

Head of AI

Sheppard Robson | London or Manchester | Full-time

About Sheppard Robson

Sheppard Robson is one of the UK's most established practices, an ever-evolving collective of architects, interior designers and masterplanners. Together our team designs buildings, spaces and places that are people-centred and precision-made. We are an equal opportunities employer, committed to creating an open and equal working environment. We have studios in London, Manchester and Glasgow but encourage a "one company" approach, where we collaborate freely between locations.

We make room for new talents and lasting partnerships to grow and flourish, giving people the opportunity to take an active role in shaping our portfolio, contributing to studio life and ultimately leaving their own mark on the legacy of the practice.

The Sheppard Robson family includes our interior design specialists ID:SR, AXIS which applies our detailed design expertise to major projects by others and GRAPHIC:SR our communications and visual identity division.

AI at Sheppard Robson

The practice began its AI journey around three years ago and the agenda is led at partner level through our AI Strategy and Implementation Group. Working with specialist external consultants, we have progressed from an initial policy and shared understanding of the technology to more advanced applications, including agentic use of large language models and sophisticated image generation, alongside a structured review of how AI can be implemented across every area of the business. A programme of training has already been delivered across the studios and a growing set of tools and workflows is in use on live projects.

This new role is about momentum. Our partner leads carry other responsibilities within the practice and the Head of AI will provide the dedicated, day to day focus needed to accelerate the work already underway, embed it with confidence throughout the practice and drive new innovation in this constantly moving field.

Role Information

- **Role:** Head of AI
 - **Purpose of role:** To lead the day to day development and implementation of the practice's AI strategy, taking ownership of the AI agenda across all practice areas, shaping the tools, agents and training programmes that transform how teams work and ensuring AI adoption is embedded with confidence and purpose throughout the practice.
 - **Level:** Senior
 - **Reporting to:** AI Partner Lead
 - **Key relationships:** AI Strategy and Implementation Group; heads of department; external AI consultants and technical partners; studio colleagues practice wide
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Role Responsibilities

Strategy and Leadership

- Chair and lead the AI Strategy and Implementation Group, developing a robust and ambitious multi-year plan for AI usage across all practice areas
- Work closely with the AI Partner Lead to review progress, surface opportunities and align activity with the broader business plan
- Champion AI adoption across the practice, building confidence and enthusiasm at all levels
- Actively engage with the wider industry to keep the practice current and well-connected in a rapidly evolving field

Tool and Agent Development

- Lead the development of departmental AI initiatives and agents tailored to the specific needs of different practice areas
- Shape project specific and practice wide AI agents and tools that meaningfully support how teams work
- Identify opportunities for bespoke practice tools that capitalise on our data and generate new methods of engaging clients
- Develop AI powered productivity templates to embed AI across all areas of the project lifecycle

AI Image Generation and Workflows

- Develop and evolve AI image generation techniques across the practice, keeping approaches current as tools and capabilities advance
- Evaluate, adopt and iterate design workflow platforms as the landscape changes, ensuring the practice's toolset remains relevant rather than tied to any single product

Training and Support

- Design and deliver AI training courses, keeping content current as tools and techniques evolve
 - Create practice-specific training materials focused on in-house workflows, platforms and tools
 - Provide hands-on support across the studios through drop-in sessions and desk-side assistance
 - Work alongside project teams to develop bespoke AI solutions where needed
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Person Specification

This is a broad role in a field that is changing quickly. We are more interested in curiosity, adaptability and a genuine appetite to grow with the technology than in experience of any particular tool or technique. If you meet most but not all of the criteria below, we would still encourage you to apply.

Essential

- Experience working within an architectural practice (preferred) or the wider design and/or construction industry
- Demonstrable hands-on experience with AI tools and platforms, and a strong interest in their application within design and professional workflows
- Genuine fluency with design processes and creative workflows
- Strong communication and presentation skills, with the ability to engage and inspire colleagues at all levels
- The credibility and confidence to lead a strategic programme of work and bring others with you
- Proactive, self-directed and able to manage a broad and evolving workload with rigour and ambition
- Strategic thinking, with the ability to balance long-term planning with day-to-day delivery

Desirable

- Experience of designing and delivering training or structured learning, or a clear aptitude for teaching colleagues
 - Coding ability, particularly in the context of AI tool and agent development, or a demonstrable willingness to develop this capability
 - Experience of agent development and LLM based tooling
 - Familiarity with AI image generation and design workflow platforms
 - Formal architectural or design qualification
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Organisational Responsibilities

All Sheppard Robson employees are expected to:

- Understand, demonstrate, apply and promote our workplace values, which revolve around openness, respect and progression
- Encourage and contribute to continued professional development, both as an individual and in providing support to colleagues
- Share knowledge practice-wide through active collaboration
- Establish strong working relationships internally and externally to continually provide exemplary service and design
- Demonstrate commitment to developing individual and practice-wide activities to create a positive workplace for personal, professional and cultural development for all
- Enhance and support environmental sustainability, diversity, inclusivity and wellbeing within our workplace and the foundations of our projects
- Show commercial awareness, providing excellent service to clients and collaborators
- Demonstrate a passion for architecture and design
- Be a positive advocate for the practice

As a senior role, the Head of AI is additionally expected to:

- Actively engage with the wider industry
 - Consider and promote strategic issues within the industry
 - Develop a productive and respectful leadership style
 - Take a strategic view in efficiently balancing priorities across design, delivery and team development
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This job description is not exhaustive and reflects only the core general activities required of this position. The specific roles, responsibilities and duties may change from time to time to respond to the practice's needs. There is a requirement for the holder of this position to adopt a flexible approach to work.