

Charity Number SC049973



Ellisland

MUSEUM & FARM

The Rural Home Of Robert Burns



Saving The Home Of Auld Lang Syne Invitation to Tender (ITT)

Introduction

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust seeks tenders for a multi-disciplinary team to deliver “Saving the Home of Auld Lang Syne”, a project of national significance funded by The National Heritage Lottery Fund and South of Scotland Enterprise. . We plan to restore the farmstead built by the poet Robert Burns in 1788, where he wrote the famous anthem to friendship, and many other songs and poems. Taking a “conservation through use” approach, the project will make the site more accessible and sustainable by attracting new audiences, while restoring the exceptionally significant site to the highest conservation standards. We have already completed a masterplan to RIBA2 “Ellisland FutureVision” and we have a completed Conservation Management Plan. We now seek a design team to develop costed plans to RIBA3 including submission to the local planning authority. This ITT will also covers further RIBA4-6 stages. However, delivery of these stages is funding dependent and the contract will include a break clause after RIBA3.

All design and specification work must adhere to exemplary heritage and building conservation standards, ensuring that the historical significance of this important site is maintained and celebrated while at the same time delivering on our masterplan’s ambition to develop sustainable new income streams and grow local, national and international audiences for our visitor centre, museum and performance spaces. In particular, our Ellisland FutureVision includes proposals for cultural residencies to allow future generations to be inspired by the setting Burns described as “Sweet Poetic Ground”. As well as the adaptation of existing buildings, we seek high quality new build visitor accommodation to provide an income source as well as residency opportunities.

Costs Our RIBA2 QS report, updated in 2024, estimated total construction costs at £2.76m for the restoration and adaptation of the historic buildings and £675,000 for the completion of three units of holiday accommodation plus groundworks.

1. Background

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust (RBET) safeguards the 1788 farm designed and built by the poet Robert Burns on the banks of the Nith near Dumfries. The A listed steading is the best preserved of all the poet's homes, the only one he built, and the place where he wrote a quarter of his musical output, including the international anthem to friendship, Auld Lang Syne. The farmstead sits in 140 acres comprising woodland and fields which were first enclosed by Burns himself. RBET is a membership Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) with a volunteer board of Trustees formed in 2020, although the site itself has been held in trust since 1928. It is located six miles North of Dumfries off the A76. It is an accredited museum, with seasonal opening, holding events and group visits off-season, depending on capacity. A small team of volunteers maintain the grounds and riverside walks for the free use of the public all year round. RBET has secured the offer of a development stage grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to produce designs and plans for the site to RIBA3, including submission to the local planning authority.

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust's charitable purpose, as stated in the Scottish Charity Register is as follows:

To hold the lands and farm of Ellisland, and such other funds and assets as may from time to time be comprised in the Trust Property, in trust for the following purposes:

- (a) the advancement of education
- (b) the advancement of the arts, heritage and culture
- (c) the promotion of the life and works of Robert Burns
- (d) to maintain a museum and collections for the benefit of the public



The RBET Mission Statement is as follows:

“Ellisland is the place to fall in love with Burns. We will increase awareness of Ellisland as central to the artistic development of Robert Burns in poetry and romantic song. We will enhance understanding of the site as the best place to see the natural world through the poet’s eyes. We will create a world class visitor experience and a vibrant centre for creative learning to ensure the unique collection, buildings and landscape are accessible to a diverse range of modern audiences.”

In 2021 RBET, with support from Historic Environment Scotland, commissioned a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) from Adams Napier, Chartered Building Surveyors & Heritage Consultants.

The CMP evaluated the site’s significance as follows:

Historical Significance: Exceptional
Aesthetic Significance: Exceptional
Artistic Significance: Exceptional
Archaeological Significance: Exceptional
Scientific Significance: Considerable

The CMP assessed the setting to be as significant as the buildings themselves, as it was chosen by Burns and is almost unchanged. A Condition Report undertaken by Adams Napier as part of the CMP found the buildings to be at risk, with significant repairs required. A collection condition report in 2024 found important artefacts including manuscripts were at risk due to the deterioration in the buildings.

In 2023, with support from South of Scotland Enterprise, The Holywood Trust and The Architectural Heritage Fund, RBET commissioned a Masterplan/Viability Study from Delfinity Ltd, working with Architects OCA. This produced a document called Ellisland: FutureVision, which included a project business plan, a landscape report and an architectural report to RIBA2 which formed the basis of a pre-application to Dumfries and Galloway Council.

