



artists' studios:

**a guide to securing, supporting and
creating affordable studios in London**

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Preface

This 'guide' has been developed by **Capital Studios - the London Artists' Studios Development Programme**. Capital Studios is an advocacy programme which aims to raise awareness of artists' workspace as an important element in urban renewal programmes, with a view to creating opportunities for long-term sustainability and growth.

Led by **Acme Studios** on behalf of affordable studio providers in London and supported by Arts Council England, the advocacy programme is directed at key bodies: local authorities, development agencies, property developers and housing associations - all those with a role in developing sustainable communities.

The Capital Studios programme is time-limited and will be concluded in spring 2007. Acme Studios will continue to work with Arts Council England, the National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers and studio groups and organisations, to ensure that the interest and opportunities raised by the programme can be maintained and developed.

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1 What is this guide and who is it for?



ACAVA artist, Roland Lawar with children from Langford School at Tate Modern.
Photo: Justin Piperger

This guide is for developers – local authorities, registered social landlords and private sector developers. It provides information on affordable studio providers in London, and their contribution to the cultural and economic life of the capital. Using case studies and examples it provides guidance on how to achieve sustainable studio developments and provides a list of studio organisation contacts and sources of help and advice.

London is a world centre for the contemporary visual arts. In 2005, the Frieze Art Fair had 47,000 visitors in just four days. Tate attracted more than six million visitors in 2004/05 with four million going to Tate Modern alone, making it the most visited modern art museum in the world. Over 40 per cent of the country's visual artists and photographers are based in the capital, and one in five new jobs in London is in the creative industries.

British visual artists are world class. Their power as cultural ambassadors is shown by the international demand for their work. The work of our distinguished visual artists is represented in museums, galleries and biennales all over the world.¹

Audiences for contemporary art are especially large in London where the distinctive skills and approaches of contemporary visual artists are increasingly benefiting a wide range of communities in a variety of ways.

London's affordable studio organisations play a vital role in this success by supporting artists at the basic level of production, enabling them to sustain and develop their practice. Studio organisations and their tenant-artists also make a significant contribution to the well-being and sustainability of local communities. By encouraging innovation and creativity across the social and regeneration agendas, studio organisations deliver cultural, community and economic benefits.

The affordable studio sector has developed over a period of forty years. There are more studio buildings in London than the rest of England combined, with 58 per cent of the total studio space located in the capital. More than two-thirds of this space is in the east and south east of the capital. Thirty-one groups and organisations manage 89 buildings providing affordable studios for 2,500 artists. But, with over 3,500 artists on waiting lists there is a high, and growing, unmet demand for studios.

As well as providing space for artists to research, experiment and make work, more than 50 per cent of all studio buildings in London have public spaces for exhibition and education programmes. Studio organisations help to demystify contemporary art by providing alternative spaces for the public to view work and meet those who create it, and to participate and learn about the visual arts.

Despite apparent success, the studios sector is seriously under threat. Having played a major role in regeneration, artists' workspaces have been squeezed out of many inner city areas. In particular artists have made a significant contribution to the growth and development of East London, which has been pivotal to the current vitality and world-wide recognition of the visual arts in London and Britain. However, even here, their position is far from secure.

Rising land values and new development schemes are, more than ever, having an adverse effect on the provision of affordable workspace for artists. With the leases of many spaces due to expire within seven years, London could lose up to 430 affordable studios. There are also fewer options for replacement and development through the traditional 'self-help' route. London's vibrant, diverse and influential culture has been promoted as a significant aspect of London 2012, but the very studio organisations that have contributed to that vitality are under threat from commercial developers exploiting the opportunities the Olympics present.

There is no single solution to the provision of artists' workspace. Each situation requires a different approach. However, there are agencies, including existing studio providers, who can appraise and advise on development opportunities if involved at an early enough stage.

