

## Open Call for Expressions of Interest



Main studio building and farmhouse from front of the site

Wysing Arts Centre invites expressions of interest from architects to re-design aspects of our existing buildings to:

- Make improvements to our gallery
- Develop a flexible performance space
- Develop a flexible production space
- Make access improvements across the site
- Put environmental sustainability at the centre of our capital plans

Wysing Arts Centre is a pioneering workplace for artists. Established in 1989 and celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2019, Wysing's 11 acre site in rural Cambridgeshire encompasses artist studios, a large gallery, a music recording studio, educational and project spaces, onsite accommodation, ceramics facilities, and outdoor space with sculpture.

Through its innovative work, Wysing influences the development of the visual arts sector in the UK and beyond. As a respected and well-connected institution operating outside the usual gallery system and urban context, Wysing is uniquely positioned to develop programmes that provide opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and ideas, and which reflect on the role of art, artists, and arts organisations in society; acting as a testing ground for new ideas.

Wysing is funded by Arts Council England through their National Portfolio and is a member of a number of national networks, including the Plus Tate network.

We want our site and buildings to reflect the ambition and scope of Wysing's pioneering and radical programming. In addition, we want our site and buildings to be accessible, user friendly, and energy efficient. We want to make the best use of what we already have to carry out a cost-effective refurbishment at a total budget, including design, consultancy and build costs, of £350,000 - £500,000 (dependent on fundraising outcomes).

### **Site**

Wysing is located on 11 acres of farmland, consisting mainly of grassland, fruit and other trees. It has been managed sustainably to allow areas to remain wild, and support wildlife. There are ten separate buildings on the site, including one artist-built structure. The buildings are clustered into one third of the overall site and create a campus-like feel. Due to the nature of Wysing, with some buildings designated as private studios and others, including reception, public facing, it can be confusing for new visitors to navigate. There are two graveled car parking areas. Some areas of the site are unpaved and unlit.

### **Current Buildings**

Wysing is set on 11 acres of land that was previously a dairy farm. The site includes the original timbered farmhouse, aspects of which date back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A number of farm buildings have been converted into artists' studios alongside new studio buildings which have been added more recently.

For these capital improvements, we would like to focus on:

#### *Gallery*

The gallery is a standard farm building with steel frame and cladding. It has wooden floors and internal walls have been added to over the years. It currently has no insulation. The gallery needs to be fully refurbished including walls, flooring, a new heating system and storage area. A maintenance report for the gallery recommends roof repairs take place within the next year, as well as a replacement heating system.

#### *Stable block*

The stable block is a converted farm building (formerly stables). It is a steel structure with cinder block interior walls. The windows and door frames are wooden and not energy efficient. The stable block currently includes an office, 3 artist studios, 3 toilets, equipment storage, a fully functioning catering kitchen, and a large 'Window Room' with seating. The Window Room has previously operated as a café and there is scope to open up the Window Room to develop a social hot-desking space with small café area, or a flexible performance, exhibiting, or making space. In addition, there is scope to re-design the interior of the stable block to improve office space, studios and storage, and create accessible toilets.

#### *Main Studio Building*

The main studio building was designed by Hawkins\Brown architects and completed in 2008. It includes 6 artist studios, 1 live/work studio, a flexible/education/learning space, 2 accessible toilets and 1 toilet. We would like to create a fully accessible live/work studio whether through converting the current live/work space, or by adapting an existing studio or office. We would also like to address storage in the flexible/education/learning space.

### *Reception*

The reception was designed by Hawkins\Brown architects and completed in 2008. It leads to the gallery. It is a large space with reception desk, 1 toilet and 1 accessible toilet, a small kitchen and a large seating area. There is scope to re-design this space to potentially include a second gallery, or a café.

### *Top Barn*

The top barn is a converted farm building that houses the recording studio and live room, and 3 further artist studios. The recording studio is not fully accessible which we would like to address.

### *Ceramics Studio*

The ceramics studio is an adapted farm building made of cinderblock. It also houses equipment and is used for storage overflow. We are open to discussions about whether this space can be refurbished to include a more expanded workshop/making space.

### *Tractor Shed*

The tractor shed is a disused farm building currently acting as storage. As part of capital works we would like to demolish it and replace with another storage solution.

## **Other Buildings**

### *Straw Bale Studios*

The straw bale studios building was a self-build completed in 2007. It has a steel frame, concrete footing and the walls are straw bales and lime render.

### *Wysing Grange Farmhouse (Grade II Listed)*

Wysing's onsite farmhouse is used throughout the year for artist residencies and commercial hires. 6 bedroomed house with integral 1 bedroomed flat.

### *Amphis*

A structure built by artists Folke Kobberling and Martin Kaltwasser with the support of volunteers and with re-cycled donated materials.

## **Maintenance**

In 2019 we commissioned a maintenance report from Savills that made a number of recommendations of works to be addressed over the forthcoming ten years. We would like to include some of these works within the scope of this programme of work, in particular:

- Repairs to the roof of the gallery, replacement floor and replacement heating system/boiler
- Replacement roof and gutters for the stable block
- Replacement of window and door glazing for the stable block

## **Accessibility**

We commissioned an Access Audit from Goss Consultants in 2019. We would like to include some of these recommendations within the scope of this programme of work, in particular:

- A fully accessible live/work studio provision, which includes a wheel-in shower wet room, accessible kitchen and bedroom facilities
- Refurbishment of toilets across the site to meet accessibility standards
- Widened doorways to the recording studio to meet accessibility standards
- An induction loop facility for Reception and Gallery
- Improvements to walkways (re-surfacing), stairs (step-nosing and handrails), and site signage to improve accessibility

## **Process**

Wysing's board of Trustees formed a working group in November 2018 to focus on site improvements. The group are taking the lead on site development and fundraising in collaboration with Wysing's senior management team. The group have commissioned a report on the site buildings and an access report. They also instigated a public consultation process to solicit views on how Wysing's site should be developed. The consultation and reports have shaped this brief.

We now invite expressions of interest from architects interested in working with the site strategy group and wider Wysing team to address the refurbishment of the site and buildings. Expressions of interest from architects should include:

- Information on why you want to work with us.
- Information on your ethos as a practice, including your approach to sustainability.
- Examples of your previous work, at a similar scale.

Wysing's Director, Donna Lynas, is available for an informal conversation about our plans and ambitions for the site on 01954 718881 and [donna.lynas@wysingartscentre.org](mailto:donna.lynas@wysingartscentre.org)

## **Open Days**

If you would like to join a site tour and Q&A session with Wysing staff, please book onto one of our open days on 5 December, 19 December or 9 January. To book, click [here](#).

## **Timeline**

The deadline for expressions of interest is midnight on 12 January 2020. Following the open call we aim to invite 4-5 practices for interview in late January with one practice being selected to work up costed plans by early March. Wysing will be making an application to Arts Council England's Small Scale Capital programme to fund the work, alongside applications to other Trusts and Foundations, in April 2020.

## **Funding**

We hope to have sufficient funds raised to begin work in the autumn of 2020. We envisage planning for a phased approach so that we can prioritise initial works and continue to fundraise during the first phase of building work. If you are interested in supporting our capital plans, please email Mary Cork, Head of Development on [mary.cork@wysingartscentre.org](mailto:mary.cork@wysingartscentre.org) or call 01954 718881.





Entrance and Reception



Stableblock, reception and main studio building



Wysing Grange farmhouse





Window room



Open studio



Reception



Gallery



Gallery





Gallery



Amphis





Amphis



Wysing main buildings, from the air