An Outline Business Case produced by Biggar Economics (2024) demonstrated the proposals in the FutureVision would generate significant economic and wellbeing benefits.

Our successful Development Stage grant application to The National Lottery Heritage Fund proposed to sensitively adapt the historic buildings to deliver a range of visitor activity, including education activity, as well as developing a cafe, play area, event and exhibition space alongside improved access. A proposed Centre for Song will reflect Robert Burns’s focus on song-writing and collecting when he moved to Ellisland. Restoring the 1788 Burns cottage to recreate the domestic life of the poet and his family – as an immersive visitor experience – is a central part of our vision. The earlier proposal for a new built visitor centre is revised - we now plan to deliver our vision *using the historic buildings alone*. We still aim to create off grid visitor accommodation to provide income. These will enable cultural residencies and retreats to take place, so that future generations are inspired by the landscape Burns described as “Sweet Poetic Ground.”

Costs

The total construction costs for the completed project are estimated at £2.76m for the restoration and adaptation of the historic buildings and £675,000 for the completion of three units of holiday accommodation plus landscaping.

Requirement

This ITT is for a Project Team to produce RIBA3 designs and submit them for planning approval, commissioning all required surveys/reports and acquiring any necessary licenses. A qualified Quantity Surveyor must cost the project. The final report will build on the recommendations in our Conservation Management Plan and updated FutureVision RIBA2 proposal. That is, it will be focussed on the adaptation and repair of the historic buildings, any required ground and landscape work, with an option of separate visitor accommodation. The project should consider the site as a whole and pay attention to entire visitor experience. However, the report should address the following aspects of the site:

- a. Robert Burns 1788 Farmhouse. This is used currently as museum exhibition space, staff office accommodation and archive storage. The Trust wishes to create an immersive experience in the cottage, to recreate the domestic life of the Burns family This commission will develop these plans to RIBA3, referring to our Conservation Management Plan and undertaking work to better understand any building adaptations and how best to reverse some of these and authentically recreate the original house. This will involve an understanding of building pathology. The design team will work with our curator. We are also commissioning an interpretation plan from external consultants to inform the development of the site and the museum.

- b. The Granary: This early 19th century building post-dates Burns. It has been used historically to store grain, as a communal entertainment space and as accommodation. It is used currently as exhibition space with toilets and storage beneath. Our revised RIBA2 architectural plan proposes to upgrade the building as our main museum space creating the conditions required for quality conservation. This commission will review that proposal and work with our curator to produce costed designs to RIBA3.

- c. Threshing Barn and Cart Shed. Built by Burns in 1788 as part of the original Ellisland steading. and subsequently extended, the space has been used for events for thirty years. Our revised RIBA2 architectural plan proposed creating a Centre for Song, performance and catering space with an option for staff accommodation and visitor orientation. This commission will review RIBA2 plans, working with our curator, to ensure the adaptations to the threshing barn and cart store allow us to deliver our vision for the site.

- d. Wee Byre. Built by Burns in 1788 as part of the original Ellisland steading, it has been used as exhibition space for 30 years and was previously a working agricultural building. Our RIBA2 plan proposes creating flexible education, events and exhibition space here. This commission will review current proposals and produce RIBA3 designs to ensure adaptations deliver on our vision.
- e. Long Byre, Open Byre, Stable and Courtyard. This space was created in the early 19th century for agricultural purposes and is currently used for storage and the exhibition of agricultural machinery. Our revised RIBA2 Architectural Plan proposed adapting this space as staff/volunteer accommodation, accessible toilets and a pop- up cafe. This commission will review the RIBA2 proposals and produce costed RIBA3 designs that deliver on the trust's vision for the site.