The history of the sector has been characterised by self-help and opportunism. Future developments, however, will require partnerships between studio organisations and commercial, public and social developers, brokered and supported by development and funding agencies. If these partnerships are not realised the sector faces both a reduction in the number of affordable studios overall and many organisations will be forced to relocate further from the centre.

New opportunities do exist for the development of sustainable studios in major development areas like the Thames Gateway and elsewhere across the capital. Within mixed-use developments cross-subsidy or planning gain can be exploited to achieve affordable workspace. Underpinning these opportunities is the growing recognition not only of the considerable value of investing in affordable artists' studio provision, but of the significant *added value* achieved in the acquisition of permanent freehold rather than leasehold property.

If we value art, we must value artists. Ensuring there are appropriate, secure facilities for the long term means artists can continue to make work and contribute to a creative and vibrant city for the benefit of all.



Acme Studios' Carpenters Road studios. Established in 1985 and proving 140 affordable studios, the building was demolished to make way for the 2012 Olympics. Photo: Hugo Glendinning



Paula Haughney-Law and her daughter, Ruth in her Carpenters Road studio, 1995. Photo: Hugo Glendinning

Frequently asked questions

What is a non-commercial fine artist?

An artist who makes art work primarily for its creative, cultural, intellectual or philosophical value, rather than its commodity value.

Why do artists need affordable studios?

The vast majority of non-commercial fine artists do not earn enough from their art practice to afford a studio at open market rents in addition to a separate place to live. Many artists support their practice by working in education, training and community development, encouraging innovation and creativity across the social and regeneration agendas. If artists are to continue to provide maximum cultural and community benefit, they need space in which to work at a rent they can afford.

What is an affordable studio provider?

Affordable studio providers charge rents which artists are able to pay without spending too much working time on other income-generating activities. Affordable studio providers in London charge rents which are, on average, one third of those for similar space on the open market. Alongside the studio space, providers offer other resources to support the artists and their work. See page 10.

How much is an affordable rent?

A national survey conducted in 2004 showed that the average 'inclusive' rent for a London studio in the affordable studios sector was £7.54 per square foot per annum. This figure, updated to 2007 prices - £8.50 per square foot - may be taken as a benchmark of affordability. For many artists a weekly 'inclusive' rent of £50 is the maximum they can afford. See page 12.

Who pays the rates?

Many affordable studio providers have charitable status enabling them to claim 80 per cent business rate relief. The charity pays rates for the whole building rather than each studio being separately rated. Artists usually pay an 'inclusive' rent which covers all costs including rates, but not electricity. The business rate relief provides a reduction of £1 to £1.50 per square foot on individual artists' rents.

Aren't there plenty of affordable studios available on the open market?

There appear to be studios available, although research has shown that commercially available studios are more difficult to find and offer less sympathetic terms than studios in the affordable sector. Furthermore, 'inclusive' rents are likely to be three times as expensive as those in the affordable sector, making them beyond the reach of most artists. See page 13.

What is the optimum number of studios in a building to ensure that a studio development is sustainable?

Successful studio projects range between five and over 100 studio units, but 20 to 25 should provide sufficient critical mass to enable the development of a viable business plan, and to ensure an appropriate and supportive environment within which artists can work. Buildings of this size will have an economy of scale in terms of management and running costs. See page 24.

