

Agenda Item: 17

Executive Board

15 July 2009



Thelma Hulbert Gallery expansion

Summary

To inform the Executive Board about the successful funding application to Arts Council England

Recommendation

That the Board note the intention of the Arts Development Team to carry out plans for the expansion of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery into the whole of Elmfield House, Honiton.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

Agreed, 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.

b) Alternative Options

Not applicable

c) Risk Considerations

Full adoption of Learning Programme may be delayed while waiting for confirmation of our funding application to The Foundation for Sport and The Arts (although this will not affect the capital programme)

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

The recommendation conforms with budgets agreed by Corporate Overview Committee and Executive Board.

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, Johathan Rhind Architects.

This report is to confirm that we wish to go ahead with Phase One of the proposed works, requiring the release of the agreed capital investment from EDDC of £70,000 which has been matched by a capital grant from Arts Council England South West.

Phase One of the capital works is structured as follows (subject to the relevant listed building consents):

Ground Floor – To encompass new exhibition spaces, a small reception and a larger office

Exhibition space – The main exhibition space available for artwork will be in the large room on the ground floor (currently the wedding ceremony room), this room runs for the entire depth of the building and used to be Thelma Hulbert's studio. This space can also be hired out for functions/receptions by local businesses or other groups, thus providing additional income

Office – The office will move downstairs into the smaller room at the front of the building

Reception – a small reception manned by the volunteer stewards will be created to greet visitors, the current hallway is large and will easily accommodate a reception area

Basement – to encompass a small cafe area and shop with extra storage

Shop – The shop will be a showcase and selling space for crafts such as jewellery, textiles and ceramics made in the South West region and nationally

Cafe – Tea and coffee facilities will be available with space for tables and chairs. This will be low key (like the set up at Newlyn Art Gallery) but will test the demand for a cafe. The changes to the built fabric will also allow the space to be part ready for Phase 3

New fire exit – This will be built up to the ground floor outside

Storage Room – a small storage room will be created next to the shop

(We hope to include a new platform lift from the ground floor and replacement accessible WC in phase one should costs allow)

First Floor – To encompass a new Special Projects room, a learning room, a staff room and a meeting room

Special Projects – looking at the house from the front, the Special Projects room will be in the front room to the right. This space can be used as an extension of the main ground floor space or as a space for new work by emerging artists, invited curators or the Masterpieces Young Peoples group

Learning room – looking at the house from the front, the Learning Room will be on the left hand side. Although this is not a large space, it can be deemed a 'messy' space and designed to cater for all age groups

Meeting and Resource Room – looking at the house from the front the Meeting Room will be on the right to the rear in what is now the Thelma Hulbert Room

Staff Room – A staff room/meeting room will be established in the old office space.

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 has already been made with the Planning Authority and the area Conservation Officer, who is very supportive of the proposals and will be helpful in gaining appropriate consents. Further future funding will be sought for Phases Two and Three.

New post of Gallery Development Manager

A new post of Gallery Development Manager (Grade 5) will be created for the gallery, recruitment for this post is underway. The post holder will be responsible for developing and realising the Thelma

Hulbert Gallery's vision, focusing on strategic planning, communications, fundraising, external advocacy and operational delivery. This post will be for 3 days per week and will be based in Honiton at Elmfield House.

Legal Implications

The Council has power, under section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972, to do anything necessary or expedient for the development and improvement of the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts and the crafts which serve the arts.

Financial Implications

Funding of £35,000 for 2009/10 and £33,000 for 2010/11 is in the EDDC capital programme. It is hoped that given the current economic climate, projected income streams from 2011/12 will be met.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

See above

Background Papers

- Minutes from the full report presented to Corporate Overview on 25 September and Executive Board on 2 October. Executive decided to agree the unanimous recommendation from Corporate Overview – **Option 2**, That the consultants second option be adopted, namely that finances be found to allow the authority (after taking back the ground floor of Elmfield House from the current lease holder) to expand the gallery and staffing to cover new activity throughout the whole building and ancillary areas. This will follow a business plan that, over four phases, and with grant aid, created better financial viability and better opportunity, enhances Honiton, provides a better learning environment, better engages the local community and creates a cultural hub for future activity across East Devon.
- Executive Summary of the Feasibility Study commissioned by East Devon District Council Arts Development Department with support from Arts Council England, prepared by Gallery Creative Business Consultancy

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Arts Development Officer

Executive Board
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