

# Public Art for Wolverton Mill park area, Milton Keynes

## Artist's Brief v4

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### 1. Project Summary

Milton Keynes Council wishes to appoint an artist to design and make artwork within an established area of green space known as Wolverton Rec (Recreation Ground) in Wolverton, Milton Keynes. We envisage that the commissioned artworks will have elements of interaction and playfulness, and although the entire green space offers potential locations for public artworks it is thought that the new play area might provide an excellent focal point for a project.

The successful artist will have experience of working with local communities as well as professional design teams, and be able to research the unique character of the site. They must have experience of creating permanent pieces of public art, and a suitable level of understanding of relevant Health and Safety legislation.

### 2. Public Art in Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes is committed to engaging artists in the creation of new spaces and has an established reputation for commissioning public art. In Milton Keynes we consider Public Art as any work of visual art, craft or design produced by an artist, designer or maker and sited in a location that is freely accessible to the public. Most importantly the Public Art Strategy for Milton Keynes states that public art commissions should be:

- Place specific
- People specific
- Artist specific

*'Place Specific'* means a work of art devised in response to a specific location – spatially through a sensitivity to scale and positioning; through the selection of materials and processes that are relevant to the site; and also designs that respond and explore the heritage and unique character of the site.

*'People Specific'* means a work of art devised in response to a specific community – whether that be a community defined geographically or by a shared interest. This can be through the direct involvement of that community in the, but most commonly is based on an artist developing an understanding of the local community and then devising a project proposal that they feel will address the needs and aspirations of that community.

*'Artist Specific'* means a bespoke work of art, craft or design produced by an artist, designer or maker that is created specifically for the site and in answer to the requirements of the brief. Most importantly this recognises the creative role that the artist holds in the process, and supports the artist in bringing their own unique skills and interests to the project.

### 3. Introduction to local heritage

Now part of the Milton Keynes conurbation, Wolverton is an extremely old settlement mentioned in the Domesday book - although nothing of the medieval settlement exists today other than traces of the ridge and furrow field system.

The town as we see it today stems from 1836, when Wolverton was chosen as the site of the locomotive repair shop at the midpoint of the London and Birmingham Railway. This saw some 200 houses built for railway workers by 1844, along with schools, a church and a market; and furthermore cemented Wolverton's role in the history of Britain's railways. The railway developers set out rows of Victorian homes in a grid pattern – a taste of what was to come over a century later when Milton Keynes was laid out.

Works is home to the Royal Train fleet, and during the Second World War the Works were used to build parts for Lee-Enfield rifles, bomber plane timber frames, Hawker Typhoon wings, Horsa Gliders and ambulances. The surrounding area is similarly rich in heritage and offers potential starting points for creative designs:

Radcliffe School, which is adjacent to the site, has a house system named after four local luminaries: Poet **William Cowper**, whose subject matter was often nature, lived in the village of Weston-Under-Wood some 5 miles away; **Edward Hayes** built steam boats in the nearby town of Stony Stratford; engineer **James McConnell** developed improved methods to burn coal in steam locomotives; and **Jennie Lee** was one of the founders of the Open University (OU), which still has a significant presence in Milton Keynes.

Approximately one mile west of the new development is Wolverton Mill, a late 18th Century grade II listed building (now converted into flats). It is thought to be on a site which had been used for the same purpose since the 11th century.

### 4. The Site

The Recreation Ground sits on the edge of Wolverton and was created as a sports ground for the workers at the Wolverton Carriage works. Along the Southern boundary is an old tree lined lane and behind this a Victorian cemetery with mature trees. To the West is the new housing development, built on old allotments and other areas of open land. The housing development is contemporary in feel with a mixture of house sizes. Ironically many who have moved here have done so as it feels “natural” or is in the “countryside”.<sup>1</sup>

This development now makes the recreation ground feel more enclosed due to the loss of the borrowed prospect, which old residents mourn the loss of.

To the east side is the predominately Victorian housing area which is a conservation area,<sup>23</sup> with a row 1930's homes backing on to the Recreation Ground. Along this edge is a Redway<sup>4</sup> with benches. To the north is the new swimming pool, which replaced the previous lido which is another fondly remembered feature of the area with many people picnicking in the area after a swim. The new pool is contemporary steel and glass clad structure, behind which is the large Radcliffe comprehensive school.

