

The Victorian Society needs a new Director

The Victorian Society is a small society which packs a big punch. Established in 1958, it is one of six National Amenity Societies that are statutory consultees on alterations to listed buildings and, by law, must be notified of any work to a listed building which involves any element of demolition. Located in west London, in the leafy, late-Victorian suburb of Bedford Park, it is the leading voice in the ongoing fight for the conservation of Victorian and Edwardian architecture in England and Wales.

If you are passionate about Victorian and Edwardian buildings, are politically astute and good at dealing with people, then this might be the job for you.

You will be working with and directing an office staff of architectural caseworkers, media and events coordinators, as well as working with casework and events committees comprising volunteers who are experts in their fields. You will work to promote both the consultative and educational aspects of the Society's work, leading campaigns, attending visits and introducing lectures and other events. You will be responsible for the performance of your staff and answerable to the Board of Trustees.

If you would like to discuss the role in further detail, please contact, in confidence, the Chair of Trustees, Professor Hilary Grainger, on 07920 054600.

Job description

TITLE	Director
SALARY	£50,000 to £55,000, plus pension, depending on experience
CONTRACT	Full-time (35 hours/week), permanent, with occasional weekends and evenings
LOCATION	Bedford Park, London W4
REPORTS TO	Chair of the Board of Trustees

Responsibilities

The Director is chief executive of a registered charity (no. 1081435) with a small staff and a high public profile and plays a unique and crucial role in its wellbeing. The Director carries out the day-to-day responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, reporting to them directly.

The Director has a key role in determining the direction that the Society must take, so that it can continue its work without compromise to its core ideals. The Director is the pivot between the Trustees, the staff and volunteers, and must ensure that all are motivated to ensure the maximum efficiency of operation and effective use of resources.

The role combines overall stewardship and development of the Society with responsibility for and detailed involvement in its day-to-day running and activities. It is a post that offers considerable scope for initiative and innovation. As the principal public face of the Victorian Society, the Director must ensure that its reputation in both casework and outreach is maintained and enhanced, and that its views are taken seriously.

Office Management

- To oversee the work of the Events Coordinator and the development of the events programme
- To oversee the work of the Media and Communications Manager and the Society's public face
- To oversee the work of the Society's paid and volunteer caseworkers
- To oversee the work of the Administrator and other day-to-day activities

Casework and Campaigning

- To play an active and authoritative role in the Society's casework, attending meetings of the buildings committees, and taking the lead in important cases and matters of policy relating to the historic environment
- To work with the Media and Communications Manager to develop campaigns, and to take the lead on the annual *Top Ten Endangered Buildings* campaign
- To compile statistics and reports for funding bodies and for the annual report

Finance

- To take an active responsibility for the overall financial health of the Society
- To oversee the Society's financial management, including individual events
- To work with the Finance Trustee to draw up the annual budget
- To monitor income and expenditure against budget and take appropriate action on variances
- To prepare, with the Finance Trustee, the annual report and accounts for audit and for approval by the Board of Trustees
- To apply for grants for both core casework and one-off projects
- To liaise with the Society's bankers when necessary
- To manage and control the Society's finances, including obtaining estimates for major expenditure and the approval of payments to suppliers

Development

- To plan and implement the future development of the Society, including ensuring that its facilities are appropriate
- To oversee the Society's computer network and website
- To lead in fundraising and membership drives

Education

- To liaise with the editor of *The Victorian* and the editors of our journal, *Studies in Victorian architecture and design*
- To work with the Events Committee on the national programme of events and, with the Events Coordinator, to review budgeted income and expenditure on major events

Members

- To ensure that the members of the Society receive a high-quality of service
- To manage and work on periodic fundraising appeals to members and the Society's legacy programme
- To ensure that the Society's CRM is up to date and performing correctly

Representation

- To represent the Society in the media, in public and with external partners including English Heritage and the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies
- To be responsible for managing these relationships and being alert to the opportunities of cultivating grants and donations from members and non-members

The Director is expected to perform all such additional duties, both within and outside office hours, as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

Person Specification

Experience

- Strong knowledge of and enthusiasm for the architecture and cultural history of the 19th and early 20th century
- Experience in the leadership and management of staff and volunteers and of the control of finances and administration
- Knowledge of the planning system, particularly as it relates to the historic environment, and a commitment to the principles of the conservation movement
- A good level of computer literacy
- Fundraising

