Mission Gallery
Feasibility Study Brief 2013
Introduction

Mission Gallery wishes to select an arts consultant with extensive experience of the arts and business planning of gallery development, and in particular lottery funded developments. Once selected through a competitive tender process the candidate will assist Mission Gallery in appointing a design team.

Mission Gallery Information

Background

Mission Gallery is one of the most inspiring spaces in Wales for the contemporary arts. It has developed a reputation for dynamic and distinctive programming, to present excellence across the visual arts, applied arts and craft, from across Wales and beyond. With exhibition space, craft space, learning resources, events, residency opportunities, Mission Gallery provides the local and wider community with opportunities to develop their understanding and knowledge of art.

Mission Gallery's craft space is renowned for its excellence and quality. Mission Gallery selects contemporary craft and design objects from both emerging and established makers that will enrich the lives of all, from the established collector to the first time buyer. An art led environment that captures and nurtures raw creative energy; profiling glass, ceramics, jewellery and textiles it is a place where the best of local, national and international makers and designers can be discovered.

Mission Gallery has always recognised Education as part of its core activity and is engaged in community arts, working on innovative and progressive projects with groups and communities across the county in Swansea and surrounding areas. Through education and outreach community projects Mission Gallery seeks to enrich people’s lives with a programme that deepens their knowledge, understanding, and love of contemporary visual art and craft, while also challenging received ideas of good practice by selecting artists that are introducing new ideas and new subjects.

The reputation that Mission Gallery has built with artists takes a long time to develop and is a testament to the esteem that Mission Gallery is held in by the artistic community in the UK. It is important to Mission Gallery to continue supporting Welsh artists and supporting them into an international career in addition to presenting artists from across the UK.
Context

St Nicholas Church was built in 1868 as a non-denominational Seaman’s Mission, built by Benjamin Bucknall. It functioned as a seaman’s mission throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century. The building is a Grade II listed structure. In 1977 Swansea Arts Workshop opened the building to the public as an Art Gallery, including exhibition and workshop space. It was run by volunteers as part of the Association of Artists & Designers (AADW). Mission Gallery is still governed by a voluntary board of directors, the management, programming and running is maintained by a small team of art-led staff and a dedicated team of volunteers.

Regeneration

Mission Gallery is in the poorest ward of Swansea, which is in turn one of the poorest wards of any local authority in the UK. Swansea also has a higher than average percentage of employees in the public sector, and with cuts from both the Welsh Government and Westminster unemployment is expected to rise. The other side of this is a local authority, with a Labour majority that has identified sustainability as a high priority, and sees the arts as part of its sustainable community objectives.

Community and Education

Mission Gallery has always had an ambitious and successful education and community programme, and a significant part of this programme is focused on children and disadvantaged groups. The Mission Gallery development has an emphasis on expanding the amount of space devoted to Education and through this being able to expand the educational activity that Mission Gallery offers.

Timeline

- 1992: Swansea Arts Workshop became an independent gallery.
- 2003: Became a revenue client of the ACW.
- 2008: Constituted as a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee.
- 2011: Receives an uplift in funding from ACW following 2010 Investment Review.
- 2012: Acquisition of 1st floor of St. Nicholas’ Church.
- 2012: A 30 year lease signed with CCS for the whole building.
- 2012: Received ACW funding for the remedial repair and development of the 1st floor into a dedicated education space.
Overview of Project
The Building

The building is a stone structure with a slate roof and is weatherproof. The local authority commissioned a schedule of condition report in 2008, but although this report included a visual examination of the outside of the building it concentrated on the inside of the building.

One of the important parts of the Feasibility Study will be for Mission Gallery to commission a full structural survey of the building as it is likely that the development will need to make interventions in all parts of the building.

An objective of the Gallery Development is to ensure that the whole building is restored. This is a key objective of the CCS and CADW partners. The building faces onto Gloucester Place on one side, and the back of the building looks out over the marina and has extensive views of the marina.

The Gloucester House (GH) residential home is on one side of the building. It has 49 flats and was built in 1998. The buildings share a pathway, and the garden that is at the back of the Mission Gallery is shared with Gloucester House, with approval for specific use of the garden given by GH. CCS own GH and its garden, which Mission Gallery does not have a lease on. One of the objectives of the Feasibility Study is for Mission Gallery to obtain this lease, and to make arrangements within this lease that satisfy GH. This will enable Mission Gallery to use the garden as an outside exhibition and education space.

