

Thelma Hulbert Gallery
Feasibility Study

September 2008

Commissioned by East Devon District Council
Supported by Arts Council England South West

Written by Gallery Creative Business Consultancy

Inspiration comes from the people – this is the moment for growth!

Why the study?

The Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG) was opened in April 1998 as the first public exhibition space in East Devon. The gallery is situated on the first floor of Elmfield House, a Grade 2 listed Georgian House, previously owned by the artist Thelma Hulbert, who had lived there since 1984.

A feasibility study in July 1997 found there was strong local support for the whole house to be used as a public art space or gallery.

THG has an excellent track record. Over the last 10 years there has been a steady increase in visitor numbers and the beginnings of commercial activity and income generation.

Elmfield House currently houses the East Devon Registration Office on the ground floor. There is a break in the lease in June 2009 and it is this break that has prompted the commissioning of this study to look the options for the expansion and long term sustainability of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery.

The brief

To look at the opportunities available, for the development of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery to create a more sustainable initiative.

To include:

- Appraising the gallery's objectives, space available, grounds and outbuildings
- Investigating how further changes could help deliver the East Devon District Council (EDDC) corporate strategy particularly in relation to young people and the economy.
- Assess potential new audiences and future marketing needs and costs
- Assess potential economic benefits for Honiton and East Devon
- Assess alternative models of governance and ownership
- Estimate capital requirements and revenue costs
- Consideration of existing staffing and future requirements

Methodology

A participative strategic planning process was used to consult with a wide range of stakeholders. Capturing their ideas and views helped to inform and shape the business case and practical development options.

The consultancy reviewed every aspect of the Gallery which included:

- Visits to the building and Honiton market town
- Interviews with EDDC officers, THG Curator, Gallery Administrative assistant and stewards
- Interviews with Town and District Council members
- Interviews with Friends of the Gallery and volunteers
- Survey of local businesses, residents and artists in Honiton & E.Devon
- Interviews with the Youth Group 'Masterpieces'
- Consultation with schools, education and services for disabled people
- Focus group events and 'Open Day' session at the Gallery
- Research and visits to other similar gallery and arts centre venues
- Desk research and meetings re governance, Creative Industries etc

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1. Summary

Ten years ago, East Devon District Council (EDDC) made a clear decision to take an opportunity and invest in an art gallery by buying Elmfield House. The break in lease of the East Devon Registration Office brings about an opportunity to reflect on the benefits and opportunities of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, and to look to the future. In a climate where arts organisations are funded less through the public purse, in some ways it may seem foolish to be considering the expansion of this small gallery.

However, throughout this research, we have uncovered many examples of good practice; public demand for the gallery; desire from other organisations (education, galleries etc) to form collaborative partnerships; and the success stories of the young people's panel, 'Masterpieces'.

All this, coupled with the unprecedented visitor numbers as a result of the Elizabeth Frink exhibition this summer (over 1000), combines to make a strong case for the expansion of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery.

The Thelma Hulbert Gallery provides a much needed cultural experience and has the potential to grow into a pivotal tourism destination for East Devon, promoting the area and growing a strong reputation for good contemporary art and related activities.

The staff and Arts Department work tirelessly to make this gallery a memorable and professional experience. However, the lack of space contributes inevitably to a poor complete gallery experience (i.e. lack of café, no decent shop, lack of good size gallery space to stand back and view work). The gallery has limited opening times: Wednesday to Saturday, 10.00am to 4.00pm with free admission.

All this continues to constrain and limit the work and activities the Thelma Hulbert Gallery can deliver. And this will always be the case without commitment and investment. What's more, if the gallery is kept on a shoestring budget and constantly relying upon the energy and goodwill of staff, then inevitably, the staff will leave and the gallery may suffer.

This is an opportunity for East Devon District Council to invest properly in this artists home and create an exceptional space that has the potential to place-shape Honiton, raise the profile of East Devon and draw visitors from a wide geographical area thus bringing economic benefits to the area. The Thelma Hulbert Gallery also has the potential to deliver on many of EDDC's Corporate Objectives and to have the wider role for EDDC to become the cultural gateway to the Jurassic coast.

It has the potential to provide inspiration, a genuine cultural experience for the public and to provide specific services for young people and a host of other audience groups such as families.

An initial capital investment of approximately £ 136,782 - £ 68,391 from EDDC and £ 68,391 from Arts Council England, South West - is required to extend the space, along with continuing revenue funds to establish the gallery over the next five years.

If the Thelma Hulbert Gallery moves towards becoming a charity or CIC, this will enable increased access to a wide range of funds and grants.

If East Devon District Council truly aspires to being an inspiring council, then here is an opportunity not to be missed!

2. Introduction

Arts organisations of all sizes face unsettling times. Creativity, culture and art have been central to society since those early cave paintings made 32,000 years ago. The centrality of creativity and culture to our experience of life should mean that arts organisations play a central role in modern society.

But arts organisations can only thrive if they are sustained by a consensus about the relevance of art. The market provides one measure of art's value: how much people are prepared to pay for it. Consumers are interested in inspirational and moving experiences that excite, soothe or intrigue.

Public subsidy of a sort is needed to help provide these services, to empower them to grow and to develop other means of income and future sustainability.

2.1 Creative people

Creativity is the lifeblood of arts organisations; and those arts organisations depend on the people who work for them. The quality of the people is vital. People who work for arts organisations have a passion for the arts. They work long hours for limited pay and burnout is common, so good support, training, and fair salaries are crucial for successful arts organisations.

People working in arts organisations are motivated by their sense of achievement when they engage an audience with a creative piece of work. Arts organisations will only prosper when they provide an environment in which creativity flourishes.

So arts organisations need to be as creative as the culture around them encourages them to be. Proper management and staffing resources, good IT systems, solid marketing understanding and commercial acumen as well as an understanding of the art market, time to research new artists, creative programming and time to plan innovative ways of working with youth groups, artists and volunteers are all vital for any arts organisation to thrive and deliver its objectives effectively.

2.2 Creativity and commerce

Arts and commerce are bound together tightly and cultural and creative industries are among the fastest growing sectors of the economy. Arts organisations are increasingly sustained by their commercial activities: shops, merchandise, ticket sales, providing venues for conferences and seminars.

Many arts centres are brought to life by their café. Now, the line between art and shopping, commerce and creativity has been superseded by a zone of cultural leisure. But not all arts organisations can create commercial income. Organisations working in deprived neighbourhoods serve people who cannot afford to pay for services, and opportunities for private sponsorship are limited.

Most arts organisations succeed by managing commerce and creativity. Arts organisations recognise that commercial income gives them more control over their destiny. However commercial income can become the primary focus and divert an organisation from its artistic purpose. The more commercial the organisation becomes, the more clearer its artistic purpose should be.

2.3 Culture

Cultural experience is likely to become ever more democratic. Art must challenge as well as entertain and please. It must cross borders and break boundaries to be creative.

Culture needs to be at the heart of economic planning and development for 'cultural destinations'. The Creative Industries have a significant role to play in relation to a tourism economy like the South West. A recent study showed that for 50% of all visitors to Penwith in Cornwall, perceptions of the area as a place to view arts and crafts had been a factor in influencing their decision to visit (Cornwall Arts Marketing).

2.4 Tourism

At a regional level, 'Towards 2015: Shaping Tomorrow's Tourism' (South West Tourism and SWRDA) outlined three strategic priorities and a vision for the tourism industry which is 'less seasonal, of higher quality, and delivers an improved all round experience.'

At a national level the DCMS has an over-arching priority of 'maximising the contribution which tourism, creative and leisure industries can make to the economy'. Since 2002, Local Authorities have been encouraged to incorporate cultural issues and previous Cultural Strategies within their community planning process.