Is there a specification for artists' studios?	The space requirements of artists vary, but the average studio is around 300 to 350 square feet. There are additional basic features that should be provided including good ceiling height, natural light, unfettered walls, 24-hour access, good general accessibility and security. See page 23.
We have an empty building available for three years. Would an affordable studio provider take it on?	This will depend on a number of factors, such as the suitability of the building, its condition, lease terms and cost. There is such a shortage of studio space that, given the right terms, a studio provider may be willing to manage it. However, this type of arrangement will not create any lasting benefits for the locality. Artists will not feel secure and will be reluctant to commit themselves to developing relationships locally when they know they will have to move on. A long renewable lease or permanent new-build studios would be a better option and provide better value for money, for all, in the long term.
Is it possible to mix artists, crafts-people and creative enterprises in one development?	Yes, it is possible to have a mix, but there needs to be a range of prices. The traditional business growth model does not apply to non-commercial fine artists whose working practice is very different from that of many creative enterprises. Non-commercial fine artists are likely to need an affordable studio for much of their working lives.
How do we ensure that there is a public face for the studios?	Most artists need a private, self-contained space in which to work, but there are ways in which studio organisations can offer opportunities for public engagement. Many take part in 'open studios' events when artists open their studios to the public. Some organisations have separate spaces in which they promote public exhibitions of contemporary art. Some run residencies or programmes of education and outreach activity involving diverse communities, on their own premises or within the local community.
How do we ensure that studio developments are inclusive?	<p>In terms of physical access, any new studio development will have to meet legal standards. However it will often be uneconomic to make older buildings accessible, particularly those on short-term leases, for example by installing an accessible lift. Studio organisations do their best to make adaptations that meet the needs of artists with differing disabilities.</p> <p>Most studio organisations have open selection procedures and several affordable studio providers run particular schemes to encourage diversity and inclusion, creating examples of good practice. These include bursaries for artists with disabilities, cultural diversity bursaries and residencies.</p>
How do we know if there is a demand for artists' studios in our area?	In some boroughs, local authority arts or cultural services departments keep a record of expressions of interest. Some may have undertaken an audit of workspace needs in their borough, or could help set one up. Some of the creative hubs, such as Creative Lewisham, maintain a register of creative practitioners' space requirements. However artists will be drawn to new studio developments if they are appropriate and affordable. Studios create demand.
I'm interested in taking this further. Where do I go next?	The following will be able to provide advice and contacts: Arts Council England, your local authority arts officer or the National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers. See page 32 for contact details.

The value of studio organisations

CUBITT is an artist-run gallery and studios in Islington, providing a vibrant environment for the creative practice of its 33 studio holders and a lively programme of public exhibitions, talks, performances, screenings and publishing projects. In receipt of regular Arts Council funding since 2001, CUBITT Gallery provides an 18-month bursary for an independent curator and tests new models of curating and exhibition-making. CUBITT upholds the importance of the artist-run space, and by virtue of its diverse studio, gallery and off-site activities, continues to promote national and international developments in visual culture.

How affordable studios benefit culture and communities

The relationship between individuals working in the creative economy and publicly funded cultural and creative infrastructure contributes significantly to the development of creative places.²

Creating cultural benefit

Affordable studio organisations make a significant contribution to the **cultural** life of London and the UK. They support artists and, therefore, the making of art. Studio organisations:

- provide the resources artists need to sustain their professional practice, make, exhibit and sell their work
- through low rents, enable artists to maximise the time they can spend in their studios
- provide a supportive environment in which artists can flourish
- by providing a secure and affordable studio, create the focus around which many artists are likely to build the rest of their lives

Some studio organisations provide public programmes of activity which enable artists, the wider arts community and members of the public to experience and engage in the visual arts. Activities might include: temporary exhibitions of contemporary art; open studios events, when artists in studio buildings open their spaces to public view; or, joint projects with neighbouring organisations. Such programmes, developed by studio organisations individually, or in collaboration with others, enhance overall cultural provision in an area and contribute to community well-being and quality of life.

Studio organisations are an important part of London's **creative industries** sector, which is recognised as a major driver for the UK and London economy. Over 40 per cent of the country's visual artists and photographers are based in the capital, and one in five new jobs in London is in the creative industries. Each year, artists wanting space to work emerge from around 1,000 courses in colleges nationwide. Studio organisations provide affordable, appropriate space for those creative people working as freelancers and sole traders. They make work that is

frequently experimental and risk-taking, that does not always have a commodity value, but which forms a vital research and development arm of the creative industries (visual arts sub-) sector.

Creating community benefit

Community Arts practice that works with and for local communities over the long term has been recognised as a vital factor in stimulating London's creative economy and developing centres of creative activity across London.

