



October 2025

1.0 Overview

The Arthouse Partnership is inviting tenders from a suitably qualified Activity, Engagement and Interpretation Plan Consultant for a repair and renovation project at the Partnership's home – the old Deptford Central Library. The project successfully achieved a Development Phase grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (Heritage Fund) and the Partnership is now seeking support from a Design Team who will assist it in the future visioning of the site, alongside a wider consultant team.

The appointment is for the Development stage, although we may need further support for Interpretation in Delivery. As such the contract will include an option to extend it after the end of the Development Phase (RIBA Stage 3). This is to allow the Partnership to submit a second-round application to the Heritage Fund to secure the funds required for the capital works.

The Consultant is required to review existing documentation and work in consultation with the Partnership and other appointed professionals – including the Architect Design Team, Cost Consultant, Business Plan Consultant, Fundraising Consultant and Project Manager – in order to develop the proposals.

We anticipate that these services will require team with expertise covering Community Engagement, Activity and Interpretation Planning. The consultants are required to liaise closely to achieve deliverables.

The following surveys/ information have been undertaken:

- Condition Report
- Measured Survey
- Asbestos Survey
- Access Review

Additional survey/investigation work is required.

Skills and Experience Required

- Experience of working on capital Heritage Fund schemes of similar scale
- Experience of working with not for profit/ volunteer-led/ community-focused organisations
- Ability to work collaboratively in a timely way, assimilating a wide range of information such that it can be incorporated into a coherent and compelling vision
- Experience of working with charitable organisations and reporting to a Board of Trustees, and a range of community stakeholders
- Experience of preparing Activity and Interpretation Plans in line with Heritage Fund guidance

Fee

Please provide a fee and breakdown for each area and stage of work. The current budget for this work is £29,400 but please submit a tender in line with what you believe is required.

2.0 About the Project

Who we are

The South East Arts London (charity number: 1162739) and Lewisham Art House Limited (Registered Society, 28058R) partnership have secured major funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver its ambitious plans to repair and renew the Carnegie Grade II-listed Old Deptford Library (ODL).

The £368,000 development grant was awarded to develop its “Creativity, Access and Cooperation: A future for the Arthouse partnership at the Old Deptford Library” project which will reinvigorate and celebrate the ODL. The project will maintain and extend its current function as a community arts centre and artists’ studios – the ‘Arthouse’ – by building on our heritage of, and commitment to, creativity, access and cooperation. The project will launch a new chapter for the building and its contemporary arts and community programme.

This is a conservation-led building project, which will improve our heritage management through training and increased staffing, deliver powerful community arts and heritage programming, increase visibility on the street and through communications, and loudly celebrate our building and its story.

By improving spaces and facilities for artists and the public, embedding the building and programme firmly into the townscape and local area, enhancing our work with local residents and partners and taking full advantage of the opportunity to take on a long- term lease for the ODL, we will develop a sustainable operating model that both protects our built heritage and our unique history of cooperation.

Over the next 18 months or so, we will develop detailed plans to unlock a further £2.8M from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and secure match funding of £1.4M.

The project is being delivered through the Lewisham Art House (LAH) and South East Arts London (SEAL) partnership.

LAH is an artist-led cooperative, established in 1992. Since March 1994 it has occupied the Old Deptford Library, registering it as an Asset of Community Value.

Within it, LAH has 46 artists’ studios, a gallery and a workshop, and delivers a programme of artist development, education and outreach, open house heritage events, and contemporary visual arts and music events/workshops. It works in partnership with a range of community/creative partners including Goldsmiths College, Deptford X, Youth Build, Heart n Soul and Brockley Max.

SEAL, the charity, was established in 2014 by LAH in order to take on a full repairing lease on the Old Deptford Library and to control the extent of their liability for future repairs. SEAL consists of seven board members, including one “resident artist member” which ensures connection and communication between the two bodies. Both parties are supported by the work of the General Manager who acts for both.

The ODL was designed by the architect Sir Alfred Brumwell Thomas, whose previous commissions included Belfast’s City Hall and Woolwich town hall. It opened on 18 July 1914. It is a grand building in the baroque revival style, with façades of Berkshire bricks, with porticos, entablature and balustrade in Portland stone. It has three floors and a footprint of c.1440m².

The external and interior condition is poor with major repairs required to the roof and external elevations, and to original features including timber parquet, marble staircase and foyer, book lift, original oak shelving, and treatment/repairs of timber doors and Morris & Co. windows. The walls also require replastering/painting.

