

**Trust New Art: Artist commission  
Artists' Brief**



*Images of Hare Hill © National Trust/Paul Harris/David Levenson*

Hare Hill want to work with an artist(s) or maker whose work explores art, nature and the environment to develop a new artwork which utilises wood from the site in 2020 for installation in 2021.

We want audiences to explore the history of Hare Hill, while looking towards its future. The area designated for the artwork is where visitors will leave the historic garden, before entering a new wildflower meadow area.

**The artist(s) will be invited to explore the sometimes challenging histories of the Hibbert and Brocklehurst families who shaped Hare Hill, along with 20<sup>th</sup> century garden designer James Russell and to consider the garden and how it's past meets it's future and what that future may look like. There will also be the opportunity to meet staff and volunteers to understand their thoughts on the past and future of the site. Potential access to an outdoor work space on-site may be possible to help create the artwork and speak and engage with visitors. This brief describes the context in which we see the commission working and gives details of how to apply.**

**Call for expression of interest**

**DEADLINE:** 16 March 2020

**Overview:** Hare Hill is in the parish of Over Alderley, near Macclesfield in Cheshire. It consists of a formal Walled Garden, surrounded by a Wooded Garden and a wider estate which is now farmed by a tenant farmer. Hare Hill Hall was the main residence for the families who lived here but is now privately owned. Over the last few years, a project to restore the Wooded Garden based on the vision, design and planting that James Russell carried out has taken place. The ponds have been dredged and replanted, the area outside the walled garden is being planted to James Russell's design plan and a new area

of the garden, a wildflower meadow, is in progress to help support wildlife and allow Hare Hill to be more resilient to climate change.

Hare Hill is part of the National Trust's Cheshire and Wirral portfolio, which consists of seventeen places including the Tudor property of Little Moreton Hall and the mines and woodland at Alderley Edge.

**What we want to achieve:** We want to encourage visitors to connect with the history of the site, at a place where there is limited opportunity to communicate the stories of the owners and the development of the garden. With only a small information room onsite, we need the artwork to speak to visitors about Hare Hill and help to communicate its stories. The artwork will also sit in an area of transition for visitors and we would like the artwork to act as a gateway or transition between the historic woodland garden and the new wildflower meadow which represents a future dedicated to supporting wildlife and making the garden and estate more resilient to climate change.

With almost no indoor space most of our interpretation at Hare Hill is in the outdoors. The ambition for this artwork is that it would attempt to represent the vision and commitment of both former owner Charles Brocklehurst and garden designer James Russell, in a way that 'embraces' and surrounds visitors. It will form a specific place in the garden with which to subtly commemorate, providing the focus to a new community garden. Hare Hill will offer the opportunity to create a large scale work in an outdoor location, increasing the scale of the overall presentation and increase the audience reach.

**This project is part of Trust New Art** which helps to grow people's love of our special places by using contemporary arts to explore and express 'Spirit of Place'. It is supported by partnerships with Arts Council England. The programme helps to build new and repeat audiences for the arts and our properties and follows the Trust's approach to programming. It provides commissioning and career opportunities to both emerging and established artists and has become recognised in the arts sector as a mark of quality. In 2020 there are eight TNA projects in the North region exploring different aspects of Art and Environment, Nature and Culture.

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## 1. Context

Hare Hill sits in an area that was once part of Broadheath common, with the first recorded use of the name Hare Hill appearing in the parish records as the residence of Mr John Hobson in 1642. Although we do not have any evidence for the origin of the name Hare Hill, it is most likely a literal naming as there are still occasionally hares spotted out on the farmland today.



*A visitor enjoys the tranquillity of the Wooded Garden at Hare Hill © National Trust/David Levenson*

### **Spirit of Place**

Hare Hill was designed as a place of aesthetic and spiritual refreshment, discreetly set within a historically visible landscape.

It is a place that reveals itself first through the wide expanse of historic parkland, visible with ancient hedgerow lines of oak and hawthorn, and looking beyond across the expanse of the Cheshire sandstone escarpment towards urban Manchester.

As you explore further you enter an atmospheric woodland of twists and turns offering hidden surprises. What secrets might you discover? The vibrant colour of a rhododendron, the call of a hidden bird, the stillness of a pond where you can rest and dream....

And finally, you arrive at the heart of this delightful place where you feel the breath of calming nature: the gates open up into the world of Colonel Brocklehurst's white walled garden, offering a friendly and relaxing oasis of tranquillity; a place for reflection, play and discovery. A place to return to time and again.