2.5 Social impact

Policy makers, arts practitioners and researchers have demonstrated that participation in the arts can result in a broad range of positive social effects. These range from increased educational attainment and self confidence, enhanced

communication and organisation skills, social cohesion and reduced offending behaviour.

A current DCMS key aim prioritises culture as a key contributor to quality of life in the UK. The 'Every Child Matters and Youth Matters' National Policy is all about working to improve access to culture, sport and play for children and young people, so they can develop their talents and enjoy the benefits of participation. Consultation with young people confirmed that they need 'somewhere to go, something to do, and someone to talk to'.

2.6 Cultural education

In July 2005 the government launched its green paper 'Youth Matters', setting out proposals designed to improve outcomes for 13-19 year olds. It proposed that young people should have:

- more things to do and places to go in their area
- more opportunities to volunteer and to make a contribution to their local community
- better information, advice and guidance about issues that matter to them, delivered in the way they want to receive it

Funding strands from the Big Lottery Fund currently emphasise the delivery of activities and places for young people and their active participation in that process, delivering projects on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

2.7 EDDC cultural strategy

The cultural strategy for East Devon 2004-8 identifies the vision for culture for the district over the next five years:

a qualitative and quantitative increase in the cultural opportunities available within the district for more people to take part in and enjoy in order to enhance an individual's quality of life

It identifies four strategic themes:

- Encouraging increased access and participation
- Improving the quality and relevance of cultural activities
- Supporting the region's cultural industries and maximising economic benefits
- Celebrating regional and local identity and cultural diversity

An action plan builds on these local priorities and strategic themes with key actions. Specific actions relevant to this study include: community development, young

people, economic development, environment, education, property and resources. The EDDC's Arts Development Team is therefore committed to extending the work of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery as the main focus for delivering on these priorities.

"The Thelma Hulbert Gallery brings high quality art to a local venue and creates important links with other regional and national galleries bringing in the work of internationally recognised artists e.g. Matisse, Andy Goldsworthy and Elizabeth Frink. The gallery has been nationally recognised as leading the way with its inspirational youth group who take part in activities as well as helping make the gallery 'youth friendly' providing a genuine option for young people. The gallery has strong links with local schools and provides educational opportunities for teachers and students and unlike commercial galleries, public funding ensures the gallery also supports local artists to produce and show new work." (EDDC Arts Dept.)

'Honiton is on the map as a well known centre of arts for East Devon. This has greatly benefited the local economy of the town, shops, restaurants and tourism. Recently the Frink exhibition attracted over a thousand people, this is great for the Gallery and the whole town. The visitors book shows how much the public has been fascinated by the various exhibitions, the curators have done a magnificent job, especially recently.'

'The project has been a huge success with a large group of young people regularly attending, many of whom had never been to the Gallery before. The young people have often informed us that there is little to do for them in Honiton and they love coming because they get to meet people and have fun. This is a common problem in rural areas that have limited provision, young people can feel isolated and can result in them becoming at risk of social exclusion in the future. Therefore the Gallery is playing a vital role in the lives of these young people.'

'I visit the Gallery whenever I am in Honiton because there is often a good exhibition. I live 12 miles away in Culmstock. There are very few good quality art galleries in this part of Devon, Exeter and Taunton being the only others. It is good to have a non-commercial venue as there are a lot of tourist galleries which sell a very limited range. The building is not ideal having to go upstairs and there is no shop which is not conducive to a good art experience.'

3. Why a contemporary Art Gallery in Honiton?

3.1 Honiton

A traditional market town, well known for its historical lace making, Honiton has a population of 10,600. Over the last ten years, Honiton has developed a growing reputation as centre for antiques in the South West. Many collectors and cultural tourists visit the town. Bonhams auctioneers have offices here attracting wealthy clients to the area. Increasingly the high street is seeing designer shops and cafes emerging.

Honiton is seen as the gateway to the Jurassic Coast and the wider South West; and utilised as a stopping off point between London and St Ives, Bristol and the coast. The Thelma Hulbert Gallery has the potential to be a big draw for these tourists and to place-shape Honiton.

3.2 A hidden gem

The Thelma Hulbert Gallery is the only local authority owned contemporary art gallery in East Devon. Over the last ten years it has steadily built a reputation and is highly regarded by artists, Friends and visitors. The energy and commitment of the Curator and Arts Officer have driven the gallery into a new place, creating many good news stories for the region, in particular, its exemplary work with young people.

“Thelma Hulbert Gallery has become a thriving Arts Space for Honiton and East Devon, bringing magnificent art collections of painting and sculpture and providing workshops for young artists, youngsters from Honiton school and the disabled”.

“The gallery contributes in huge measure to Devon’s cultural economy, increasing awareness in the arts and providing a platform for artists to contribute to the local economy through sales and the attraction of visitors”.

“The College and specifically its Art Department has over a period of time developed a close relationship with the Thelma Hulbert Gallery. Students use the TH Gallery as a resource that enriches their art studies, particularly at GCSE and A level. A wide variety of art and artists on our doorstep has enabled many students to see at first hand fascinating and important works. Their final grades have been raised through visiting and responding to their Gallery experiences. It is clear to me that the real value of the TH Gallery lies in its ability to attract artists and exhibits that can directly impact on students’ learning. A couple of good examples were the Lal Hitchcock exhibition and further back in time the Howard Silverman exhibition.

Small groups of children and students worked with these artists in the TH Gallery. Although severely limited by working space it was apparent that this type of activity has huge positive outcomes on the quality of learning. Because of the current space restriction only a few children are able to benefit from these and similar experiences, which is a pity. The Gallery has always done its best to provide quality educational experiences but is limited by the physical space and the fact that the Gallery is a dual use building, which further restricts its effectiveness in promoting the arts to a young audience.”

However, there are many blocks to the gallery fulfilling its potential and these are:

- Lack of good gallery space to show larger exhibitions
- Lack of good workshop and learning space for young people to ‘get messy’
- Lack of decent space to sell products and generate commercial income
- Lack of café, giving a poor gallery experience and preventing visitors from staying longer
- Lack of storage space
- Lack of marketing budget
- Lack of good signage
- Sharing a building with the Registration Office means visitors sometimes find themselves in the middle of a wedding
- A limited gallery experience

3.3 Gallery potential

“If the whole building could be dedicated to the visual arts it would give the gallery greater integrity and a stronger identity, a bonus for Honiton, culturally and socially.”

“Honiton is a good stopping off point for Cornwall. The Tate at St Ives has many visitors, if the gallery was more spacious it could have larger exhibitions and more going on which would encourage people into the town benefiting local businesses.”

“Regarding future development of the Gallery, we have a wonderful opportunity which the Council should seize. The downstairs space is where Thelma had her studio and lends itself to art exhibitions, a cafe and gardens. If it was possible to have the whole of this magnificent Georgian house which was Thelma Hulbert’s home it would be such an asset to Honiton and the art world.”

4. Investment and EDDC Strategic priorities

East Devon’s District Council’s vision is:

‘outstanding and sustainable quality of life for everyone in East Devon’.

To achieve this vision the Council is working towards seven priorities. Out of these priorities there are four which are directly relevant to the future of the Gallery, and they are:

- Thriving economy
- Children and young people
- Excellent service for our customers and
- An inspirational council.

The Thelma Hulbert Gallery has the potential to deliver on all four of these strategic priorities.

4.1 Investing in Thelma Hulbert Gallery

Thriving Economy (priority 2)

“A thriving economy is about good jobs, economic growth and revitalising communities to improve their local facilities and services for our residents now as well as for future generation”

Investing in the gallery would mean investing in Honiton and East Devon as a cultural destination. Giving it a sense of place and identity it would attract visitors to the gallery, the town and the area spending in the gallery, and with local businesses bringing economic benefits.