The parties' joint aims are to:

- Secure the Lease in order to repair and renew the ODL; preserving it for future generations, and making it function better for artists and communities within the borough of Lewisham and its environments.
- Protect, adapt and strengthen the Cooperative Society/Artist Membership model which has proven to have significant impact on local communities, building management and artist development, and to become more resilient in the future.
- Commission external advisers to assist the Parties in their adaptation and renewal plans, including architects, consultants with expertise in conservation, business and activity planning within the local environment/relevant sector.
- Plan programmes that renew LAH's objectives for social/community/art impact and access, and enable those objectives to be realised.
- Collaborate on fundraising activities and applications required to deliver these objectives.
- Develop a business model which is able to generate sufficient income to cover all future maintenance and repair costs.

The Works

SEAL and LAH will repair and renew the Grade II-listed ODL, maintaining and extending its current function as a community arts centre.

This is a conservation-led building project improving spaces and facilities for artists and the public, embedding the building and programme firmly into the townscape and local area, enhancing our work with local residents and partners and taking full advantage of the opportunity to take on a long-term lease for the ODL. We will develop a sustainable operating model that both protects our built heritage and our unique history of cooperation.

a) Repair & renew the Grade II Old Deptford Library on Lewisham Way

The ODL is in a poor state of repair. This project focuses on immediate repairs, with the bulk of funds allocated to the roof. Other repairs include external elevations, timber window/door repairs, dealing with damp, & internal repairs/finishing/floors.

With regards to new works, these focus on facility upgrades and new greening and access works at both the front and rear. Our aim is to create a more impactful and welcoming arrival to the ODL, and to inspire new vision for Lewisham Way creating an improved connection between two town centres – New Cross and Lewisham.

b) Upgrade public facilities & spaces

Currently facilities, heating and lighting are in a poor condition (or non-existent). This project seeks to address this by installing new services, complete reordering of the principal public areas (gallery and community workshop space), with improved toilet and kitchen facilities. It will use the original configuration (the former News and Periodical Rooms) to inform the new layout so that the heritage can be better understood. It will also install new studio space partitions for artists that better align with the historic building whilst not losing the potential for income and creativity.

c) Create & equip new shared/open-access areas

At present, access for the general public is limited to the front ground floor spaces. Through this project, we want to open access to other areas. This will include the creation of a new reception/open-access area (where the original reception desk was within the Lending Library) which will be open to the wider community and provide views into artist studios at ground level.

d) Digitise our archive to enable new heritage-inspired programming

Our archive is rich and tells our heritage story. We want to increase access, through digitisation/interpretation, and use it to inspire new programming including a “Discuss and Disseminate” series of activities and events.

e) The heritage-inspired community arts commissions, in collaboration with targeted communities and other stakeholders.

“The Lewisham Arthouse has been an amazing and accessible opportunity for Heart n Soul’s young learning disabled and autistic artists...These works have gone on to be shown and used as part of the Imagine Children’s Festival at The Southbank centre.”

We want our heritage story to inspire new community arts/engagement experiences, and we want to support our artists and partners to help us with this. This project therefore includes funding for a series of heritage-inspired community arts commissions. The briefs would ask artists to respond in collaboration with targeted communities, to our heritage themes of 1) A struggle for space: A public good; 2) Pioneers: Open-Access, “Extra-Mural” & Cooperative; 3) Reclaim & Resist: The interconnection of arts and civic movements.

Timetable

The timetable for the project as a whole is anticipated as follows:

Kick Off Meeting	December 2025
RIBA Stage 2 Presentation	May 2026
RIBA Stage 3 Presentation	November 2026
Dev Phase: Review Meeting	December 2026
Dev Phase: Stage 2 Deadline	February 2027
Del Phase: Capital Works start	June 2028
Del Phase: Completion date	May 2029

Supporting Documents

The following documents are issued with this Brief:

- Sketch/Design proposals
- Statement of Need
- Access Review
- Programme

3.0 Schedule of Service

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The Activity and Interpretation Consultant is required to make sure that the deliverables are coordinated.
- 3.1.2 Consultation with stakeholders to inform deliverables should be approached by the wider consultant team jointly to avoid repetition and make the best use of consultant events and opportunities.
- 3.1.3 It is essential that the Activity and Interpretation Plans are put together in close partnership with the Client Team to instill ownership and buy-in to the plan across the organisation.
- 3.1.4 Deliverables are to be completed by the end of RIBA 3 as per the programme with draft documents issued for RIBA 2.

