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**Nature + Love Project Brief**

**Horniman Museum and Gardens**

**Required Services: Digital Engagement Consultant**

**Estimated value of Tender:** £15,000

**Estimated Duration of Contract:**

March 2022 – July 2022

**Name of Contact:** Kirsten Walker

**Timetable for responses to brief:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tender Issue | 6 January 2022 |  |  |
| Clarifications deadline | 27 January 2022 |  |  |
| Tender Submission Deadline | 3 February 2022 |  |  |
| Evaluation of Responses | 4 February 2022 – 14 February 2022 |  |  |
| Interviews | 21 February 2022 – 25 February 2022 |  |  |
| Internal Approval Period | 28 February 2022– 4 March 2022 |  |  |
| Appointment | 7 March 2022 |  |  |
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1. **Introduction**
   1. **Summary**

The Horniman Museum and Gardens is planning a major redevelopment of parts of its Gardens and its Natural History Gallery, to be completed by early 2026. The re-invigorated and re-interpreted outdoor and indoor spaces and associated collections will enable us to celebrate our love and need for the natural world and encourage an inclusive and positive movement for environmental change amongst our audiences. The redevelopment will span two gallery and three gardens spaces. The total project budget is circa £8.9 million.

**1.2 Horniman Museum**

In 1901 Frederick Horniman gave the Horniman Museum and Gardens as a free gift to the people for their education, recreation and enjoyment, and this vision still remains central to the Horniman today. A blend of high quality collections spanning the natural, multi-cultural and musical worlds; 16 acres of well managed urban open space; community based educational and leisure programmes and a wide range of performance, events and activities provide an unrivalled opportunity to encounter and understand the richness and variety of the world in which we live.

The Horniman audience is local, national and international and it actively seeks to attract users of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. It is a much loved community resource for London and the South East. It has an exceptional record of educational achievement and works with a range of partners to develop its learning programme and encourage participation from as wide a range of people as possible.

**1.3 About the Nature + Love project:**

In 2019 the Horniman declared a Climate Emergency and in 2020 published a climate and ecology manifesto outlining the steps we will take to mitigate against the climate and ecological emergency, and to help shape a positive future for generations to come including the intention to be greenhouse gas neutral by 2040. The Horniman’s first pledge is to deliver:

* ‘an ambitious Nature + Love project to redisplay the natural history and living collections, to highlight climate and ecological issues to a wider audience’.

In the wake of the pandemic the Horniman has revisited its long terms plans and outlined a Reset Agenda, with a number of priorities which are:

1. Engage wider audiences through programming and communications
2. Diversify staff and volunteers
3. Consult people and work in partnership
4. Address the history of the Horniman business and institutional collecting
5. Enhance our digital provision
6. Make the Horniman greenhouse gas neutral and more biodiverse
7. Maximise income generation to support this agenda

These objectives enshrine our determination to use the Horniman’s position as London’s only museum of global nature and culture to raise awareness of urgent issues of climate change and global social justice, whilst becoming a more inclusive organisation and building our post-Covid organisational resilience.

Nature + Love has been set as the priority project in the context of this new Reset Agenda. The project improves access and use of key outdoor spaces, and will modernise the 60 year old interpretation in the 1901 Natural History Gallery to form a key part of our strategy to engage people in mitigating the climate and ecological crisis. It focuses on mobilising our love and concern for future generations in order to spur action on current climate and ecological challenges.

The project is a generational transformation project and will play an essential role in strengthening the social, economic and green recovery of both the Horniman and its local community as it emerges from the devastation of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We will redevelop several areas of the Horniman’s estate and heritage assets, making new connections between outdoor green spaces and interior gallery displays using accessible interpretation and digital technology.

We will create:

* a Nature Explorers Adventure Zone, opening access to our historic Nature Trail and introducing a nature-themed play area and children’s café, encouraging learning and wellbeing through exploration and play
* an outdoor Sustainable Gardening Zone with new plant nursery and sustainable planting displays encouraging improved health and wellbeing, and a programme to encourage adult skills development
* a redisplayed Natural History Gallery and Nature Explorers Action Zone, exploring human understanding of and impact upon the planet, and supporting people to make changes on a local and personal level
* a range of nature-focused partnerships and activities to diversify our audiences.

