

CASE STUDY

MUSEUM REBRAND AND DEVELOPMENT OF WEBSITE: ST ANDREWS HERITAGE MUSEUM & GARDEN

In this case study Samantha Walker, Museum Manager and Curator at St Andrews Heritage Museum & Garden talks about better reflecting the public-facing activities of the museum through a rebranding project and creation of a dedicated museum website funded through Museums Galleries Scotland.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PROJECT FUNDING:

- This project cost £5,582.
- It was fully funded through the MGS Recovery and Resilience Fund (an emergency fund provided through additional funding from the Scottish Government in 2020/21 to help the independent sector deal with the impact of COVID-19)
- £26,321 was awarded for 'Building resilience and community advocacy to secure the future of the SAPT Museum'. From this grant £5,582 was used for the museum rebrand and development of the website, including print costs of some marketing materials.

PROJECT DELIVERY:

- The project commenced mid-November for launch in Spring 2021.

THE PROJECT:

Since opening in 1982, the museum has had the same name and branding as St Andrews Preservation Trust, and the museum has never had its own website.

While this was suitable for a membership organisation dedicated to preservation in St Andrews, feedback from visitors and volunteers highlighted that the museum's branding and lack of dedicated website did not effectively communicate what the museum was about. There was often confusion from visitors as to whether the museum was a public space and they found it difficult to find information about the museum online.

The project sought to resolve this through a rebranding project and the creation of a dedicated museum website. Having a strong brand would raise the museum's profile, but we also wanted the branding to reflect both our heritage and our aspirations for the future.

It was clear that 'St Andrews' had to form part of the name as it has such a global reach, as indicated by our consultation with a group based in Canada. The word 'heritage' was at the centre of our workshop sessions – it reflected our building, our collections, and our activities, so the new name, 'St Andrews Heritage Museum & Garden' fell into place.

To design the logo, we reflected on our future aims and took inspiration from our collections. The woodcuts of the Scottish artist, Annabel Kidston, were a favourite of staff and volunteers, and we felt that taking inspiration from these woodcuts was very appropriate; not only was Annabel a founder member of the Trust but she was involved in the early days of establishing the museum collection.



ST ANDREWS
HERITAGE MUSEUM
and GARDEN

the people | the town | the stories

“Rebranding brought our team together to reflect on our vision, and on our exciting future. We now have an accessible platform from which to share our rich heritage, while making it much easier for visitors to engage with us.”

Samantha Walker, St Andrews Heritage Museum & Garden

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES:

- Our new brand reflects our heritage and activities. It is accessible and clearly communicates to visitors what the museum is about. The logo complements the existing Trust branding, and the two sit well together.
- There was fantastic cooperation among the rebrand team in agreeing the aims of the project and in coming to a final decision on the branding. Everyone has a positive mind-set going into this; reflecting on our organisation in this way provided a much-needed boost over lockdown!
- Initially, it was challenging to get agreement on the rebrand. Preliminary consultation, especially within the organisation, brought with it a range of views that were often quite different. Our rebrand team got back to basics and reflected on the museum’s mission, history, and activities. Taking part in workshops with a designer and speaking to people who had no prior experience of the museum allowed us to get a clearer, evidence-based vision for the rebrand.

THE IMPACT IT HAS MADE:

- The project has provided us with a strong foundation for moving forward with our longer-term development aims. It publicly demonstrates our future vision but also reflects the museum’s heritage and activities.

- The website has given the museum a new platform. Key visitor information is easy to find and our collections are more accessible.
- Since the launch we have received fantastic feedback from Trust members and local organisations. The website has resulted in an increase of 31% in visitor bookings compared to 2020, and the online shop has opened a new income stream.
- Volunteers are engaged by contributing articles to the new blog – a fantastic way of highlighting the important work that they do!

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Firstly, consultation is key in making informed decisions. The feedback we received, especially from those unfamiliar with the museum, was so useful in making evidence-based decisions and gave us the justification for changing the branding.
- Secondly, having confidence in your designer is critical. Our designer visited the museum and took time to understand our heritage and future vision through two workshops. The time spent for consultation and in working with the designer really paid off.

GUIDANCE:

- Plan to consult with a wide range of people, including those who have no prior knowledge of the organisation. Ensure the consultation informs the project, even if the outcome differs from what you had expected or hoped for!
- Ensure you have a plan in place for maintaining your website long-term. This is something we are working on now, but it would have been useful to have this early in the project. Managing a website takes more time than you might think!
- Get others in your team involved in contributing to the project so you have collective ownership, and agreement about the way forward.

USEFUL RESOURCES:

If you would like more information about this project please contact Samantha Walker, Museum Manager and Curator at St Andrews Heritage Museum & Garden, email: samantha.walker@stapt.org.uk

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