The Faces of the Gallery

Although MG is in a prominent position on the Gloucester Place and edge of the marina, it is still possible for people to walk past the front of the gallery and not know what is happening inside. Surveys undertaken by Mission Gallery have shown that for some people there is still a sense of mystery about what is happening in the building. It is an objective of the development for Mission Gallery to become more welcoming, and although part of this work can be done through marketing, the physical development can play a part in making Mission Gallery more prominent and more welcoming.

Glass Doors were added to the front of the gallery in the 1990’s and this has helped to make the inside of the gallery visible. Expanding this visibility should be looked at in the Feasibility Study, either by altering these doors, or by extending the glazed area on the front of the gallery. Any increase in the amount of glazing will need to be agreed with the planning authorities, as this is a Grade II listed building.

We therefore want the FS to examine the ways that the activities in the building can be advertised. This may be through different signage, the positioning and location of present signage, or some other means.
Vision

Mission Gallery has a special place in the history of Swansea. For many years the Gallery was confined to the ground floor of the building but now that Mission Gallery has a long lease on the whole building, we want to make it a special place for the arts in Swansea and for the whole of Wales. We want to do this by both preserving and improving an important building, and by making it a place for 21st century art.

The core structure of the building is in good condition and any work we do on the structure will be integrated with the artistic improvements to the building. The plan is to completely reconfigure the internal layout of the building to a high design standard, and to put an emphasis on sustainable design.

The ground floor is currently an exhibition space, shop and offices, and we plan to improve these exhibition spaces, and retail area, and add further exhibition spaces, by making flexible spaces on the first floor that can be used for both exhibitions and education. These spaces will be designed to the highest exhibition standard with walls and flooring to a very high specification, but will retain the unique sense of place that makes Mission Gallery so special. All the public areas will be fully accessible to both the able bodied and disabled, and include a sound and audio loop.

All the exhibition spaces will have high quality lighting, and power supply. The education spaces will have education studios, and a fully equipped resource area. This will enable Mission Gallery to double the size of its display and activity space.

Within the reconfiguring of the whole gallery there is a need to provide fully accessible public toilets; improved office spaces, including a meeting room; expand the storage space on site with an examination of off site storage for larger items.

More flexible and effective use of the first floor is essential; currently it is used for both exhibitions, education, meetings, residencies and this needs to be maintained/resolved. Additionally, better access into gallery for loading and parking is required and the Feasibility Brief should look at new access points to the gallery for delivery. Although it has been decided that the brief will not include a café, Mission Gallery is renowned as a meeting place for artists and the public and we want to encourage this by providing a gallery that can be used as a community space. Another part of the brief is to create a designated bookshop, and to expand the retail area.

Along with all the improvements that will be visible to the public, we also need to improve the back of house facilities. This includes updating the heating system, improving the security system, and installing CCTV. Creating a networked telephone system and improved IT infrastructure in all spaces, including a computerised till in the retail area.

Mission Gallery had a tower earlier on its life, and it would be worth exploring whether a tower as part of the lift and stairs complex would provide a statement and also more space. There have been suggestions that the gallery has a basement, or even a tunnel beneath the ground floor; and although these may be myths we want to explore all possible options in the feasibility study so we will ask the structural survey to investigate.

Although it is possible to undertake all of this work within the existing building, in order to have a larger lift and stairwell, we would like to extend the back of the building, and also make a garden. The garden will be used as an outside exhibition space. This land is owned by the City and County of Swansea (CCS) and discussions are taking place with CCS to enable this extension. The Feasibility Study will be expected to resolve this question.

In addition to the work on the main Mission Gallery site there is a possibility of expanding the working relationship with Swansea Studios so that in addition to the existing artists studio leased by Mission Gallery, that the other studios will be managed by Mission Gallery to create a residency complex. An examination of this will form part of the Feasibility Study.

Sustainability

It is a requirement that the proposals should create an energy efficient building. Throughout the whole of the design there should be an emphasis on sustainable design. The building should ultimately conform to the environmental rating systems assessed by BREEAM to ‘very good’ standard.
The Role of the Arts Consultant

Following the appointment, Mission Gallery will expect them to oversee the recruitment, advertising etc, for its design team. This includes assisting with all administration concerning advertisements, applications and interviews.

As Mission Gallery is not part of a local authority and does not have access to the benefits this would bring, The arts & business consultant would be expected to write a five year business plan; develop a fundraising strategy and identify new partnerships.