“Our experience of the Frink show was that we witnessed friends from Bristol travelling especially, buying catalogues in the gallery, having lunch on the High Street and buying gifts in Hybrid, we know four people spent nearly £200 between them!”

Children and Young People (priority 5)

“EDDC wants to continue to work with young people and children recognising that they are in fact a minority in East Devon. We wish to inspire young people to achieve their best and to tackle issues which concern them.”

Young people and children are a minority in East Devon. Investing in the gallery would result in creative, engaging and relevant services for young people. The gallery is already recognised for its fantastic work through the ‘Masterpieces’ project and has been able to attract separate funding. A bigger gallery space and a dedicated learning room would greatly benefit local young people and their families.

“we need somewhere to be creative, where we can talk about art and learn about art, this is the only place there is”

Excellent services for our customers (priority 6)

“Our vision is to provide quality and easily accessible services – to ensure we are providing quality services, when and where our customers would like them”

There is a clear demand for an art gallery in Honiton. A space for workshops and inspiring talks, for a creative space for people to meet. Many residents in Honiton believe there must be a contemporary art gallery that is challenging, inspiring and networked nationally.

“why shouldn’t we be having first rate exhibitions in Honiton, it’s ridiculous that we have to travel so far to see decent art”

An inspirational council (priority 7)

‘our vision is to be publicly acknowledged as an inspirational council’

Investing in the expansion and vision of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery demonstrates tangibly EDDC as an inspirational council. Committed to providing a first class contemporary gallery, leading the way and creating a thriving, buzzing creative environment for a whole range of audiences to engage.

“A total commitment to moving the gallery forward would show vision, strength and a belief in investing in this area culturally, it would put us on the map”

5. Consultation process

The consultation process for this study included a questionnaire study, face-to-face meetings and an open day at the gallery. Parallel questionnaires were developed for local communities including visitors and supporters of the Gallery, and EDDC Councillors, distributed with support from the Gallery staff and Arts Development team at EDDC. We received 65 forms from local communities and businesses, plus five completed forms from Councillors.

Together the surveys delivered valuable results and suggestions in relation to the potential development of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery. Overall the surveys indicated:

5.1 Survey results

67% live in Honiton and East Devon, 16% in the SW region

53% are aged 56+, 36% aged 36-55 and 11% aged 23-35

30% are artists, 30% residents, 25% local businesses, 10% visitors

80% had visited the Gallery, 20% had not visited

The majority heard of the Gallery via the leaflet, local media, Friends Scheme, Council Information – others had seen the signboard or heard from friend

45% visit the Gallery occasionally, 25% once a month, 15% once a week and 5% every six months.

The main reason people visit the Gallery are: Exhibitions/Events 66%; Buying Art & Craft 11%; Friends Members 11%; Exhibit Artworks 6%; Children’s Events 5

75% of those visiting the Gallery were 'highly satisfied, 25% were satisfied

Responsees would like extra facilities and services at the gallery to include:
16% Cafe; 14% Art/Crafts Shop; 14% Adult Art Classes; 14% Artists' Talks; 12% Artists' Studios; 9% Children's Workshops; 13% Sculpture Garden; 6% Interpretation

Other suggestions included: links with schools; taster workshops for adults & children: CPD provision for artists; films and a book shop; rotation of Thelma Hulbert's work; longer opening hours.

Responsees were involved in the arts in different ways including:
12% Buy Art & Craftwork; 18% Practicing Artists; 2% Student Artists; 7% Attend Art Classes; 24% Visit Art Exhibitions; 5% Visit Art Fairs; 5% Attend Art Talks; 27% Visit Museums & Galleries

The majority, 77% believe the Gallery benefits local communities, 23% not sure
The majority 75% of responsees knew the reason for the Gallery's name; 24% did not know; 1% were not sure

Councillors Comments:

- The THG brings people into the town and gives it an individual identity.
- It gives local artists the chance to exhibit their artworks and local people and visitors the chance to enjoy them.
- It is an attraction for people who are interested in the arts

Councillors Suggestions:

- The staff and volunteers are brilliant, it is a great asset for Honiton and East Devon - to have use of the whole building would be a great opportunity to do more things.
- A lot of cultural businesses run on their own two feet - and should be run independently.

5.2 Open Day results

The Open Day held on Thursday 14 August, and one-to-one interviews with selected Councillors and key stakeholders, helped to identify the following issues that would need to be addressed as part of future development of the Gallery:

Building Facilities for Visitors:

- The Thelma Hulbert Gallery is a hidden gem with untapped potential. It has huge potential to become the leading contemporary art gallery in East Devon.
- Build upon what you have - a heritage building and contemporary collection.

- A traditional building can be used very successfully for contemporary artwork and sculpture. The Gallery has a friendly atmosphere and offers intimate spaces because it was a private home with personal character, similar to the Hepworth, Kettles Yard and Guggenheim galleries (Venice).
- The mixed use of Elmfield House does not work as people visiting the gallery feel uncomfortable during weddings. There are too many barriers as the front door is shut, there are discouraging signs and you have to go upstairs to access the Gallery.
- Community Centre and Thelma Hulbert – combined together they could offer added value – an ideal place to establish a ‘cultural hub’.
- Thelma Hulbert Gallery is a focal point where culture and tourism meet, Honiton is a stopping off place for visitors from the SE on their way to Cornwall and St Ives.

Marketing & Funding:

- Marketing has been neglected and people can’t find the Gallery. Better signposting is needed at the entrances. Banners could be used to attract visitors to the Gallery.
- The Gallery needs a new name and strong branding.
- Make more use of the Friends and offer them arts visits and talks eg. collecting art.
- If the Gallery was a charity the Friends could pay their fees with added Gift Aid.

Exhibitions, Interpretation & Learning:

- Frink and the Spotlight on St Ives exhibitions are great examples of what can be achieved. Develop an exhibitions programme of local artists and ‘Frink’ type shows.
- Interpretation is provided by the Curator, Assistant and volunteers. This approach works because the Gallery is small and can be ‘personal’. If the Gallery expanded with more space for larger exhibitions, the question is would this still work?
- The Thelma Hulbert collection does not need a dedicated room but could be hung along the stairwell or presented using a digital presence.
- People want to do workshops at the Gallery, it could provide new opportunities to schools and colleges nearby eg. Millwater School for special needs.

In conclusion, the consultation process generated a wide range of positive ideas and insights, concluding with a rousing call to action from a Councillor:

‘Inspiration comes from the people’ – this is the moment for growth!

6. Vision and Values

The results from the consultation process, combined with the face-to-face talks with staff, councillors and volunteers have contributed to defining a potential vision for the gallery, with clear aims and values.

If the gallery is to move forward, to deliver on EDDC objectives, to grow in size, to generate new sources of income and to be a cultural destination contributing to Honiton and East Devon's sense of place, then a robust vision and brand needs to be developed.

6.1 Vision

That by 2012, the Thelma Hulbert Gallery will be a nationally recognised contemporary art gallery. Its innovative programme of exhibitions and ground breaking work with young people, communities and volunteers alike will bring it media attention, awards and visitors from afar.

Its pivotal role as the leading cultural space in East Devon will have developed a reputation for Honiton and the surrounding area as 'the' place to visit for contemporary art and antiques'.

And as a result of all the talks, workshops, classes and collaborations driven forward by the gallery there is a new buzz on the high street with regular art markets, specialist events, projects with and for specific communities and an active engagement with local business, to include exhibitions with Bonhams.

6.2 Aims

The gallery's aims are to:

1. Be an asset to the region, making a contribution to the social, cultural, educational, and recreational experiences of the local and wider communities
2. To originate and show an innovative and high quality programme of contemporary art and craft of local, national and international significance
3. To support and promote contemporary artists living and working in the South West
4. To develop and deliver a strong art-based learning programme for diverse groups and individuals
5. To curate and facilitate integrated exhibition and learning programmes

6.3 Point of difference

What makes Elmfield House and the Thelma Hulbert Gallery so special is the space itself. The fact that it was a home of an artist brings a personal, welcoming and accessible space in terms of its atmosphere.

