



# RUSS: CALL OUT TO DESIGN OUR NEW CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA!

## ABOUT RUSS

RUSS is a member-led Community Land Trust based in southeast London. The trust was set up to create sustainable, community-led neighborhoods and permanently affordable housing across London.

Our first project of 36 homes on a disused site next to the Ravensbourne River, a short walk away from Ladywell station, is now complete. The homes are a mixture of different sizes and tenure, including private ownership, shared ownership and affordable rent. On the same site, we are creating a new public park to foster biodiversity, community and play.

This new public park will open up a previously inaccessible section of the Ravensbourne River and restore nature to its banks. It will include numerous newly planted trees and shrubs, communal vegetable beds, a cycling repair station, and carefully curated public artworks.

## 1. THE BRIEF

### PROJECT AMBITIONS:

Central to this park is the commissioning of a new play area that will be designed by a selected creative practitioner or collective and built collaboratively by RUSS volunteers and residents, with support from external fabricators if required.

The ambition for this area is to encourage imaginative, participatory and collaborative play. Designed for varying ages, we want it to feel like an exciting new space that children can explore and creatively engage in. We are hoping to incorporate an element of discovery and intrigue, allowing each child to make it their own.

We are committed to accessibility and the need to integrate features that engage neurodiverse visitors and those with physical disabilities. As part of the

developed design phase, we plan to collaborate with accessibility specialists to bring this to the forefront of the design. In the initial proposal stage, we would encourage a focus on sensory elements - texture, sound and movement.

We are eager for the play area to offer an experience that is varied and accommodates diverse needs or preferences. For example, if some spaces are designed to be open and collaborative, there could also include areas that offer something more intimate and private. A multi-faceted, sensitive design will offer an alternative to the prescriptive norms of playground equipment and facilitate inventive, exploratory play.

### THE PROJECT WILL:

- Provide a piece of play equipment as part of a new public park opening in Lewisham.
- Offer something to local community that is not otherwise available. This will require some understanding of the local parks and gardens to establish what will most benefit the community.
- Offer an accessible and varied experience that caters to different needs and preferences.
- Where possible, be built by RUSS volunteers and residents. External fabricators will be used if needed.
- Be hardwearing, easy to maintain and sustainable.
- Meet EN 1176 standards and undergo annual inspections by an independent specialist.

### THE CREATIVE PRACTITIONER(S) WILL:

- Be inspired and committed to the objectives of this project.
- Abide by RUSS guiding principles: <https://www.theruss.org/about/guiding-principles/>



- Have a portfolio of relevant projects or work. Experience producing larger scale public art projects is not necessary, but some evidence of successfully realising ambitious projects would be beneficial.
- Have a clear interest in fostering communities and creative play.
- Be willing to engage with the local community, RUSS residents and collaborate with an accessibility specialist.
- Be sensitive to feasibility and budget and be excited to work as part of a committed team to respond creatively to any project challenges that arise.
- We welcome applications from individual practitioners or collectives.



Church Grove housing project

## 2. THE SITE:

Please see images and site plans at the end of this document. One site labelled PLAY AREA has been proposed as a suitable location but other suggestions are welcome.

Dimensions of site: 8.5m x 5.5m

We would encourage a site visit to get a better understanding of the gardens and surrounding homes. Please do not hesitate to contact us to arrange this.

## 3. HOW TO APPLY:

Deadline for application: 10th May 2024

Creative practitioners are invited to apply with an expression of interest and initial concept ideas. These initial ideas can be wide-ranging and should just indicate the direction your thoughts are going in and any immediate inspiration you have derived from the brief.

If you are interested in applying, we would be happy to welcome you to RUSS for a site visit. Please get in touch with [info@theruss.org](mailto:info@theruss.org) to arrange this.

Please include in your application:

- Expression of interest – no longer than one page of writing setting out your practice, why you are interested in this project, an outline of your design process, and any initial ideas.
- Initial sketches or ideas are welcomed if they support the written statement, but not required.
- An up to date CV highlighting relevant experience/projects and two references.
- A portfolio of images of your creative practice.



Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview. As part of this interview, they will have the opportunity to meet RUSS residents to discuss their idea and respond to any preliminary thoughts or feedback.

When submitting your application, please state your availability for each of the following options:

- May 16th AM
- May 16th PM
- May 17th AM
- May 17th PM

If during the application process we consider some applications to be complimentary or believe applicants could benefit from additional expertise, we may suggest a collaboration. This will only be offered as a suggestion and there is no obligation to accept.

## 4. TIMELINE:

### SELECTION TIMELINE:

Application deadline: 10th May

Interviews: 16th-17th May

Successful applicants announced: 20th – 21st May

### PROJECT TIMELINE:

Follow up meeting with residents: May 23rd –27th

Preliminary design: May 31st

This preliminary design should provide a more developed idea and indicate what materials and methods will be used. A detailed budget is not required at this stage, but an idea of overall costs and feasibility is necessary.

Installation: June – August – flexibility is offered to fit the practitioner(s)' schedule and any other preferences (e.g school holidays).

## 5. BUDGET

Total project budget: £10,000

We recommend you including in your budget an artist fee, materials, and any external fabrication or labour support.

## KEY CONTACTS:

Please email [info@theruss.org](mailto:info@theruss.org) for any enquiries and to organise site visits.



Suggested site for play area



SITE IMAGES:



