, the slender 1920's and 1960s and the full bosom of the 21st Century. The 20th century saw the development of brands and marketing, while subcultures use dress to rebel.

- **The Body Uncovered**

Bodies have been shaped by foundation garments, implants, fake eyelashes, exercise and designer muscles. The costume collection will demonstrate female corseted waists and male 30 inch chests and compare them to modern sizing. We will attempt to link our costume collection with skeletal sizes found in graveyard excavation archives.

This part of the exhibition will have an emphasis the museum's costume collections and YMT's wider art collection, so lighting levels will be a consideration. Designs should take full advantage of the height of the gallery. The gallery could include a feature that doubles as a model's catwalk.

Gallery 2 & 3

- **We are what we eat**

Victorian Navvies ate a staggering 6,000 calories a day and a busy female servant around 3,000 calories. Meals were made from what was available; a poor harvest could mean starvation. Archaeology will show the wear and tear of a grain diet and teeth the impact of sugar. We will look at the science of nutrition and how fast food and ready meals mean people have little idea of what they actually eat.

Part of Gallery 2 will include a temporary exhibition area

Gallery 4

- **We are what we do**

Jockeys, dancers, models and athletes use their body shape to earn a living and others have left evidence of hard manual work on their bones. Today many people are desk bound, contributing to obesity and health injuries such as back pain and repetitive strain injury.

It is anticipated new cases will be installed in some areas of this gallery.

Curators are currently engaged in extensive research and object searches to further develop these themes.

2.5 Design services required

The designer's services:

- The design, planning, cost planning, fabrication, delivery and installation of the fit-out scheme for the exhibition spaces.
- Project co-ordination of mechanical and electrical engineering including:
 - Renewal of fire alarm
 - Renewal of intruder alarm
 - Installation of environmental monitoring system
 - Lighting in the gallery spaces

Using the museum's preferred contractors

The process will include:

Stage 1: concept brief

Initial development phase to:

- Establish detailed brief with client
- Agree budgets for each display discipline within the scheme

- Agree mechanisms for cost planning and control
- Agree timetable for design development, production and display installation
- Run creative sessions between designers and
- Confirm M&E requirements

Stage 2: concept design

Full development of the exhibition content with the exhibition team

- Prepare concept designs (3D, graphics, interactives, lighting)
- Prepare cost estimates for design proposals
- Consultations with project team
- Consultations with all statutory bodies (Fire Officer, H&S, etc)

Stage 3: detail design

Final design

- Working drawings and specifications of display scheme should be supplied on a digital format that allows YMT to easily view and circulate as well as A3 hard copy
- Graphic templates and artwork on disc. These detailed drawings should be to be sent to YMT in hard copy at A3 and in a digital form that can be circulated

Stage 4: implementation & completion

Exhibition installation and M&E works

- Supervision of off-site fabrication and liaison with contractors (including printers and specialist interactive suppliers). Suitable contractors will be chosen in conjunction with YMT. YMT already have some long term partnerships with contractors which may be of use for this project.
- Supervision of on-site installation
- Snagging
- Issue of completion certificates

The exhibition design will require consideration with regard to the exhibition infrastructure such as the environmental conditions for the objects, lighting, power supplies for multimedia and interactives.

The exhibition must comply with all relevant legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Health and Safety Regulations, and seek to implement good practice.

2.6 Exhibition Tone and Interpretative Approach

Although heavily based around the museum's collection, the tone of the exhibition needs to be hands on and interactive. The following techniques could be employed:

- object display
- panels
- talking heads
- digital media
- art installations
- physical interactives such as catwalk with costume to try on, some form of exercise spaces and/or equipment to demonstrate movement
- any other ideas

All gallery equipment must be robust and easily replaceable.

2.7 Key Relationships

- History Curatorial Team
- Castle Museum Manager
- Building Services

2.7 Timetable

The timetable is driven by the requirements of the main funders as well as the aim to open in time for Easter holidays 2016.

Brief Released	17 th June 2015
Tender Returns	6 th July
Interview notification	13 th July
Interviews	17 th July
Start-up meeting	22 nd July
First concept/ initial timetable established	10 th August
Concept design and ME works established	30 th September
Final Design	15 th Nov
Any demolition, M&E install Case refurbishment	From 30 th Nov
Exhibition install	From Jan 2016
Exhibition opens	18 th March 2016

3. Application Procedure

The response to the brief should include:

- A design vision for the overall exhibition
- Suggestion of interpretative techniques/ interactives within the budget
- A comment on the proposed timetable
- A breakdown of costs and fees
- A list of the personnel that will be working on the project and their roles
- Details of previous and current work relevant to the project and two referees
- Professional insurance and indemnity certification

To discuss project contact alison.bodley@ymt.org.uk 07741263094

Applications should be sent to Alison Bodley either by email or posted to the Castle Museum, Eye of York, York YO1 9RY by 12 noon Monday 6th July

Appendices

York Castle Museum – the Buildings

At the end of the 17th century, it was decided to build a new prison inside the bailey of York Castle and work commenced on a new County Gaol which opened in 1705, having taken four years to build. This building became known as the Debtors' prison and was described by Daniel Defoe as, 'the most stately and complete prison of any in the Kingdom, if not in Europe, kept as neat within side as it is noble without.'

A courthouse was added next door in 1737 and the Female Prison on the other side in 1783. All these fine buildings remain, indeed the court still functions as York Crown Court. The two prisons closed at the end of the 19th century. They were finally restored and converted into the Castle Museum which opened in 1938.

All buildings are **grade 1 listed** and will require listed building consent for any structural works to the Prison buildings. Displays are not subject to listed building permission. YMT staff will advise where such permissions are required.

Dr Kirk Founder of York Castle Museum & the creation of Kirkgate

York Castle Museum is a landmark in the history of museums world-wide. It was founded in 1938 by Dr John L. Kirk, who amassed most of the Museum's collections, and John Bowes Morrell, a leading York City Councillor.

From the 1890's onwards Dr Kirk collected with a passion - he bought, was given and accepted in lieu of fees. The collection outgrew his Pickering home and was displayed in Pickering Memorial Hall in the 1920's. Dissatisfied with the condition of this building he offered them to any museum authority who would house it to his design. The City of York agreed to his conditions and converted the former Female Prison.

Kirk used the most revolutionary ideas of his day to create Period Rooms and the reconstructed Victorian street, Kirkgate.

York Castle Museum has grown from the collections of Dr Kirk, it expanded into the Debtors' Prison in 1952. The original vision continues and the museum still collects objects reflecting the everyday life of the region.

By the end of the 20th century York Castle Museum had been enjoyed by over 31 million visitors

The museum holds the Kirk Archive, a record of the Kirk's personal life, collecting history and the making of York Castle Museum, including preliminary exhibition sketches and designs.