

Katy Mann  
Head of HS2 Special Projects  
Economy, Regeneration & Investment  
London Borough of Camden



## Invitation to Review Stanhope St opportunity with Camden Council

### Our understanding of your requirement

Camden Council have three residential blocks on Stanhope Street NW1. All three blocks are subject to the decant of existing residents due to the impact of the adjacent HS2 development site.

The properties are currently regarded as unfit for residential occupation but will come with considerable cost and time management, notwithstanding the impact of vacant building on the wider area once they are completely decanted. To this end the council have been exploring other uses. The proactive decision was made to convert a number of residential flats into Class E, commercial workspace under a pilot scheme, which they would make available to support the local creative and charity sector. To manage the property and help facilitate this change, the council contracted Bow Arts, an experienced charity in property management and community and creative facilitation, to deliver the pilot creative workspace scheme.

The pilot consisted of 17 flats in Langdale House, ranging from Studio flats up to 3 bed properties. The council re-listed the flats from residential to E Class making them available to be used exclusively as affordable creative workspace. The Studios have permitted use between 8am – 8pm seven days a week. Affordability and access for local residents is key for the council, Bow Arts therefore agreed to cover all its management and facilitation costs through a capped rent system rather than a recharge to the Council, the Council in turn has agreed to offer all the new tenants a 100% Business Rates subsidy on the properties. Each flat will contribute a £50pcm Service Charge to Camden Council for the upkeep of the overall buildings and services. The pilot project -created a total of 39 affordable workspaces, 8 of which are offered at a peppercorn rent + SC back to other local charities.

Following the initial success of this first pilot, the council now wish to expand it into phase 2, which will include a further 74 decanted properties across the three buildings. The Council have noted that they expect the project to expand into phase 3 with potentially up to a further 61 properties, over the next 12-18 month period. Not all of the properties are expected to be fit for use, the council will advise.

Camden Council has asked Bow Arts to propose a safe and secure management solution for these properties that includes supporting local artist, designers, makers, community enterprise and other local charities.

The council have outlined a number of specific targets that they would like the scheme to deliver;

- **Embedding a fair and equitable application process to ensure wide access to space across all sectors.**
- **Expand the offer away from just creative industries, providing space for smaller organisations, supporting hyper local organisations and individuals.**
- **Work with existing organisations and projects, ensuring the meanwhile space links with community groups and networks.**



This paper sets out the approach that Bow Arts would take to expand the current pilot project into phase 2 and 3, based on criteria set by the Council.

## Bow Arts

Bow Arts is one of the UK's leading providers of affordable creative workspace and homes for artists, designers and makers, we manage 15 sites across London. Established in 1995 as a charity, we are London's first charitable Social Enterprise. We create employment and training by investing in local communities. We are an educational charity that works with over 90 individual schools and 9 schools consortia, that annually support over 15,000 young people improving attainment, access, social mobility and opening creative career pathways. We deliver a uniquely successful Creative Place Making schemes with some of London's leading developers and housing providers. Our partners value our experience and track record.

The Bow Arts model is a circular, social enterprise model and as such is based around people. We have learned that if we empower individuals through our support, this then builds resilient sustainable proactive communities. It is through these communities that we are able to provide the services that create meaningful social impact and outcomes.



Bow Arts is interested in a long-term relationship with Camden, its residents and young people. We see the potential expansion of the pilot scheme as an opportunity to deliver a much greater impact to the community. We understand that the proposal for the management of these flats is complex and that there will be multiple stakeholders involved, we also recognise that Bow Arts is one of the very few London based Charities that has both the experience and scale to be able to manage a project like this.

Our experience shows that it is important to have a single operator with the capacity to manage both the larger scale letting and management of property, alongside the ability and commitment to broker and support multiple individual relationships and projects. An increased scale would allow us to take a wider approach and respond to the needs of the community, we are committed to providing a project that is ambitious and becomes an exciting place to work and visit.

## **Summary of Proposal**

The proposal is for Bow Arts to take on an additional 74 flats in phase 2 with the expectation that this number will grow by up to a further 61 flats in Phase 3. Bow Arts will manage the flats as affordable workspaces. Each main room, bedroom or living room will become a workspace with shared amenities: kitchen, bathroom, hallway and heating. Each flat will contribute £50pcm Service Charge to Camden council. Individuals will be issued with a licence to occupy and will be required to comply with all Bow Arts health and Safety procedures. Bow Arts staff will manage the buildings and ensure compliance and safe practice. Based on the current scheme and its configuration, this project could support up to 190 new workspaces in the borough offered on a Camden resident first principal. 190 affordable community workspaces will create a visible and remarkable asset for the borough. 18 workspaces would be provided at cost to local organisations and artists through a collaborative approach with Camden and local partners.