It is not an impersonal white cube that alienates and threatens. This uniqueness has the potential to create a clear point of differentiation as a gallery. And, expanding on previous shows coupled with a new and clearly defined curatorial programme, there is an opportunity to focus on one-off shows that enhance this position. For example: specialising on shows for women artists following in Thelma's legacy; contemporary ceramics (the tea pot exhibition); a contemporary twist on the tradition of lacemaking; and connections with its rural space.

So the space, with the programme of shows and activities has the potential to create a dynamic and exciting point of difference, enabling the Thelma Hulbert Gallery to stand out against other galleries and art centres in the region.

6.4 Values

The Thelma Hulbert Gallery must have clearly defined brand values that run through the heart of its curatorial policy, activities, promotional materials and volunteer training. The complete 'Thelma Hulbert experience' needs to be based around these core values:

Personal	a welcome home for visitors, new artists, new artwork and cultural partnerships
Contemporary	showcasing creative innovation in the visual arts
Engaging	involving all audiences (local, regional and national) in a dynamic, targeted and relevant way
Inspiring	the experience should inspire and link back to one of its key priorities as being a cultural leader for EDDC
Quality	promoting excellence in contemporary arts

7. Curatorial and Learning programme

7.1 Curatorial policy

Within the new vision for the Gallery comes a revised curatorial policy:

The Curator's aim is to create active partnerships with artists resulting in an innovative and high quality programme of contemporary art and craft exhibitions - rather than the gallery simply acting as a receiving house for artists submissions. It is important for the Curator to have dialogue not only with artists but with other curators and arts professionals from galleries and visual arts organisations in Devon and beyond, thus establishing long term working relationships and raising visibility of the Gallery.

7.2 Curatorial programme

The Curator is to programme a maximum of seven exhibitions per year, each lasting between six – seven weeks and held in the new main space on the ground floor. The annual exhibition programme would aim to include a selection of the following exhibitions:

- A touring exhibition with international appeal - from the likes of South Bank/ Hayward Gallery or Crafts Council. With possibility of this coming from a more local source i.e. Elisabeth Frink from Sherborne House
- A contemporary art/craft exhibition which highlights environmental issues – potentially linked to the local countryside, AONBs and Jurassic Coast, encouraging partnerships between EDDC departments, local agencies and organisations.
- A site specific exhibition/residency by a contemporary artist - which would aim to include a period of research prior to the exhibition, workshops, talks and tour of the exhibition.
- A contemporary exhibition of new work - by a recent graduate/s from a South West College/University or young emerging artist/s.
- A themed Open exhibition - judged not only by the Curator but with guest arts professionals. For consistency of a high quality programme the gallery will no longer display exhibitions by members of local amateur and semi-professional art groups or societies. The Open allows everyone to submit work for display.
- A family centred exhibition – for example Animated Exeter.
- A contemporary exhibition by an artist of national or international reputation - who has never or rarely exhibited in the area before
- A selling exhibition of high quality contemporary craft - from the best of South West makers. This exhibition would be sourced by the curator rather than as it is now, due to time restrictions, a mix of the curator sourcing and submissions.

A Special Projects space would be developed on the first floor and equipped as a versatile space with the possibility to show:

- Projects undertaken by 'Masterpieces' the gallery youth group
- Work by community groups in East Devon collaborating with the gallery

- Specially commissioned projects by young people undertaking arts education in the local area
- New work by emerging artists from the region.

7.3 Learning and engagement programme

The word education is usually connected to schools and can convey negative impressions. Therefore 'learning and engagement' are more appropriate and positive terms to be adopted by the gallery for any future planning. Learning implies a two way process, where arts organisations and audiences learn from each other.

Learning and engagement already play a strong part in the THG programme. In 2007, young people were recruited to form a youth panel who could advise staff on youth participation. After meetings and a trip to Tate Britain, ideas were generated, friendships made and the youth panel is now a permanent fixture involving young people in decision making and providing social events.

This project was so successful that in March 2008 the Curator was asked to speak at a national conference thus raising the profile of the gallery and of Honiton at national level. She has also recently been asked to speak at Tate St Ives in November to her peer group in the South West.

7.4 Positive out of school activities

The Gallery's Youth Panel and Masterpieces project are positive examples of the potential for the Gallery to provide 'positive out-of-school activities' for young people and families that meet the Government's national policy objectives (DCSF 2008).

Its vision for the future builds upon this inclusive approach and brings learning to its heart. The Gallery wishes to become a model of best practice for learning and engagement and a leader among arts organisations, which often fail to understand the relevance of education and new audiences development.

7.5 A culture of learning

By responding to the needs of audiences as 'customers' the potential development of communal spaces (along with a shop and café) would help visitors feel comfortable and welcome, thereby generating loyalty and preparing the ground for them to engage in artwork and creative workshops. These facilities would also help generate new income for the Gallery.

If a culture of learning is to prevail in the Gallery, it must extend and apply to staff and volunteers, instilling creativity and learning from within. In practice this means

putting in place a programme of continuous professional development, mentoring, knowledge exchange, promoting innovation and time for research.

If learning and engagement are at the heart of the Gallery's mission, then this work also needs to be at the heart of the building. We propose that a space identified for learning is vital to the future development of the Gallery. Modern learning and exhibition spaces need to be flexible and adaptable to a variety of uses eg. hosting an artist's residency or arts workshop in a gallery space, or an exhibition in an education room. Café spaces can also be used for group meetings and discussions, talks and workshops, films and events.

The potential growth of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery offers a unique opportunity to run a full curatorial and learning programme that not only runs side-by-side but is interlocked with each other. One is not more dominant or more important than the other; rather they support each other in different ways at different times according to the meaning being conveyed by the curator. A fluidity within the use of space(s) within the gallery is vital to supporting this philosophy.

8. Gallery management

8.1 Gallery Curator

The Gallery is managed by Angela Blackwell, the Curator, who is employed part-time by EDDC. Within her 26 hours a week, the Curator's tasks cover far more than exhibition programming and interpretation of the artworks. She manages the Gallery budget, one part-time staff member (jointly with Ishbel Ramsey, Arts Development), two new freelance artists working on the education programme and up to 15 voluntary stewards. She also manages the Masterpieces youth group (meeting every other Wednesday with up to 15 young people attending).

The Curator acts as the technician in hanging exhibitions and develops marketing and promotional materials. She assists with fundraising in terms of funding bids, developing local sponsorship and supporting the growth of the Friends Scheme. She is pro-active in engaging with new and target audiences, for example the Masterpieces Youth Panel funded by ENGAGE, plus schools and families activities.

Angela has been in post since Autumn 2004. She has gradually reduced the number of exhibitions from 8 to 7 shows a year, allowing more time for a sustainable learning programme to develop. The gallery is open from Wednesday to Saturday, 10.00am to 4.00pm with free admission.

The reality is that she is unable to have any time to research new shows, and is reliant on applications to the Gallery, forcing her position to be mainly reactive, not proactive.

But her work has not gone un-noticed. Angela won the 'Star performer' Award for EDDC in July 2007 for recognition of outstanding achievement and contribution towards the Council's key goals, with the Masterpieces project with Young People being a major contributor. Support for her work was evidenced in consultation:

"Congratulations to all involved as this was a great exhibition (Elizabeth Frink). This might be a very important turning point for the Gallery as not only do we seem to have a renewed interest from Members in Arts and Culture, but this exhibition seems to have drawn in plenty of people who do not usually visit - you have regularly proven that there is scope for sales income."