Manoj Ambasna, Report of the Mayor's Commission on the Creative Industries

Studio organisations play a significant role in the life of **communities**. They:

- are responsible tenants who, given sufficient security of tenure, develop a strong loyalty to their neighbourhood, build long-term relationships and make good use of local facilities and services

In addition, many of them:

- deliver a wide range of educational and outreach activities, enabling diverse groups of people and individuals to participate in, learn through and work in the visual arts
- are involved in a complex web of partnerships with local organisations to deliver projects which:
 - promote education and training in the arts
 - enhance the public realm
 - support social cohesion
 - reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

We value our partnership with APT and Laban. Being able to draw on the skills of their members, skilled people who work professionally in the visual arts and dance, enriches the work we do with the local community. It means we can offer the local kids and families who come on our courses so much more.

Chris Gittner, Creekside Educational Trust



Courtyard, Bow Arts Trust, Open Studios night. Photo: Jeremy Clarke

Sculpture workshop at St Paul's Way School with artist Matt Caines (Bow Arts Trust). Photo: Bow Arts



Arts Unwrapped was London's first city-wide open studios project. Forty buildings featuring the work and workspaces of around 1,000 artists and designer-makers opened to the public over three weekends in November 2005, attracting 14,000 visitors. Affordable studio organisation ASC (Artists Studios Company) manages Arts Unwrapped on behalf of Creative London and Arts Council England.

Bow Arts Trust, based in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, manages affordable studios for over 90 artists and the Nunnery gallery. The Trust also manages an educational agency and resource which works with over 25,000 young people across east and south London, delivers inset training for teachers and provides employment and training for over 100 artists.

Successful projects include Bow Arts Trust's work with St. Paul's Way Community School, a 1,200 place school in an area of severe poverty, where 87% of pupils are Bengali. The school's GCSE results were near the bottom of the league tables with only 15% A-C passes. Within the first year of becoming a specialist Visual Arts College and being the first school in the country to take on an official arts partner (Bow Arts Trust), GCSE art results were above 90% pass rate at grade A. This success has spread to all the art and media forms with results remaining in the mid 90s year on year since. The school is now achieving over 50% A-C passes across the whole curriculum.



A proposal to provide studio workshops for artists. SPACE leaflet, 1967, a proposal to occupy part of a warehouse at St Katharine Dock. Photo: SPACE Studios

SPACE Studios is the original London studio organisation. Established in 1967, SPACE currently manages 16 buildings providing affordable studios for over 500 artists. SPACE Programmes includes professional development for artists, off-site collaborations involving local communities, exhibitions at the Triangle and SPACE Media Arts, which offers media software courses and individual surgery advice. SPACE Media Arts also runs a flagship programme of projects and research engaging artists with emergent technologies.

APT (The Art in Perpetuity Trust) was one of the early arts-led organisations which saw an opportunity to utilise available industrial space to convert to artists' studios and use as a base for running and supporting education projects. There are now five studio organisations in Creekside, including the well-known Cockpit Arts and Creekside Artists, as well as other arts organisations such as Laban.

Creating economic benefit

Studio organisations make an important contribution to the **regeneration** of areas of the city. They may:

- occupy difficult, hard-to-let buildings, reducing crime and vandalism and securing funds to refurbish and bring them back into use
- act as a catalyst for the revitalisation of areas
- actively participate in the consultation processes that inform regeneration plans
- provide the security and links with neighbourhoods that artists need to enable them to play an active, creative part in the urban renewal process
- support artists who work in the public realm, in their own neighbourhoods and further afield

Artists have an important role in the renewal of a high-quality built environment, not just as creators of 'public art', but by being part of planning and design teams. This kind of cooperation works best when artists are valued from the outset as an intrinsic part of communities... Artists have an essential role in neighbourhood renewal; creating a sense of value, pride and distinctiveness.

