

Agenda Item

Executive Board

2 Sept 2009



Thelma Hulbert Gallery expansion

Summary

To inform the Executive Board about the appointment of Jonathan Rhind Architects for the project. Savings for the council will be made if this architect is appointed as we will be able use the substantial amount of work they have already carried out.

Recommendation

That the Board agree the intention of the Arts Development Team to waiver the Council's Contract Standing Orders to permit the appointment of Jonathan Rhind Architects, Taunton to carry out the work required for the expansion of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

Subject to successful funding application, by Corporate Overview and Executive Board that recommendations set out in the feasibility study in October 2008 are carried out. As part of the feasibility study the architects Jonathan Rhind were appointed as consultants.

b) Alternative Options

to go to tender to seek an alternative architect

c) Risk Considerations

The loss of valuable work already carried out by Jonathan Rhind on behalf of the gallery.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

In order to conform with budgets already agreed by Corporate Overview Committee and Executive Board we will need to work with the current architects, to go to tender at this point will delay the process and take the project over the agreed budget.

e) Date for Review of Decision

Works to be reviewed by Corporate Overview Committee towards the end of 2010

1 Main Body of the Report

On 2 October 2008, in response to the findings of the Feasibility study, the EDDC Executive Board agreed to ratify the unanimous decision of the Corporate Overview Committee that finances be found to allow the authority (after taking back the ground floor of Elmfield House from the Registrar, the current leaseholder) to expand the gallery and staffing to cover new activity throughout the whole building and ancillary areas. Therefore, in December 2008, the Registrar was asked to vacate the building from July 2009.

Over a 5 year period and in 3 phases, the proposed works are to include the removal of inappropriate insertions that have been made in the past within the house and to return the principal rooms within the house to their original form. A new, larger, teaching and workshop

area, more exhibition space, cafe and toilets for the gallery will eventually be housed in an exciting, contemporary extension. The design is to be developed on sound ecological principles, working with experienced Devon based architects, Johnathan Rhind Architects.

This report is to confirm that we wish to waive the standing order to permit the appointment of Johnathan Rhind Architects to carry out the specialist works required to gain the planning permission and Listed Building Consent required. As part of the feasibility study undertaken in 2008, Johnathan Rhind was appointed to act as architectural advisors to the consultants and have already carried out a considerable amount of work. The architects have already produced a number of detailed proposals, a detailed historical building assessment and draft building plans, these plans then formed the basis of the successful grant application to Arts Council England South West enabling the project to happen, the fees for the architect were part of the original study.

Johnathan Rhind Architects will be responsible for conducting tenders for all other professionals required to carry out the work i.e. Building and Quantity Surveyors and developers.

The feasibility study consultants Gallery Creative Business Consultancy, Bristol were appointed on 6 August 2008 after an open tender process through which we received 5 detailed proposals in response to our brief. The proposals were shortlisted to 3 by the Thelma Hulbert Gallery Selection Panel and the proposers were invited to interview on Monday 23rd June 2008.

The architects Jonathan Rhind have a good track record in working on listed buildings and were highly recommended to the feasibility study consultants by East Devon District Council Conservation Officers working with us on the project.

Phase One is planned to take place (once all relevant planning permissions have been received) from Jan – March 2010. Because Elmfield House is a Grade 2 listed building, any changes will require an application for Listed Building Consent. External alterations will also require an application for Conservation Area Consent as Elmfield House lies within the Honiton Conservation Area. Any permission will expire within three years of granting unless a material start is made on the work. This is why it is appropriate to see the works in Phases, but all connected. Contact by the architect has already been made with the Planning Authority and the area Conservation Officer, and a pre-application and site meeting have taken place.

Legal Implications

The architects were originally appointed as part of a tendering process and it would be sensible given their past involvement to appoint to this project. The fees involved are relatively modest and are well within the margins which permit the Board to make this decision. The author of the report has arranged for the formal exemption form to be completed.

Financial Implications

As detailed in the report, to go to tender would mean the Council may have to pay a new architect to complete the work already carried out by Jonathan Rhind Architects which was paid for as part of the feasibility study.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

See above

Background Papers

Request for Exemption to Standing Orders

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