"You have built up a great reputation, and the result is obvious with an expanding number of visitors. I have been coming to your gallery for a number of years and would be delighted to see it expand."

Any sustained growth for the gallery must take into account the wide range of demands and resources needed to deliver an effective and well managed exhibitions, learning and engagement programme. To maintain and increase the quality of the Gallery's programmes, facilities and services, Angela will require support for professional development and training, plus time to research other contemporary galleries and artists' work.

A significant result of a recent EDDC Audit has resulted in a 'red alert', identifying the need for extra staffing as increased income streams are generated by the Curator, forcing her to deal with finance on a day to day level and taking her away from her key role.

Traditionally the curator's role was to care for and look after the collection. In more recent years the role of the curator has broadened. In contemporary art, the title curator is given to a person who organises an exhibition. In this context, to curate means to select works of art and arrange them to achieve a desired effect. This might involve choosing a strategy for display, thematic, conceptual and formal approaches are all prevalent. In addition to selecting works, the curator can be responsible for labels and signage, exhibition catalogues and essays, promotion and interpretation.

8.2 New post of Gallery Business Manager

Any sustained growth for the gallery must take into account the wide range of demands and resources needed, in particular, to increase funds for the gallery, through applications to a wide range of options and developing the shop and café functions.

It is proposed that a new post of Business Manager (Grade 5) is created for the Gallery starting in Jan 09, which supports the marketing and commercial side of the

organisation, leaving the Curator to concentrate on the curatorial and learning programme.

It may also be appropriate to increase the hours per week for the Gallery Administrative Assistant, in order to cover the extra administration caused by longer opening hours and extra activity.

8.3 Volunteers

The Thelma Hulbert Gallery has built a dedicated group of 15 volunteers since it opened in 1998. The Gallery could not operate without its voluntary stewards, who are well managed and trained by the Curator. Some volunteers have supported the Gallery since it opened.

Acknowledgement of the true value of volunteers and the demands placed on the Gallery Curator in managing them needs to be recognised and considered in future planning. Volunteers need a role description and specification. They act as workers for the organisation but without the same rights. Roles need to be clearly defined and supervised. The organisation needs to consult with its volunteers and develop an agreed Volunteer Strategy and Policy document.

8.4 Friends of the Gallery

The Friends Scheme is an untapped resource and has the potential to contribute significantly to income for the gallery.

Deborah Smith, Gallery and Arts Administrative Assistant, co-ordinates the scheme. At present the Gallery has 140 friends who pay £7.50 per year. The scheme needs a complete overhaul, developing a clear package of benefits and a restructure of the price. The membership fee is very modest compared to other organisations. So there is scope to increase the fee and if the gallery moved towards charitable status then the gallery would be eligible to offer Gift Aid as an option (and the Gallery would also be able to reclaim basic rate tax back on such donations).

The Friends are also an untapped resource for extra donations and volunteers; however until greater capacity is built within the staff team these opportunities will be missed.

9. Marketing

Many of the issues surrounding effective marketing of the Thelma Hubert Gallery were identified in Nov 2001 in a marketing study commissioned by East Devon District Council. It is worrying that many of the same issues still exist seven years later. Primarily they are around signage, joint mailings with EDDC (thus a confusion

of the gallery identity) and the ineffectiveness of the webpage dedicated to the gallery on the EDDC website. Although on the surface joint mailings seem cost effective, they are counter-productive, in terms of developing audiences effectively. The need for a clearer 'style guide' or brand for the gallery is also picked up on in the more recent Business Plan (2006).

Limited resources and budget are, in the main, the reason why a lot of these issues have not been addressed. To support the development of the Gallery's identity and profile, widen audiences and attract new visitors consideration needs to be given to developing strategic marketing and communications including new branding, signage, website and publications with the necessary budgets to deliver this effectively.

9.1 Gallery name and brand

The recent consultation with stakeholders using survey questionnaires plus the 'Open Day' and discussion groups confirmed that 75% of those consulted were aware of the reasons for the name of the Gallery ie it was the home and studio of artist Thelma Hulbert.

There were mixed opinions on whether the name of the gallery should be retained or changed. Some consultees felt the name Thelma Hulbert Gallery should be kept as she was an established and recognised contemporary artist of the 20th century, who was involved in promoting creative learning as an arts tutor, and who bequeathed her collection of artworks to the public for exhibition in Elmfield House.

Other consultees felt that for many local people and visitors who have not visited the gallery, or for new potential audiences (especially young audiences), the name is meaningless and not easy to say, spell or promote.

The consultation process delivered a range of ideas and key words in response to the question 'what three words would you use to describe the Gallery?' These responses contribute to inform the development of a new name, brand and vision for the Gallery.

Fundamentally the gallery name, its brand identity, the vision, curatorial policy, activities and marketing should all be clearly aligned. Further work is needed on development of the gallery name, pros and cons of changing it or modernising and developing a strong brand identity.

In our survey, one of the questions we asked was: What three words best describe the Gallery to you? Responses included:

Intimate – friendly – contemporary

Haven – inspiration – quality

Making art accessible

Valuable – local – amenity

Stimulating – elegant – comfortable
Unique - Special – potential
Local – accessible – informed
Creativity – potential - dedication
Educating – enjoyable - thought provoking
Inspiring – challenging – educational

9.2 Signage

The lack of permanent signage for the Gallery is a serious problem. Currently, the Gallery is restricted to a temporary signboard placed on the street each day. It results in many people - including local residents - not being aware the gallery exists; visitors having problems successfully navigating their way through Honiton to find the Gallery; and once they arrive being put off or confused by the closed front door and Registry signage. Comments and suggestions gathered from the local consultation included:

- *“Saw the museum sign on the high street, I didn’t realise it was an art gallery.”*
- *“Better signposting and awareness in the town, wider marketing should be developed.”*
- *“Its location is confusing for people who haven’t been before - it needs to be made clearer that people are welcome to walk through the Registry to access the gallery.”*
- *“The Registry office downstairs is off-putting – it’s not an inviting entrance.”*
- *“Could the entrance notice be changed from the forbidding “Bridal Car Only to ‘Welcome to the Thelma Hulbert Gallery’. Above the front door there could also be the name in large letters - the closed front door is not inviting.”*

9.3 Website

Currently the Gallery’s web-presence is hosted as a web-page on the East Devon District Council website. In 2007 these web pages received a total of 1163 hits, and from January to July 2008 it received an increased level of users with 2041 hits.

However, if the Gallery is to expand its exhibitions, learning and engagement programmes and market its facilities and services it will need to develop attractive web communications with interactive features to meet wider audiences needs.

Currently, there is no Gallery archive on the web and this is another feature that could be developed as a valuable cultural resource.

There are three options for future website development:

1. No change – the Gallery continues without a separate web address and with limited presence as a web-page hosted by EDDC’s website. This is an economic solution, appropriate while the Gallery is managed, supported and promoted by EDDC’s Arts Development team – however, it restricts future growth and marketing solutions.
2. Partial change – the Gallery commissions a separate web address that acts as a portal directing audiences to a series of linked web pages hosted by EDDC. This would enable it to develop a separate identity and promote its expanding exhibitions, learning and engagement programmes. This lower cost solution is appropriate if the Gallery was in transition towards greater independence from EDDC.
3. Positive change – the Gallery commissions the development of its own dedicated website and web-address to establish a stronger independent identity and branding. This would require more investment, plus management and maintenance by the Gallery team. However, it would enable the Gallery to market and promote itself more powerfully and to add interactive facilities beyond email enquiries eg. on-line event bookings and sales of products. It could host a number of blogs encouraging new younger audiences to engage with the gallery and have their say. It could also benefit from web-links with EDDC and DCC websites. This is a higher cost solution, appropriate if the Gallery and EDDC were committed to a transition towards organisational independence.

