



Design Brief

Front garden - Royal Institution of Cornwall

January 2024

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1. Introduction

Royal Cornwall Museum has an exciting opportunity to create a brand-new look for this much loved and important historical building in the heart of Cornwall. As part of a major capital development project taking place from 2023 – 2027 the museum wants to improve the look, feel and use of the museum main entrance and garden.

The transformation will create a sense excitement and inspire potential visitors to step inside and explore the museum. The landscape garden design will give a real sense as to what treasures can be unearthed during a visit.

This new garden will incorporate a single-entry route for all visitors via a fully accessible walkway leading to a new main door. The project will include the small area with side entrance with fire escape.

We are keen to employ a more sustainable way of working within and beyond the project plans. Where practical we would look to explore ways to repurpose existing fixtures and consider sustainability and longevity in equipment and furniture, minimise waste and carbon footprint, and use sustainable materials.



2. Background

In January 2020 the museum closed to the public for eight months to start a process of radical change and to carry out emergency maintenance work. The museum leadership team changed, with new Board members, a new co-leadership model with the Executive and Artistic directors bringing in a new vision, operating model, and five-year plan.

The museum hit further challenges in 2022 when a sudden halt in grant funding meant an uncertain future for the museum. This moment has passed, and we have bridge funding secured and capital grant funding confirmed to invest in the development of the museum. Our focus is on transforming our museum; its sustainability, the physical spaces, the visitor experience, and audience engagement.

By 2027 the Royal Cornwall Museum will have become a compelling visitor destination, a vibrant, thriving multi-arts community hub. It will attract over 60,000 visitors a year and all its activities will be underpinned by a robust, agile, and sustainable operating model.

3. About The Royal Institution of Cornwall

The Royal Institution of Cornwall is a community-focussed museum, art gallery and archive which houses nine galleries and holds approximately 1,000,000 objects. The RIC is a membership run charity.

Royal Cornwall Museum cares for many of the most significant objects and archives from Cornwall's history, natural environment and art, that collectively hold the identity of this small nation, providing insight into Cornish life, culture, and global connections. We use our public spaces, collections, and creative programme to make positive change for our communities.

Royal Cornwall Museum is at a pivotal time in its 200-year history. We are embarking on a phased transformation project that will build sustainability to become more financially resilient and secure our future by transforming the organisation into an exciting multi-arts space for our communities.



4. Our Vision

Cornwall is unique. The seas and the landscapes, its language and its minerals, as well as countless generations of Cornish people who have lived and worked across this land, have all combined across the generations to make Cornwall a place like no other.

At the very heart of Cornwall and its cultural life, the Royal Cornwall Museum is a centre of exploration and learning. Using the eclectic collections of Cornish culture, art, antiquities, archaeology, science, and natural history we take people on a journey from deep underground, up into the sky, around the world and way back in time. In doing this, we use our collections to help our communities look forward together.

Our plan is to transform the museum into an exciting multi-arts community space, where people come together to share and enjoy creative activities, where they can be inspired to take part and enjoy life-enriching cultural activities.

The role of museums is changing, and our vision and values reflect this change while recognising that the founding principles that were established back in 1818 still hold true today. The RIC's activities, approach and decision-making will always be driven by its charitable objectives, vision, and values.



5. Charitable Objectives

To advance the education of the public through the study and knowledge of literature, natural sciences, archaeology, history, ethnology, geology and the fine and applied arts.

5.1 Our Values

Shared Vision, Purpose Driven
Collaboration and Imagination
Open and Inclusive
Environmentally Responsible

5.2 Strategic Priorities (2022-26)

1. Achieve financial sustainability.
2. Build audiences & engagement.
3. Secure capital Investment to repair and improve our buildings and our visitor offer.
4. Improve care and management of our collections.
5. Develop our capacity.
6. Environmental sustainability – net zero carbon by 2030.

6. Project Summary

Garden Size: Approx 176m² (8m x 22m)
Duration: Garden design and installation with expected lifespan of 25-50 years.
Schedule: The project will be delivered to two phases. Phase 1 complete by January 2025 and phase 2 by Spring 2027.

6.1 Project Context

This project is part of a phased transformation of the Royal Cornwall Museum that will create a sustainable visitor destination that plays a significant part in Cornwall's cultural offer and creates a vibrant multi-arts community asset in the heart of Truro.

The project's first phase is being funded through the Shared Prosperity Fund <https://ciosgoodgrowth.com/>. Phase two will be included in a National Lottery Heritage Fund application. This project is an integral part of phase 4 of the overall transformation project.