*Visitors enjoy the Walled garden at Hare Hill © National Trust/Paul Harris*

### **Other site considerations**

- The restoration of the historic garden at Hare Hill is ongoing, along with the establishment of the new wildflower meadow and these will continue to happen around the artwork.
- The garden has flat level access, is surrounded by fencing is small enough that it feels safe. For this reason, the garden is a site for first-time nature experiences – you can come with all the family, in normal shoes and get outdoors.
- Flat, hard-standing paths also mean the garden is relatively accessible. Any artwork/s should ensure it is therefore as accessible as possible for a wide range of visitors.
- A site for the work has been identified in the Woodland garden (plan attached)
- A pathway will need to pass through the area identified for this artwork, with the right gradient to meet accessibility needs and this will need to be considered when the design is taking place.
- Charles Brocklehurst wanted Hare Hill to be a place of aesthetic and spiritual refreshment and it is known for its tranquillity, the artwork/s would ideally reflect this and fit within the aesthetic of the garden.

### **Audiences**

Hare Hill has a small, local (within a 30-minute drive-time) and repeat audience. Through the artwork/s we would like existing audiences to explore the past and future of the site. The artwork/s along with the new wildflower meadows will also be marketed to potential visitors, to help grow visitor numbers.

## Materials

We are particularly interested in artist(s) who work with the environment and are interested in reclaiming, reusing or repurposing materials. In particular we would like this artwork to use wood from Hare Hill where possible.

This artwork is intended to be a semi-permanent structure. For as long as it remains safe it will 'decay in place' and this needs to be considered in its design, construction and the materials used.

## Residency/Commission

On appointment the selected artist(s), would come to Hare Hill for a site visit and in discussion with Head Gardener Emma Hill and other members of the Hare Hill team determine which spaces would be most suitable to work within.

We would expect the artist(s) to be on site to engage with our visitors for periods of their work. This could take the form of demonstrations, asking visitors to be involved in the design and/or creation of the piece as is feasible or asking groups to help create some of the artwork onsite. We are happy to discuss approaches with the selected artist.

Part of the requirement of the commission would be to work with Kate Picker, Visitor Experience Manager for Hare Hill to create interpretation around the new artwork which would be on site throughout 2020. This should give visitors an insight into what is being created and why, and when they can expect to come back and see it

The staff and volunteers (c.60) need to be kept informed and involved with the project. This might include writing updates for our internal newsletter or if feasible, coming along to our Hare Hill happenings where we gather everyone together to update them.



Head Gardener Emma Hill and some of the Hare Hill team ©National Trust/Mark Waugh

## 2. The project

### 2.1 Aims of the project

- To connect people with the history of Hare Hill and how in particular the gardens developed.
- To create a semi-permanent piece which will be at the site for 5-10 years.
- To create a 'transitional' space between the historic garden and the new wildflower meadow
- To help visitors deepen their connection with Hare Hill and the National Trust.
- To create a new offer at Hare Hill to encourage new visitors
- To create an accessible artwork that complements the garden from a heritage or nature conservation perspective.
- To consider the suitability and sustainability of any intervention.
- To engage staff and volunteers with this new approach.

### 2.2 What we would expect from our chosen artist:

- The design and development phase will be completed during 2020, with creation and delivery in 2021.
- Create an installation that responds to the garden and its history using wood and possibly other natural materials that are sourced from Hare Hill as far as possible.
- Co-Create interpretation (physical and/or virtual) for the new artwork that is engaging and welcoming to key audiences.
- To work with Head Gardener Emma Hill on the sourcing and availability of materials, so any used do not detract from the ecology of Hare Hill.
- Work alongside other projects & plans for the garden to engage visitors in their artistic creative process for the project
- Work with Cathy and Kate to create a maintenance and decommissioning plan for the artwork

## 3. Project Structure & People

### 3.1 Project team members:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Based</b>
Kate Picker	Visitor Experience Manager	At Alderley Edge/Little Moreton Hall
Emma Hill	Head Gardener	At Hare Hill
Tamsin Whinnerah	Visitor Experience Officer	At Hare Hill
Rachel Thomas	General Manager	At Alderley Edge/Little Moreton Hall
Cathy Newbery	Contemporary Arts Consultant	North Advisor
Kelda Savage	Cultural Programme Coordinator	North West Advisor

### **3.2 Permissions & maintenance**

- Hare Hill is very significant ecological site, working with the knowledgeable staff to create appropriate artwork/s to this environment will be key.
- Certain permissions may be required depending on the work e.g. planning permission.
- A maintenance contract will be put in place once the artist(s) has been appointed but minimal intervention/maintenance would be preferable, especially if the artwork is a home for flora/fauna. The artwork may deteriorate and become part of the landscape, but maintenance will need to be considered for safety reasons.

