



South West Heritage Trust Chew Valley Hoard Project

Brief for Capital Works Conservation Architect-Led Design Team RIBA Stages 4-7

1. Introduction

The South West Heritage Trust (the Trust) wishes to appoint an experienced conservation architect-led design team to lead, manage and contract administer the delivery of capital works at the Museum of Somerset in Taunton (RIBA stages 4-7).

The work is part of the Trust's Chew Valley Hoard project, which is being principally funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).

2. Project Background

The Chew Valley Hoard is the largest and most significant hoard ever found from the period of turmoil and transition immediately following the Norman Conquest. Discovered in 2019 by detectorists in the Chew Valley area of Somerset, the hoard comprises coins issued by Edward the Confessor (reigned 1042-66), Harold II (reigned 1066) and William I 'the Conqueror' (reigned 1066-87). Comprising 2,584 silver coins in total, the hoard is representative of a key turning-point in English history and of a moment that defined national consciousness, making it of unique regional, national and international importance. It is the highest-value UK Treasure acquisition ever recorded.

The Trust has raised over £4.3 million to acquire the hoard and is now embarking on a major project to engage audiences and to create a permanent home for the hoard at the Museum of Somerset.

The museum is housed in Taunton Castle, which is a Grade 1 Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument. The castle was founded in the 12th century by Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester and grandson of William the Conqueror. Not only will the project contribute to the long-term care of a nationally-important heritage asset it will enhance the building's meaning and significance for visitors, with the hoard occupying a prime space near the heart of a stronghold created by the Conqueror's own grandson.

The project will:

- Create a dedicated new gallery at the museum for the permanent display of the hoard, with high quality interpretation and a large feature showcase to display the entire hoard, together with impactful and immersive graphics and AV. The design of the installation is intended to create a spectacular visual impact as visitors enter the gallery,

celebrating the scale and beauty of the hoard and allowing the gallery space to be better appreciated architecturally and historically.

- Repurpose an adjacent gallery to create a new 'Turning Points'-themed gallery for co-curated rotating community exhibitions, enabling communities from across Somerset to tell their stories. Works will include installing a new glazed security screen to allow the gallery's great double doors to be opened during the day, allowing much more natural light to be provided, together with a view across the castle courtyard to the site of the castle's Norman 'great tower'. This newly-opened sightline will reinforce a sense of the castle's Norman origins, as will additional interpretation of the massive 12th-century doorway that connects this space with the museum's existing Rebellion gallery.
- Deliver an ambitious two-year community engagement programme, including a year-long temporary exhibition at the Museum of Somerset, in which over 4,500 people will actively participate and which will reach nearly 450,000 attendees.
- Improve and update visitor facilities at the museum including the visitor welcome space and retail offer.
- Undertake access improvements at the museum including accessible signage, tactile guides and handrails.

3. Outline of Capital Work

In brief, the capital works within the scope of this commission will include:

- Repurposing the museum's current Gathering and Going Places galleries into the Chew Valley Hoard and Turning Points galleries
- Security works to meet Accredited museum security requirements and insurance standards (SR2 security rating), principally security glazing and locks
- Installation of new security glass door behind existing door in Going Places gallery
- Undertaking conservation repairs, including to lime plaster and the fireplace in the existing Gathering gallery
- Joist strengthening to support the hoard showcase
- Seating and blinds/window film treatment
- Repair/replace flooring and relocate existing radiators
- Decoration and making good.

The value of the capital works is estimated to be around £160,000 including preliminary, contingency and inflation allowances, but excluding VAT.

4. Scope of Services

The brief is to take the RIBA Stage 3 designs that have already been approved into detailed technical design and construction (RIBA stages 4-7). Listed Building Consent for these designs was granted on 19 August 2025 and there are no conditions to be discharged.

The scope of services is to include:

- Detailed technical design
- Commissioning asbestos R&D survey as required
- Tendering and appointment of capital contractors
- Contract administration of capital construction works (estimated to be 12 weeks)
- Managing the financial aspects of the contract, including validating all expenditure, managing changes and variations, assisting in resolving any contractual claims and keeping the client informed of any cost implications.
- Weekly site inspection visits during the construction works.
- Coordination with the Trust’s museum design team and assisting them with aspects of the project’s exhibition design and fit-out works, including technical detailed design & drawings and showcase procurement. The value of showcases for both the temporary and permanent exhibitions is estimated to be around £125,000.
- Coordination with the Trust’s team and assisting them with the capital elements of the project’s access improvement works, including technical detailed design & drawings and procurement (value of these works is estimated to be around £10,000).
- Liaison/coordination with the Trust’s Senior Conservation Officer and archaeology team in respect of statutory consents and watching brief requirements during construction.
- Liaison/coordination with the project’s shop/retail consultant (this will be a separate commission reporting direct to the client) in respect of any architectural design or statutory consent requirements for the redevelopment of the museum shop and welcome area.