- f. Orchard and Outside Spaces. Our RIBA2 proposals include a play area, improved access road, increased car parking, necessary groundwork and landscaping including in our existing orchard. This is based on a more extensive landscape plan by Harrison Stevens. This commission will review the RIBA2 proposals and produce costed RIBA3 designs that deliver on the trust's vision for the site. Notwithstanding the need to scale back RIBA2 landscape plans for cost reasons, we are ambitious to imaginatively restore and improve interpretation of outside spaces for maximum public enjoyment and creative inspiration.
- g. Holiday accommodation. Our RIBA2 proposals included bespoke designs for off grid accommodation that would provide a sustainable income and offer opportunities for artistic residencies. These were inspired by “The Hermitage”, a small summerhouse in the neighbouring Friars Carse estate where Burns wrote, surrounded by nature. This commission will review the RIBA2 proposals for The Hermitages and produce costed RIBA3 designs that deliver on the trust's vision for the site. This can be presented and costed as a separate piece of work. We will consider proposals for either bespoke structures or high-quality prefabricated structures with the groundwork and services for these itemised and costed.
- h. Orientation of the site. The RIBA2 designs were revised to deliver the trust's vision for Robert Burns Museum and Farm without a new build visitor centre. That remains the intention of this commission. This commission will review the RIBA2 proposals, to produce costed RIBA3 plans that make best use of the space and offer an excellent visitor experience.
- i. Understanding and investigating the buildings. We expect the successful team to build on the understanding of the site which began in our Conservation Management Plan, including commissioning research to better understand these exceptionally significant buildings, their interiors and setting to inform the restoration and adaptation . The buildings have undergone adaptations and inappropriate repairs since Burns built them in 1788. This Commission offers further opportunity to increase understanding of the buildings and their heritage significance.
- j. Environmental considerations. Our RIBA2 proposals included some retrofitting to improve the insulation of the buildings including the option of renewable heat. This Commission will provide costed RIBA3 plans to take forward these proposals, while respecting the integrity of the A listed site and its exceptional significance.

k. Surveys and Reports. This Commission will require at least the following surveys. These should be costed along with planning fees and consents.

- Topographic survey
- Site Investigation
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Tree survey
- Biodiversity Net Gain Response & Plan
- Archaeology
- CCTV drainage survey
- Scottish Water Pre-Development Enquiry
- Transport Statement

2. Selection Process

The selection process to identify the preferred Project Team will be as follows:

1. A notice is published on Public Contracts Scotland seeking interested parties.
2. Parties registering an interest will be requested to submit an SPD.
3. Following the SPD return date, the SPD submissions will be assessed and scored. The bidders with the highest scoring SPD submissions will be invited to submit a tender.
4. An Invitation to Tender will be issued to the shortlisted Bidders. The purpose of the ITT is to identify the Most Economically Advantageous Tender.
The weighting given to tender submissions in respect of price / quality will be in the ratio 30%/70% (price / quality).
5. Interviews convened
6. Evaluation of ITT submissions
7. Contract Award

The criteria for awarding the commission will be based on your team's relevant previous experience, technical/professional ability and supplementary information requested. The weightings to be used under each criteria are noted as:

- Technical/Professional Ability – scored based on the following weightings:
 - Core functions and specialisms – (20%)
 - Resources – (20%)
 - Management systems and quality – (10%)
 - Relevant Experience – (50%)
- Interviews will be held to meet the teams and discuss the Tender Quality Submissions. Interviews will not form part of the scoring process.

In the questionnaire below please fill in the grey boxes, save as a word document or pdf and submit through the Public Contracts Scotland portal:

Technical/Professional Ability

This part provides prospective Project Teams the opportunity to furnish information concerning their technical capacity and ability to deliver the contract. In judging this section the following weightings will be used:

- Core functions and specialisms - (20%)
- Resources – (20%)
- Management systems and quality – (10%)

1.0 Technical/Professional Ability 50%	
Core functions and specialisms - (20%)	1.1 Please provide a brief description of the nature of your business, highlighting core functions and any particular areas of specialism. Please indicate if any members of the Team possess any Conservation Accreditation or relevant qualification. Maximum 2 x A4 pages in font 11
Resources – (20%)	1.2 Attach details of the staff and resources relevant to the proposed project which your company has available, noting the number of employees within the office from which you propose to service this contract (noting whether full, part time and any freelance staff) with details of their qualifications. Maximum 2 x A4 pages in font 11
Management systems and quality – (10%)	1.3 Attach details on the management systems and quality assurance methods that you use and any recent innovations that you have made in service provision which has provided benefit both to you and clients – provide copies of any quality accreditations held. Maximum 2 x A4 pages in font 11

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2.0 Relevant Experience 50%

2.1 Heritage Conservation and Renovation (25%)

1. Provide examples of completed projects involving the conservation and repair of A-listed historic buildings or structures of comparable significance.
2. Describe the challenges faced and how conservation principles were implemented.
3. Detail your experience working on projects funded by heritage organizations (e.g., National Lottery Heritage Fund). Include how you ensured compliance with funding and conservation standards.

