



Embrace Abbeydale

Brief for a retail consultant



Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet, Sheffield, S7 2QW, UK

September 2024

Total amount available

£2.5K + VAT

Purpose of this brief

Sheffield Museums is seeking to engage a retail specialist with significant experience in a visitor attraction context to advise us on the retail element of, and inform our thinking on the creation of, a new Welcome Hub at Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet, which will be ready to open on 1st April 2025. The retail specialist will play a key role in informing the re-development of the space; identifying key opportunities based on our current and likely future audiences, local residents and potential audiences from the onsite café. They should have a good knowledge of retail in visitor attractions and insight into similar projects and spaces.

The Embrace Abbeydale project, funded by a major grant from [The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#), alongside further support from Sheffield City Council and the J G Graves Charitable Trust, begins an exciting new chapter in the Hamlet's remarkable story.

Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet played an early and significant part in Sheffield's story of steel production. Skilled craftspeople have forged and ground edged tools, particularly scythes, there since the mid-1700s. It is the most complete example of an integrated water powered industrial works in existence and is of outstanding international significance. It is a Scheduled Monument with Grade I and II listed buildings and it is a working museum, a workplace for skilled makers, and increasingly a haven for wildlife and nature.

About Sheffield Museums

Sheffield Museums Trust is the independent charity that operates six of the city's leading museums and heritage sites: Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet, Graves Gallery, Kelham Island Museum, Millennium Gallery, Shepherd Wheel and Weston Park Museum. Established in 2021, through the merger of Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust and Museums Sheffield (Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust), the charity cares for the city's collections of art, human history, and natural science, alongside the Guild of St George's John Ruskin collection and provides a home for the Ken Hawley Collection Trust's Hawley Tool Collection.

Our purpose is to enrich life in Sheffield and our vision is to create welcoming and inspiring experiences for everyone. We work with communities to tell remarkable stories of Sheffield and its people, and celebrate its reputation for excellence in craft, making and innovation. Together with local, regional and national partners, we showcase home-grown creative talent and bring outstanding cultural experiences to the city.

We believe that the museums and collections we care for belong to everyone and we know that connecting with them can make people's lives better. We know that people encounter many barriers that make connecting with their museums and collections difficult. We are committed to making long-lasting changes so more people can use the museums to learn and reflect, and to find joy and inspiration.

Sheffield Museums is committed to becoming an anti-racist organisation and embedding equity, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of the organisation from the collections and programming to policies, procedures and workforce development.

Project context

Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet represents and encapsulates Sheffield's reputation as an influential centre for the development of metallurgy and metal working industries.

Through the Embrace Abbeydale project we want to ensure that the Hamlet inspires the next generation of wonder-smiths, engineers, entrepreneurs and makers and stimulates curiosity and creativity in all its visitors. It will become a resilient, sustainable hub for local communities, a base for makers, a working site and a great day out for visitors of all ages.

The funding Sheffield Museums has secured will enable the introduction of new interpretative materials to help visitors better connect with the site's rich history, restoration of the Boring Shop and Blowing Engine waterwheel, a new welcome area with a shop, extended car park, new family resources including a play area, and more.

In 2022-23 we welcomed approximately 11,000 visitors to Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet. We are currently open seasonally, from Easter to October, although our longer-term ambition is to extend this for more of the year. We anticipate an increase in visitor numbers to 16,125 in 2024 and 18,000 in 2025.

Aims and objectives of the work

We want to create a plan for a compelling retail offer in the welcome hub, which will optimise spend per head, making the most of the shared space. As part of this project, we'll consult with audiences on initial recommendations put forward by the consultant, and you should consider this when planning the work. The aim is to generate an extra £10k of profit, contribution to the Charity, within Year 1 of opening.

The plan should consider:

- Insight into trends in retail in visitor attractions.
- Insight into the potential spending habits of current and potential audiences, and price points across all audiences.
- Insight into visitor flow in retail spaces both in the context of the wider visit and within the retail space itself.
- Product recommendations within price points for all audiences.
- Recommendations on the best use of the physical space both to maximise spend per head and to support the overall development plans.
- Recommendations on flexible fixtures and fittings and lighting suitable for an historic site.
- Advice on staffing, positions and opening hours.
- Advice on retail opportunities going forward (for example are there other spaces we could consider for retail in the future)
- Advice on common pitfalls for us to avoid.

We envisage the work will be carried out in October and November 2024. It will include at least two site meetings with our retail and visitor experience team, and on site or online meetings with other specialists such as architects, structural engineers and the project manager.

Scope of the welcome hub

We know that the welcome is critical to the visitor experience, setting the scene for a visit. We envisage that the new hub will enhance the visitor experience and develop a retail income stream as well as creating a great space for fundraising. The new hub will be multipurpose and will function as:

- A welcoming and relaxing space, situating visitors in Abbeydale through the use of authentic materials and good lighting.
- Scene setting interpretation that shares the overarching narrative and sets expectations for the way in which visitors can engage with the site on their visit.
- Presented to a high quality, a space with flexible retail units and lighting which is inviting and encourages spending.
- An authentic space to share the charity message and enable vital fundraising.

Tenders

Please put together a short application describing your relevant experience and how you would work with us on this project, and email to Pamela.Cunningham@sheffieldmuseums.org.uk by 12noon on Monday 14th October 2024.

A kick off meeting will be held w/c 4th November 2024

An interim report should be ready for consultation by w/c 25th November 2024 and the final report ready by December 2024