

Inside the Old Shop – Developing a Dedicated Space for Under 5s at the Barbican

About the Project/Background

Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning are seeking proposals from artists, collectives or companies for an inspirational child-led creative play space, which will serve as a dedicated central venue in the Barbican for young children aged 0-5 years old and their families.

Building on the successes and learning of existing early-years engagement on site, we would like to develop a new play provision as a semi-permanent contribution to the Barbican's public offer for families.

The semi-permanent offer will be housed in the Barbican's 'Old Shop' space, which is a multi-use space designated for under 5s activity during the day, a talks programme in the evenings and other events as required by the centre.

This new space will be open and accessible for families with children aged 0-5 years every day, centre-wide programming permitting. The creative play offer will be predominantly self-facilitated, and will be complemented by regular facilitated sessions within the space, led by experienced Play Worker staff.

Proposals must:

- encourage child-led play, nurturing creativity and imagination from a young age
- align with the Early Years Foundation Stages and engage with current pedagogies and best practice in learning and play
- respond to the Barbican's multi-art form programme and/or unique architecture
- over the course of a year, offer an accessible interactive experience for up to 6,000 babies and young children and their families
- be self-led and interactive in nature, with the potential for additional facilitated sessions
- be both designed and built by the artists/companies
- consider the project as a year-long residency, with an installation that should be responsive and adaptable based on use/behaviours – review points will be built into the schedule
- be semi-permanent and constructed in such a way that it can be concealed within two hours/with minimal intervention so that the space can be utilised for talks + public events on certain evenings
- consider access, health and safety and safeguarding requirements appropriately for under 5s play

Proposals may:

- include digital and tactile elements, including light, sound and sensory play
- include a mix of bespoke and commercially available pieces, but the overall design concept and pedagogy should be unique

Proposals should be aware of Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning’s objectives which are to:

- test the boundaries of play in the context of a multi-arts centre
- deliver and evaluate the programme as a year-long residency from spring 2018
- create a safe, cohesive space that positively and actively contributes to stronger communities and reduces social isolation
- widen participation of children from diverse, disadvantaged, low engagement backgrounds and communities by encouraging new audiences to engage with the Barbican
- provide a platform to explore play across the art forms
- work to engage with the needs of local partners and stakeholders, including the Barbican Children’s Library, the LSO and a local Barbican nursery

Physical parameters:

The Barbican’s ‘Old Shop’ space will be undergoing some changes to make it more suitable as a multi-use space for our wider public programme offer. Proposals should consider maintenance and/or replacement costs for an offer that should last for up to a year of heavy use. Please see the attached appendix that outlines more details about the space.

Budget

The budget for this project is a £8-£10k over the year. This must include:

- design and build
- maintenance across the year
- meetings and evaluation
- ongoing contact with the Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning team in order to deliver the project across the year

Timeline

March 2018	Brief circulated for proposals
Tues 3 April, 5pm	Deadline for proposals
Mon 23 April	Shortlisted applicants will be contacted
Wed 9 May	Provisional date for meeting shortlisted applicants

w/c 14 May	Feedback to candidates and appointment of successful concept
by End of June	New provision installed and opened

Next steps

We invite proposals from artists, collectives or companies who share our creative vision for creating a high-quality, arts-inspired under 5s offer.

Proposals should be submitted to creative.learning@barbican.org.uk by 5pm on **Tuesday 3 April**.

If you have any queries or would like to arrange a site visit to the space please contact Chris Webb chris.webb@barbican.org.uk or Lauren Monaghan-Pisano lauren.monaghan-pisano@barbican.org.uk

Case Study – Barbican Blocks

In 2017 we launched a new initiative for families with very young children, Barbican Blocks. Designed for families with children aged 0-5 to explore, play and stretch their imaginations, Barbican Blocks has proved a much welcomed addition to our foyers. Since opening on 3 February, we have been at capacity during every session. Children and parents/carers who live in and around the Barbican attend, as well as families who live further afield.

The project was designed and developed with Early Years specialists Co-DB and Pop up Parks, and ran in two residencies: Feb-August 2017, and November 2017-April 2018.

Since the project launched we have run 95 sessions facilitated by Play Workers and Barbican staff, with approximately 4,548 under-fives, parents and carers attending (average of 45 per session). Participants have given Barbican Blocks an average customer satisfaction rating of 4.59 out of 5, with 100% of attendees stating that they felt it was important that the Barbican are doing this, and 100% stating that they feel welcomed at the Barbican.

"I have been three times now with my one year old, and she absolutely loves it! It's made the Barbican a great place for us to go during the week." Participant, Barbican Block

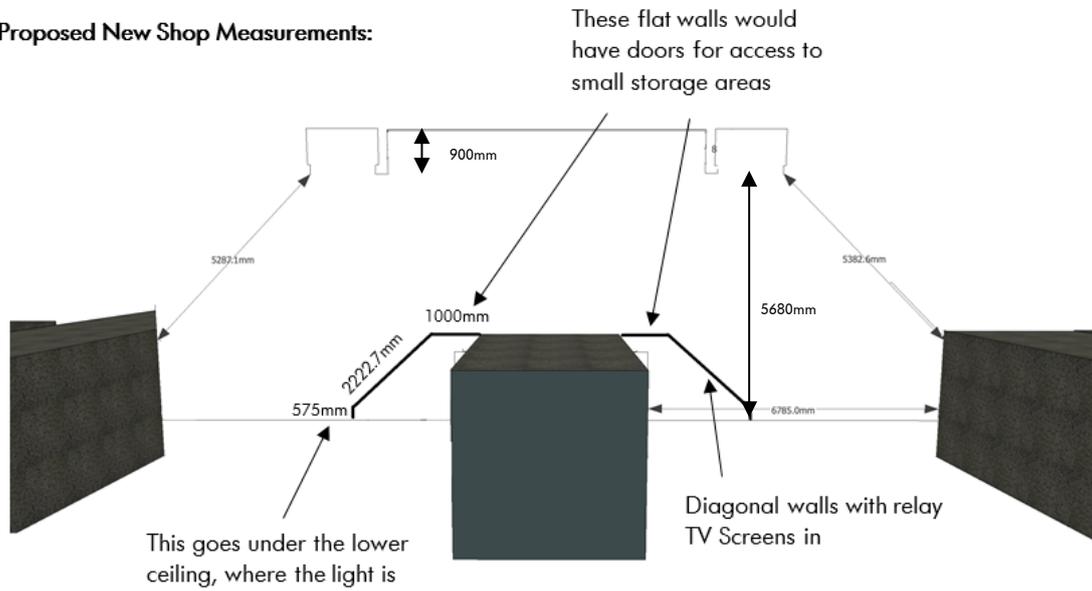
Evaluation

Evaluation for the project was embedded from the outset to enable assessment of progress against the desired outcomes. Thoroughly evaluating the programme every year enables us to be responsive, refining the model when necessary to ensure it continues to meet the needs of participants. Data was collected throughout the project. All data collection methods are appropriate for the age and experience of the groups (for example through participatory facilitated exercises rather than extensive written feedback).



About the Space

Proposed New Shop Measurements:



Rendered drawing (V1) or new space layout for multipurpose space (Under 5s offer and Talks programme)

