

Job Description

Head Gardener



Responsible to: Centre Director

Responsible for: The management of Moat Brae garden and garden volunteers.

Salary: £24,000 per annum [permanent]

Hours: Full Time (35 per week). Some evening and weekend work will be required.

Background

Moat Brae House is a large sandstone townhouse on George Street, Dumfries built to the design of the distinguished local architect Walter Newall in 1823.

In the 1870's J.M. Barrie, as a pupil at nearby Dumfries Academy, became a friend to the two Gordon boys who lived at Moat Brae. Its garden became their adventure playground and the inspiration for the famous story of Peter Pan. It was, said Barrie many years later, "the genesis of that nefarious work".

Only a shadow of that nineteenth century garden remains. The house became a nursing home in 1914, eventually being sold for development, with demolition imminent in 2009. To prevent this, a charitable trust was established to restore the house and garden as the National Centre for Children's Literature & Storytelling. The Centre is expecting to open publicly in May 2019.

J M Barrie's "Neverland Garden" awaits its turn: it is a considerable task. Of almost two acres, the land falls steeply to the bank of the River Nith with views across water meadows opposite and further to the Galloway Hills; there are several fine original trees.

The Trust commissioned landscape architect Peter McGowan to provide the initial plan. This includes several garden features which evoke the Peter Pan story; with imaginative planting to become a garden of discovery. Education is a key element and will be woven within the horticultural excellence and diversity of planting and year-round interest.

Key Roles

As Head Gardener with the Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust you'll:

1. Manage and curate the garden and grounds at our property and its plant collections so that its history, evolved design and artistic integrity are further developed and presented in an exemplary manner and documented according to nationally recognised standards.
2. Manage all day to day aspects of garden presentation and cyclic maintenance, leading a customer focused culture that delivers exemplary standards of garden and

landscape management, maintenance, curation, presentation, interpretation and promotion.

3. In association with the Director, recruit, train, manage and develop volunteers to achieve first class garden presentation and interpretation as well as job satisfaction.
4. Play a lead role in the practical work and in the formulation and implementation of management, development and conservation plans, ensuring that plans accommodate and promote best practice.
5. Identify and develop local marketing opportunities for the promotion of the garden and development of the visitor experience. Ensure visitors have the best possible day out and act as a garden representative to develop external relationships and lead garden tours as required.

What you'll be doing as part of the Moat Brae team

Garden and Landscape Management

- Being responsible for the effective maintenance and management of the garden within an approved budget;
- Maintaining excellent standards of garden presentation at all times and participating in the work of the site team, identifying opportunities for improvements, contributing to the formulation of garden and plant collections interpretation and display plans, and providing information to support these;
- Being responsible for the day to day running of the garden and supervision of contractors and volunteers to ensure that appropriate horticultural standards are maintained, meeting the needs of the Moat Brae Garden Management Plan;
- Creating & servicing a small plant sales area utilising surplus material from the garden;
- Ensuring that exemplary standards of horticultural husbandry and plantsmanship are employed and presented to the public throughout the garden.

Coordinating Volunteers

- Assisting with volunteer recruitment, training and development of agreed objectives to deliver maintenance and presentation standards and targets and being responsible for volunteer welfare, discipline and other 'employee' issues.

Financial Management

- Proposing and managing an allocated garden budget and preparing bids for specific small projects. Liaising with other Moat Brae colleagues to monitor all contracted work within the landscape, minimising any adverse impact on the site.

- Identifying maintenance and development needs as well as resource and budget requirements.

Health and Safety

- Overseeing management of contracts and contractors on the site in respect to the gardens and landscape, ensuring works are carried out in a safe manner and to the standard appropriate for the site and in conjunction with other activities on site.
- Ensuring that all garden related activities are fully compliant with H&S legislation and procedures in accordance with Moat Brae policy to include appropriate risk assessment, reporting, training.

Administration

- Maintaining a site archive of the plant material relating to the gardens and landscape, liaising with on-site colleagues to create and maintain such records and plans.
- Helping to produce and maintain and update a full computer based catalogue (IrisBG) and visual record of the garden and its plants. This will include recording of movements of plants around and off site and damage or threats to significant plantings.

