

The Observatory 'A Place to Look In, A Place to Look Out'

Design Competition Brief

1.0 Context

The Observatory - www.lookinlookout.org: will create a unique and exciting sculptural and architectural structure, which is directly accessible by the public. It will offer artists the opportunity to engage with a specific place, providing space and shelter to undertake their investigations and share with an audience. It will be an **inter-disciplinary project involving artists**, other professionals and students providing creative learning opportunities throughout all phases.

Vision:

- A focus for artists and audiences to experience the landscape
- A space for artists and audiences to encounter each other
- A place for artists to work and for audiences to see that work
- A point of interest and a reason for visitors to linger when the artist is not present

SPUD has extensive experience in delivering a major artist residency programme - **the Exbury Egg**: www.exburyegg.org. The Exbury Egg has attracted genuinely global interest in the creation of a high quality and unique structure which engages people. Most recently the Egg was **featured on George Clarke's Amazing Spaces on Channel 4 TV** in the UK.

The Observatory needs to intrigue people and act as **a beacon** that draws attention to a place - in this case **4 very special locations along southern England from the South Downs to the River Tamar**. The Observatory will need to be movable, flexible and reconfigurable. It will offer opportunities for a variety of artists (working in differing media) to create new work in response to the special locations.

Beginning in November 2014, the **two-year programme** will facilitate extensive opportunities for audiences to engage with the artists in an informal (non-gallery) setting. It will take art to **new audiences in places where they would not normally encounter art**, resulting in new encounters between artists, audiences and places. The Observatory will enable 12 artists to undertake close investigation covering geology, geography, heritage, social history, nature and environment, leading to interpretation and a richer perception of place, with the outcome being a piece of work(s) that can be shared with an audience.

At the end of its time in each location (6 months, 3 artists per location) there will be **an exhibition in the local area**. On culmination of the two year programme there will be a **major conference** in partnership with a UK University to unpack the shared learning from the programme.

The Observatory will provide **significant opportunities for artists and audiences to engage in new places outside conventional galleries and within unique landscapes**.

1.1 Entry requirements

This open competition aims to secure a range of concept design proposals for a new structure for artists to work from, to be known as The Observatory

We seek submissions that are innovative, robust, functional and flexible. The owners of the structure will be SPUD Group and the users will be 12 artists.

Each team must consist of at least one Artist and One Architect whether professionally qualified or still studying.

Evidence of effective collaboration between the different disciplines must be clearly demonstrated.

The competition is funded by Arts Council England, Winchester City Council, New Forest National Park Authority and South Downs National Park Authority and managed by SPUD Group and its programme partners.

The competition is open to all architects and artists based in England and students of architecture or fine art studying in the South East and South West Regions.

1.2 The competition will involve three stages:

Initial submissions

Submissions to be a maximum of:

2 x A2 boards to include drawings, sketches and cover the following:

1. Collaboration and Research
2. Development of Concept
3. Final Design

1 x A4 information description sheets/supplementary information.

Your display boards should incorporate as a minimum:

- Concept image of the observatory in at least one location
- Plan
- Section
- Elevations
- Any models should be included as images on the boards

A digital copy of the boards and information sheets is also required and **MUST** be emailed to: jointheadventure@SPUDgroup.org.uk as low resolution PDFs before the deadline.

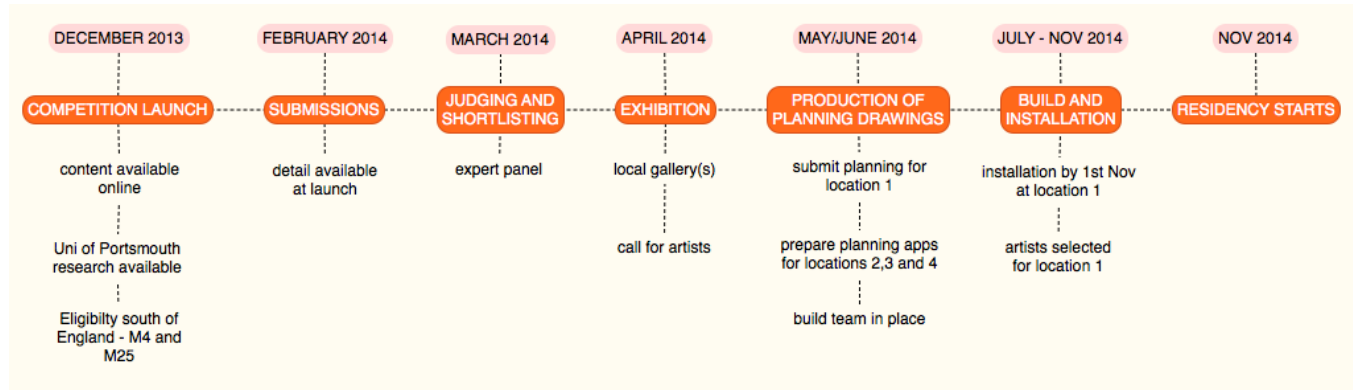
We will not accept CDs.

1.3 Programme

Initial information available: Wed 18th Dec 2013

Expressions of interest by: Thur 6 Feb 2014

Questions received no later than: Thur 6th Feb 2014
 Entries received by: Fri 28th Feb 2014
 Shortlist Agreed: Mon 10 March 2014
 Interviews week beginning: Mon 24th March 2014
Winner announced: Fri 28th March 2014



1.4 Judging

Shortlist

A maximum of five proposals will be short-listed.