Embedded throughout the project will be an impactful activity programme including an informal learning offer, co-produced schools workshops and resources and range of digital content, aimed at encouraging a wider to connect to nature and wildlife and leading to change in individual ideas and actions.

As part of this work we are seeking a consultant to develop a Digital Feasibility Study to help us deliver the project. This study will sit alongside side an overall interpretation plan for the project, which is being developed by our in house team, with an outline to be delivered in May 2022. It is vital that the two strategies work together.

**1.4 Current Issues for:**

**a) The Gardens**

At this time of global climate and ecological crisis and in the wake of a global pandemic, the Nature + Love project has potential to become a focus of community, local and sectoral environmental initiatives. Lewisham Council has declared a climate emergency and has outlined tackling this and creating a greener borough as two of its strategic objectives in the Lewisham Local Plan 2021. The Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership, of which we are a member, recently published its updated action plan outlining strategies for the conservation of nature and the contribution of Lewisham’s natural environment to quality of life and sustainable development objectives within the Borough, making it a better place to live, study and work. Schools projects and activist groups have formed across south London. Our project and venue are where our community and these complementary partners and missions can come together to encourage sustainability and biodiversity and raise visitors’ awareness of local wildlife, the natural world and what action they can take at an individual level.

Whole areas of our listed gardens are under-used due to being inaccessible or undiscovered, yet their value to our community during lockdown has been evident in the visitor numbers and feedback we have received. The opportunity to provide new forms of access to nature and green space will support the wellbeing of our local community and specific targeted groups.

The first area that needs development is our Nature Trail and nearby old model boating lake – both suffering from under use and lack of investment. Our half a mile long Nature Trail is London’s oldest, following the route of the original Crystal Palace and South London Junction Railway. The railway was closed in 1954 and the area was left unmanaged until 1972, resulting in it becoming a wild woodland area. Today, the trail features a variety of plants, birds, insects and other animals, including the endangered stag beetle. However, it is not directly accessible from the Gardens and consequently very few of our visitors know that it is there. Signage and interpretation is virtually non-existent, and it is inaccessible to those with mobility issues. For these reasons it lost its Green Flag award in 2020. Similarly, the old boating lake, one of the historic features of the Gardens, is drained to its concrete base and looks neglected and is consequently under-utilised.

The second area on the other side of the estate is our plant nursery, which is reaching the end of its life, and the adjacent South Downs Garden. Maintenance is a challenge and the current layouts do not make the most of these spaces. The nursery, whilst a critical resource that allows the Gardens team to produce plant material for pop-up gardens and temporary displays each year, urgently needs replacing with modern facilities designed for public access. Planting in the South Downs does not take account of ground conditions in the area and because of the steep incline paths are very difficult to maintain, meaning this space is becoming less accessible to our visitors and is closed off in a number of places.

**b) The Natural History spaces:**

Our Natural History Gallery first opened in 1901 and has changed very little over the past century. Indeed, the bulk of the interpretation has been in-situ since the 1960s. The Gallery features several different natural science based topics and themes, mainly evolution and adaptation. The approach to interpretation is out of date and much of the labelling is now scientifically visitors inaccurate. The poor presentation of scientific content, its relevance and comprehension is a significant barrier for families, schools and marginalised groups. It makes few connections between people and nature and does not adequately explain the impact and implications of climate change or biodiversity loss and what this means for the future of life on the planet and what we might do to help.

This Gallery still retains many of the original showcases built in 1901 and these contribute to an historical atmosphere much loved by our visitors. However, the cases are not airtight, let in dust and insect pests, have minimal lighting and need refurbishment to improve their condition. Most of the cases retain their original Edwardian locks and are either very difficult or very easy to open.

The general infrastructure of the Gallery needs urgent attention, the fabric of the roof is failing, there are damp walls, worn out floors, pest infestation issues and the lighting and gallery environment are difficult to control with temperature and humidity fluctuating widely between the summer and winter months. The redevelopment of its companion gallery, the World Gallery in 2018, has only served to highlight its outdated and tired infrastructure and content. All of these issues affect the visitor experience and need to be addressed as part of the Nature + Love project.

**c) Our Natural History collections**

In 2012-13 we conducted an in-depth review of our Natural History collection, supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund. This enabled us to re-evaluate the strengths and potential of the collection for increased public engagement, display, and in learning and research terms. The Natural History collection contains around 250,000 specimens. Currently only a small proportion are on public display, the vast majority for many decades without rotation. Recent research shows that our visitors would like to see a greater diversity of specimens on display that showcase the quality and significance of our collection. A major re-design and re-display of the Gallery introducing new themes and topics will allow us to showcase more of the spectacular and significant specimens currently housed in our Study Collections Centre, many of which have not been displayed for many decades.

In addition to this, new acquisitions, additions to the Handling Collection and loans (large taxidermy specimens or models of prehistoric animals such as dinosaurs) will be procured as spectacular gateway specimens to provide a more accessible route into a particular topic or theme.

**2. Our vision for the Nature + Love project:**

**2.1 Audiences**

Nature + Love offers the Horniman the ability to create a seismic shift in our audience development work by appealing to a wider range of visitors, including current non-visitors. Our audience research has identified an appreciation of nature as the common thread amongst all existing and non-visitors. Our priority objective therefore is to use the project as a mechanism for increasing the diversity of our general audiences to more closely match that of the London population in terms of ethnic and socio economic backgrounds, and disability. Whilst undertaking extensive targeted engagement with local community, marginalised and schools groups, we will also take an intersectional approach to how we achieve these demographic changes in our audience profile by embedding a new audience segmentation system into the project.

We will prioritise two general audience segments in particular that have high representation of these demographic targets, alongside underrepresentation in our current audience profile. These are:

• Active Achievers - families that live for exciting, challenging, new experiences which take them out into the world, but are less confident in conventional cultural spaces.

• Self Improvers - adults focused on living their best lives, seeking enjoyment and fulfilment. Connecting with the natural world helps meet their need for both physical and mental wellbeing.

High quality redevelopment of urban parks, designed with accessibility in mind, can undoubtedly enable more people to enjoy and connect with nature. We will work hard during every stage of the project to ensure that ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, previous cultural engagement and disability are not barriers to engagement. Each element of our activity programme will be developed in consultation or co-production with a mix of audience demographics reached through diverse partners, representative organisations, surveys and consultation panels, to ensure that a broad range of visitor needs are met, that the experience will be enjoyable and relevant, and subsequent marketing promotion is targeted and appealing. Barriers identified during this ongoing consultation will be addressed as they arise.

The main groups and partners that will participate in the project will be:

1. Non-Audience Active Achievers and Self Improvers – We will recruit a panel of approx. 12 non-Horniman visitors from the local area (Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark)
2. School children and their teachers from five Lewisham schools with a high percentage of free school meals and/or from ethnic minority backgrounds
3. Representatives of Special Educational Needs and Disability groups as members of our Access Advisory panel, looking at the development of accessible wayfinding, interpretation, audio description tours, BSL-led family activities and early relaxed openings
4. Families with limited access to outdoor space or wildlife.
5. Young people interested in developing digital and other skills, which for some will move them nearer to employment
6. Marginalised adults including those most vulnerable to lower levels of wellbeing, and experiencing social isolation via eight community partners
7. Existing audiences and local stakeholders
8. Local environmental action stakeholders and nature-themed organisations
9. Volunteers.

**2.2 Gardens improvements we want to achieve:**

We will transform two areas of the Gardens into new outdoor interactive zones. The Nature Explorers Adventure Zone will be an engaging and enjoyable outdoor family destination. Unified by a local wildlife theme, the new zone will open up access to the Nature Trail and establish a new outdoor play area and children’s café, overall combining to attract new and different audiences and encourage improved health and wellbeing through nature exploration and play. The second outdoor zone will be a Sustainable Gardening Zone, redeveloping and linking a new, publicly accessible plant nursery to a transformed South Downs Garden that includes refurbished pathways for improved accessibility and a new, rolling programme of immersive, sustainable planting displays. This new zone will also include an interactive outdoor engagement space where we look at themes that will help visitors make lifestyle changes within their home and garden.