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<sup>1</sup> *Feedback from consultation on the Recreation ground*

<sup>2</sup> [http://miltonkeynes-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/dev\\_plans/conservation\\_area\\_review/wolverton/wolverton\\_car](http://miltonkeynes-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/dev_plans/conservation_area_review/wolverton/wolverton_car)

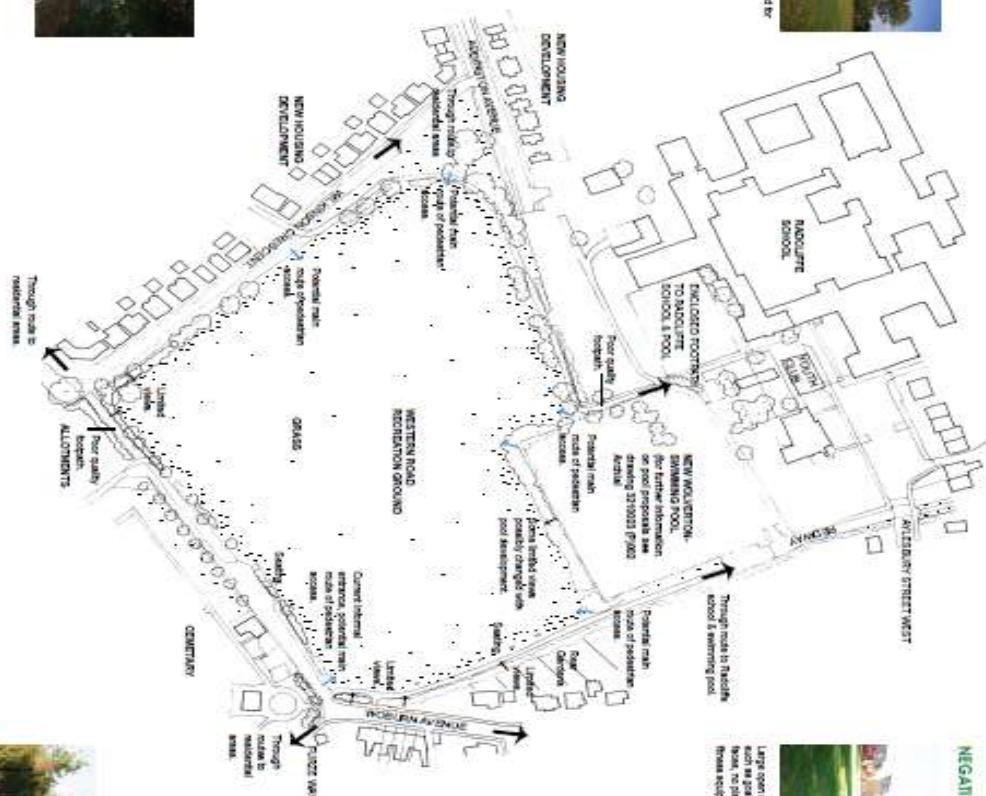
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mkheritage.co.uk/wsah/hood/>

<sup>4</sup> *Redway is the local term for the cycle and pedestrian routes that criss-cross Milton Keynes*

