

## Public Art Commission Brief

**An opportunity for an artist or artist collective to create a public work of art inspired by Worcester’s porcelain heritage within the former factory site.**

**Commission Fee: £75 000, submit proposals by 12pm Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023**

*This is an exciting opportunity to work with a unique and important regenerated site of British industrial and design history, and the communities around it, on a placemaking project that will engage residents and visitors with a history of local and global significance.*

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### 1. Site History and Context

From the 1780s until the final closure of Royal Worcester in 2009 porcelain was produced at the Severn Street factory site conveniently close to the River Severn and canal. It is a short walk from and within sight of Worcester Cathedral and the city centre. From 1840 it was the main production site as other rival porcelain factories in the city were absorbed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century into what became The Worcester Royal Porcelain Company. A large area of land was dedicated to all the required manufacturing processes with a purpose-built showroom,

## Former Porcelain Works Site – Public Art Opportunity 2023

still standing today, to cater to customers. It is a living history with many Worcester residents and members of their families having worked at 'The Porcelain', as the factory was affectionately known.

Following the factory closure the site has been regenerated by Berkeley Homes as a mix of high and medium density residential development and public access routes and spaces, with some business units. This transformation is largely complete – an inner section of the site remains under development. The historic Severn Street frontage has been conserved and redeveloped by independent local arts charity, the Bransford Trust, to create high quality spaces for creative businesses and an independent café. The original factory Showroom within this 'Royal Porcelain Works' (RPW) complex is now a function, performance and community venue managed by RPW. Across the landscaped courtyard stands the Museum of Royal Worcester, an independent charity established in 1946 to make the heritage of Worcester porcelain accessible through displays, exhibitions and events. The MoRW looks after over 8000 ceramic objects and extensive archive in historic premises, a former Victorian schoolhouse where many factory workers and their children would have gone to school. **(See Appendix A for site views and plan).**

Royal Worcester porcelain, recognised worldwide as an exemplar of English ceramic skill and quality, was a giant of the global ceramics industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Porcelain was first manufactured in Worcester in 1751 by pioneering medical doctor and artist Dr John Wall. It was one of the earliest, and the first commercially successful, porcelain factories in England – combining a porcelain body that could withstand boiling water with the most fashionable design and decoration. Worcester porcelain was crucial in the history of transfer-printing and the Midlands industrial revolution and was a star of the 19<sup>th</sup> century international trade exhibitions winning prizes with astonishing feats of ceramic artistry. At closure it held the longest continuous Royal Warrant of any English ceramic firm with an incredible reach into people's lives. At one time, it was said that one in four households owned a piece!

## 2. Project Background

**A Section 106 planning condition on the site development allows for a heritage interpretation signage scheme and public art commission to ensure that this exceptional and significant heritage is embedded and celebrated in this regenerated locality.**

**The artwork(s) is envisaged as a visual statement that will provide impact, showcase the porcelain history of the Severn Street site and enhance the experience, appearance and character of the public space.**

This **public art commission is one of three strands** within the wider S106 project that will be delivered concurrently. The other two complementary elements are:

- A suite of heritage interpretation boards with visuals, text and possibly tactile elements installed at key locations throughout the site identifying relevant buildings, manufacturing processes, social history
- An oral history strand where interviews recorded with former factory workers around the time of the factory closure are made more accessible digitally and via QR codes used on site signage and in the public venues of the Royal Porcelain Works and Museum of Royal Worcester; relevant digital content will be added to the Know Your Place App where information is linked to map locations

### 3. Commission Opportunity Outline

#### 3.1 We will provide:

- **An artist commission fee and opportunity** to create a prominent site-specific public artwork or artworks using creative approaches to celebrate Worcester porcelain, its history and special material qualities
- **Time to engage with the largest collection of Worcester porcelain in the world and associated rich archive** held at the Museum of Royal Worcester to inspire and inform your ideas and the resulting installation
- **Engagement with local residents, site stakeholders, ex-factory workers and other networks** to develop and inform the project
- **Liaison with site partners, funders and stakeholders, and project management/marketing support**

#### 3.2 Project Management:

This project is led by a small committed steering group including Worcester City Council Planning and Heritage Officers, Museum of Royal Worcester staff, Royal Porcelain Works staff, local residents and councillors, and will suit individuals with energy, enthusiasm and a collaborative approach. The Museum of Royal Worcester is providing artist liaison and project management for the commissioning process.

#### 3.3 Project Brief:

**We wish to commission a work of public art that will surprise, delight and raise awareness and appreciation of Worcester's porcelain heritage.**

It should flag and celebrate this heritage for visitors/tourists to the site on a day visit or longer stay in the area, and for Worcester city and region residents attending or passing through the site on foot on a regular or irregular basis. In addition to this it should be meaningful and resonant for the residents of the redeveloped site for whom it is their neighbourhood.