Personal Attributes

- Interest in and commitment to the aims of the Society and its charitable status
- Confidence, energy and enthusiasm
- Self-motivation, and the ability to work under pressure with the temperament to work within a committee structure
- A flair for administration and a good business sense
- The ability to communicate well and enthusiastically, in writing and in speech, with those who may not share your or the Society's views
- The ability to deal sensitively and sympathetically with a wide range of people
- The ability to think strategically, while not losing touch with the detail of day-to-day management

While candidates might not possess all the experience listed above, the Society will be keen to consider applicants who believe that they have particular strengths to offer.

Conditions of Employment

There will be a six-month probationary period, after which the employment may be terminated by either party giving three months' notice.

The Director will be based at 1 Priory Gardens, London W4 1TT or at such other place as the Society may reasonably require. Normal hours of work are from 9.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. Aside from the usual working pattern, the Director is expected to attend the Annual General Meeting, Trustee meetings and Casework and Events Committee meetings, which tend to take place on a Saturday or in the evenings.

In addition, many outside events at which the Director represents the Society take place in the evenings. Time off in lieu is given for attendance at out-of-hours meetings and events.

The annual leave allowance is 25 days. The office is closed from Christmas Eve to New Year's Day inclusive, and on all other Bank Holidays.

The salary will be £50,000 to £55,000 depending on experience. In addition, the Society is prepared to pay a sum equivalent to 5% of the gross salary into NEST or a personal pension plan of the Director's choice. Salaries are reviewed annually in March. In the case of this appointment, the first salary review will be in March 2025.

How to Apply

Please send a CV and a supporting statement which fully addresses the criteria set out in the person specification. We expect that the information you give us will be, to the best of your knowledge and belief, true and complete. If you give any information which you know is false, or if you withhold relevant information, your application may be rejected or, if you have already been appointed, it may lead to your dismissal.

We would also like the names and contact details of two referees, one of whom should be your current or most recent employer. References will only be taken once your express permission has been granted.

We would prefer electronic applications, in which case please email your application to:
admin@victoriansociety.org.uk

Otherwise, please post it, clearly marked 'PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL' to the Society's Administrator:

Richard Seedhouse
The Victorian Society
1 Priory Gardens
LONDON
W4 1TT

Timetable

Closing date for applications	noon, 2 April 2024
Short list of candidates invited for interview	Thursday 11 April 2024
Interviews	Week commencing 29 April

This timetable may be subject to change.

About us

The Victorian Society was founded in 1958 in response to the growing threat to fine examples of Victorian and Edwardian architecture. At first it met with defeats – the most notorious being the demolition of the Euston Arch in 1962. But gradually, through its publications and educational events as well as through campaigning, it slowly began to change public attitudes. St Pancras Station and the Midland Grand Hotel could not have been so spectacularly revived as the Eurostar terminal and five-star hotel it is today if the Victorian Society had not fought for it in 1966. Similarly, the Society long campaigned to save the Albert Dock in Liverpool. And it was the Victorian Society that campaigned for the restoration of the Albert Memorial when – unbelievably – the government vacillated over finding money for that purpose.

Today the Society is the national charity campaigning for Victorian and Edwardian architecture. The major monuments of the period may now seem safe, but our work is far from over as many fine and useful buildings remain in danger and are being wantonly destroyed or insensitively altered. We want to help owners and developers make better decisions about adapting Victorian and Edwardian buildings to the way we live now, while keeping what is special about them.

To do this, we review and comment on applications for listed building consent or faculty. We have a formal role in the planning system by virtue of the Secretary of State's direction in *Arrangements for handling heritage applications - notification and directions by the Secretary of State* (ODPM Circular 01/2001) that we must be notified of all applications for Listed Building Consent that involve an element of demolition. When determining applications, local planning authorities must take our advice into account, but they are not obliged to follow it. We also have a formal role in the various listed building control procedures set up by those Christian denominations which have chosen to retain their exemption from normal listed building regulations.

In addition to this statutory casework role, the Society comments on matters of general policy relating to the historic environment, puts forward buildings for spot-listing, produces reports, and provides help to members of the public with advice and support. The Society publishes *The Victorian*, a magazine for its members which comes out three times a year, and a more academic journal, *Studies in Victorian architecture and design*, of which seven annual issues have so far appeared.

