

Affordable artists' studios

at the Royal Opera House Production Park, Thurrock
- a unique opportunity!



Sketch of the proposed studio building. Image: Stock Woolstencroft (2010)

Dear Artist,

I should like to make you aware of an exciting opportunity to become part of a unique creative community currently under development in the Thames Gateway. Acme Studios has been commissioned to undertake a study to look at the demand for and feasibility of creating affordable, purpose-built artists' studios as part of the Royal Opera House Production Park in Thurrock, Essex. The commission is on behalf of Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation, in partnership with Arts Council England, East, two of the lead partners in the Royal Opera House Production Park project.

Please find below a description of the proposed studios and the context in which they will operate. If you are an artist in East London, Essex, Kent or East Anglia and would be interested in renting a studio please complete the short questionnaire which can be accessed from our website - www.acme.org.uk/thurrock.php. This can be completed online or downloaded and returned to thurrock@acme.org.uk. If you have any questions or require this information in an alternative format, please contact the Acme office on 020 8981 6811.

Completing the questionnaire will not only provide you with the opportunity to register an interest in taking a studio (we will then keep you informed as the project develops) but also allow you to comment on and influence the final outcome of the project itself. The deadline for receipt of questionnaires is **Friday 30th April**.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Harvey,
Chief Executive, Acme Studios



Background

A ground-breaking scheme for artists' studios is planned as part of a major new production park for the arts in the Thames Gateway. High-quality studios will stand alongside the Royal Opera House's new set and scenery workshops, the National Skills Academy for Creative & Cultural Skills and the restored Grade II listed farm buildings.

Artists' studios have from the outset been central to the vision for the development of the 14-acre site, which is underpinned by a commitment to high quality design and excellence.

'The development of artists' studios on the Park adds another rich layer to the unique cultural mix. Opportunities to engage with the Park community, local population and the wide range of "cultural tourists" who will be attracted to the Park, will offer artists unrivalled professional development and creative inspiration.'

Stephen Spencer, Production Park Director,
Thurrock Thames Gateway Development
Corporation

Visualisation of the Park showing the walled garden, the National Skills Academy (right) and the Royal Opera House Production building (left). Image: TTGDC

The Park

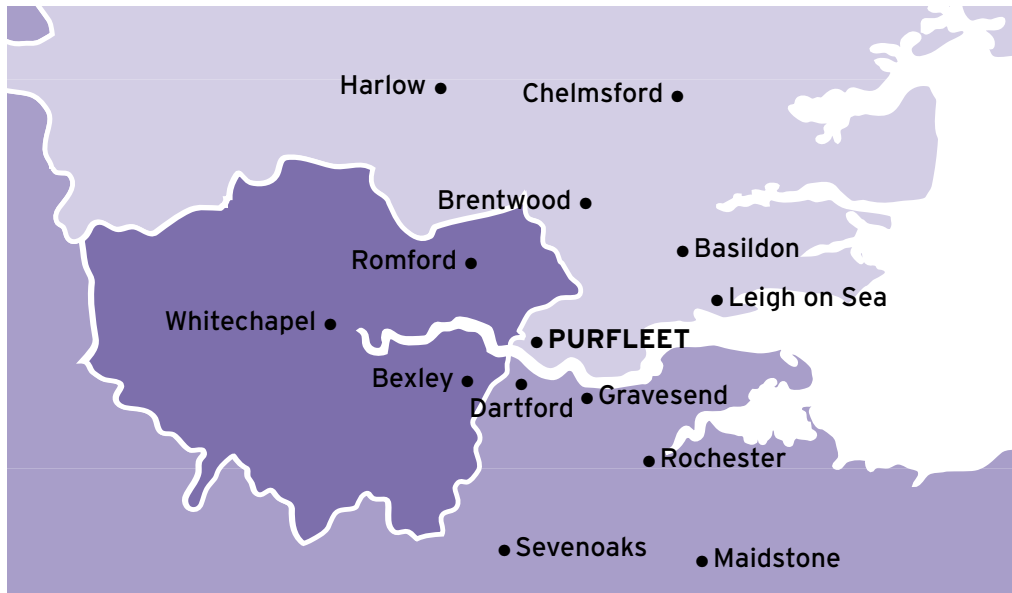
The Royal Opera House Production Park in Purfleet is the UK's first-ever national centre of excellence for technical skills, crafts and artistic production. Uniquely, the focus of the park will be on cultural production; the project partners understand the importance of the 'behind the scenes' work necessary to create music, craft and art.