Conservation

- Liaising with colleagues to develop or update the gardens and landscape conservation and management plans, which will set out the aims and objectives and agree parameters for conserving and managing the site for present and future generations of visitors.
- Establishing curatorial parameters to ensure the protection of the garden and landscapes during and after functions, events and filming, including the recommendation of preparatory work and levels of on-site supervision.
- Working with the Director to ensure appropriate and legal requirements are met in respect to the tree safety, ecological and wildlife management of the site.

Interpretation and Expert Advice

- Developing a thorough understanding of the garden, its history and plant collections, undertaking and assisting research into the garden, landscape and plant collections.
- Providing advice on the significance the historic landscape, garden and plant collection and on any activities which may affect them.
- Answering public enquires for personal or educational purposes relating to the garden, its collections and historical background in general.

Occasionally we may need to review a job description to incorporate any changes or other duties needed for the role as identified by the Director.

Who We're Looking For

Essential Experience	We'd also like to see:
<p>Proven experience from working in a varied garden environment with high standards of presentation.</p> <p>Excellent understanding of the amenity gardens sector and experience of the management of gardens and landscapes open to the public.</p> <p>Proven track record in the management and cyclical maintenance of significant garden for instance a small high-quality plantsman's garden or part of a large garden open to the public, including volunteer performance.</p> <p>Proven delivery of high-quality garden management and maintenance.</p> <p>Proven resource management including people and other assets.</p> <p>Proven experience in the use of a wide range of specialist equipment and machinery.</p>	<p>Understanding of conservation issues.</p> <p>Proven experience of managing a garden of quality open to the public.</p> <p>Management of grounds maintenance contracts.</p> <p>Specialist skills specific to the individual site e.g. if it has a woodland or kitchen garden, meadows or a lake.</p>
Essential Skills / Knowledge / Qualifications	We'd also like to see:
<p>Good general level of education and specialist technical qualifications.</p> <p>Current driving license.</p> <p>HND in horticulture/landscape management or equivalent. A.P.L. (Accredited Prior Learning) will be considered where excellent performance and extensive experience demonstrates ability.</p> <p>NPTC spraying qualifications PA1, PA6 and membership of NRoSO.</p> <p>Effective management of a garden budget.</p> <p>Excellent plant knowledge and proven horticultural skills.</p> <p>Familiarity with plant collection management.</p> <p>Understanding and experience of health and safety aspects of gardens as visitor attractions including and risk assessment procedures.</p>	<p>M. Hort. (RHS), Degree, Botanic Garden Diploma in amenity horticulture</p> <p>Chainsaw certificate</p> <p>General IT skills including the clear presentation of development proposals and financial information</p> <p>Knowledge of keeping full and accurate botanical records using the IrisBG plant recording software</p> <p>COSHH qualifications</p> <p>First Aid certificate</p>

<p>Ability to identify training needs and deliver effective training and coaching to meet standards and develop a strong team ethic.</p> <p>Ability to identify and appropriately treat the full range of horticultural pests and diseases.</p> <p>Effective time and workload management skills.</p> <p>Knowledge of the optimum use of composting systems.</p> <p>Competent in the use of ICT, PC and other technologies on site.</p>	
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Essential Inter-personal skills	We'd also like to see:
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<p>Strong inspirational leadership skills and an ability to manage effective teams and teambuilding.</p> <p>Self-starter with the initiative to make things happen.</p> <p>Strong organisational ability, for effective management of own and others' priorities, workloads and deadlines.</p> <p>Willingness to support and deliver wider site objectives and strategies across Moat Brae.</p> <p>Excellent communication skills with ability to maintain a supportive manner when dealing at all levels with colleagues, partners, neighbours, community groups and visitors.</p>	<p>Ability to develop and inspire voluntary groups.</p> <p>Ability to deliver appropriate media & public addresses, lectures and exemplar representation of Moat Brae garden.</p>
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Additional Circumstance to Consider

<p>Willing and able to work weekends as part of the general working week if required.</p> <p>Moat Brae garden is a steep bank that falls down towards the River Nith. The site has a multitude of steps. Accessing all parts of the garden will be an essential core element of this post as will strenuous physical practical work which will require the successful candidate to be agile and able to stand for long periods during the working day.</p>