Summary of the transformation project phases:

	Outline	Funding sources	Complete by
Phase 1	Redevelop the mineral gallery and create a digital lab	Truro Town Deal - funding secured	July 2024
Phase 2	Secure the building fabric; essential repairs to the roof, rainwater goods, rendering repairs and timber replacement.	DCMS Arts Council England MEND - funding secured	May 2024
Phase 3	Complete the redisplay of the ground floor permanent galleries; the Heart of Cornwall Gallery, the Nature Gallery and exterior landscape and garden improvements	Cornwall Council Good Growth SPF - funding secured	March 2025
Phase 4	Develop the upper floor galleries, improve physical access from the street front, create a new access core and enhance commercial areas.	Funding to be sought	March 2027

6.2 Project Vision

We want to create a new presence for the museum on Truro's high street celebrating the historical significance of the 1849 building whilst ensuring improved access for all and creating a warm welcome and excitement for passersby's and destination visitors.

We want to create:

- a **social, community garden space** that reflects our **inclusive values**
- A space which contributes to our ambition of creating a vibrant, **high quality visitor attraction** and inspiring **community arts venue**.
- **Environmental responsibility** is important to us.

We want the garden design to consider and reflect **sustainability in approach, materials and delivery**.

The project will be realised through a collaborative process with the Royal Cornwall Museum team, stakeholders and consultants working on parallel projects in interpretation planning and brand development. The design of the garden will align with our emerging brand and support our interpretation strategy. This work will be shared with the successful tenderer once complete.



7. Audiences

The wider transition project sets out the journey we are on to make Royal Cornwall Museum a valued community hub and thriving visitor attraction in the heart of Cornwall. It is our aim to grow visitors from 30,000 2022 to 60,000 visitors in 2026 and engage with more diverse people. This project is a key part of achieving this ambition, alongside our programme of exhibitions and events.

We want the outside space to be appealing to local people, families, school groups and tourists who already visit the museum, but we want to ensure that, in addition, the garden attracts new, diverse audiences.

8. Content

The **garden will address the following** key areas:

1. A **visually inviting** and **suitably striking introduction** to the foremost museum of Cornish heritage and culture.
2. A **valued community space** on one of Truro's popular shopping high streets.
3. A healthy balance between a **practical, safe warm welcome for all with seating, signage, art and planting**.
4. A place where **nature can thrive**, and **people are inspired to engage with the natural world**.

The garden could include sculpture from the museum's collections and content can be developed in partnership with other institutions, artists and partners. The garden should reflect and celebrate the location, in terms of aesthetics, installation and planting.

9. Design approach

The garden design and landscaping installation should reflect the values of the Royal Institution of Cornwall:

- **To establish and share collections and archives that celebrate Cornwall and Cornish culture.**
- **To create a space at the heart of Cornwall where ideas could be discussed and challenged.**
- **To be a place for sharing knowledge, learning, creativity, and ambition.**

Accessibility and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do. The garden needs to be well-lit, fully wheelchair accessible, have multi-sensory elements, support neuro-diverse visitors and have seating points with arm rests.

The garden should be designed in a way that is environmentally sustainable, easy and cost effective to maintain going forward.

Designers will be expected to take on the role of Principal Designer for the project and should be able to demonstrate their capability to dispense that responsibility and should cost for the time it will take. There may be times when more than one contractor is working on site at any given time

and the contractor will need to be flexible in negotiating Construction Design Management CDM responsibilities.



The project requires a complete design for the full garden frontage of the museum and neighbouring Arts Café, including full planning permissions and associated consultation costs.

The design scheme needs to be packaged for a two phased delivery programme. Phase one is included in this brief and includes the garden area excluding areas with café seating.

10.The Brief

An experienced landscape garden designer/ architect is required for the design and build of this project. We require the full design of phases 1 and 2 (UK Landscape Institute's stage A-Feasibility to E-Detail Proposals to enable planning application to be submitted) but only the installation of Phase 1 to Stage L- Completion - <https://www.landscapelinstitute.org/technical/bim-working-group/li-digital-plan-of-works-for-landscape/>

10.1 Deliverables

- A detailed landscape design developed collaboratively with the RIC team to cover the full external frontage of the museum and Arts Café.
- Planning application to cover phase 1 and 2. Note planning fees are not required to be included within consultant costs and will be covered by the client separately.
- Responsible removal and demolition of existing fabric and plants that aren't being repurposed.
- Installation of phase 1 landscape garden design scheme in response to the brief, creating improved access to the garden, seating and commissioning and installation of artwork and including all associated costs.
- Improved building and garden lighting and signage.

10.2 Key requirements

- A succinct methodology and outline plan / programme.
- Outline of the consultant or team experience, including where appropriate subcontracting teams.
- Sketch concept setting out initial thoughts aligned to the expectations of this brief to be built upon if successfully appointed.
- Fixed price project fee including daily rate breakdown and expenses.
- Two references from similar project/ organisations.



Contacts

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Acknowledgements - Thank you to our supporters:

