SOMERSET HOUSE: A NEW VENUE IN THE HEART OF LONDON

STAGE 1: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

August 2019

0.0 UPDATES

0.1 Q2.25 added
0.2 Wording to A3.2 clarified

1.0 QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT

Q1.1: Would you please clarify the extent to which the existing buildings within in the red marked area, need to be retained and incorporated to the new project?
A1.1: Please remember this is not a design competition and we are not expecting design ideas as part of your submission. Somerset House is Grade 1 Listed and any intervention will need to take this into account. Much of the building in the red area is not part of the original build, so we believe could be demolished, but this will need to be negotiated with the relevant authorities.

Q1.2: Is there an intention for the West Wing or the New Wing be integrated in the future Project, physically or in terms of program?
A1.2: The integration of the new auditorium and its support spaces into the existing buildings will depend on the detailed design that is developed by the winning architect. It is recognised that the new project will cause disruption to existing uses. At the moment adjacent spaces are occupied, by a wide variety of uses including the service yard, offices, workshops and studios, restaurants, cafés and public spaces. The presumption is that it will be difficult to displace much of this activity, though there will need to be key access points.

Q1.3: What, if anything, is to be demolished?
A1.3: Please see the answer to Q1.1

Q1.4: What is the current use of the West Wing and the New Wing?
A1.4: Please see the answer to Q1.2

Q1.5: Is it possible to already share the estimated construction budget?
A1.5: As it says on the competition webpage, the total project cost is expected to be in the region of £50m. We have no further detail at this stage.
Q1.6: What is the size and programme breakdown in sqm of the new building?
A1.6: This will ultimately depend on the design that is developed. The capacity figures given in the brief should be used as guidance.

Q1.7: Would you please confirm that the perimeter of the project site is red marked area in the document?
A1.7: The redline shown on the aerial photo is simply to indicate the approximate location of the new project. Further details will be given to shortlisted practices.

Q1.8: What would be the total GFA of the project?
A1.8: Please see the answer to Q1.6.

Q1.9: Is any of the funding in place for the project or will there be fundraising during the design phases?
A1.9: As with most major arts capital projects, the project will depend on a capital fundraising programme and the new designs are expected to play an integral part in this effort.

Q1.10: Does Somerset House have an artistic director or user group already in place to direct the programme of this new venue?
A1.10: Somerset House has an established cultural programme that is mostly created by its in-house team of producers and curators. The rest of the programme comes from various partners, many of whom are resident artists or organisations. The new space will be programmed in the same way.

Q1.11: Do we need to retain the building on the basement level between West Wing and New West Wing for heritage purposes or is it to be demolished? We’re asking this to form an appropriate team structure, not for design purposes.
A1.11: Please see the answers to Q1.1, Q1.2 and Q2.1.

Q1.12: How much of the 50M GBP project budget is currently raised?
A1.12: Fundraising is just beginning and there is some money already allocated for early stage feasibility. A design is needed to launch fully the fundraising effort.

Q1.13: In relation to your goal for "transformation", do you intend for the existing conference centre to be rehabilitated/improved/added upon, or do you foresee the possibility of an entirely new facility in its place?
A1.13: Please see the answer to Q1.1. However, we do not believe that the current conference centre can be reused.

Q1.14: Regarding the intended "visibility" of the project, are there any height restrictions of which we should be aware? May the new building's height breach the top of the existing Wings?
A1.14: Please see the answer to Q1.1. Any additions would have to be agreed with the relevant authorities.

Q1.15: How far does the new proposal extend? If new facility is located in the courtyard it will impact on the windows either sides – are enclosed rooms either sides to become part of the proposal?
A1.15: Please see the answer to Q1.1 and Q1.2

Q1.16: Is it envisaged to have a connection between the larger fountain court through the building?
A1.16: Please see the answer to Q1.1
Q1.17: The brief initially talks about a new auditorium that would ‘transform an existing 1960’s conference centre into a new dynamic forum’ it then talks about a feasibility study that identifies a new building, built as an infill between the West Wing and New Wing to house a multi-purpose auditorium (sunk into the basement to connect the River Walk). I am assuming that the existing conference centre is in the basement (of the infill) and would probably be removed as part of the works?