**2.3 Natural History Gallery improvements we want to achieve:**

Our new Natural History Gallery will retain its historical infrastructure and atmosphere, as well as many of our most popular specimens like the walrus. Using our existing collections, new acquisitions, loans and collaborative scientific/artistic interventions, our displays and interpretation will be brought up to date – including human impact on the environment for the first time, making it more relevant and accessible to a wider range of people. The Gallery will explore and celebrate our love and need for the natural world and also show how people have related to, understood, exploited and changed the natural world around the globe through time. It will examine our impact on the planet, the lessons we might learn, and how new scientific approaches, advances, fresh thinking and understanding can guide us towards a more sustainable, healthy and more balanced future.

A re-focussed and expanded Nature Base will be transformed into a Nature Explorers Action Zone, providing the main interactive area for families with young children, focussing on the theme of ‘Nature and You’.

**2.5 Practical Considerations for the Nature + Love Gallery redevelopment**:

**2.5.1 Gallery look and feel:**

We wish to retain the historical nature and atmosphere of the existing Natural History Gallery if at all possible. Many of the existing cases were constructed as part of the original Charles Harrison Townsend 1901 building development and could be considered to be part of the Grade 2\* listing. We know that our visitors love the historic look and feel of the existing space and the opportunity it provides for all our visitors to get up as close as possible to the specimens without actually touching them.

It is, however, essential that the gallery spaces, displays and interpretation are bought up-to date and we would expect the end result to be friendly, accessible and unintimidating, with relaxed seating, appropriate interactives, digital interventions and an action zone where visitors can handle objects and find out more about UK biodiversity. We wish to create an environment that inspires our visitors to explore and celebrate our love and need for the natural world, instilling a sense of curiosity and wonder and challenging visitors to take positive action to help preserve the world we all share.

**2.5.2 Showcases:**

We are keen to explore the potential to retain many of the existing showcases by refurbishing them to improve their air-tightness, incorporate local environmental control into the bases of these cases, improve security and safety aspects of the cases and install better and more efficient display lighting. A study will be carried out at the beginning of the development stage of the project to test the feasibility and costs of this approach.

We anticipate that we will need some new showcases to support the exhibition design and these should be specified to meet GIS standards to support any potential loans from other museums.

**2.5.3 Lighting:**

The main lighting design scheme for the space needs to be creative, sustainable, flexible and ultimately, it needs to show the nature and beauty of the collection as well as enabling our visitors to easily read all the interpretation and navigate the gallery safely.

Elements of the lighting design will sit within the Architectural and Exhibition design team’s scope of works and we expect the two teams to collaborate closely to deliver the overall lighting scheme.

**2.5.4 Interpretation:**

We will provide a range of interpretation routes through the site for visitors which will include accessible materials to support parents/carers/teachers in the interpretation of the spaces for their children/students. The interpretation must be accessible to existing and new audiences as it is essential that this project achieves its objective of widening audiences.

The new interpretation will need to link seamlessly across all aspects of the Nature + Love project, from the Nature Explorers Adventure Zone and Sustainable Gardening Zone in the Gardens to the Natural History Gallery and Nature Explorers Action Zone inside. During the project development phase the Horniman team will create a detailed site-wide interpretation strategy which will form the basis of the interpretation plan.

**2.5.5 Interactivity, physical and digital:**

Our Nature Explorers Action Zone (currently the Nature Base) will provide the main interactive area in the Museum for families with young children, focussing on the theme of “Nature and You”, local and UK biodiversity and its role and importance, instilling a sense of curiosity and wonder and supporting and challenging families to take positive actions that are good for nature on a local and global level. This area needs to be fun, engaging and participatory, with a focus on robust low-tech interactives and should link thematically to the Nature Explorers Adventure Zone outside. We will build on the findings of our Environment Champions Club to support the development of this project along with a pilot coproduction project to be delivered during the development phase of the project.