We see this as an opportunity to open up space to existing residents and active community groups ensuring that they have a clear access route. Clearly affordability is at the heart of this but also a transparent a fluid management approach is vital. Following initial meetings with local groups we have suggested routes to access that include hosting community forums in our site office, hosting regular open studio days (participation is part of the licence agreement of any of our occupants) and connecting our artists with projects.

The Pilot scheme targeted the creative sector, Phase 2 will broaden the offer to include a wider range of enterprise and charitable activity. We feel a mixed use meanwhile project is sustainable and is the right approach for this project. This is similar to our approach on other sites, where a mixed economy thrives when centred around a creative cluster. We will use our experience in managing both commercial and community tenants to deliver a genuinely integrated mixed use scheme. We do not prescribe exact uses, our approach is about listening to the needs of the communities in which we work and letting them dictate the end users. Our property team are experienced in curating often challenging spaces to create good working environments that enhance a sense of community.

As we delivered in the pilot scheme, during the occupation stage we will create a moveable communal area and site office, this will help new tenants get to know their new neighbours and us. We will aim to place community focused practices and public facing operations on the lower floors to encourage an interaction with the public realm and surrounding the blocks.

We will cap licence fees at £15 per sqft in line with the Mayor of London's Affordable Creative Workspace Targets. (*Bow Arts is one of only two organisations in the capital that strives for and regularly meets or beats*



*these targets*). Bow Arts will take on all utility contracts and costs, these will be recharged on a prorate basis throughout the scheme, this evens out costs and delivers value to tenants.

By supporting such a large number of new creative business and enterprises in the area, Bow Arts will be able to act as a broker to support the councils culture team and wider cultural objectives with access to high level skills and ideas. [We are willing to commit time and expertise to help the council develop their wider affordable workspace strategy and vision for move on space for small creative businesses](#). Our sector is small when compared to the traditional property market and we see ourselves as part of a longer term solution working alongside other organisations.

### Handover

In order to manage the allocation of space safely, we propose that voids are handed over in batches of 10, this will give our team time to vet and allocate applications fairly whilst working with Camden to ready the next batch. By phasing the handover process we generate interest and ensure demand, this reduces delays and keeps the cost down for individuals.

It will be essential at handover for our operations team that the flats are:

- Fit for habitation and use. – Damage / mould ect.
- The utilities (W,G,E) are in working order and have not been decommissioned.
- The heating system is in working order and certificated.
- All HS2 remedial soundproofing and ventilation works are complete
- The flat is secure and all keys and entry fobs are provided.

This simple agreement will avoid delays and unnecessary costs both for Camden and Bow Arts.

Within Phase 2+3 Bow Arts will allocate up to 18 workspaces at peppercorn rent + SC to Camden's priority organisations, this will be done in consultation with key Camden officers and in the longer term through our connection to community forums. We are open to working with other organisations under licence to us, to deliver against the wider objectives of the project as long as they are able to meet our three basic criteria:

- They are Camden based organisations supporting Camden Residents
- They agree to operate within our affordability criteria
- They will adhere to our Health and Safety rules.

This approach allows us to partner with other similar organisations to deliver a successful project and tap into markets we may not have direct access to such as theatre or dance.



## Application process and allocation of space

A key ambition in the curation of the spaces will be to look at the project as whole against the needs of the borough. We see this space becoming a meanwhile utopia of thriving enterprise where a cycle repair shop develops next door to a food bank who in turn get their marketing done by the graphic designer on the floor above them.

Licensees will be carefully selected and vetted for the opportunity. We manage a policy of local priority across all our sites and will follow a simple hierarchy when allocating workspace here.

1. Existing local residents
2. Borough wide residents and/or community groups
3. Outside of borough based artists, community groups or enterprises that can demonstrate an affiliation to Camden, or desire to be involved with our schools work or wider community work through their practice.
4. Open Platform.

Across our portfolio we find that after a year of opening a site on average 70% of occupants live within a mile and a half of their workspace and with strong support from Camden we anticipate another high engagement level of local residents.

Our application process is straightforward and purely looks to establish whether the applicant has a recognisable track record. We only take basic information that is required to allocate space and ask prospective artists to provide a link to their portfolio in whatever form they feel most comfortable with, as the world evolves this is often via social media link – as long as we can see their work and attribute this to a benefit in having a professional workspace we move ahead with their application. We limit the description of practice to 60 words to streamline the process and save the artist time, taking some of the pressure off. You can find a link to this questionnaire that is housed on jotform [here](#).

