



Project Brief for a Creative Practitioner/ Theatre Company for Crafting Cultures: Reviving Calverley Old Hall

Location: Calverley Old Hall, Woodhall Road, Calverley, Pudsey, LS28 5NL (West Yorkshire)

Who are we?

The Landmark Trust is the UK's second biggest historic buildings charity. It rescues extraordinary historic buildings from dereliction and gives them a vibrant new life as places everyone can enjoy for short breaks. Each year some 40,000 people stay in our buildings, and another 10,000 visit them on public open days or through our educational programmes. <http://www.landmarktrust.org.uk>

Calverley Old Hall's exceptional potential has languished unfulfilled for decades. This outstanding Grade I Listed medieval manor house based in Calverley, Leeds, is now on the Buildings at Risk Register. In the 1980s, when the Landmark Trust acquired the property, one element of the building was restored as a holiday let for 5 and the rest was made safe while life tenancies within the subdivided building concluded. These ended in 2001 and much of the building has remained unoccupied and deteriorating. The Lodging Block has been a popular place to stay, but other than this, and occasional public open days, there has been little engagement by people with the site.

In May 2022 the Landmark Trust was awarded a £1,600,000 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Our two-year project will bring the whole site into new use with spectacular self-catering holiday accommodation for 10, alongside dedicated space for local communities.

The £1,600,000 Heritage Enterprise Grant from the Heritage Fund, taken together with the many other donations from generous supporters, means work has now begun to deliver the capital works, alongside an ambitious and wide-ranging Activity Plan, Crafting Cultures.

Project activities

Crafting Cultures is about the revival of a semi-derelict medieval manor house and the surrounding communities of Leeds and Bradford who will help to bring the site back to life, engaging in a varied programme of activities that develop mutual understanding and enhance skills, knowledge and wellbeing. The two elements will support and bind each other to uplifting and inspirational effect.

The principal elements:

- The restoration of this fascinating but little-known Grade I Listed medieval manor house, largely hidden behind boards and broken windows, into a sustainable multi-use new future.
- Vibrant and uplifting community programme focussed on bringing together local residents, refugees, disenfranchised young people and the heritage world.
- A beautiful and original design approach to re-inhabiting a complex historic site that will influence the sector.
- The creation of a Landmark to sleep 10, available to all, a community base and garden, and a residential flat.
- A craft training programme giving a series of individuals a life-changing opportunity to learn skills that will set them on a new life path.

The rebirth of this historic place will elicit real pride, in those who use and visit it, those who have participated in its revival and those for whom it has been a stepping-stone to new skills, knowledge and relationships.

For more details about our project please go to: www.landmarktrust.org.uk/calverley

Who we are looking for

The Landmark Trust is commissioning an experienced creative practitioner or theatre company to be part of the team that delivers high quality interpretation material for the Calverley Old Hall project.

They will be responsible for designing and delivering a project which explores some of the key narratives that create the history of the hall over many centuries, in particular the Calverley murders. A blog written on the subject is available on our website: [A Yorkshire Tragedy blog | The Landmark Trust](#)

The murders have been a shadow over the building for many centuries and we wish to engage and explore them in a way that is meaningful; avoiding over exaggeration, fictionalisation and obsession with ‘the gory details’.

The practitioner will work closely with members of the Landmark Trust’s project team, including the Project Engagement Officer who is responsible for delivering the NLHF funded activities, and Landmark’s Historian.

Practitioners responding to this opportunity should carefully consider how their response can align with the Landmark Trusts priorities of engaging with local people, young people, the refugee and asylum-seeking communities and those currently underrepresented in the heritage sector, whilst delivering high quality heritage interpretation on site.

Materials available

A huge amount of research has already been done about the Calverley family and the later residents of the building.

This is available on our website: <https://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/support-us/projects-and-appeals/appeal-launched-calverley-old-hall/>

Research has continued throughout the project and will underpin the delivery of this part of our engagement. Also in existence are two plays *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, both written soon after the murders took place, which can be explored further within the work.

Much has also been written over the years in the modern press which is dramatic (and not entirely true) and now we wish to develop a more thoughtful approach to 'coming to terms with' the murders.

The workshops

The workshops can be delivered either on site at Calverley Old Hall or off site, in order to reach out to nearby audiences within the Calverley and Farsley ward and the nearby Leeds and Bradford communities, who may not currently be engaged with heritage.

Currently there is limited access to the site, so we envision that the workshops onsite will take place in Spring 2024.

The workshops should:

- Be exploratory – with no expectation of a set outcome (i.e. a performance) at this stage. The final outcome should be decided with the participants and could be, for example, an audio recording, theatre performance, sharing event, creative writing or poetry performance, photography display etc. Other practitioners can be brought in to help realise the final outcome if required.
- The workshops should aim to explore, in particular, the circumstances around the Calverley murders, touching on themes such as:
 - mental health,
 - gambling and debt,
 - legal/justice systems – *no contest* pleas,
 - journalism and press coverage.
- All these themes are relevant to today's society and we would encourage the historic events to be explored in a way that is meaningful to contemporary audiences.
- The workshops should not be aimed at 'performers' – but instead should be open to anyone who has an interest in exploring the themes through discussion and creative tools in an honest way.
- Create a safe space for discussion that is welcoming to all those who would like to participate – this could mean that an element of the project is delivered online (by Zoom for example) to allow for wider participation.
- Practitioners may also wish to consider how we could use the Landmark Trust's social media presence to expand the reach of the project with e.g., a live Twitter chat, Instagram stories etc.

Universal Design

A key part of our overall vision for the interpretation of the site is to make it as accessible as possible for a wide range of people, following the 7 Principles of Universal Design. We encourage practitioners to consider how to make the outcome as accessible as possible.

Contacts

The Project Engagement Officer will be the main contact for this work. They will act as point of contact for any other experts or members of staff required and gather necessary information from them which will help with the delivery. The Project Engagement Officer will work with the theatre practitioner/company to advertise the workshops, to attract participants and to plan any workshops in advance, so that they fulfil the necessary aims and objectives of the project.

The agreement will be with the Landmark Trust.

Requirements

We are looking for a theatre practitioner/company with:

- Creative flair and ability to work with a diverse range of people
- Skilled in exploring sensitive subject matter
- A portfolio of inspirational work
- A commitment to working with the 7 Principles of Universal Design in order to create an outcome that is accessible to a wide range of people.

Budget

The following budget has been outlined for the project:

Freelance practitioners and associated artists **£8,500**

Materials and equipment **£2,500**

Outcome costs (event/display etc) **£2,000**

Expression of interest

Please ensure your application includes the following:

1. A statement demonstrating the specialist or general understanding, knowledge, skills, training and competencies you have to deliver this project
2. An outline of previous relevant projects
3. Profiles of any other staff who may be involved in the delivery (if known)
4. A statement or breakdown of fees regarding how the project can be achieved within the budget.
5. Any other ideas/suggestions that could be delivered within the budget

Please return all expressions of interest documents by 5pm on Monday 15th January to: calverley@landmarktrust.org.uk