We want digital interpretation to be an integral part of the main Natural History gallery but we do not want it to dominate the display and would ideally seek solutions which do not require lots of hardware in the space and that consider any infrastructure limitations. Any digital interventions would need to be accessible to family groups together, with sound not being intrusive to other visitors. We would also need the digital experience to have longevity as the life of the gallery will be at least 20 years. Examples discussed to date include mixed reality, ceiling projections, augmented reality trails and live feeds, but we are open to all ideas that will help us meet our objectives.

The digital experience will extend beyond the Horniman. Any visitor to the Horniman website will be able to follow the same journey as a visitor to the Horniman galleries and gardens, plus an additional layer of experience available only online, unrestricted by the physical limitations of the Horniman spaces. The project also offers the potential to enhance our natural history photography and collection records online, and links to other projects including Citizen Science programmes and 3D scanning of our Handling Collection.

**2.5.6 Object mounts:**

The object mounts are likely to include a mixture of plinths, bespoke metal work and acrylic supports. Our mount making team have developed a mounting system which was used successfully to deliver the World Gallery and we would anticipate working closely with the Exhibition Designer and our teams to see if this approach is appropriate for the Nature + Love project. It is anticipated that the Horniman will appoint a mount making contract (with support from the External Project Manager) for the delivery of some of the mounts, some will be delivered by the exhibition fit out contractor and some by the Horniman team.

All of these new and redisplayed spaces will be linked through an accessible, themed and cohesive approach to interpretation, alongside new wayfinding signage and interactive trails that encourage exploration and connections between the indoor and outdoor.

**3. Other Information:**

**3.1 Environmental Issues / Sustainability**

In 2019 the Horniman declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and published its Climate and Ecology Manifesto in early 2020, with the aim of becoming Greenhouse Gas neutral by 2040. It is essential therefore that we take a low impact approach to the design and specification of all elements of this project, wherever possible reducing its environmental impact and ensuring that all materials specified are either recycled and reused or obtained from environmentally sound and sustainable sources. We will commission a sustainability consultant to help us develop and implement a sustainability strategy for the project. They will address issues including low impact design and carbon emissions reduction; design durability and resilience; adaption to climate change; and ecological value and biodiversity protection.

**3.2 Accessibility**

The Horniman is firmly committed to ensuring that all its projects are designed with full consideration given to the physical and intellectual needs of all its visitors, including children, people who are disabled, Neurodivergent, Deaf or hard of hearing. Commitment to the principles of the Social Model of disability and Universal Design is an essential requirement in the selection of the Architectural Design Team and will not be compromised. We aim for the gallery to be award winning in its approach to accessibility.

We have a long standing external Access Advisory Group who meet at least 4 times a year and who will work closely with us on the Nature + Love project. We expect all design teams to work closely with this group throughout design development. In addition to this we will appoint an Access Consultant to provide advice throughout project development and delivery and would expect the design teams to work closely with this consultant.

**3.3 Health & Safety**

The design and specifications of the galleries must comply with the relevant statutory regulations regarding Health and Safety, fire safety and emergency escape requirements and to this end, before final working drawings are produced, the Design Team must supply plans and details of materials to be used for approval by the Client, local authority Fire Officers and any other relevant statutory body. All requirements of the CDM Regulations 1994 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 must be complied with.

**3.4 Longevity and maintenance**

The intention of the Horniman is to create an environment which is robust, hard wearing and as low maintenance as possible to cope with the demands of extreme usage by a large number of visitors of all ages. We would expect the lifetime of the Gardens structures and galleries to be at least 20 years with an update after 10 years.

It is anticipated that all buildings, lighting and any environmental control systems as installed will be capable of being maintained by our in-house team and term MEP contractor and that a maintenance budget projection will be provided for routine AV maintenance and cyclical replacement using an external firm. Hard and soft landscaping will be maintained by our Gardens and Estates teams.