### POSITIVE FEATURES:



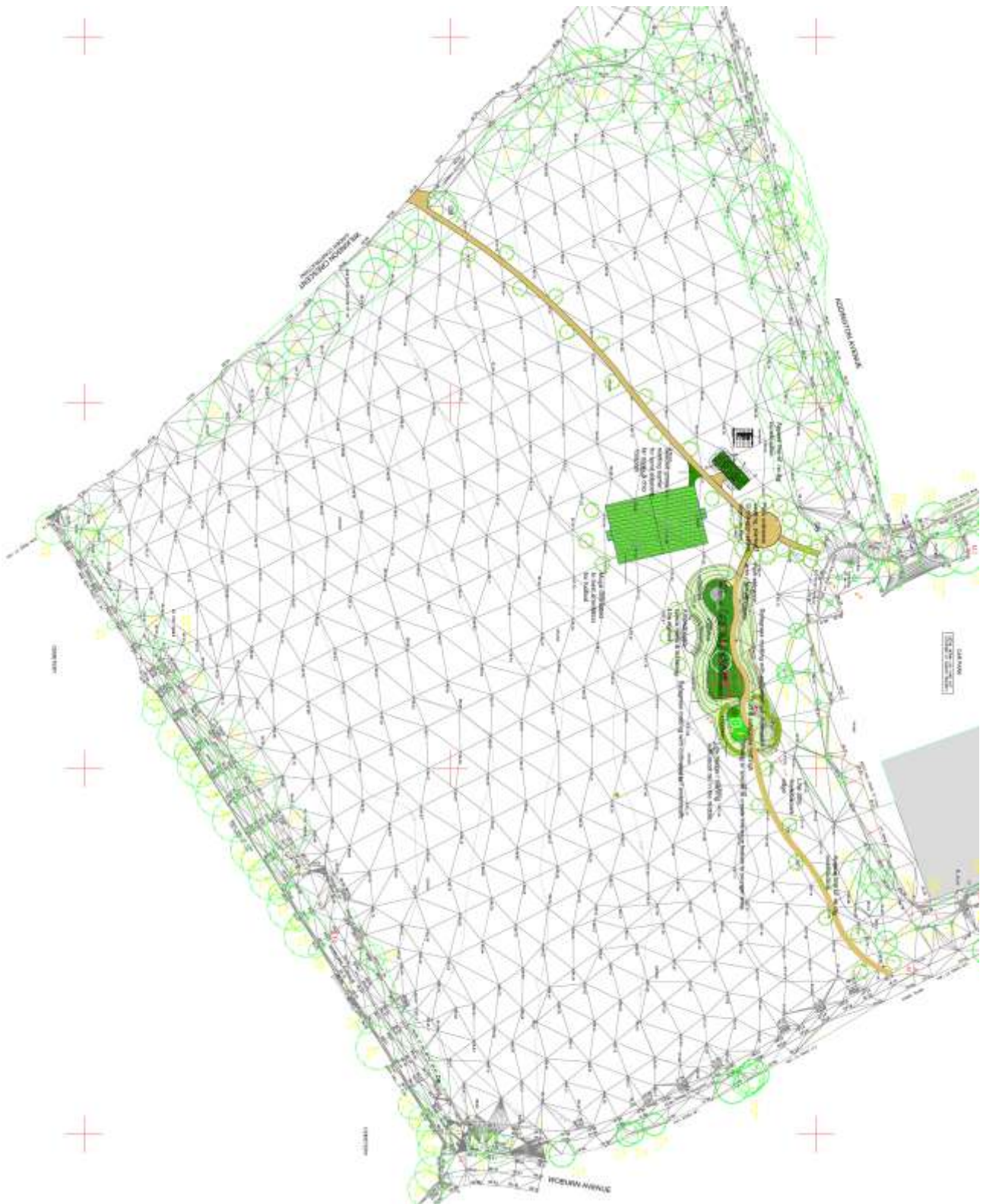
N.B. DRAWING IS BASED ON IMAGES AND MAP INFORMATION AND PHOTOGRAPHING OF OCT 2012. FOR ACCURATE INFORMATION A SURVEY WOULD BE REQUIRED, BASE PLAN SUBJECT TO CHANGES AS ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT SITES.



**NEGATIVE FEATURES:**



*site assessment (prepared as a tool in the site planning)*



*site plan (consultation draft)*





## 5. Requirements of the project

In the proposal phase shortlisted artists must:

- creatively engage and consult with the beneficiaries  
(note: it is proposed that this may be in partnership with the Play Rangers team)
- prepare an outline proposal for an artwork(s) within the park space
- present their outline proposal to the project steering group
- demonstrate value for money within their proposal document

Subsequently it is anticipated that the scope for the art commission will include:

- Development and delivery of engagement and consultation activities during the creation of the artworks (and beyond if appropriate)
- Creation of artwork(s) that have relevance to the local community and to the site
- Creation of artwork(s) that have a minimum life expectancy of 10 years
- Creation of artwork(s) that are maintainable with minimal cost
- Supply of a detailed maintenance plan for the artwork(s)
- Deliver the artwork to site
- Provision of appropriate interpretation material

## 6. Management & Oversight

The art commission will be managed by officers from Milton Keynes Council. Day to day project management of the commission will be led by Phillip Snell of the council Public Realm Services Group, who also manages the construction of the wider scheme. Phillip will be supported by Public Arts Officer Richard Hollinshead, who will advise on contracting, technical issues and the engagement programme.

Oversight for the commission will be through a Steering Group comprising ward members from Milton Keynes Council, members of Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council, representatives from Radcliffe School, the leisure centre and officers from Milton Keynes Council. Shortlisted artists will present their proposals to the Steering Group, who will also select the artist(s) for the final commission(s).