We believe that the better people understand their Victorian and Edwardian heritage, the more they will value and seek to look after it. Consequently, we have a comprehensive education programme which includes walks, visits, lectures and conferences, many of which are organised by our regional groups, on an astonishing variety of subjects including the visual arts and literature.

Annual income, which is in the the order of £300,000, is derived principally from membership subscriptions, grants from English Heritage, the surplus from events and donations. Legacies provide an extra and much welcomed revenue. Expenditure is primarily on casework, publishing and general running costs. Payroll costs account for about half of annual expenditure. The scale of the Society's achievement, when compared with the resources at its disposal, is a matter of considerable pride to us and of amazement to outside observers.

We presently have around 2,600 members. Our office is in a Grade II-listed house of 1880, at 1 Priory Gardens, London W4 1TT. The Society owns the freehold and has recently completed a major refurbishment.

Objectives

There are three charitable objects set out in our constitution:

- To save Victorian and Edwardian buildings or groups of buildings of special architectural merit from needless destruction or disfigurement
- To awaken public interest in, and appreciation of, the best of Victorian and Edwardian arts, architecture, crafts and design
- To encourage the study of these and of related social history and to provide advice to owners and public authorities in regard to the preservation and repair of Victorian and Edwardian buildings and the uses to which they can, if necessary, be adapted.

Structure

The Victorian Society is a registered charity (no. 1081435) and a company limited by guarantee (no. 3940996). It is governed by a memorandum and articles of association.

Governance

The Society is managed by a Board of Trustees. Each trustee has a designated executive or non-executive role including legal and finance. Trustees are recruited on the basis of skills needs identified by the Board of Trustees. Trustees are elected by the members of the Society at the Annual General Meeting normally for a term of office of three years. Trustees are automatically eligible for re-election for one further consecutive term and, if the Board of Trustees so approves their candidature, are eligible for re-election to further consecutive terms of office. The Board of Trustees has the power to co-opt members during the year.

Management

The Board of Trustees currently comprises thirteen members and meets formally six times a year, including at the Annual General Meeting. Members of the Board individually or in small groups also act to take forward the Society's plans. Day-to-day management of the Society is delegated to the Director who is responsible for supporting the Trustees in discharging their stewardship and fiduciary responsibilities and attends meetings of the Board of Trustees.

Committees

The Board of Trustees has delegated the detailed work on some of its functions to committees. These are:

- *Northern and Southern buildings committees*. These two committees between them oversee the Society's work on listed buildings and on matters of general policy relating to the historic environment. They meet approximately monthly in Manchester and London respectively
- The *Events committee* is divided into two parts – the London committee, which meets four times a year, and the Regional committee, which meets online three times a year. Working together, the committees plan the Society's comprehensive programme of events nationally (from London) and regionally.
- *The Mary Heath Trust* was set up to administer a legacy left for the benefit of the Society's Birmingham and West Midlands Group. The Director is a trustee. Business is generally carried out by email.

Between meetings, the Director has frequent contact with the Society's Chair and other trustees and with the chairs of committees.

The Society has a network of regional groups, run entirely by volunteers. All arrange events and produce local newsletters; some additionally carry out casework and produce publications. Their territories are Birmingham & West Midlands, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Wales.

Staff

In addition to the Director, the Society currently employs the following staff. All are London-based with the exception of the Birmingham and West Midlands Conservation Adviser who works from home:

- three conservation advisers dealing with secular buildings (one full-time, one 4 days a week, and the third 2 days a week dealing exclusively with Birmingham and the West Midlands area)
- one churches conservation adviser responsible for the church casework (full-time)
- one administrator (4 days a week) responsible for the Society's membership and for the day to day running of the office.
- one events coordinator (3 days a week) responsible for administering the Society's programme of events.
- one Media and Communications Manager (full-time) responsible for the Society's media presence, national campaigns and supporting local campaigners.

In addition, on a contractual basis a bookkeeper assists with the reconciliation of accounts, preparation of quarterly management accounts and preparation of draft annual accounts and supporting documents.

Financial Position

The Society is solvent and with cash in the bank – primarily from legacies – but, as in most charities, care is needed to manage the Society within its means.

Full details may be found in our annual reports, published on our website:
www.victoriansociety.org.uk/about/annual-reports.