

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



STRAWBERRY HILL
House & Garden

Candidate Information Pack 2024



About us

Built as Horace Walpole's summer residence in the eighteenth century, Strawberry Hill House is a beautiful example of Gothic Revival architecture with a wonderful story to tell through its inhabitants, design, collection and restoration. The Strawberry Hill Trust ("the charity"), formed as an independent charity in 2002 by local supporters and volunteers, now has a 125-year lease from the freeholder St Mary's University (SMU). It was entrusted with the aim of restoring, maintaining and making accessible to the public Walpole's home as a hub for keeping his name, spirit and contribution alive.

Since 2007 The Strawberry Hill Trust has undertaken a major £10 million restoration of Horace Walpole's iconic gothic villa and gardens in Twickenham. The first stage was completed in 2010, with significant support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (now the NLHF), when the house and garden were opened to the public. The restoration was awarded a Europa Nostra Grand Prix in 2013 and the house management and visitor facilities are graded as Excellent by the VisitEngland inspectors. 99% of visitors rate their visit as very good or excellent.

A second restoration stage to refurbish the smaller, private rooms was completed in early 2015, and these too are now included on the visitor tour. The garden restoration is on-going and has restored many of the features of the landscape immediately surrounding the house. Strawberry Hill is an Accredited Museum, and the Strawberry Hill Trust works closely with the independent charity The Strawberry Hill Collection Trust, (Company number: 06851597, originally incorporated in March 2009), a body established to hold the collections of Strawberry Hill House.

Over the past few years SHH has received support and/or objects through Acceptance in Lieu, the Art Fund, Dulwich Picture Gallery and other key stakeholders. A closer relationship has also been developing with St Mary's University whose campus adjoins the House and Garden and who are SHH & Garden's landlords.

By fulfilling its objects on a sustainable long-term basis, the Trust can help improve people's lives by providing rich educational, cultural and intellectual experiences. The Trust's vision is for Strawberry Hill House (Grade I listed) & Garden (Grade II* listed) to be an inclusive and positive visitor experience, a sustainable business, and remain a significant part of our national and international cultural heritage.

To learn more about the House and Trust please see the website here: www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk

"A very proper habitation for the author of the Castle of Otranto."

**Horace Walpole,
1784**

The Role

This is an exciting time to be part of Strawberry Hill House's future.

After the challenges of 2020-2023, during which the heritage environment has significantly changed, Strawberry Hill House is now setting a new course, under a new Executive Director, with an emphasis on developing a sustainable business model which combines the original mandate, to make Horace Walpole's legacy available to all, with the need to develop a commercial programme of enhanced fundraising and donor support, events and community engagement, while minimising costs.

The Trust is now seeking an excellent candidate to join the Board of Trustees as Chair to support Strawberry Hill House & Garden in achieving this objective. As Chair, you will help the charity meet its growth ambitions and deliver the vision and leadership needed. In simple terms, the Chair leads and guides the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director runs the House. Together, they develop and execute the strategic direction of The Strawberry Hill Trust, ensuring that Strawberry Hill House & Garden builds the strongest local, national and international reputation as a well-run and interesting museum. Of paramount importance in achieving this vision is a robust financial strategy and the strongest commitment to playing a leading role in the local community. The Trust relies on the Chair to ensure that key decisions are made, recorded and actioned.



Trustee Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees are jointly and individually responsible for:

- Overall governance and strategic direction of the charity;
- Its financial health;
- The probity of its activities; and,
- Developing the organisation's aims, objects, mission, vision and values in accordance with the governing documents, legal and regulatory guidelines.

Trustees must act at all times in the best interests of The Strawberry Hill Trust. They must avoid situations where their personal or other interests conflict with the interests of The Strawberry Hill Trust and must not profit from their role. In carrying out their role, Trustees have a duty of care to act reasonably and prudently and have a higher duty in areas of their own expertise. As well as the various statutory duties, any Trustee should make full use of any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the Board make good decisions.