## 7. Budget

This project has a total budget of **£77,000 exc. VAT** (if the artist is VAT registered) inclusive of all artists' fees and expenses (travel, subsistence, accommodation etc), other professional fees (structural engineering reports etc as appropriate), engagement activities, fabrication and transportation of the artwork to site.

Note: this budget excludes installation of the artwork, including any foundations or site preparation required – which will be undertaken by Milton Keynes Council in accordance with the artist's designs and structural engineer's guidance.

As noted in section 11, although our expectation is that one artist will be commissioned using the entire budget available, we reserve the right to ask more than one artist to develop their proposals further – potentially negotiating a division of the available budget between more than one artist.

## 8. DBS check

Before working with young people the selected artist may be required to undergo an Enhanced DBS Check (formerly Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check), and must be willing to provide the information required under that process. The cost of the Enhanced DBS check will be met by Milton Keynes Council.

## 9. Timescale

The art commission process will run alongside the play area construction programme, and shortlisted artists must confirm their availability and ability to work within this timeframe. The provisional timescale and milestones are as follows:

Action	Dates
Artists tender deadline	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2014
Shortlisted Artists site-visit/orientation	early February 2014
Initial consultation and engagement sessions	mid/late March
Research and outline design stage	April
Shortlisted artists present outline proposals	5 <sup>th</sup> May
Artist appointment, further engagement sessions	May
Develop detailed designs	June - July
Detailed designs presented for sign-off by Project Board	end July
Approvals (planning permission process)	August - September
Production/fabrication	October - November
Installation	December
Completion, evaluation and handover	December 2014

## 10. Selection Process

This opportunity is being advertised nationally via appropriate forums and bulletin boards such as the Ixla, ArtsJobs, MK Arts Gateway websites. From submissions received, between three and five artists will be shortlisted by the Public Arts Officer and invited to visit the site, meet members of the local community and develop an outline proposal. Applications for this opportunity will be assessed in reference to the following criteria:

- (30%) Quality of previous projects, in particular:
  - Unique 'voice' within the field of public art
  - Innovative responses to specific sites
  - Relevance of the artwork to the site's character and heritage
- (30%) Experience of delivering public art commissions:
  - Successful delivery of projects of similar scale and budget
  - Successful delivery of projects in similar leisure contexts
  - Experience of the H&S and maintenance issues surrounding such projects
  - Experience of integrating into wider design teams
- (30%) Experience of working successfully with local communities, in particular:
  - Experience of working with children and young people
  - Successful translation of engagement findings into physical artworks
- (10%) Information supplied by referees (where taken up)

Each shortlisted artist will be paid a fixed fee of £1500 for the Outline Proposal stage of the project, inclusive of all travel costs and other expenses. Shortlisted artists will present their outline proposals to the Project Board, who will then select one or more artists to progress their proposals to a detailed design stage. Note: our expectation is that one artist will be selected to develop their proposal using the entire budget available, but we reserve the right to ask more than one artist to develop their proposals further, and subsequently to negotiate contracts with more than one artist for a proportion of the available budget.

## 11. Application Requirements

Artists interested in this opportunity must first register as a supplier via the Milton Keynes Council procurement portal IN-TEND (<https://in-tendhost.co.uk/miltonkeynescouncil>). This is a simple and quick process, and once completed will enable you to access the tender opportunity and upload your application. The reference number for this commission is **QU0326**.

Please submit the following information to IN-TEND by **12 noon Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February**:

- 5-10 examples of previous projects (pdf or jpg file types only)
- A cover sheet providing basic information about each project (date, client, budget, materials etc – as appropriate)
- Curriculum Vitae including qualifications, public art commissions and experience of working with communities
- Letter confirming your availability, willingness to be DBS checked, agreement to have your application data retained by Milton Keynes Council for consideration on future projects, and any other information you deem appropriate
- Contact details (email and telephone) for 2 referees, stating what relationship exists between the artist and the referee – *note: preferably these should be from recent commissioners of similar artworks*

Applicants are advised to refer to the assessment criteria outlined above in section 10, since it is the information you provide that will be used for the initial shortlisting.

## 12. Further information

At this stage the Artist Brief should provide sufficient information for you to decide whether to make an application. However if you have any further queries then please contact:

**Richard Hollinshead**      Public Arts Officer, Community Facilities Unit  
01908 253606   richard.hollinshead@milton-keynes.gov.uk  
(note: Richard works on Wednesday and Friday only)

**Phillip Snell**              Project Manager, Public Realm Services Group  
01908 253606   phillip.snell@milton-keynes.gov.uk