A1.17: Please see the answer to Q1.13

2.0 QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMPETITION TEAM MEMBERS

Q2.1: Please clarify whether the competition is aimed solely at an architectural practice or at an architectural team, as suggested under ‘Design Quality’ on page 11: ‘why this architectural team has the creative talent… etc.’ As opposed to on page 4 under ‘The Competition’ ‘to find the right architects with the right skills…’ etc.

A2.1: When we refer to ‘architectural team’ we mean exactly that: this is a competition to find an architect. It is not a competition to find a full design team. Please note that we are very happy to receive submissions from collaborations of complementary architects as well as from individual practices. As it says on the webpage, we will be asking practices that are shortlisted to suggest possible collaborators from other disciplines but we do not require or want names at this first stage of the competition; the client will focus on the appointment of other consultants once the architect is on board and the OJEU procurement route will be used where appropriate.

Q2.2: What is the minimal disciplines for teaming?
A2.2: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.3: Is there a conservation consultant already involved?
A2.3: No

Q2.4: Is Purcell (feasibility study) precluded from teaming for this competition?
A2.4: No. However, any competitor may only enter this competition with one team.

Q2.5: Are there any favourable teaming compositions not outlined in the brief?
A2.5: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.6: Would you please clarify how you intend to procure the services of the other consultants?
A2.6: It is our understanding that the client will focus on the appointment of other consultants once the architect is on board and the OJEU procurement route will be used where appropriate.

Q2.7: We understand that this a submission for Architectural Services only but that you would like us to list the consultant team that we would like to work with e.g. Structural engineers – please confirm where this list of other consultants should be put within our submission and the level of information that you require on these companies.
A2.7: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.8: We’ll form a team with relevant consultants, but will you appoint Project Managers and Quantity Surveyors for the project, or do you want us to include them in our team structure?
A2.8: Please see the answers to Q2.1
Q2.9: Are you expecting Stage 1 submissions from a multi-disciplinary team to cover e.g. venue design, acoustics, public realm, heritage, sustainability etc OR simply architectural practices at this stage, with a wider team to be identified at Stage 2?
A2.9: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.10: If a multi-disciplinary team is expected, can you advise the specialisms that should be included?
A2.10: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.11: Can you confirm that the competition at stage 1 will only be considering architecture and architects?
A2.11: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.12: The questions refer to the ‘architectural team’ – and we note that even at stage 2 no scoring is proposed for the wider consultant team that is proposed – it is viewed as being ‘for information only’. Therefore is there any advantage to teams making a submission at stage 1 to include engineers, acousticians or theatre consultants within their submissions?
A2.12: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.13: May we kindly check that we have understood the team requirements for stage 1 correctly, that stage 1 is to select the architectural team only, and this could be a practice or collaboration between practices.
A2.13: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.14: We note in the brief that if successful and shortlisted to stage 2, that architectural teams will be asked to provide the names of other consultants for this project, including engineers, landscape architects and acousticians for information only, and this would not form part of the evaluation process.
A2.14: This is correct. It is our understanding that the client will focus on the appointment of other consultants once the architect is on board and the OJEU procurement route will be used where appropriate.

Q2.15: We are planning to submit an expression of interest for the Somerset House opportunity; can you confirm it is acceptable to include a theatre consultant in our team at this time – or if this will be procured separately?
A2.15: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.16: We’d like to lodge a query regarding the team composition you are seeking in the first stage of this completion. Page 10 of the brief mentions that the “Trust is looking for an architect that can lead a team of diverse consultants”. Can you say more about when those diverse consultants will be brought on board, and by whom? For instance, in the first stage, would it be appropriate for us to include team members beyond the discipline of architectural design?
A2.16: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.17: Is it the intention that the client will procure an engineer or acoustician and if so, who would they be? Or will these team members have to be a part of our SQ?
A2.17: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.18: Please confirm that sub-consultants are only required for Stage 2.
A2.18: Please see the answers to Q2.1
Q2.19: The competition brief states that this procedure is for an architect only, however certain elements refer to multiple organisations and shortlisted teams. Are we correct in understanding that a design team is not required during Stage 1 of the competition?
A2.19: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.20: Will Stage 2 of the competition require a design team to be assembled and included within the fee proposal?
A2.20: No. In the brief it says that: ‘Shortlisted architectural teams will be asked to provide the names of other consultants for this project, including engineers, landscape architects and acousticians. This is for information only and will not be used in the evaluation process.’ It is our understanding that the client will focus on the appointment of other consultants once the architect is on board and the OJEU procurement route will be used where appropriate.