The consultant will offer support to the Director and Board of Mission Gallery during the process

Negotiating and working in partnership with the City and County of Swansea, will play a large part in the consultants role. Mission Gallery is a Grade 2 listed building, leased from the local authority, therefore permissions will need to be sought. Experience and awareness of local authority policy, CADW, Welsh Government and European Funding systems are therefore essential.

The arts consultant will need a thorough knowledge of design and architecture, combined with business knowledge. Financial support and extensive experience of budget control, will be an important role, as will the assurance that the successful candidate is capable of interpreting Mission Gallery’s vision and fully understand its ethos and philosophy. This includes understanding the role of Mission Gallery’s Board of Directors, the relationship with the Arts Council of Wales, and the business planning for the development of the Mission Gallery.

What the Feasibility Study will require

- Drafting a new Business Plan. This should cover the two year build, plus three year period post opening. It must clearly indicate how the building proposals will impact on the organisation as it moves forward with the development.

- Advice should be given on the most appropriate management structure for the gallery development and identify any additional areas of expertise that will be required to undertake the detailed design and building.

- Assist Mission Gallery to work on partnership agreements with existing partners and identify new partnerships and sources of funding.

- Determine how the project will meet the objectives of Mission Gallery, ACW and CCS and any other partners.

- The Building proposals and costs to be identified. With the plans developed to the concept stage (equivalent to RIBA Stage C) Costs for the whole project identified having taken account of any surveys commissioned during feasibility.

- Examine the financial viability of the proposals and identify the revenue implications.

- The proposals should seek to work with the existing staff levels wherever possible and if an increase in staff is suggested, how this might be funded. It should be clearly identified why this member of staff is required.

- Examine the increase in trading opportunities that the proposals provide and ensure that trading opportunities are increased wherever possible and identify additional revenue funding partners where this is possible.

- Maximum the benefits to the public by seeking to meet local authority, Welsh Government and Arts Council objectives.

- Identify how the proposals compliment existing partners in the region and in particular ensure that the proposals maximise the partnership with NWM and CSA.

- Ensure that the design team provide all that is required to complete the Feasibility Study

- Ensure appropriate governance procedures are in place, including a board skills audit
Funding Partners

The Arts Council of Wales is likely to be the major funding partner for the development, subject to application.

We have identified the City and County of Swansea (CCS) as a funding partner and we have entered into some preliminary discussions with them. We will expect the consultants to work with us to explore with CCS on funding as part of the Feasibility Study.

We have also identified CADW as a partner as the Mission Gallery is a building of historic importance, and CADW have an Historic Buildings Grant scheme. We will expect the consultants to work with us on building a partnership with CADW during Feasibility.

Other funding partners are likely to be the National Churches Fund, European Regional Development Fund, and The Welsh Government Community Facilities Grant. We will expect the arts and business consultant to explore this further. A fundraising strategy should be developed as part of the process, to explore these and other potential partners.

The family of Jane Phillips (First Director of Mission Gallery) have made a written commitment to provide a contribution to the project via the Jane Phillips Award. In the first instance this will be by providing matching funding of almost £10,000 for the Feasibility Study. We will expect the consultants to liaise as appropriately with the Jane Phillips Award and its representatives.

Steering Group

Mission Gallery has formed a Steering Group (below), to manage the development. Their views will be relayed to the consultants by the Mission Gallery Director.

- Director, Mission Gallery
- Chairman, Mission Gallery Board of Directors
- Business & Communications Manager, Mission Gallery
- ACW representative
- Chair of Jane Phillips Award
- City & County of Swansea Representative

Key milestones for the Feasibility Study

- Interim report
- Draft report
- Final Draft report
- Finished report

Important Dates

- Submission deadline: Friday 21st June 2013 at Noon
- Shortlisting Friday 28th June 2013
- Interviews: Monday 8th July 2013
- Final report by Friday 11th October 2013
Report Format

A proposal on no more than 2 pages of A4 and a CV on no more than 2 pages of A4. Making in total a submission of 4 pages of A4 with the text printed on one side only, no smaller than 10 point. No other material should be submitted.

Copies of the report will be required in three formats; by email (PDF attachment); a disk/USB flash drive and 6 hard copies and should be sent to:

Amanda Roderick
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Payment Schedule

- 20% following appointment
- 40% on completion of the interim report
- 40% on completion of Finished Report

All fees are inclusive of VAT

Documentation Available

- Mission Gallery Business Plan
- Schedule of Condition Report
- Images of Mission Gallery on Website

The Feasibility Study will be a competitive tendering process, commissioned by Mission Gallery.