Maximum 4 x A4 pages in font 11

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2.2 Museum and Exhibition Design (5%)

1. Provide examples of projects where you adapted historic buildings to house museum collections or exhibitions. Highlight how you balanced conservation needs with exhibition functionality.
2. Explain your approach to designing exhibition spaces in heritage environments. How do you ensure environmental controls and preventive conservation measures are in place?
3. Describe a project where you integrated modern exhibition design into a historic context while preserving the building's integrity and working with a curator and heritage building/interior specialists.

Maximum 4 x A4 pages in font 11

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	<p>2.3 Visitor Experience and Interpretation (5%)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe a project where you developed immersive and engaging historical or cultural experiences at a heritage site. What interpretation techniques were used to enhance visitor engagement? 2. Provide an example of how you improved visitor orientation and accessibility at a heritage site. How did your design contribute to better visitor flow and understanding of the site? 3. Discuss your experience integrating visitor amenities (e.g., cafes, play areas, or performance spaces) into a heritage site without compromising its historic value. <p>Maximum 2 x A4 pages in font 11</p>
	<p>2.4 Sustainable Adaptation (5%)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe your experience implementing sustainable solutions in a heritage context. Include examples of energy-efficient retrofitting or renewable energy integration. 2. Provide an example of how you balanced sustainability goals with the conservation of historic fabric on a previous project. Highlight any innovative approaches used to achieve both objectives. <p>Maximum 2 x A4 pages in font 11</p>
	<p>2.5 Landscaping and Access Improvements (5%)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide examples of projects involving landscaping and road access improvements at heritage sites. Explain how you ensured these changes were sensitive to the historic environment.

	<p>2. Describe how you integrated new visitor facilities (e.g., parking, outdoor spaces) into a historic or cultural landscape. How did you ensure the improvements complemented the site’s character and significance?</p> <p>Maximum 2 x A4 pages in font 11</p>
	<p>2.6 Community Wealth Building (5%)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe your approach to supporting local economic development and community wealth building through your projects. Provide examples of local hiring, subcontracting, or sourcing practices that benefited the surrounding community. 2. Explain how you engaged with local stakeholders to maximize social and economic benefits during a heritage project. Highlight any long-term impacts on the local workforce or businesses. <p>Maximum 2 x A4 pages in font 11</p>

Retention of Design Team for RIBA4 and Beyond (Subject to Funding)

The Robert Burns Ellisland Trust (RBET) reserves the option to retain the appointed design team for the subsequent RIBA stages, specifically:

- RIBA4 (Technical Design): Finalisation of all design elements, including specifications, schedules, and integration of specialist subcontractor designs. This stage includes coordinating with other consultants to produce comprehensive technical drawings and specifications for tendering, while ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, Building Regulations, and funding body conditions.
- RIBA5 (Construction): Overseeing the construction phase, ensuring that the design is implemented accurately on-site. This includes providing regular site visits, inspections, and contractor liaison, as well as addressing design queries and issuing necessary revisions or instructions to ensure adherence to the agreed plans and quality standards.

- RIBA6 (Handover and Close Out): Ensuring the successful completion and handover of the project, including final inspections, preparation of as-built drawings, O&M (Operation and Maintenance) manuals, post-occupancy evaluations, and addressing any defects during the defects liability period.

Continuation beyond RIBA3 is contingent upon the successful acquisition of additional funding. A break clause is included at the conclusion of the RIBA3 stage, allowing RBET to terminate the contract without obligation to proceed to RIBA4 or beyond if funding is not secured or if project priorities change. This clause ensures that the trust retains the flexibility to manage financial and project risks.

References

Please provide details of two independent referees who can be contacted to provide feedback on the service received from you or your company in relation to access related work that you have completed in the last 36 months. These references must relate to two of the 3 projects referred to in your SPD submission.

Referee 1 (name):

Contact Details:

Referee 2 (name):

Contact Details:

Please return your Pre-Tender Questionnaire in accordance with the instructions contained in the Public Contracts Scotland Stage 2 Notice.