3.2 Activity and Engagement

The role of the Consultant will be to work with the Client to assimilate all of the required information, undertake detailed and informed analysis, and produce an Activity Plan of the highest quality that meets both the needs of the visitors and participants, as well as the specific learning and participation requirements of the NLHF.

Specifically, the Consultant will be required to:

- 3.2.1 Lead the activities and programming planning in liaison with existing Trustees and staff. This will include pre and post opening activities over a five year period.
- 3.2.2 Liaise with the project team to ensure all necessary information is available to contribute to the Activity Plan and identify the key gaps in information.
- 3.2.3 Review and analyse the strategic and policy context in relation to the Client's audiences and visitors.
- 3.2.4 Develop a detailed profile of the previous key user and visitor groups.
- 3.2.5 Develop target audiences in relation to activities.
- 3.2.6 Undertake a full and detailed analysis of each target audience proposed, profiling the specific learning and participation needs of each.
- 3.2.7 Explore and analyse the barriers to engagement, for example financial factors, cultural and attitudinal factors, environmental factors, interpretation, interactivity, capacity issues etc.
- 3.2.8 Identify the key delivery and strategic partners related to each proposed target audience.
- 3.2.9 Undertake a full and detailed analysis of each target audience proposed, profiling the specific learning and participation needs of each.
- 3.2.10 Feed into the development of the capital works any requirements of the Activity Plan.
- 3.2.11 Review all qualitative and quantitative information available on the organisation's existing users and visitors and identify the key themes in terms of, for example, enjoyment, relevance of activity, likelihood for recommendation, etc.
- 3.2.12 Review the current schools market for the organisation, current gaps in provision, and the future potential.
- 3.2.13 Identify any gaps in consultation information available and coordinate a consultation drive to target underrepresented audiences.
- 3.2.14 Review data to assess visitor and participants' levels of engagement within programming.
- 3.2.15 Work with the Client team to establish a number of pilot projects focused on removing any identified barriers to learning and participation. Develop a series of detailed case studies assessing the outcomes of these.
- 3.2.16 Review and analyse the opportunities for the identified audiences, particularly in terms of formal and informal learning, volunteering, interpretation on site and online, outreach work, training and partnerships.
- 3.2.17 Work with the client team to develop the Activity Plan, identifying the overarching aims and objectives.

- 3.2.18 Work with the organisation's team to identify each specific activity that the organisation plans to offer to its target audiences.
- 3.2.19 Set out in detail how the proposed activities link directly to the needs of the identified target audiences. Explore, for example – the rationale for the activity / what the audience needs / what potential barriers to learning and participation would be / what activities will be provided to overcome these barriers / measures for success.
- 3.2.20 Identify the specific evaluation measures to be put in place to effectively measure success, including a series of quantitative and qualitative targets.
- 3.2.21 Undertake a benefits analysis of the Activity Plan, assessing the potential short and long term benefits against the proposed targets.
- 3.2.22 Follow Activity plan good practice guidance (see NLHF website).
- 3.2.23 Provide short monthly reports to the Project Manager to update on progress including tasks achieved that month, tasks to be achieved next month, information issued, information required and key risks.
- 3.2.24 Attend workstream meetings to discuss activity and interpretation (between fortnightly and monthly).
- 3.2.25 Present proposals to the client and key stakeholders (e.g. funders) to obtain approval to the activity proposals at the end of key stages.
- 3.2.26 Recommend the appointment of external experts and utilise in-house expertise as appropriate to provide specialist subject advice as and when necessary.
- 3.2.27 Write the briefs or job descriptions required for any work to be carried out in relation to the Activity Plan which are to be submitted as part of the NLHF Delivery Phase application.
- 3.2.28 Assist the Project Manager in reviewing the project programme and risk register at regular intervals.
- 3.2.29 Ensure that Interpretation Strategy is integrated and joined up with the Activity Plan and to identify how audiences can be involved in co-created elements of the interpretation as part of the Activity Plan.
- 3.2.30 Present to Project Board on the findings of their research and consultation during the planning of the scheme and development of activities.
- 3.2.31 Provide an NLHF Development Phase Review Presentation.
- 3.2.32 Attend other meetings and workshops as required.
- 3.2.33 Prepare a good draft Activity Plan for the end of RIBA 2.
- 3.2.34 Coordinate with the development of the Evaluation Plan.
- 3.2.35 Undertake a full assessment of the specific costs associated with the development and delivery of the activities proposed in the Activity Plan, particularly in terms of staff, training, volunteers, equipment and materials, recruitment, evaluation and consultation. Ensure the costs assigned here are fully aligned with the Financial Plan set out in the Business Plan.
- 3.2.36 Work with the client's team to develop a highly detailed, timed Action Plan with key milestones for delivery, including: details of the activity, target audience, benefits for people (preferably using the 'Inspiring Learning for All' Framework generic learning outcomes (GLOs), resources required, costs in project budget, timetable, measures of success, methods of evaluation and ways each activity meets the NLHF Learning and Participation aims.
- 3.2.37 Advise the Client team on management and organisation issues related to the Activity Plan.
- 3.2.38 Advise the Client team on dissemination techniques and sharing of best practice related to the Activity Plan.
- 3.2.39 Ensure the Activity Plan aligns to and fully complements the Business Plan.
- 3.2.40 Feed into the overall project cashflow in relation to Activity costs
- 3.2.41 Deliver a consultation programme which identifies:
 - Target audiences' learning and participation needs, and the most appropriate types of activity for each audience (includes existing and new target audiences).
 - Barriers to engagement for all target audiences.
 - Suggestions to overcome those barriers.
 - Innovative proposals for activity which meet the needs and preferences of target audiences.