Chris Murray, Director of Learning and Development, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) *Creating Places* conference, Tate Modern, July 2003

Studio organisations also deliver **economic** benefits to communities. They:

- add value to mixed-use developments
- can help to maintain employment use in developments, so meeting planning obligations
- provide a significant subsidy to artists by providing studios at an affordable rate (see page 13 for details of affordability and the subsidy provided)

What are studio groups and organisations? What do they do?

Artists need studios. For many artists committed to non-commercial fine art practice³, having a studio is essential. However, the vast majority of these artists do not earn enough from their art practice to be able to afford a studio at open market rents in addition to a separate place to live. Affordable studio providers respond to this need.

Currently, 31 groups and organisations provide affordable studios for 2,500 artists in 89 buildings across London. This is an extraordinarily diverse sector. There are different philosophies, constitutions, structures and staffing levels (many are run by volunteers). They are very different in size and age, rental range and in the types of activities they undertake. However, all have the provision of affordable space for artists at their core. The word 'group' denotes a body which may be formally but not legally constituted, as opposed to an 'organisation' which will be a legal entity.



Above: ASC's New Cross Studios prior to development. Photo: Jenny Jones



Artist in ASC's New Cross Studios. Photo: Jenny Jones

ASC (Artists Studios Company) is a registered charity that exists to support artists, promote art and advance the education of the public in the arts. ASC is a leading affordable workspace provider currently supporting over 400 artists in seven leasehold buildings across south and east London.

Fundamentally, studio organisations provide the resources artists need to sustain their professional practice. But, as well as places for undertaking research and making art, studios can be:

- a marketplace
- a venue for mutual support
- centres for education - both formal and informal
- a focus for peer support
- venues for training

There are two main types of studio organisation: those studio groups and organisations that occupy a single building, where the ethos and activity of the organisation is inextricably linked to that particular building and the individuals that occupy it; and, studio provider-developers, who manage multiple buildings. APT, Cubitt, Gasworks and Occupation Studios are single-building organisations, while a number of larger organisations, such as ACAVA, Acme Studios, ASC and SPACE, are studio provider-developers managing multiple buildings, each providing studios for hundreds of artists.

Individual buildings vary greatly in size. The Lounge Gallery and Studios and Standpoint Studios house under ten artists each, while Bow Arts Trust provides space for over 90 artists in one building.

More than 50 per cent of all affordable studio buildings in London are also resource spaces for the public, variously providing public exhibitions, professional development programmes for artists, facilities for media arts, and educational workshops and outreach programmes involving diverse communities. Several are involved in local arts festivals and in public art programmes through which artists are commissioned to make new work or collaborate on public realm enhancement schemes. The level of public activity varies considerably from one studio provider to another, depending on its particular aims and ethos.

Gasworks is based at Kennington Oval in south London and provides 12 artists' studios including three studios for visiting international artists participating in its residency programme. Since 1994, Gasworks has hosted over 100 artists from 50 different countries. Gasworks presents up to six exhibitions a year and both the residencies and exhibitions are accompanied by an education programme and off-site activities through which artists engage with local communities.

The Florence Trust Studios

provide a small group of carefully selected artists with an intense period of a year to push the boundaries of their work and explore new ideas.

"Our support goes well beyond the normal provision of studio space as we recognise the importance of developing professional networking skills. We work with the major public arts funders, have links with the public and commercial London galleries, art fairs, arts organisations and consultants, art writers and curators."

In 2006 Julie Cook joined us as a maker wanting to push her work into a more conceptual art world arena. Julie went on to have two exhibitions, gained an Arts Council grant, secured a new studio and ended her time with us by selling a large-scale work to the Crafts Council collection. As she said, '... an amazing end to an amazing year.' "

Paul Bayley, Studio Programme Director,
Florence Trust Studios



Jo Holland's work in the summer exhibition 2005, at Florence Trust Studios.
Photo: Florence Trust Studios

Seventy per cent of affordable studio providers in London have charitable status enabling them to gain access to public funding and reductions in business rates.