In Phase two where the offer is extended into a wider type of enterprise we will use our experience, local knowledge and council officers to ensure the candidates meet our criteria and that the offer will support their businesses or desired use.

As part of our agreement with Camden we will be providing up to 18 workspaces at cost. We see these spaces as an exciting opportunity to help develop a sense of ownership of the project within local residents. We have already had exploratory conversations with a number of local groups and these conversations form an integral part of our organic approach to building a local network. It is through listening that we will help provide space for the right people. Our suggested approach would be to utilise ground floor spaces for the more publicly engaged projects with our studio manager helping foster networking events between them. We will actively try and fill these spaces within the first few months of phase 2 as we appreciate these local organisations being based within the building will help grow our networks at a far greater rate.

As we have done in the Pilot scheme, our studio managers will conduct in person viewings with every prospective tenant, where they can help answer any of the practical questions, this is followed by an informal interview to assess the suitability, both for us and for the prospective licensee. All licensees must complete a rigorous health and safety review before being accepted into a space. This is a tried and tested approach that has allowed us to build truly accessible and safe working communities for the past 28 years.

We believe the success of this project will be built on ensuring that the individuals taking up the opportunity quickly start to feel a connection to the place and to their wider community - we are experienced in this



proactive approach, to find, vet and support people that will make the most of the opportunity.

### **Marketing and reach**

Our marketing team work closely with staff on the ground and target our content to make sure it is reaching people locally. We undertake research into our surroundings to find out the best way to reach people. As an example, in Thamesmead we support around 80 guardianships tethered to 40 studio spaces, we translated and duplicated all of our marketing material into French, this is because there is a large Central African population in the area, this approach allowed us to engage with a far wider audience and in this case a community that had often felt isolated and excluded from the change happening around them.

Bow Arts is able to operate as a charity through our ability to fill space. We have work on at 98% occupancy rate across our portfolio for 28 years. Having a portfolio of different buildings across London allows us to accurately appraise demand for affordable creative spaces. The opportunity of centrally located affordable workspace is one we believe will be hugely attractive to artists. Our proposed phased occupation will also allow us to monitor demand updating our approach as the project develops. Working with a wider pool of potential tenants gives us confidence that we will be able to successfully fill spaces with the right people.

Bow Arts was a founding member and director of NFASP the National Federation of Artist Studio Providers, this was set up with the support of DCMS and ACE in the early 2000's. Through our work on NFASP over 10 years, Bow Arts identified the need for a safe platform for the creative sector to find genuine safe space in which to work. We developed the Artist Studio Finder.org. website that now covers the whole of greater London and Kent and is the only genuine affordable studio finder. It is a free platform for NFP providers and for artists alike. It is supported by the GLA, ACE and Kent County Council. Artist Studio Finder generates around 12,000 page searches per month.



## **Management**

Our managements role is to provide safe and affordable space. Our organisations ethos is to nurture places that create positive change. We believe both are possible and use property as a vehicle to deliver against our charitable objectives.

To ensure consistency and oversight we will allocate a full time studio/project manager to manage the site, they will in turn be fully supported by wider Bow Arts team and have full access to and be able to signpost all the additional services provided by our departments. All Bow Arts sites have a tried and tested out of hours service meaning that although our staff member may not be on site 24/7 a member of the team is always contactable and artists have this process explained to them as part of their licence signing. We understand that HS2/Camden currently employ security 8pm-8am and we would work with these teams to ensure cohesive approach, hopefully creating 24 hour visibility. We are also open to extending our operating hours to lessen the need of this security contract.

As we have done in our pilot scheme and do across all our sites we will employ an on site caretaker (or several). This role is fulfilled by a licensee and gives them some additional income if they are able to be a reactive key holder on site for our studio manager. They are interviewed as with any other role in the organisation and have to commit to minimum weekly hours based on the site.

Our Studio Manager will be based in the communal and site office for 4 days a week with one day at our head office. Initially the Studio Manager will focus on delivering against occupation targets, however they will also become an active member of existing local community forums and relevant resident forums. This allows us to start to develop relationships with these existing groups, introduce the scheme as a positive contributor and to signpost new Licensees to support local activity.

A senior member of Bow Arts will actively engage with resident groups to support both staff and licensees as an active presence on site. If there are no appropriate local forums we will create our own, however we feel that with such a rich base of activity already in existence we are excited simply to help our artists connect and facilitate further growth. We are already in dialogue as a result of our pilot scheme with a number of local organisations and have begun to signpost artists to opportunities. T-Factor have met with us to open up a dialogue about how we can work together to provide opportunity for existing projects and community groups.