The centrepiece of the Park is the Royal Opera House Production Facility; an eco-friendly, grass-roofed hangar which will house Covent Garden's internationally acclaimed set building and scenic artists' teams. The large new space will mimic the main London stage, allowing sets and materials to be built and trialled on site.

The National Skills Academy is developing a Centre of Excellence at the Park which is due to open in early 2012. The bespoke building will offer training in backstage theatre and live music aimed at top level practitioners together with entry and mid-career level learners.

Existing Grade II listed farm buildings at High House have been restored to provide a café, meeting and exhibition spaces. The Park will be extensively landscaped with a new play park,

Selected towns and distances from the Park - Brentwood (19 mins), Bexley (23 mins), Sevenoaks (27 mins), Chelmsford (37 mins), Maidstone (37 mins), Whitechapel (41 mins)
 *AA Route Planner
www.theaa.com/route-planner/index.jsp



mature trees and a wild-flower meadow. An historic walled garden will be restored to include an outside performance space and seating area.

The Park is close to the estuary and from its elevated position there are extraordinary views of the Dartford Bridge and, up river, of Canary Wharf in the distance.

Studios

The Park's emphasis on arts production will create a unique cultural environment for artists' studios. Outline planning permission has been granted for a three-storey building with a 750 m² footprint. Acme is working with architects Stock Woolstencroft to develop outline designs which will generate a total of 17,500 square feet of studio space within the permitted development. The ground floor will contain up to seven large spaces with individual entrances, WCs and wash up areas, four-metre high ceilings and extra-wide doors. The largest of these units will be 123 m² (1,324 f²) and all will have the flexibility to function either as private studios, short-term commissioning/project spaces or as public spaces for exhibitions or events. There will be an oversized lift serving the upper floors

and the ground floor will contain bin and bike stores.

There will be 36 units on the two upper floors which will include a range of sizes from 12 m² (129 f²) to 51 m² (549 f²). The first floor will have three-metre high ceilings and the top floor units will be over four metres in height with skylights. Each floor will be served by a communal WC/ washroom.

All studios will have sub-metered lighting, power and heating and be Wi-Fi enabled.

Location

The Park is located in the village of Purfleet, near to the M25 Dartford Crossing and A13 to London. The studios will have a dedicated loading and drop-off point and disabled parking spaces. Free parking will be available elsewhere on the site.

Purfleet railway station is just under a mile from the Park and a free shuttle bus will be provided for people working there. C2C trains run directly to London Fenchurch Street and to Southend-on-Sea via Grays.

FENCHURCH ST	LIMEHOUSE	WEST HAM	BARKING	PURFLEET	GRAYS	SOUTHEND-ON-SEA
→	→	→	→		←	←
29 MINS	25 MINS	20 MINS	14 MINS		5 MINS	61 MINS

*The Trainline www.thetrainline.com

Renting a studio

If the project goes ahead it is proposed that the studios would be made available to artists to rent for an initial maximum period of seven years. Tenants would be able to give two months' notice at any time after the first six months. Short-term rentals (six months to a year) would also be considered. The rent would be inclusive of all charges with the exception of electricity which would be sub-metered and charged quarterly in arrears.

The target rent at this stage is £7.50 per square foot per annum (£80.73 m² per annum). Based on this figure, the monthly rent would range from £81 for a 129 f² studio (12 m²) to £756 for a 1,210 f² studio (112.5 m²). This rent is considerably lower than the current average for artists' studios in East London.

Allocation

Artists will be eligible if they work in fine art practice (e.g. painting, sculpture, print-making, fine art photography, installation, performance, multi-media, video and time-based work). Artists applying would need to provide a curriculum vitae and description of their work, together with a statement as to how they would intend to use their studio and how it would benefit their practice.

'This unique centre of excellence will offer purpose-built workspace for artists and a wealth of opportunities to develop their practice, explore new collaborations and engage with communities across the region.'

Mark Richards, Head of Resource Development,
Arts Council England, East

Timetable

Work on the project is planned to commence in 2011/12 and a specialist partner will be appointed to manage the studios.

Please contact us on 020 8981 6811 if you require this information in an alternative format.



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