What do we mean by affordable?

An affordable artist's studio is a workspace which enables an artist to sustain and develop their practice and which is made available at a rent and with lease terms appropriate for artists in need i.e. artists who are unable to afford to rent workspace on the open market in addition to somewhere to live.

An affordable rent

The national survey of studio organisations undertaken by Acme in 2004 showed that the average inclusive rent for an affordable studio in London was £7.54 per square foot per year, approximately £215 per month for a studio of average size (340 sq. ft.).

Most affordable studio providers charge inclusive rents, so artists know exactly how much they will pay. An 'inclusive' rent normally includes insurance, repairs and maintenance, business rates, caretaking and management - all costs except electricity, which is usually metered with artists charged for what they use. One or two months' returnable deposit is the norm, as are low or minimal administration charges.

Flexible lease terms

In addition to an affordable rent, most artists' studio organisations try to offer guaranteed periods of occupation so artists can plan ahead.

'Easy-in, easy-out' lease terms, where artists need to give only one or two months' notice are also important. An artist's ability to maintain a studio may be affected by a change in financial circumstances, the need for a different type of space for a limited period, residencies which may take an artist away from their studio for an extended period, or a change in type of practice. It can be very restrictive and expensive for an artist to be tied to a long-term and inflexible lease.

Other lease terms offered by affordable studio providers include:

- an option to share, if rent becomes unaffordable
- an option to sub-let for artists who may need to work away temporarily

Studio Voltaire is the only artist-led gallery and studio complex in south west London providing affordable studios to over 40 artists. Over the past four years, Studio Voltaire has developed an ambitious and wide-ranging programme of educational events and projects especially for individuals who may have little access to formal education or who may not be regular gallery visitors.

Other support

Generally, affordable studio providers also offer:

- debt and arrears counselling when necessary
- a supportive and flexible response to artists facing hardship
- a commitment to make adaptations to studios for artists with particular requirements

Some studio groups and organisations provide other services for their tenants, such as access to equipment, resource areas or exhibition space. These may be included in the rent.

Comparison with the commercial sector

A November 2005 survey⁴ commissioned by Capital Studios of the availability, suitability, rent levels and terms for commercially available studios in 10 London boroughs found that:

- the average inclusive rent per square foot per year surveyed in the commercial sector was £22.82 compared with £7.49 in the affordable sector – a difference of £15.33 per square foot, or 299 per cent
- less than 10 per cent of commercial agencies surveyed offered fully inclusive rents
- there is far greater flexibility of lease terms and support for artists' needs in the affordable sector
- appropriate, affordable workspace is rarely available on the open market

Subsidy value provided by the affordable studios sector

The November 2005 survey demonstrated the vitally important support provided to the visual arts economy in London. It showed that:

- the level of annual rent subsidy created by the affordable sector in London, compared to commercially available premises is currently around £9.3 million
- the value of annual business rate relief obtained by the affordable studio sector, represents between £880,000 and £1.4 million

The report concludes that the affordable sector's provision of studios to visual artists creates a very significant subsidy to the visual arts sector in London and represents extremely good value for money.



ACAVA's Blechynden Street Studios, North Kensington. Photo: ACAVA



APT's studios, Deptford. Photo: Liz May

Securing and creating studios

Mother Studios was founded in 2001 by artist Joanna Hughes. Having occupied various studios in Stoke Newington, Brick Lane and Shoreditch, Joanna found she needed a larger space. Her search confirmed just how few spaces were available and how many artists had lost their spaces to property developers. In the end, her difficulty in finding a suitable space led her to set up her own studio organisation. Initially a self-funded project, Mother Studios is now a not-for-profit organisation providing 30 studios for 45 artists on the top three floors of an old warehouse in Hackney Wick, next to the River Lee.