9.4 Publications

The Gallery’s promotional leaflet, along with local media coverage and EDDC’s publications have proved to be effective at increasing awareness of its presence, exhibitions and events. If the Gallery expands its exhibition, learning and engagement programmes it will need to consider developing a promotional brochure with a longer shelf life that could accommodate leaflet inserts for new exhibitions, courses and events.

Currently, the Gallery does not have a professionally produced membership leaflet to attract new Friends and members to support and participate in its activities. If the Gallery moves towards greater independence as an organisation, it can consider developing ways to attract and win greater support through increasing membership, legacies, donations and Gift Aid.

As part of this process there is potential to develop its Friends and Membership Scheme, by increasing the membership fee and the range of benefits it offers currently. A professionally designed leaflet would be required to launch an effective Friends and Membership Scheme recruitment campaign.

9.5 Developing new audiences

The Curator of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery has worked to attract diverse audiences to visit exhibitions at Elmfield House. Currently the Gallery attracts a wide range of audiences:

- School children and young people
- Arts students and arts tutors
- Families and older people
- Artists and makers
- Art lovers and art buyers
- Tourists and visitors to Honiton
- Local businesses

9.6 Visitors

Visitor data for 2006-2008 reveals a growth in the number of visitors to the gallery (even with less exhibitions):

Dates	Exhibitions	Visitors Numbers
Feb 2006 to Jan 2007	8	3170 (363 young people)
Feb 2007 to Jan 2008	7	3626 (670 young people)
Feb 2008 to Jul 2008 (6 mths to date)	4	2371 (6 mths) (352 young people to date)

The visitors' book provides evidence that people are travelling to the Gallery from across Devon, the South West region and from London. Visitor numbers identify marked increases in the quantity of visits during high quality national exhibitions like Elizabeth Frink.

9.7 Schools

The Curator has been developing strong links and partnership working with schools in East Devon. Artists Claire Gunningham and Anna Aroussi are developing an education programme at the Gallery to engage with schools and children. This is funded via a recent grant from Envision, a programme supported by Engage (the national association for gallery education). Claire commented on the potential of the Gallery to develop an education programme:

“The gallery represents a wonderful opportunity for schools and children to engage with the arts in a rural setting in a way that is not readily available to them - the other nearest public art gallery is in Exeter. We are sure our gallery education programme is going to be successful, however we are limited by the space the gallery can offer. With only three rooms all with artwork being shown in them it is not always easy to have groups of children making art. At the recent Elisabeth Frink exhibition we wanted to have plasticine out during the exhibition for children to model with but it was deemed too risky. It would be wonderful to have a room set aside for gallery education. The room could also be used for the youth group, functions and workshops. Life drawing classes could be run for adults and perhaps an art club on a Saturday. Children need the freedom to learn in places other than school, Honiton and East Devon seems under developed in this area. East Devon children deserve the right to access to culture and art.”

9.8 Families

Currently, Angela provides a very popular ‘doing trolley’ for children when they visit the Gallery with their parent or carer. Extending this could be a new area of audience development for the gallery. One way to do this is to work initially with primary school children and then organise activity days at weekends for the whole family.

Tate Liverpool has demonstrated ways to develop programmes to meet families needs. They have a number of suggestions for making galleries family friendly, including baby changing facilities and cloakrooms big enough for buggies. Online they provide a kids question quiz to do before the visit, and a follow up in the form of a families e-bulletin.

9.9 Older people

Tate Liverpool also offers a well attended ‘Over 50’s’ programme throughout the year. Visits are led by an artist who guides groups of older people round the exhibition, provides a commentary and interpretation of the artworks and facilitates group discussion. The Friends are an obvious starting point for developing this targeted activity.

9.10 Working with local business

As part of the consultation, businesses in Honiton were engaged in discussion about the future development of the Gallery’s facilities and services. For example, Charles Lanning of Bonhams Fine Art Auctioneers and Valuers commented:
“If the whole of Elmfield House was available we could hire it to host client receptions and previews for collections, which is not possible at present due to the limited space. If there were sufficient gallery spaces Bonhams could exhibit some collections prior to auction, particularly where a Georgian setting would be beneficial and enhance the show. A good example of partnership working with the

Gallery that attracted lots of visitors was the 'Teapot Show' where people brought their teapots to be valued by our team for free. There is great potential for similar 'antique roadshow' events in future. Bonhams also works with groups such as STEPS (solicitors) and offers them training in antiques. We could offer training courses in art collecting and valuation at the gallery if there were sufficient space and facilities available. There is great potential for developing joint marketing, media and promotions between Bonhams and the Gallery for a range of exhibitions and events."

Clearly, there is potential to develop links with local businesses in the Honiton and the surrounding area for Gallery hire for events, plus joint marketing and sponsorship.

Our research with businesses on Honiton High Street alone highlighted a desire to regularly visit and be involved with the gallery. Opening hours are a current obstacle for some businesses. A regular drinks evening, talk or private view specifically for local businesses would build relationships and support any developing opportunity for business membership of the gallery, sponsorship and other partnership opportunities.

Again, time, resources and budgets are needed to develop this potential new market.

A planned calendar of events, talks, courses and workshops will actively promote the gallery attracting new audiences and generating new streams of income.

It is anticipated that the programme of exhibitions coupled with a strong marketing campaign would see visitor numbers growing from approximately 4,000 to 11,000 over the next three years.

Talks, workshops for the public and engagement with schools could easily attract a further 600 – 1200. Currently the lack of space prevents this being possible. For example, a dedicated learning space would enable school classes of up to 30 to visit rather than the constrained 8 per session at present!

10 Gallery buildings and grounds - development options

We assessed and evaluated the full range of options available for the future of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery. These are:

Option 1 – the Registration Office remains on the ground floor.

Option 2 - the Gallery takes over the ground floor from the current lease holder and expands into the whole building with a building conversion (four-phased approach)

Option 3 - Elmfield House is sold and plans for the Community Centre and the expansion of a visual arts space at Thelma Hulbert Gallery are combined.

10.1 Option 1 – the gallery stays the same

The current situation is that the East Devon Registration Office for Births, Marriages and Deaths are based downstairs in Elmfield House, and the gallery upstairs. There are a number of difficulties that arise from two organisations requiring different things:

Conflict of noise control. The gallery is unable to fully extend its education work with schools and young people. This means no access to funding (ie from Arts Council) as not enough people benefit.

Hanging work becomes difficult to plan when weddings are organised downstairs: *“We also had to stop work (hammering and drilling) when the registrars were conducting weddings downstairs.”* (artist)

Different usage and no working relationship between the two organisations means conflict regarding parking and use of the front door ie a van was organised for a Tuesday lunchtime to collect the Frink artworks but couldn't get near enough as there was a wedding – a stretch limo and a photographer – waiting.

It is off putting for the public to negotiate access to the gallery as it stands, and as such, hampers any effective audience development programme:

“The Registry office downstairs is off-putting, hearing ceremonies whilst looking at art, its not an inviting entrance.”

So, although not ideal, if the gallery was to remain in the same place, we would strongly recommend that a number of issues around marketing be carried out, to ensure visitor numbers continue to rise. These are: review the name, create a strong brand identity, develop professional marketing collateral and independent web-site, extend opening hours and create permanent signage.

This would be an estimated cost of £ 20,000, with an extra £ 8000 a year for staffing. However, it is our belief that this would not be a solid strategy for the sustainable future of the gallery. If Option One is the preferred option, you also run the risk of losing the demoralised staff.

10.2 Option 2 - the gallery takes over the ground floor from the current lease holder

There will be access to three new rooms, the basement and external grounds, plus two small outbuildings. Options are varied and can be approached in four phases of growth, enabling funds to be raised and growth managed effectively.

Phase One

Exhibition space will be available on the ground floor.