Q2.21: If no design team of consultants is required how will the consultant team be procured and will the selected architect be involved in this process?
A2.21: Please see the answers to Q2.14. It is not known at this stage if, or how, the architect will be involved in the selection process.

Q2.22: Can you please provide a definition of the "architectural team" in terms of the necessary disciplinary composition for Stage 1? (i.e. landscape, interiors, urban design, etc.)
A2.22: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.23: We plan to include a specialty consultant in our Stage 1 submission. Is it permissible for such a consultant to be included on multiple teams during both Stage 1 and Stage 2?
A2.23: Any competitor may only enter this competition with one team. See also the answer to Q2.1

Q2.24: The brief refers specifically to the ‘architectural team’, is this assuming no additional (non architectural) team members / consultants are expected to be included in the submission for stage 1?
A2.24: Please see the answers to Q2.1

Q2.25: We want to be crystal clear on the teaming expectations and requirements (Q2.1). We understand the client is looking for an architect / architectural collaborations only at Stage 1, but would you classify a Heritage Architect within this architectural group, or as a specialist consultant? We think a Heritage Architect is an essential part of the design team and they would likely be a sub-consultant to us, though it’s just whether they need to be named and need to be exclusive at Stage 1.
A2.25: We are interested in the bidders’ experience of working on historic and listed buildings and this is covered in the defined assessment criteria. The services of a heritage architect do not however form part of the brief for the main architectural appointment at this stage. Somerset House may decide once the architect has been appointed to independently appoint a heritage architect to advise on specific elements of the project and, should this be the case, then the appointment of a heritage architect will be done in consultation with the appointed architect.
3.0 QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMPETITION PROCESS

Q3.1: Competition Brief; p. 15: Stage 2: CHARETTE AND INVITATION TO TENDER – would you please clarify what will be required for the “Design Delivery statement”?
A3.1: Shortlisted teams will be asked to submit a written report of no more than eight sides of A4, which would be expected to include their working methodologies; a resource schedule; a response to the project programme; a response to the proposed Terms of Engagement and the scope of services. Details and supporting information will be given to Stage 2 competitors.

Q3.2: For a consortium bid, must all sub-contractors complete the questionnaire? If not, need they fill out any specific sections to comply with the rules of the competition?
A3.2: Each organisation that is being put forward must complete Parts 1 and 2 of the SQ document. Part 3 should only be completed once, by the lead consultant, on behalf of the entire team. Please also refer to the answer to Q2.1.

Q3.3: Clarification for question 6.1: Can you clarify the scope of the three contracts? Are you seeking three for listed or historic structures? Must they be listed only or hold similar classifications in other non-UK jurisdictions?
A3.3: The three projects requested in Q6.1 of the SQ document are for reference purposes and will inform the Design Quality assessment at Stage 1 of the competition. They should demonstrate that the team has the ability to respond with confidence to this project brief. Other than those mentioned in the question, there are no restrictions on the kinds of projects that may be included.

Q3.4: We would like to visit the site. Do we need to request access to specific areas, or are teams free to visit all publicly accessible areas of the site at this stage, with more detailed visits if shortlisted to Stage 2?
A3.4: You may certainly visit the public areas; a formal site visit will be arranged for the shortlisted teams.

Q3.5: Another question we had, was whether the charrette was a shared charrette involving multiple teams?
A3.5: We are not anticipating a shared charrette at this stage; we will give details to the shortlisted architects. Please also see the answer to Q3.10.