The design team is to include:

- Conservation Accredited Architect (AABC) acting as Lead Design Consultant and Contract Administrator
- Principal Designer
- Structural Engineer – allowance in respect of the floor and ceiling.
- Building Services Consultant – allowance in respect of environmental controls and heating.

Note: the project also includes an allowance for a QS to provide an independent assessment and report on capital tenders to meet funder requirements. This service will be commissioned directly by the client.

5. Indicative Timescales

Task	When
Technical detailed design	Spring/Summer 2026
Showcase detailed design and procurement	Spring/Summer 2026
Tendering, appointment and mobilisation of contractors	Autumn 2026
Turning Points Gallery - on site construction & installation - 4 weeks during museum closed period	January 2027
Capital elements of access improvement works – during museum closed period	January 2027
Hoard Gallery - on site construction & installation - 12 weeks	February – April 2027

6. Essential Qualifications

Significant experience of working on similar projects and of leading, managing and administering the delivery of the capital elements of major NLHF-funded projects.

AABC accredited, with the specialist conservation knowledge and experience to provide the necessary skills and expertise to deliver this high-profile project in a sensitive Grade-1 Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument.

A proven track record of working on similar listed buildings and of working effectively with Conservation Officers and archaeologists.

Knowledgeable of traditional trade skills and experience of commissioning and working with traditional heritage trades.

Comprehensive understanding of NLHF's current funding investment principles and processes and their application to this project.

Experience of collaborating with/supporting exhibition design and interpretation specialists on the technical design, procurement and delivery of museum/heritage interpretation projects.

Experience of working on 'live' sites where the Employer has partial Occupation and which is open to the public.

Able to attend site at least weekly to manage the construction works.

7. Fee

This is expected to be in the region of **£40,000** including expenses plus VAT if applicable.

Payment terms to be monthly in arrears.

8. How to Apply

Applications should take the form of a Tender response (maximum 20 sides of A4) to include:

- Suitability to undertake this work, with written and illustrated examples of relevant previous work that demonstrates your understanding and experience of working on NLHF-funded projects of a similar type and scale.
- A proposed team structure chart with names of team members and a short statement for each person demonstrating relevant experience and qualifications (maximum 150 words per person).
- Details of any sub-consultants/third party services that you will commission.
- Methodology, identifying how you would approach this assignment, key delivery stages, milestones and dates.
- How you would add value to the project.
- Your thoughts on the key risks and challenges for the project.

- Your fixed price to undertake the contract, with an itemised break down by RIBA stage, including all expenses and VAT.
- Two referees for whom you have conducted services of a similar type and scale over the past five years.
- Evidence of professional indemnity and public liability insurance showing extent of cover.
- An undertaking that the team allocated to the contract shall remain constant, as far as is reasonably practical, together with a statement to indicate how you will ensure the contract is completed in the event of unforeseen problems such as health issues or competing contracts.
- An undertaking that you will attend site at least weekly during the construction works to administer the contract.

9. Tender Evaluation

Tender scoring criteria will be on the basis of:

- 20% for price
- 50% for quality/experience/methodology
- 30% for added value.

In the event that interviews are held these will be assessed separately.

10. Decision and Award

The Trust reserves the right to negotiate with the preferred bidder and to award all, part or none of the contract.

11. Timeframe and Process

Tender responses to be submitted by email to Sam Astill, Chief Executive Officer (sam.astill@swheritage.org.uk) and Carrie Blogg, CVH Project Heritage Consultant (cblogg@btinternet.com) by **Monday 16 March 2026**.

Interviews, if required, will take place w/c 23 March 2026.

12. Contact Details

If you have any queries in advance of submitting a tender please contact Carrie Blogg, CVH Project Heritage Consultant (cblogg@btinternet.com).

13. Acknowledgement

This project is supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, this nationally significant hoard has been saved for the nation and will be shared with audiences across Somerset and beyond.