The showing space available for artwork will be in the large room on the ground floor – approx...sq metres. This will be the main exhibition space and allow a programme of seven exhibitions a year. There will also be a room upstairs for Special Projects, enabling the curatorial programme to either use this room as an extension of the main ground floor space or to see it as a space for new work, by emerging artists or invited curators.

Consultation with the public has shown that there is no need to exhibit Thelma Hulbert's work in one room - perhaps a digital presence or place some of her work on the stairwell.

A new space primarily for a learning programme can be established on the ground floor. Although this is not a large space, it can be deemed a 'messy' space and designed to cater for all age groups. In all the case studies we have made, a flexible use of space within any kind of learning room is paramount. Storage is important and many galleries provide foldable lockable doors to store equipment and sinks.

To establish a small shop on the ground floor. The primary function of the shop would be as a showcase and selling space for crafts such as jewellery, textiles and ceramics made in the South West region and nationally.

Research shows (Making it to Market: developing the market for contemporary craft, 2006) that there is a huge potential for people buying original craft. 6.9 million people have already bought, with another 4.4 million potential buyers in England. Few galleries specialise in craft and though the sector produces lower-value items than does the visual arts sector its turnover is still significant. The research shows that buyers' responses to craft are intuitive, rather than intellectual. The Own Art scheme is run by Arts Council England and is designed to make it easy and affordable for everyone to buy contemporary works of art and craft.

Availability of tea and coffee facilities can also be established in the ground floor backroom to run alongside a shop space. Tables and chairs can be set up outside in the grassed courtyard. The aim here is to test out the need for a larger café.

A section of the large basement will need to be made good to enable storage along with a new staircase and fire door. Other uses of the new space(s) available in Phase One:

As a meeting room. Currently there is no cultural venue for artists or arts organisations to meet regularly in the region. Organisations such as ArtsMatrix, alias or Engage South West are groups who meet regularly across the region and would be interested to meet in East Devon to ensure they are providing equal access for attendees. A room – either the main gallery space downstairs or one of the smaller rooms upstairs - could be hired at a reduced cost for such groups and they also benefit from access to tea and coffee facilities.

ArtsMatrix is the regional skills and enterprise development service for the creative sector. We deliver training and development opportunities to creative professionals across the South West. As part of our commitment to truly regional delivery, it is important that we can use suitable, accessible meeting rooms throughout the South West, so that we can bring our services to areas where there is a high concentration of artists and creative businesses. A new meeting room based in a lively arts base would benefit us in providing opportunities in the East Devon region, supporting the cultural economy of the area.

Annie Warburton, Chief Executive, ArtsMatrix.

As a resource room for exhibitions. Many galleries find visitors appreciate a room with reading materials and displays about the artists' process very useful and is increasingly what visitors expect when visiting a gallery. Information in such a room can include gallery guides, extended information on boards, newspaper cuttings, articles, video of artist(s) in conversation, feedback from visitors in the form of questionnaires, post-it board etc.

The main gallery can be hired out for functions/receptions by local businesses or other groups, thus providing a form of income. The office can move into one of the current gallery spaces, and a staff room/meeting room established in the old office space.

Phase Two

Phase two responds to the needs established by Phase One and converts the outbuildings as required, along with partial courtyard cover. There are a number of options available in converting the outbuildings, either:

- Into a bigger café
- Creating a larger learning space

- Building two spaces for small creative industry workers. These could be rented out on short lets, offering emerging artists and makers an opportunity to have a dedicated space for making, followed up an exhibition at the gallery.

All create opportunities for larger sums of income, but at this stage it is difficult to predict the best use of these outbuildings in two years time. It is vital to establish the core changes and then evaluate where demand is strong and commercial opportunities create the best possible income streams.

Phase Three

Sculpture Garden

The external grounds around the gallery can be redesigned and used for a new set of commissioned sculpture/installations. Fundraising will be needed for this and the Henry Moore Foundation identified as a source.

Phase Four

Basement Digital Suite

Phase Four looks to the use of the basement for extra storage and potential digital suite. We are aware that SWRDA are interested in funding digital media and incubator spaces for creative industries.

NB: To make any of these changes in a Grade 2 listed building and also within Honiton Conservation Area will require consent.

10.3 Option 3- Elmfield House is sold and plans for the Community Centre and the expansion of a visual arts space at Thelma Hulbert Gallery are combined.

Advice given by Rob Spears (Senior Estates Surveyor, EDDC) is that:

“Elmfield House, in its current commercial use as offices/gallery, would achieve a sale price of approx £330,000. However, if the property were to revert to a private residence (if planning permission were to be granted) then the value would be appreciably higher. However, the consideration of the possible sale of this asset would be a matter for the Council's Asset Management Forum to consider, not only in the light of the services that the Council wishes to provide to the community, but also as a revenue earner and portfolio asset.”

A new purpose-built community centre has been planned for a number of years now, to be built in front of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery on the space taken up by long stay car parking. It is beyond the focus of this study to analyse fully the potential for combining the community centre and the work currently done by Thelma Hulbert gallery. We have been looking solely at the needs of an existing visual art gallery in

the region. However, it is possible to identify some advantages and disadvantages at this point:

Advantages

- A new building could be purpose built to reflect aspirations, such as a well equipped education room; an eco build.
- Shared staffing ie reception can also be a shop or gallery space.

Disadvantages

- Our analysis of public thought via consultations and questionnaires supports fully the need for an extended visual arts space in Honiton. Some of the key attributes of the existing Thelma Hulbert gallery space – ie the size and friendly feel of the spaces enhance the experience of the visitor which obviously would be lost with a new build.
- Another issue would be mixed use, with the emphasis on a new build being with mixed and varied use of the arts, as opposed to a concentration on the visual arts.
- The new cost of redesigning plans for this arts/community centre
- The delayed timescale as it is not known when the community centre will be built
- The community centre would not have the ability to become a cultural destination as it has a primary local focus.
- Young people would not be interested in coming to a new space. They regard THG as it stands as distinctive.

It would appear that, in the immediate future, the gallery could expand to make its existing facilities in Elmfield House work better.

11. Gallery Ownership and Governance

For the Gallery to move forward, the current structure, governance, ownership and asset management should be reviewed. There are options for the Gallery to, over a phased period, separate itself from being owned by EDDC, thus creating opportunities for generating other income streams and greater curatorial independence.

Through this process, it may be appropriate to transfer the assets of the building.

Quirk Review – Asset Transfer

The Quirk Review has identified that the asset base of the public sector, including local authorities, is currently subject to considerable investment, rationalisation and re-configuration, presenting both problems and opportunities in relation to asset transfer.

Many Councils are having to address selling a proportion of their asset base to finance investment in their retained assets. The Quirk Review has examined the transfer of ownership and management of such assets, excluding liabilities.

11.1 Organisational Structures

There are relatively few ways to organise a body to be the legal vehicle for a cultural organisation; relevant models include:

Private Limited Company – the company is a legal ‘person’ in its own right, distinct from those of its members or directors. Directors’ liability is limited so long as the directors act in accordance with the law. There are two alternative structures:

Non-profit-distributing company limited by guarantee - this is the most common structure in the arts world. Directors take on the responsibility of the company’s governance and for any employment, expenditure and reporting to Companies House annually.

Company limited by shares - this structure is common among commercial organisations, and directors are often investors, holding shares in the company on that basis. External investors can also hold shares, in any of a complex variety of ways.

Community Interest Company - recently introduced by 2004 legislation, Community Interest Companies (CICs) are limited companies with special additional features created for the use of people who want to conduct a business or other activity for community benefit, and not purely for private advantage. This is achieved by a "community interest test" and "asset lock", which ensure that the CIC is established for community purposes and the assets and profits are dedicated to these purposes. Registration of a company as a CIC has to be approved by the Regulator who also has a continuing monitoring and enforcement role. A key difference between a CIC and a charity is the CIC directors can be paid, and some element of profits distributed, within certain limits. The CIC Regulator registers CICs and enforces the statutory asset lock. There are 2016 CICs registered, and approximately 15% have some cultural aspect to their business.