The artwork or artworks should act as a striking and attractive signpost and creative response to the site's porcelain heritage. It should use artistic practice to in some way pick up on the distinctive visual, material and/or tactile qualities of Worcester porcelain, its forms

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or decoration. It is important that it embodies and expresses the beauty, skill and quality of the porcelain. It can be playful and we are interested in proposals with a tactile dimension.

We are looking for a strong artistic practice and demonstrable experience/understanding of public art. Experience of working with communities, multiple stakeholders and creating site-specific works will be highly valued. We have no fixed ideas around artform, medium or process. Low maintenance lighting as an element of artworks is of interest. Water features are not considered feasible.

The artwork must be resilient and use materials and fixings of a suitable quality to last for 20 years. Its installation must be secure but not irreversible; where a location on any building wall is settled on it should not cause any damage that cannot be made good with modest expense. Any maintenance required should be minimal, straightforward and affordable to undertake.

It must complement the regenerated built environment which has been developed to a high standard and strikes a balance between restored and preserved heritage elements and modern architectural and garden design additions. It should be conceived in appropriate relation to the heritage interpretation scheme, other site signage, and the opportunities to invite people to visit the Museum and access programmes held at Royal Porcelain Works

A number of potential location options around the site have been identified including external building walls and freestanding locations, **these are set out in Appendix B – with images, notes and mapped on site plan**. You may wish to focus on one, propose a concept for multiple locations, or present ideas for more than one location. With the steering group and as part of the commissioning process the location choice and installation option deemed best will be worked through.

#### 4. Timescale:

1 – 14 August 2023 – shortlisting proposals

w/c 14 August 2023 – invites to interview

w/c 4 September 2023 – panel interview and artist appointment, contract

**16 September 2023 – community consultation event including appointed artist if available**

October 2023 – February 2024 public engagement, artist research and concept development

March 2024 – consideration and sign-off of detailed artwork commission proposals

April-June 2024 – fabrication and planning of installation, public dissemination of designs

July-September 2024 – installation

October 2024 – launch/celebration event

#### 5. Fee, deliverables and requirements:

**The commission fee is £75 000 exclusive of any VAT.** This sum must cover the following:

- Your time and expenses to visit us as required during the project, carry out research and your time at up to 2 public consultation events and attendance at appropriate steering group meetings

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- Time and materials to create your artwork design, test any methods or samples and refine in response to steering group review process
- Time, materials and equipment hire or purchase, subcontractor costs, required for fabrication of the artwork and installation on-site
- A risk assessment and method statement for the installation of and positioning of the artwork and a post-installation care and maintenance schedule for the artwork(s)
- Attendance at a launch event for the artwork, and participation in relevant promotional activity for the project
- Reflections from you after delivery for evaluation

This is a freelance commission – you must be registered as self-employed, and will be responsible for your own tax and National Insurance and be able to provide evidence of current public liability insurance minimum £5 million. You should have a current DBS check or undertake one through Worcester City Council.

The commission fee will be paid in three instalments: the first upon the commission contract being signed by all parties, the second upon approval of final detailed artwork design and the third upon fulfilment of the contract.

### 6. How to apply:

Your application should be submitted by email as one pdf\* with text in a minimum font size of 10; it must include the following:

\*you can use adobe acrobat's free merge tool to combine documents

<https://www.adobe.com/uk/acrobat/online/merge-pdf.html>

- A brief artist statement of approximately one A4 page describing your creative practice, with images or selected links to previous projects (maximum of three) that support your proposal
- A proposal of no more than four A4 pages, with images where appropriate, outlining your response to the brief, what approaches you might take, and what you find inspiring about Worcester porcelain/the Severn Street site; this should be written with reference to the selection criteria set out below and noting the context provided in Appendices A and B
- An outline breakdown of commission costs to artist time/materials/installation/any other anticipated costs *Please note – we are not expecting a detailed budget at this stage, but an indication that the scope and costing of your proposal fits the brief.*
- Your CV and contact details including links to any relevant professional social media accounts

Please DO NOT attach image or video files separately to your email but embed them as images or links in your proposal document, a maximum of three links please.

If you have any particular access requirements in order for you to submit an application, please contact us and we will endeavour to meet them.

Please email your proposal to [procurement@worcester.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@worcester.gov.uk) by 12pm on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023

Late submissions will not be considered.

### 7. Selection Process and Criteria:

Submissions will be reviewed by a panel of site partners including staff from Worcester City Council, the Museum of Royal Worcester, the Royal Porcelain Works, and local resident representative(s).

They will be shortlisted against the following criteria, **please note the weighting of each criterion in brackets:**

- Fit to the brief and evocation of the porcelain heritage of the site (30%)
- Quality of ideas, inventiveness, and originality (20%)
- Demonstrable skills and experience in creating robust and attractive work for public spaces (20%)
- Experience of stakeholder and community engagement with arts projects (20%)
- Realistic and appropriate allocation of commission fee to achieve deliverables (10%)

An initial evaluation of proposals against the required submission elements will be undertaken and where they are incomplete or insufficient in addressing the listed requirements they may not be progressed to shortlisting.

Shortlisting will be carried out independently by panel members. A moderation process will be undertaken as a panel to review any differences in individual evaluator scoring and agree a consensus shortlist with reference to the project aims and requirements.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview to present their proposed approach and relevant experience. This will be a moderating interview where the panel will confirm their understanding of the shortlisted proposals and review/adjust the original scoring against the same criteria set out above. No new criteria or weightings will be introduced at this stage.

Please email your proposal to [procurement@worcester.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@worcester.gov.uk) by 12pm on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023

Interviews will take place week commencing 4 September 2023, they will be held in person as far as possible.

We would like the successful candidate to join a community event scheduled to take place on the site on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023 as far as they are available.

### 8. Additional Information



### 8.1 Appendix A site views and plan

8.2 Appendix B potential art commission locations with images, notes and mapped on site plan.

### 8.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Worcester City Council is committed to reducing inequality and safeguarding the rights of people protected by the Equality Act 2010. The council aspires to lead by example by tackling inequality, challenging discrimination, promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity to help the Council to achieve its vision for the city. We will lead by example, work with others, invest in communities, and listen and act when people tell us how we can deliver better services. You can read our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and find ways to contact us in relation to this here <https://www.worcester.gov.uk/council/equality-inclusion>.

We expect this public art project to be undertaken in line with these principles as both an inclusive artist recruitment process and delivered in a way that welcomes and involves stakeholders across the community.

### 8.4 Privacy Notice

Worcester City Council complies with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR), is committed to protecting your privacy and is registered as a data controller with the Information Commissioner's Office Z6062884

Our Privacy Notice that explains how we will use any information about you and how we protect your privacy in relation to the public art project at the former Worcester porcelain works site is on our website here <https://www.worcester.gov.uk/notices/privacy-policy>.

Please also note that information about you in relation to a proposal you submit to this Commission opportunity will be shared with and handled by the Museum of Royal Worcester for the purposes of administering and supporting the commissioning process. This will only be to the extent necessary to deliver the project; the Museum of Royal Worcester is registered as a data controller with the Information Commissioner's Office ZA920930 and will observe the same standards in data handling and security as Worcester City Council.

### 8.5 Freedom of information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004

The Authority is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "Act") and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR"). Accordingly, all information submitted to it may need to be disclosed by the Authority in response to a request under either the Act or the EIR (a "Request").

In making any proposal for this commission opportunity each applicant acknowledges and accepts that information contained therein may be disclosed by the Authority under the Act or EIR without consulting the applicant, although the Authority will endeavour to consult with the applicant and consider their views before doing so.

If applicants consider that any information made available to the Authority is commercially sensitive, they should identify it and explain (in broad terms) what harm may result from disclosure, and the time period applicable to that sensitivity. Even where information made available to the Authority is marked commercially sensitive, the Authority shall be entitled (acting in its sole discretion) to disclose it pursuant to a Request. Please also note that information marked "confidential" or equivalent by applicants does not bind the Authority to any duty of confidence by virtue of that marking.

Exemptions to disclosure pursuant to a Request do exist and the Authority reserves the right to determine (acting in its sole discretion) whether there is any available exemption and whether to disclose any information made available to it by applicants pursuant to any Request. If you are unsure as to the Authority's obligations under the Act or EIR regarding the disclosure of sensitive information please seek independent legal advice.

### **8.6 Data Protection Legislation**

By submitting a proposal the applicant is confirming to the Council that it is fully compliant with the requirements of the current Data Protection Legislation including the General Data Protection Regulations and has in place compliant systems and processes to act as a Data Processor if relevant and required.

Proposals are submitted on the condition that the appointed applicant will only process personal data (as may be defined under any relevant data protection laws) that it gains access to in performance of this Contract in accordance with the Council's instructions and will not use such personal data for any other purpose. The applicant will undertake to process any personal data on the Council's behalf in accordance with the relevant provisions of any relevant data protection laws and to ensure all consents required under such laws are obtained.

### **8.7 Intellectual Property**

This Commission brief may not be reproduced, copied or stored in any medium without the prior written consent of the Authority except in relation to the preparation of a proposal.

All documentation supplied by the Authority in relation to this commission opportunity is and shall remain the property of the Authority and must be returned on demand, without any copies being retained. Applicants are not authorised to copy, reproduce, or distribute the information in the Commission brief at any time except as is necessary to produce a proposal.