### **3.3 Copyright and ownership of artwork**

Due to the long-term nature of the art piece, the National Trust will take ownership of the artwork/s. Copyright will be retained by the artist(s)

### **3.4 Documentation**

National Trust will commission photographers and videographers to document the project, but we request that artist(s) also ensure that all stages of the process are captured (in any format they choose) for sharing amongst partners and externally.

Any images taken of people must follow the National Trust's GDPR guidelines which will be provided.

### **3.5 Evaluation & Reporting**

We want to evaluate the process as well as the presentation of the project, and in order to support this we request that the artist(s):

- Support the project team in capturing the process for sharing (images/text/sound/video)
- Provide a monthly informal update (email) circulated to all key partners outlining progress and related information
- Provide a mechanism for the participants to give feedback on their experience of participating

### **3.6 Audiences, stakeholders and partners**

- Staff – 5 permanent staff at Hare Hill, plus additional staff who work across the portfolio
- Volunteers – c. 60
- Current visitors to Hare Hill – c. 33,000 annually
- Rossendale Trust and Macclesfield Community Garden, supporting the work at Hare Hill on the new wildflower meadow area
- Barnaby Festival in Macclesfield 18 -28<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and we have been exploring connections to Hare Hill historically and through audiences.

## 4. Timeline and Process

### 4.1 Timeline

Closing date for expression of interest	16 March 2020
Open day for artist(s) and interview	2 April 2020
Appointment of artist(s)	April 2020
Research and development	May – October 2020
Barnaby Festival	June 2020
Completed work in situ	TBC 2021
Project end	TBC 2021
Debrief and evaluation	TBC 2021

### 4.2 Application Process

We are looking for artist(s)/artist collectives, makers or small architectural practices, whose work is in arts and environmental practice and who have experience of working in response to history and nature. We cannot accept applications from students. We are looking for artist(s) who are happy to communicate about their work at different levels.

An expression of interest should be submitted on no more than four sides of A4, by EMAIL ONLY to Suzanne Coxon, [Suzanne.Coxon@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:Suzanne.Coxon@nationaltrust.org.uk) by **midnight on** Tuesday 16 March 2020. Please do not send original material, this cannot be returned.

**Your expression of Interest should be formatted as a single PDF, containing:**

1. An outline of your interest in the project, and initial ideas for your potential approach
2. A statement detailing your experience of participatory and other relevant projects
3. Up to 5 images of your work/links\* to other media.
4. Completion of an equal opportunities form.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CSNSVBL>

\*Please provide hyperlinks online files. Time-based media should be limited to up to four clips of no longer than 5 minutes; images should be no larger than 1600 x 1200 pixels. Information submitted in other formats will not be accepted.

From the submitted expressions of interest we will select up to ten applicants, based on the following criteria:

- Quality of previous work
- Experience of engagement with the public through practice
- Relevance to practice
- General response to the brief

From this we will invite up to 3 artist(s) or teams to interview for which we will pay travel expenses.

We regret that **will not be able to provide feedback** to artist(s) not selected. This is because we receive a high level of submissions and do not have the capacity to respond to all applicants.

#### 4.3 Budget

Up to £19,000 is available for the project. This is to include artist fee, materials and travel & expenses, and VAT. Please be advised that access to a car is desirable as it is a rural location with no public transport.

EXPENDITURE	Budget	Item
<b>Artistic Spending - Artist Fees</b>		
Artist Fee		£9,500.00
<b>Artistic spending - other arts related costs of delivering the activity</b>		
Selected Artist travel grant & accommodation if required		£500.00
Artist production budget		£8,000.00
Technical advice for installation		£1000.00
<i>Subtotal</i>		<b>£19,000</b>
<i>Contingency to be discussed</i>		

National Trust and any partners will support the project through interpretation, marketing and publicity. It is anticipated that materials in kind for this project will be a significant contribution to the budget.

#### 5. Artists & art forms

We welcome expressions of interest from artist(s), makers and architectural practises with the right to live and work in the UK and artists working alone or collaboratively. If the selected artist(s) see potential in bringing other artists into the project to deliver specific elements we are open to supporting this.

We are an equal opportunities employer and are working with the Arts Council of England's Creative Case for Diversity. ACE are joint funding this project.

For more information about the project, or if you have any queries prior to submission please contact Kate Picker, Visitor Experience Manager, contact details [kate.picker@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:kate.picker@nationaltrust.org.uk)