



Van Gogh House Voluntary Tour Guide role and personal specification

Background information

We are looking for enthusiastic and confident people to act as guides for our timed entry tours of 87 Hackford Road, the house where Van Gogh lived as a young man from 1873 to 1874.

87 Hackford Road is a site of global historical significance as part of an international Van Gogh archive. Beyond this, the house has its own interesting history, having survived the blitz and post-war redevelopment, and providing a home for 6 families since its construction in 1824. Purchased in a derelict state, the site has been renovated by conservation architects. As well as providing access to an important heritage site, the mission of Van Gogh House London is to actively support living artists, designers and craftspeople and to be a focus for learning in the fields of art, art history, heritage and architecture. We also run a growing community engagement and education programme: Vincent's Treasures that engages local children and families in arts and heritage.

Since opening in May 2019, the house has hosted theatre events, exhibitions and artists' residencies as well as regular timed entry tours. More information about our programme can be found on our website vangoghhouse.co.uk

Van Gogh House is a small site and in order to make sure it is protected, we offer guided timed entry tours, usually on the last weekend of every month. These enable us to provide access to the house in a way that is sensitive to the fabric of the building and the local community in Hackford Road. Staff and Volunteer guides lead our house tours, which take in a short walk to set the context for the house, followed by a tour of 87 Hackford Road. The tour lasts about an hour and 15 minutes.

We hope that the tours provide a unique insight into Van Gogh's everyday existence at this time, as well as a glimpse into the way ordinary people lived in Victorian London. We have a tour script that we have carefully developed and amended over time with our volunteer team. Our visitors are diverse and come from all over the world to visit the house, and so leading the tours is always a fascinating and enriching experience for guides.

We have compiled a list of responsibilities and a personal specification for the voluntary role. If you have been a guide before we would love to hear from you, but previous experience is not necessary – we can provide full training to less experienced volunteers who have the skills and attributes to fulfil the role.

The role provides experience of leading groups, presentation skills, of working in heritage and tourism and of course the opportunity to pass on knowledge that will inspire and enthuse others about London's rich history and culture.

We are committed to equality and diversity in our organisation and encourage applications from people who are underrepresented in the Arts and Heritage Sector. We regret however, that Van Gogh House is a Grade II listed property with narrow corridors and numerous stairs and limited physical access. Wheelchair or step free access is sadly not possible.

Travel expenses (within London) are covered by Van Gogh House.

Application process

If you are interested in the role, please download and complete the application form and return to info@vangoghhouse.co.uk by **12 Midday on 31st August** with the subject **"Volunteer Tour Guide Application – [Your Name]"**.

We will also be inviting suitable applicants to join us on Saturday 3rd September, for a day to learn more about the role and volunteering with us. This day will run from 10:00 until 15:30 and will offer a fun, informal opportunity to get to know more about the house and our work, learn what volunteering will be like, experience the tour and to meet some of the staff and current volunteers over a lunch that we'll provide. Please confirm with us if you are available to join us on that day. If you are interested and unable to attend however, please do still apply but highlight this in your application.

Role, Responsibilities and Personal Specification

Role and responsibilities:

- To provide a welcoming and inclusive experience for visitors attending the tours
- To help ensure the health and safety of visitors at all times – in the house and when visiting tour stops outside the house
- To deliver guided tours as directed in a clear and informative way
- To keep up to date with any changes to the tour, as and when required
- To answer visitors questions or refer them on if you don't have the information or know the answers
- To respect Van Gogh House and be sensitive to the local neighbourhood and to make sure visitors do the same
- To undertake tour guide and volunteer training and receive feedback about performance from VG house staff and visitor feedback forms
- Able to commit to leading at least one tour per month

Personal Specification:

Skills and attributes

- An outgoing and confident manner with an ability to lead groups
- An enthusiasm and interest for heritage, social history, art history and domestic architecture
- Good interpersonal skills, good verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Observant and sensitive to the needs of others
- Reliable and punctual – with good time keeping skills
- A love of learning and of imparting information or inspiring others
- Ability to learn and retain facts and information
- A team player who gets on well with others
- A responsible self-starter who is able to problem solve and stay calm under pressure
- Ability to assess risk and respond accordingly

Desirable Experience

Full training will be given, but experience of the following would be an advantage:

- Experience of working with the public
- Experience of leading groups –especially in a similar situation
- Experience of public speaking, performing, lecturing/teaching/training or making presentations
- Knowledge of 19th and 20th century history, art history and domestic architecture

If you need any more information about the role or the application process or you are interested in other volunteer opportunities at Van Gogh House, please contact Ben at info@vangoghhouse.co.uk