Q3.6: We understand that the contractual set-up is to be discussed throughout the selection process – is our understanding correct?
A3.6: Please see the answer to Q3.1

Q3.7: We would like to understand more about expectations for scoring in relation to Economic Standing. Can you advise what level of turnover you might expect to see to allow us to qualify on technical grounds please.
A3.7: The Economic Standing of the organisation will not be scored. The preferred bidder may be asked to provide information about its economic standing to reassure the client that it is a bonafide and sustainable organisation. That said, the appointed architect must be capable of providing the services required to deliver this project and must therefore be of sufficient scale to offer the necessary resources. Very small practices are encouraged to team up with others to offer the required critical mass.
Q3.8: Is it possible to add the Purcell feasibility study to the downloads?
A3.8: We do not want to encourage competitors to focus on specific design parameters of the project at this first stage of the competition. The feasibility report will be made available to shortlisted practices, when competitors will be asked to consider their approach to the project itself.

Q3.9: Should we choose to submit with a partner firm for Stage 1, is it required to submit one joint standard questionnaire (SQ) or two separate SQs?
A3.9: Please see the answer to Q3.2

Q3.10: Please clarify the agenda for the Charrette on December 12th.
A3.10: We do not know the format of the charrette at this stage; the objective will be to understand better what kind of working relationship would be possible with the shortlisted practice. We will give details to the shortlisted architects. Please also refer to the answer to Q3.5

Q3.11: Please clarify the stakeholders present for the Charrette and, if different, the anticipated stakeholders in the project besides Somerset House.
A3.11: Please see the answer to Q3.10

Q3.12: Will the master plan be available at stage 2?
A3.12: Please see the answer to Q3.8

Q3.13: Is the stage 1 submission digital only or would the addition of bound, printed copies of the submission be useful?
A3.13: In accordance with OJEU requirements, submissions should only be submitted in digital format.

Q3.14: Should the organogram requested in the design delivery section on p11 of the design brief be focused on the architectural team, client and key stakeholders or include other potential consultants such as an acoustician / theatre consultant?
A3.14: The organogram should explain how your team will work on the project. Therefore, it should include the client, key stakeholders as well as other potential consultants that you think will be required. Please make sure that it clearly shows the roles taken by each of the key players in your team and, if your team comprises more than one architectural practice, how they will work together on this project. This clarification has now been included in a revised version of the competition brief (v03).

Q3.15: Will all shortlisted competitors for Stage 2 receive the honorarium or only those five invited to submit a tender after the initial interview?
A3.15: All competitors shortlisted to take part in Stage 2 will receive the honorarium on delivery of a compliant submission.

Q3.16: Question 6.1 – is it acceptable to include project examples from collaborating architects in response to this question? Can you also confirm how this question will be evaluated?
A3.16: Yes. Please also refer to the answer to Q3.3

Q3.17: Will the Jury mentioned on page 15 be involved in scoring the submission during Stage 1?
A3.17: Yes. Any changes to the membership of this panel will be posted on the competition webpage.
Q3.18: Under the title "STAGE 1: SUBMISSION FORMAT AND DELIVERY ADDRESS" (page 12), the brief indicates that "Submissions should comprise: Cover sheet; Completed SQ; Response to the design capabilities questions; Response to the design delivery question." Can you confirm that "design capabilities" corresponds to the "design quality" requirements detailed on page 11?
A3.18: Yes.

Q3.19: Because we are a US-based company, we are only permitted to purchase employers liability insurance in the United Kingdom for up to £1 million GBP. I’ve observed that all companies are required to hold £5 million minimums. Is there any exception to this rule? If we work with a local architect or engineering firm, can their insurance level of £5 million suffice? If our team includes other non-UK members, and they’re unable to meet the £5 million minimum, will their presence negatively affect our bid?
A3.19: There is no exception to the rule that any company with employees in Great Britain must have not less than £5m Employer’s Liability insurance. This is a legal requirement. A company not having employees in Great Britain is not legally required to have that level of insurance. However, we would expect any company wishing to engage with Somerset House to carry at least the same level of insurance to cover injury or disease to its employees sustained in the course of their employment.

Q3.20: We’re concerned with the insurance requirement of 5million GBP. Because we’re a non-UK company, and work with a local team in the design process, we’re only allowed to purchase insurance of up to 5million GBP. Can you advise how we should proceed if we wish to join the competition?
A3.20: We assume you are referring to the minimum requirement for Employer’s Liability Insurance as stipulated in the Standard Questionnaire document; the required level of Professional Indemnity Insurance is £15m. Please see the answer to Q3.19.