Some further information / clarification may be requested by the Jury to develop and explain the proposal.

Final winner

The aim is that the outline/winning scheme will be developed into a full proposal ready for submission to the relevant planning authorities. Construction can be through the winning design team's existing contacts or we can work with them to realize the structure.

2.0 Costs

The capital cost of the Observatory structure will be a maximum of £50,000. This includes all consultant's fees. Planning fees and delivery to site are excluded and will be met from programme funds. The winning project team can, of course, supplement this fixed fee using in-kind support or sponsorship through their own contacts.

3.0 The Sites

- South Downs – probably on the site of Winchester Science Centre
- Lymington Salt Marshes and Sea Wall
- South Dorset Ridgeway – exact site to be confirmed
- River Tamar (Devon & Cornwall) - potential sites such as Royal William Yard, silted tidal areas and historic mining sites

See the appendices for further information on each location and aerial images of the proposed site locations. **Please note** that the detailed location of each site is still under-negotiation, therefore the

information provided in the appendices is indicative of the type of area we are anticipating locating the structure.

4.0 Design Issues

Observatory: a position or building that gives an extensive view.

Latin *observatorium*, from Latin *observat-* 'watched', from the verb *observare*

Observe: notice or perceive (something) and register it as being significant
take note of or detect (something) in the course of a scientific study

Latin *observare* 'to watch', from *ob-* 'towards' + *servare* 'attend to, look at'

The Observatory Should:

- Challenge the idea of an 'Observatory'
- Act as a 'beacon' to engage people
- Encourage people to question what can be observed: Micro, Macro, Up, Down
- Explore the concept of 'Look In - Look Out'. What does this mean to the artist and the public?
- Explore the notion of permeability and encourage public engagement with The Observatory, the Artist & their work.

The Observatory Must:

- Touch the ground lightly and ground fixings need to be removable.
- Provide lockable, waterproof storage.
- Fit onto one regular flat bed lorry or trailer in either parts or as a whole. The structure itself could be towable like a trailer from site to site.
- Have the provision for renewable energy to supplement the use of a laptop, camera charger.
- Be robust and with stand the environment and the possibility of vandalism
- Appropriate and flexible working space(s) that can accommodate Artists working in a range of media e.g. writer, sculptor, film maker, painter etc...

Items to Consider:

- Potential for on board non-drinking water or collection
- Be capable of future use, re-use or recycling at the end of the two-year residency program.
- The structure could make use of recycled materials
- The structure needs to withstand potentially extreme weather conditions over two years

5.0 Supplementary Documents:

Appendix information, site plans, photos, environmental information etc will be available to download online at: www.lookinlookout.org

- i. Site photographs and location information
- ii. Competition entry form

Your display boards should incorporate:

- Concept image of the observatory in at least one location
- Plan
- Section
- Elevations
- Any models should be included as images on the boards

6.0 Submissions

Please keep information submitted to the requirements set out above 1.2, in order to assist the judging panel and encourage efficient use of competitors' time and resources.

6.1 Expressions of Interest

Please register on the competition pages at the website prior to submitting: www.lookinlookout.org

Hard copy and digital submissions must be received by 12 noon on Friday 28th February, 2014

Mark Drury

The Observatory Competition

SPUD group

15 Angel Courtyard

High Street, Lymington, SO41 9A

You are advised to send all submissions Special Delivery to ensure they are signed for and received safely.

7.0 Selection criteria

7.1 Stage 1. Submissions

Quality of design boards

Clarity of A4 information sheets

Ability to respond to the vision, brief compliance and overall comprehension

Concept ideas

Innovation

Technical response

Sustainability approach

Research

Viability including brief reference to capital and maintenance costs

7.2 Stage 2. Shortlist

5 designs will be shortlisted from the entries received.

The five short-listed candidates may be requested to provide some additional information or clarification and a copy of their CV. They will be invited to a short interview to present and describe their proposals followed by questions from the Jury panel.

7.3 Stage 3. Winner

The final winning submission will be chosen. At the convenience of both parties, this winning team will then be invited to meet further with our team to assist in the development of the detail design and production. Student teams will be allocated a professional architecture practice to work with unless they have already identified one. The construction team will be procured by the winning team or alternatively provided by the project team.

7.4 Jury

The jury will consist of representatives from SPUD, funding partners and a high-profile architect and artist (final names to be confirmed).

8.0 Appendices

See project website: www.lookinlookout.org

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING NOTES:

The Observatory Project only has limited development funding at the time of this brief being made public. Applications are pending with major funders, but it is important to understand that this project will not be built unless additional funding is secured. SPUD Group is confident that funding will be secured, but all entries into the competition must be made with this understanding.

Important: The Observatory structure will remain the property of SPUD Group and all decisions in relation to its sale, reuse or decommissioning will be retained by SPUD. Any funds raised from the sale of the structure post-residencies will be held by SPUD and used for future programme activity. Intellectual copyright of the structure will remain with the project architects/artists and new structures created based on the original design will be in negotiation with the design team and SPUD Group.

Disclaimer: SPUD Group and its partners reserve the right to amend this brief, website content and entry conditions at any time. All decisions regarding entrants and winning designs will be final and at the discretion of SPUD Group and its partners.

Supported by:

