

Brief – To Assess the Heritage Significance of the Vauxhall Heritage Centre Collection



Image 1: Vauxhall AVX 1966 courtesy of Simon Hucknall, Vauxhall

Introduction

The Culture Trust is a charitable trust who manage museums, arts centres, creative workspaces, heritage sites and community venues. We deliver amazing arts and cultural engagement activity throughout the year. In partnership with Luton Borough Council, Vauxhall Motors and Save our Town Community Group we seek a heritage professional to undertake the creation of a report. The report will focus on the significance of the Vauxhall Heritage Centre's collection of cars and archive, its potential to form the basis of a major capital project in Luton, for Luton's communities, for car enthusiasts, school aged learners, skills, employment development and new audiences (local and national).

The brief is to gather a broad understanding of all currently existing research, sources and knowledge relating to the collection, from a range of sources and experts. To manage that process and to collate the evidence and identify the significance of the collection to the people of Luton and the UK. To produce a report that will be used as the basis for securing funding of a future capital development (potentially) at the site of Stockwood Discovery Centre in order to secure the collections long term care, storage and public access.

History of Vauxhall in Luton

Luton officially became a borough in 1876 and from the very beginning the local Chamber of Commerce showed their concern over the fact that the town had most of its workforce, employed in one industry, the hat trade.

Their idea was to introduce heavier industries in to Luton, employing more of the male population as the hat industry leaned heavily towards female workers. In 1899, The Chamber of Commerce and the Borough Council formed “The New Industries Committee”. Within a few months the committee had produced, what was almost certainly the first British industry promotional brochure, *Luton as an industrial centre (1900)*. It began encouraging new industries, by offering reduced rates and most importantly cheap electricity. This quickly won several important successes. One of which being Vauxhall Iron Works. From its very humble beginnings in 1905, Vauxhall motors grew to be Luton’s largest employer, making a valuable contribution to the economic and social welfare of the town.

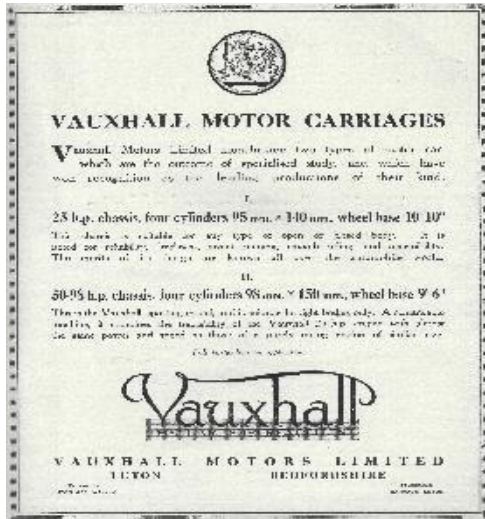


Image 2: 1920 Advert in Chamber of Commerce Journal



Image 3: Courtesy of VHC Archive

Scope of the brief

The Vauxhall Heritage Centre is owned by Vauxhall Motors a part of Groupe PSA. Vauxhall Heritage Centre comprises of a total of 70 cars and a comprehensive archive. The cars are in the most part kept as a working collection and Vauxhall employs a team of trained mechanics to manage their upkeep. The collection will remain in the ownership of Vauxhall Motors, which will maintain its working status. The collection is current stored at the Griffin House site in Luton but by Dec 2020 will be relocated to a temporary storage facility, due to the sale of the site to developers.

Furthermore, there is a smaller Vauxhall archive held at the Wardown House Museum and Gallery, managed by the Culture Trust, Luton and four vehicles at the Stockwood Discovery Centre Site. The curatorial team are experts in interpretive techniques and audience and public engagement having completed, over the last 11 years, two major museum redevelopments.

At present the Culture Trust in partnership with Vauxhall have a small temporary exhibition of some (13) of the key cars on display at Stockwood and this is being used to gather evidence of interest and need from communities and audiences to inform the future project development.

The Save Our Town Community group have gathered a number of active and informed local experts and local historians who have developed a detailed knowledge of Vauxhall History and stories. These contacts are fully available to inform a broad understanding of the collection and its importance.

The Brief

The Culture Trust is the commissioner but we expect the contractor to work closely with the Save Our Town team and other stakeholders to develop this report. Our aim is to select a heritage expert to pull together all the relevant information into a report, which can be shared with partners, funders and stakeholders.

The report must follow best practice guidelines as set out by the Collections Trust in January 2018 by Caroline Reed called **SIGNIFICANCE 3.0: a framework for assessing museum, archive and library collections’ significance, management and use.**

</Wp-content/uploads/2018/01/RevSig3-Introduction-1.pdf>

Or a similar approved framework and be submitted in a format that complies with the requirement of National Lottery Heritage Fund, [understanding-your-heritage-guidance](#).

Commission requirements shall be to;

- Provide an analysis of the significance of the collection for the people of Luton AND for the UK/World including;
 - Collate an overview of the current collections and archive available to inform the future interpretation of the collection
 - Identify any gaps or areas for collections development that could inform a future Collections Development Plan
 - Identify possible interpretive areas for exploration during any development of the collection and project
- The report to be informed by input from;
 - Key partners, stakeholder and local ‘experts’ and amateur historians

Create a final report to be shared in draft for comment and edits by the partners and final approved version for sharing with funders and stakeholder

NLHF and partner logos to be displayed on final report

Budget

It is estimated that this work will take 15 days

Timeline for project

Stages	Notes	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOI 	Provide a methodology for completing the tasks required Provide a C V that outlines similar work projects completed Provides 2 references Provide estimation of costs and breakdown of budget including day rate and phasing of the work in line with the methodology	End Nov 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract agreement 	To be agreed by all partners	Mid Dec 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report Draft 	For comment and edits by partners	End Feb 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report completion 	Agreed and final sign off	No later than end March 2021

How to apply

Please submit EOI stage by the **30th Nov 2020** to Karen.Perkins@culturetrust.com