Charity - the Charities Act 2006 made some changes to the regulation of charities. ‘The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science’ is now a charitable purpose under the act. A new structure, the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) is created under the act. A CIO will have the advantages of a corporate structure, such as reduced personal liability for trustees, without the burden of dual regulation by both Companies House and Charity Commission, as at present. The act has come into effect in stages from 2007.

11.2 Sources of Funding and Affordable Finance

The need for investment at all points of the community management and ownership spectrum is immense. Neither government nor any other single source of funding can meet the need – a range of sources is essential. This is particularly the case at a time when there are significant financial constraints on the public purse. Some specific current and potential future sources of capital and related revenue funding, in addition to the contribution of local authorities and charitable foundations, include:

- Big Lottery Community Buildings Fund £50m
- Futurebuilders Fund £125m - which in part funds third sector asset-based development, as part of its programme of support for voluntary and community sector capacity to deliver public services
- Adventure Capital Fund's £13m - programme of investment in community enterprises
- Community Asset Transfer Fund £30m - announced in the 2006 Pre Budget Report, and being established by the Office of the Third Sector to fund the refurbishment of local authority assets to facilitate their transfer to community management and ownership (managed by Big Lottery Fund FB)

Any share of the Unclaimed Assets funds that is in the future allocated to asset-based development, for instance through the proposed Social Investment Bank, should such funds become available as a result of current legislative proposals from HM Treasury and negotiations with the relevant banking institutions
Funds dedicated to support for community management and ownership of assets identified in the government's Comprehensive Spending Review 2007

If the gallery was successful in gaining charitable status it would then be able to apply to trusts and foundations such as:

Paul Hamlyn Foundation - The Open Grants Scheme supports the development, implementation and dissemination of new ideas to increase the experience and enjoyment of the arts by people of all ages. They are interested in all art forms and are particularly interested in young people, including initiatives involving families, carers and communities.

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation - The Foundation's art theme supports professional artists and UK based arts organisations, usually at an early research and development stage. Its focus is on the support of the making of original and imaginative new work, particularly that which may involve the commissioning of international artists or collaboration with international arts agencies.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation - Primary interests are in the UK's cultural life, education, the natural environment and enabling people who are disadvantaged to participate more fully in society

12. Conclusions

Reviewing the desk research, consultation and survey findings there are a range of issues to be addressed in relation to the potential development of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery:

Councillors responding to the survey believe ‘culture’ should be included in the EDDC Corporate Strategy. They commented that culture benefits local communities as it improves quality of life, provides educational opportunities and challenging experiences for young people; educates and gives pleasure and enjoyment to a wide range of residents and tourists to the area; culture brings many valuable things to the community and visitors; culture is important to most people.

They believe the Thelma Hulbert Gallery: brings people into the town and gives it an individual identity; gives local artists the chance to exhibit their artworks and local people and visitors the chance to enjoy them; it is an attraction for people who are interested in the arts.

They regard the Gallery as an asset to Honiton and East Devon and consequently that the whole of Elmfield House should be made available so it can expand its facilities and services.

Stakeholders responding to the Community Survey identified a range of issues that need to be addressed as part of the potential development of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery: young people in Honiton and surrounding rural areas have limited opportunities for positive out-of-school activities and the Gallery is playing a vital role by providing Masterpieces and hosting the Youth Panel; its work with schools has provided enriched learning experiences; the Gallery has insufficient space to develop linked exhibitions and learning programme; it’s a free activity for families and visitors; it provides access to wider audiences for local artists; it brings high quality contemporary arts exhibitions into the area.

Local businesses believe the Gallery is “good for the town, attracting visitors, which benefits everyone”, is an “extra addition to Honiton’s prestige and attractions”.

Case Studies of Galleries and Art Centres – indicate a range of positive strategies for developing contemporary visual arts facilities and services. For example: Brewery Arts Centre offers 12 incubator studios and workshop spaces to artist and makers; Stroud Valleys ArtSpace provides artist residences and co-ordinates the Open Studios for over 100 local artists; Devon Guild of Craftsmen is managed as a job share between the Creative and Finance Directors as it combines a gallery with a shop and café and so on.

13. Recommendations

We recommend that:

Cultural Hub

The Thelma Hulbert Gallery be expanded and developed into a contemporary gallery or 'cultural hub' for local communities and visitors to Devon and the SW region. If the whole of Elmfield House was made available this would allow the building to be redeveloped into flexible gallery and learning spaces, potentially with a shop and cafe, internet facilities and a sculpture garden.

EDDC look to working in partnership with Public Sector and Third Sector partners (eg. SWRDA and ACE SW, Co-Active and CDFIs) – to apply social enterprise models and lever in public investment, community funding and affordable finance, and actively seek out other new partnerships with key sector organisations.

EDDC takes legal advice on the preferred option re organisational structure. A phased approach towards organisational independence for the Gallery is recommended over a 12 to 18 month period.

If EDDC decided to move the Gallery towards organisational independence - a 25 year lease on a 'peppercorn rent' would endow the new organisation with a valuable asset and affordable premises. Alternatively, the Council could consider 'asset transfer' as a way to endow the new arts organisation with a valuable asset that would help lever in public funding and affordable finance for future development of facilities and programmes.

Staffing

A new post of Gallery Business Manager is created as a Grade 5 (3 days a week) alongside the Curator post, starting in Jan 09, which supports the marketing and commercial side of the organisation, leaving the Curator to concentrate on the curatorial and learning programme.

The Curator position extends to 4 days a week to ensure effective curation of the whole of Elmfield House, and management of volunteers.

The Gallery Administrative Assistant is given more hours (one extra day) in order to cover the extra administration caused by longer opening hours and extra activity (ie Friends scheme).

Learning

A gallery-based high quality Exhibition and Learning Programme for diverse audiences is developed, offering interpretation, cultural learning and creative skills for all.

Marketing

A commitment to a proper marketing budget is made, that delivers on key aims of increased visitor numbers (and therefore new income). Develop professional marketing resources ie an enhanced brochure and exhibition inserts, plus Friends membership leaflet and newsletter.

A new brand for the Thelma Hulbert is considered (ie change of name)

Permanent signage is developed and that changeable exhibition banners to be attached to the two main entrance routes to the Gallery. Public wayfinder signage is needed from Honiton High Street and in the adjacent shopping centre car park. Tourism or heritage road signage could be added on the main routes into Honiton from the M5 and A30.

Opening hours are increased in order to attract wider audiences into the Gallery.

A separate website is commissioned, to be maintained and updated by gallery staff.

Fundraising

Additional research should be commissioned into a new Business Plan for the Gallery and a fundraiser sought to cover the period from now until new post of Gallery Business manager is filled.

14. Budget Summary

1 Capital Budget

An initial investment of £ 68,391 is required from EDDC to develop the gallery space, a learning space, a shop and small café facilities, alongside conversion of external outbuildings.

Actual total capital cost is £ 136,782 but discussions with Arts Council England South West show interest in raising a proportion of capital funds for this project, **IF at least 50% of confirmed partnership funding** can be found.

Phase 3 and 4 of the capital requirement would be subject to raising sufficient funds from other sources.

Please see additional financial sheets.

2 Revenue Budget

Currently Thelma Hulbert Gallery budget from EDDC is £46,000. There is a further £7,000 income to Asset Management at EDDC from the registrars rent.

Projected revenue needed from EDDC from 2009/10 is £ 45, 235 moving to £ 28,835 in five years.

Attached: THG budget sheets including 3 years, 5 years and a proposed capital budget.

15. References

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