The traditional approach is no longer viable

The 1970s saw the beginnings of the 'studio movement' which grew from the acute need of visual artists for affordable workspace. Solutions to this need were achieved by the collective action of artists themselves, acting opportunistically in response to a depressed property market and the availability of redundant buildings.

The large, diverse, yet distinctive sector which has resulted is still characterised by this self-help approach. However, this is no longer sustainable. Rising land values and the diminishing availability of capital funds through grant sources have combined to make artists' self-help efforts less viable as a way of securing studio space. The need now is to work in partnership with developers - local authorities, housing associations and private sector developers - to achieve affordable, secure and accessible space that will be available for the long term.

For example, Hoxton has grown during the last decade as a centre for London's art market with a cluster of approximately 100 galleries in 2002. However, fashionable bars, clubs and restaurants combined with new residential developments have caused rents to go up. Many organisations can no longer afford to remain in the area and are moving eastwards. Creative activities are often forced out of an area because they have not had the capital to purchase their property and protect themselves from rent increases...This is a key issue.

The Mayor's Culture Strategy, April 2004

Essential requirements for sustainability and growth

Studio organisations have three key requirements: security of tenure, access to finance and professional development/capacity building.

Security of tenure

Security of tenure enables studio organisations to develop stability and confidence and deliver maximum benefit to communities. There is growing recognition that there is considerable value in investing in

affordable artists' studio provision and significant *added value* in providing it through the acquisition of permanent freehold buildings rather than leasehold property.

Research into two London studio organisations has shown that security of tenure provides the self-confidence and motivation for studio organisations to:

- build the ethos of the organisation - to invest the time needed to create a cohesive and confident community
- commit to their locality and become part of the community
- establish their identities, groups and track record and attract and build creative and professional partners and networks.⁵

Moving from one short-term let to another, or being involved in campaigns or protracted negotiations to retain studios, is financially wasteful, time-consuming and saps the energy and confidence of artists. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood of artists developing confidence in their practice and taking an active role in the local community.

However, securing freeholds is not the only option. Security of tenure can also be achieved through long-term leasehold arrangements. Traditionally, many studio organisations occupied buildings on short-term leases because the future of those buildings was uncertain and rents were cheap.⁶ If developers and property owners offered long-term, renewable leases of 15 to 20 years, with protected rent reviews linked to the RPI (Retail Price Index), studio organisations would enjoy sufficient security of tenure, and cost certainty, to enable them to provide many of the cultural and community benefits referred to elsewhere.

Access to capital finance

The traditional understanding of cultural buildings is that they are liabilities in financial terms, whose costs (both capital and revenue) must be subsidised by public, charitable or private patronage. However, new models are emerging through which studio organisations are delivering cultural, community and economic value. Given capital financing, studio providers can make a powerful business case, showing high occupancy levels and low arrears, leading to eventual net income generation.

Major sources of capital funding, such as Arts Council England's capital programme, the Single Regeneration Budget and European funding have dwindled in recent years and new sources of capital investment are now needed to ensure studio organisations can continue to develop. Such sources might include cultural infrastructure investment funds, neighbourhood renewal funds, planning gain and low-cost loans. (See page 17)

Professional development/capacity building

The 2004 *Survey of Artists' Studios Groups and Organisations in England* showed that management capacity among organisations varies widely and there is a clear need for professional development and support. Also, the studio movement relies to a large extent on voluntary input for its management and development. Of the 31 affordable studio providers in London, 22 employ less than one full-time staff member and seven have no staff and are run entirely by volunteers.

Chisenhale Art Place was set up by a group of artists and dancers who were forced out of Butler's Wharf in 1980. They renovated the derelict building to provide 39 studios as well as a dance space. Subsequently, the artists renovated the ground floor to establish the Chisenhale Gallery, now managed independently. The three organisations together form an internationally known, cultural landmark on the Hertford Union Canal in Tower Hamlets and have played an important part in the proliferation of galleries and studios in East London. In recognition of this, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets has renewed the lease on the building for an additional 25 years and the organisation is exploring fresh ways to develop in the coming years.

