Head of Property

Job description

Job title	Head of Property
Location	Essex Hall, Essex Street, London WC2R 3HY. Mainly on site.
Hours	3 days a week (22.5 hours), with some flexibility for project needs
Salary	£52,000 - 58,000 FTE, £31,000 – 35,000 actual for 3 days (depending on experience)
Contract	Permanent
Reports to	Operations Director
Manages	Consultants and contractors on the building projects, and the freelance buildings manager

About us

Essex Hall sits on Essex Street, just off the Strand, on the site of Essex House, once the London home of the Earl of Essex. On 17 April 1774, Theophilus Lindsey held the first service of England's first openly Unitarian congregation here. Benjamin Franklin was in the room, and Joseph Priestley, the scientist who discovered oxygen, was among Lindsey's early supporters. A purpose-built chapel followed in 1778, and Essex Hall itself was built on the site in 1886.

In 1944 the building was destroyed by a flying bomb. For 14 years the site stood empty while the work carried on elsewhere. The foundation stone of today's Essex Hall was laid on 8 June 1957, and the new building, designed by Kenneth S. Tayler, was completed in 1958. The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches has had its headquarters here ever since, and the building has been shared with other tenant organisations from the start. Today Essex Hall is owned and run by the Essex Hall Trust.

Like many buildings of its age, Essex Hall has commensurate issues and now needs real care and investment. It also has a lot of history that was never written down.

The building is home to several tenant organisations, including the General Assembly, and hosts events and meeting room hire. Over the coming months we're starting a major refurbishment and fit-out, alongside upgrades to heating, solar and fire safety. We want to come out the other side with a building that's safe, compliant, well run and a great place to work.

About the role

This is our senior property role, reporting to the GA Operations Director. You won’t be expected to do everything yourself. You’ll lead and coordinate a team of consultants, contractors and our freelance buildings manager, make sure the work is delivered well, and make sure we meet all our legal responsibilities as a landlord.

Our freelance buildings manager will continue to look after the day-to-day running of the building. You'll set their priorities and make sure the work gets done well. Your time goes on the bigger picture: getting the building up to standard and keeping it there, running projects and tenders, and guiding our leadership on property decisions. Very little about the building has been written down, so a big part of the role is making sure the records and systems we've never had are put in place.

It suits an experienced property or estates professional who can handle complex projects, explain things in plain English and help a small charity make good decisions about a building it cares about.

What you'll do

Get the building up to standard and keep it there

- Get a clear picture of the building's condition, compliance position and risks, and agree a plan to fix the gaps.
- Own the planned maintenance programme and the compliance calendar, including fire safety, electrical, gas, water hygiene, asbestos and any lift inspections.
- Make sure long-standing issues in an older building, including damp and ventilation in the basement, are properly investigated and dealt with.
- Work with building control, and with the local authority on any conservation area requirements.
- Look for ways to make the building more sustainable and cheaper to run.

Lead building projects

- Oversee several building projects at once, including the refurbishment and fit-out and the heating, solar and fire safety upgrades.
- Plan the order of works so projects don't clash, and so the building can stay open and usable for tenants and events.
- Lead and coordinate the team of consultants delivering the projects, such as architects, surveyors, project managers and contractors, and hold them to the agreed specification, budget and timeline. Keep the GA Operations Director updated on progress, risks and decisions.
- Make sure we meet our duties as the client under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.
- Manage snagging, handover and making sure we receive and keep all the right documents at the end of each project.

Manage the Buildings Manager

- Set the freelance Buildings Manager's day-to-day priorities and review their work regularly.
- Make sure walk-rounds, compliance checks, room set-ups and reactive repairs are done well and recorded.
- Act as the escalation point for anything urgent or complex.

Tenders, contracts and suppliers

- Run fair, well-documented tender processes for works and services, and make clear recommendations.
- Manage contracts and supplier performance, including checking insurance, accreditations and risk assessments.
- Set and manage the property budget, and report on spend and anything likely to go over.

Guide our landlords and leadership

- Be our trusted advisor on landlord and building responsibilities, and explain what we need to do, why and by when.
- Report regularly to the GA Operations Director, the EHT Chair and Finance Director on compliance, risks, projects and spend, and bring clear options for decisions.
- Make sure leases and licences are clear on who is responsible for what, and that tenants know too.
- Balance the needs of different tenants and event hire, especially while works are going on, and keep everyone informed.

Document and systemise the building

- Our previous building lead left with little handover or records, so we're learning about the building as we go. You'll put that right.
- Find out how the building works: its structure, plant, services and systems, and how they depend on each other.
- Create and keep up to date a single building manual, including an asset register, plans and drawings, operating and maintenance manuals, compliance certificates, utility meters and shut-offs, keys and access, and contractor and supplier details.
- Set up simple systems that anyone can use, such as a planned maintenance schedule, a compliance tracker and a log for issues and repairs.
- Write clear procedures for routine tasks and emergencies, so the buildings manager and others can pick things up without relying on memory.
- Make sure everything from the refurbishment, including as-built drawings and the health and safety file, goes into the records.
- Make sure what we know about the building is shared and kept, so it never rests with one person again.

About you

Essential

- Significant experience in a senior property, estates or facilities management role.
- Strong working knowledge of landlord and building compliance in England, and of CDM 2015.
- A track record of leading building works or upgrades while a building stays occupied, and sequencing them alongside a larger refurbishment or fit-out.
- Experience with older buildings, including damp, ventilation and building fabric issues. Experience of setting up building records and systems from scratch, such as asset registers, building manuals and planned maintenance schedules.
- Experience leading and coordinating teams of consultants and contractors on building projects, running tender processes and managing budgets.
- Experience managing or directing other people's work, including freelancers or contractors.
- Able to explain technical and compliance matters clearly to non-experts, and to challenge and guide senior people when needed.
- Organised, with good record keeping, and able to prioritise and delegate well to make the most of 3 days a week.

Desirable

- Experience in a mixed-use building with shared tenants, event hire and an organisation's own use.
- Experience with building control and conservation area requirements.
- Experience of heating, solar or other low-carbon upgrades.
- A relevant qualification such as MRICS, MCIOB, MIWFM or NEBOSH.
- Experience in a charity or community setting.
- An interest in sustainability.

What we offer

- 30 days holiday, plus English bank holidays
- Workplace pension scheme (7.5% Employer contribution)

- Staff support budget for personal development and wellbeing
- Membership of financial wellbeing programme (Maji)