3.3 Interpretation

- 3.3.1 Consultant is required to develop an Interpretation Plan to identify:
- What we want the interpretation to achieve.
 - Target audiences, and how they can be involved and participate in the creation of the interpretation.
 - Themes and topics - the messages and subjects to be communicated.
 - Objectives - what we specifically want people to experience, feel, learn and do as a result of the interpretation.
 - Carry out testing of interpretative themes with community/potential audience groups.
 - Key learning outcomes for each element of interpretation.
- 3.3.2 Review existing research/ information into the archive.
- 3.3.3 Identify gaps in the information, with the support of volunteers, who you will need to direct, to carry out further research into key themes and topics to support the development of the Interpretation Plan.
- 3.3.4 Develop a design brief for each element of interpretation.
- 3.3.5 Develop a framework for research which needs to be carried out in order to inform individual design briefs
- 3.3.6 Contribute to the appraisal of the concept of the overall visitor experience.
- 3.3.7 Provide short monthly report to the Project Manager to update on progress including tasks achieved that month, tasks to be achieved next month, information issued, information required and key risks.
- 3.3.8 Present proposals to the client to obtain approval to the interpretive proposals at the end of key stages.
- 3.3.9 Support the Client to overcome and resolve any objections from wider stakeholders.
- 3.3.10 Support the Client, Project Manager in any negotiations required with the wider stakeholders.
- 3.3.11 Present proposals at the Development Phase Review with NLHF.
- 3.3.12 Recommend the appointment of external experts and utilise in-house expertise as appropriate to provide specialist subject advice as and when necessary.
- 3.3.13 Write the briefs or job descriptions required for any work to be carried out in relation to the Interpretation Planning and content development e.g. research, picture research.
- 3.3.14 Assist the Project Manager in reviewing the project programme and risk register at regular intervals.
- 3.3.15 Work with the Activity Planning Consultant to ensure that Interpretation Strategy is integrated and joined up with the Activity Plan.
- 3.3.16 Liaise with the project team to ensure all necessary information is available to contribute to the Interpretation Plan and identify the key gaps in information.
- 3.3.17 Liaise closely with the Client to develop/work with existing focus groups and community engagement strategy to consultant on the Interpretation.
- 3.3.18 Identify any existing gaps in consultation information available and design and help coordinate a consultation programme to target underrepresented audiences.
- 3.3.19 Provide short monthly summaries to the Project Manager to update on progress including information required and key risks.
- 3.3.20 Prepare a full draft Interpretation Plan ready for the Development Review with NLHF and then update following feedback. The date of this is yet to be determined but it should be expected that this will be at the end of RIBA 2.
- 3.3.21 Coordinate with the development of the Evaluation Plan.
- 3.3.22 We are not yet sure what format the interpretation will take (ie. Physical, digital, programming, artist commission) but this consultant will need to write briefs for whatever is decided.