We use a custom built CRM to manage all our licencing – this interface allows all tenants to fully and transparently manage their accounts, giving them instant access to important documents on their personal online portal – the system is also a creative intranet that allows practices to share opportunities within the whole Bow Arts network and to showcase their practice. Our thinking is simple – if we help people to be successful – they will be able to afford their bills and be able to contribute more to their community, this thinking has helped the trust operate with a less than 2% bad debt rate that helps us keep rents affordable.

## **Facilities management and Maintenance**

As part of our management of the spaces we have built in to our costs up to £12,000 of maintenance annually on top of the £91,800 (153 flats) annual service charge bill to help manage on site issues. We hope this fund will help us respond quickly to any potential issues and allow us to work with the councils maintenance teams, relieving some of the pressures these teams will naturally face in what quite honestly are likely to be more urgent matters.

Bow Arts will be responsible to the council for the collection of the monthly Service Charge (£50/flat). Service



Charges will only kick in once a flat is occupied, following the same protocol used in the pilot scheme, Bow Arts will supply Camden with a regular Schedule of occupation.

We suggest Service Charges are billed on a quarterly basis against our occupation lists.

We are willing to support the council by using our contractor networks to complete small scale works and propose the council provide a financial limit against these works, allowing us to complete them without attaining financial permission each time, deducting any evidenced work from the quarterly service charge bill. We would only undertake works with written instruction by a Camden officers and if there is a clear cost saving advantage to the scheme and supply all receipts etc as part of invoicing procedure. Our experience in managing affordable workspace means we have expertise in finding value for money and solving complex facilities issues. Our Property Team Lead and FM expert, Glen Moxon, will oversee this aspect of the project.

### Bow Arts requirements

In order to deliver the project successfully we will require our operations team to inspect and sign off each flat within the batch of 10. We suggest our operations team and a member of the Camden team are allocated view batches and approve readiness:

- Working and connected utilities. Gas, Water Electric. *Gas disconnections have resulted in large delays within current pilot scheme.*
- Flats must be designated as workspace (Use Class E) and discounted for business rates.
- Flats must have appropriate HS2 impact modifications .
- Flats must be secure and habitable. **Our artists and team can deal with aesthetic issues.**
- Should any flat under Bow Arts Management become uninhabitable due to wider issues other than standard building maintenance, Bow Arts will reserve the right with agreement of the council officers to hand these properties back to the council to be declassified.

Kind regards

Marcel Baettig





## Bow Arts Project Team

Marcel Baettig, Chief Executive Officer



In 1995 he established Bow Arts as a leading educational and arts charity. Now a National Portfolio Organisation and National Pathfinder for Sustainability, the charity provides over 500 artist, designers and makers with affordable safe workspace across a range of work and live work spaces in London. Over the past 15 years the Trust's Learning programme has grown into one of London's most respected professional educational projects, championing mobility and creative career pathways in many of London's most underserved areas.

Joss Taylor, Head of Enterprise and Placemaking



Joss joined Bow Arts in 2016 working across many different aspects of the trust before establishing the Enterprise and Placemaking department. He has overseen the successful Royal Albert Wharf project earning international recognition with two Dezeen awards for a community focussed public artwork.

Adonis Fuyana, Enterprise and Placemaking Officer



Adonis is responsible for enterprise and placemaking activity over a number of key Bow Arts sites, The Lakeside Centre in Thamesmead, and RAW (Royal Albert Wharf) in the Royal Docks and Oaklands in north Acton. In addition, he works across the organisation, supporting Enterprise and creating opportunities for the communities in which we are based.

Jen Pringle, Business Manager



Jen is a highly organised and motivated Business Manager who first joined Bow Arts in 2016. She quickly established herself and her role across all aspects of the business from finance to IT. She brings advanced skills in a number of areas that she gained working in both the charity and corporate sectors.

Glen Moxon, Property Team Manager



Glen oversees the letting and management of all our properties and studios sites, ensuring the smooth running of the sites and delivering affordable studios that meet the needs of creatives in London



## Supporting Material

- Annex i Flats use layout
- Annex ii Bow Arts Annual Report 2021-22 Annex iii  
Meet out artists - Spotlight Annex iii Copy
- Licence and Agreements
- Annex iii Application Process

### Annex i Flats use - layout

*The flats range from Studio flats (1 room) to three bed flats (4 rooms).  
This example is a two bed flat that offers 3 studios spaces, a shared kitchen and bathroom facilities.*

*Each flat has been adapted by HS2 to comply with minimize noise levels. This includes work to the windows, doors and separate air control systems per flat.*



Figure 1 Example flat use as studios