Appointment of Chair

The Chair will also be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role of Chair. All Trustees must hold the charity “in trust” for current and future beneficiaries, together with the following formal responsibilities which are indicative but not exhaustive:

- Ensuring that The Strawberry Hill Trust fulfils its legal responsibilities as laid out in its Articles of Association, as a company limited by guarantee and as a charity registered in England and Wales;
- Ensuring that The Strawberry Hill Trust pursues its objects as laid down in the Articles of Association and that its assets are used exclusively in pursuit of these objectives;
- Approving the annual returns submitted to the Charity Commission and Company’s House
- Overseeing the development of strategy and approving the strategic direction and policies of The Strawberry Hill Trust;
- Monitoring the performance of The Strawberry Hill Trust against agreed key objectives;
- Ensuring that The Strawberry Hill Trust remains financially viable and that the financial and reputational risks to which it is exposed are appropriately monitored and mitigated;
- Ensuring that the Risk Register is actively managed and regularly reviewed;
- Agreeing the annual operating budget and monitoring financial performance in-year;
- Ensuring that The Strawberry Hill Trust is following best practice in both charity governance and business management;
- Providing expertise and insight into key issues.



Person Specification

The Strawberry Hill Trust is seeking an individual who identifies strongly with its charitable objects, looking after a significant historic property and its grounds, and presenting it to a wide audience. Experience and a proven track record in heritage management, team leadership, and financial management, with an appreciation of our vision, mission and values and how these positively impact the lives of others is of great importance. Knowledge, skills and an understanding of the heritage environment, nationally and internationally, is highly desirable, as well as previous experience of acting as a trustee.

Candidates must have:

- Experience chairing a decision-making forum in a charitable, public sector or commercial organisation;
- Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives;
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision-making, working with fellow Trustees, in-house employees and volunteers as a team player;
- A history of impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences;
- A demonstrable track record of commitment to promoting equality and diversity.
- Awareness of and a strong commitment to the mission, vision and values of the House and the Trust and a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to achieving them;
- Preparedness to make challenging recommendations to the Board, a willingness to speak their mind and a commitment to robust debate;
- Willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis;
- Good, independent judgement and strategic vision;
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship;
- A willingness to act as an effective ambassador for Strawberry Hill House & Garden, and the Trust, as and when necessary, especially in developing relationships with supporters, donors and stakeholders;
- An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and Executive Director.

Terms and Conditions

- The Strawberry Hill Trust is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital status, religion, sexuality, transgender status and working patterns.
- **Principal address:** Strawberry Hill House, 268, Waldegrave Road, Twickenham, TW1 4ST
- **Time commitment:** The Trust has four quarterly Board meetings per annum, which last no more than two hours. To keep on top of all aspects of the business of the House, the Chair will meet regularly with the Executive Director, sometimes weekly, and attend House and networking/fundraising events on a rolling basis. There may be occasional Zoom meetings with Trustees in between Board Meetings. As an active member of the heritage community the Chair will be expected to attend some ad hoc social engagements, consistent with being recognised as a leader in the field.
- **Term:** Three years initially but can be extended as Trustees, including the Chair, may serve for a maximum of three consecutive terms of up to three years each;
- **Reporting to:** Board of Trustees (Executive Committee)
- This position is unremunerated; however reasonable expenses are eligible for reimbursement (by receipt).





How to apply

If you would like to apply for this fantastic opportunity, please provide the following with your application:

- An up to date CV with details of two referees (we will not contact them without your prior permission)
- A support statement (no longer than two A4 sides) which addresses how you meet the main criteria and explains your motivations for applying

All applications should be sent to applications@trustees-unlimited.co.uk

If you would like a confidential discussion about the role, please contact Melissa Baxter at Russam & Trustees Unlimited on:

melissa.baxter@russam.co.uk / 07789 985229.

The next steps

Closing date for applications: Monday 22nd July 2024

Interviews and informal conversations with Strawberry Hill House:

Wednesday 31st July 2024

We look forward to receiving your application.