"I was part of the original group of artists from Butler's Wharf to establish Chisenhale Studios and Gallery, which generated much energy within our artistic group. Having an affordable studio meant I could concentrate on my artistic research and start to exhibit my paintings. Since the creation of art is a long-term endeavour, often without a secure income, it was important for me to have the security of a studio which I could afford. I also have moved into the area to live close to the studio. I am committed to the development of the area."

Chisenhale artist **Ingrid Kerma**



Artist Ingrid Kerma, Chisenhale Art Place.
Photo: Lisa Howard

In the Borough of Merton, studio organisation **ACAVA** has worked with local authority officers to bring back into use several disused and problem buildings, including a laundry and a potting shed, at the same time providing much needed studio space for artists. The partnership supports the local authority's arts development strategy by creating community arts projects and employment opportunities for artists. Merton has granted peppercorn leases, initially for five years, but to be increased to 20. The artists pay an affordable rent which covers running costs and, following discussion with Merton Arts Officers, creates a fund for strategic community arts projects.

"The partnership will triple the number of affordable artists' studios in Merton. I am delighted that this run-down building will have a new lease of life that will benefit the community."

Maureen Pepper, Merton Arts Development Manager, on the reopening of the disused laundry as Phipps Bridge Studios.

Studio groups find themselves 'reinventing the wheel' when embarking on development projects and lack of paid time and specialist advice are significant barriers to growth in the sector. The new National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers will address this need by providing information, advice and support and encouraging networking and sharing of expertise among the sector (see page 32 for details). Also, the Federation will champion the needs and benefits of studio organisations and campaign to influence public policy and decision-making in support of studio developments.

Development options: conversion and new build

Over the last 30 years, artists have created studios by converting an extraordinary range of older buildings including factories, warehouses, schools, churches and offices. Almost three-quarters of London studio premises are more than 50 years old, requiring a high level of repairs and maintenance.

The disadvantages of this approach, borne out of necessity, are now all too clear:

- because most buildings were rented on short-term leases investment in conversion was minimal, making the buildings barely usable as studios
- environmental and access issues were not addressed, resulting in most buildings being only just legal
- while artists have valued their studios enormously and worked hard to keep them operational, the buildings have been subject to slow but certain decay

The situation that faces us is:

- there are no cheap buildings any more
- it is often too complex and therefore too expensive to convert buildings for short-term use

There are now two realistic options for achieving good quality, sustainable, fully compliant space:

- **conversion of existing buildings for long-term use**
- **new, purpose-built studios**

Conversion of existing buildings

Culture-led regeneration projects involving mixed-use developments offer scope for the 'recycling' of large, disused buildings for long-term studio use. Through the planning gain process such buildings may be 'harnessed' to an adjacent commercial development application, resulting in long-term, sustainable cultural provision at little or no cost to the local authority. By linking strategic regeneration funds to the scheme, it may be possible to achieve a realistic business plan for artists' studio space.

However, the particular costs involved in the conversion of old 'land-mark' buildings, civic or industrial, may exceed the costs of new-build.

Older buildings often have innate, sometimes irreconcilable problems:

- accessibility
- health and safety
- original construction materials lead to very high future maintenance costs
- very wasteful of space - financially inefficient
- environmentally and thermally inefficient leading to high service costs
- more difficult to identify risk than with new-build

New-build option

The difficulties faced in converting existing buildings can, in every sense, be 'designed' out once it is established that the new-build is economically viable. New-build can achieve:

- good design
- a good performance specification
- better cost control
- current artists' needs
- a high environmental specification
- low maintenance costs
- space efficiency

However, stand-alone buildings are not likely to be achievable in a planning gain scenario: it is much more likely that artists' workspace will be incorporated into a mixed-use development. Where land is scarce, this could take the form of a shared multi-storey building - shared with other users, e.g. domestic or office (recognising there will be practical issues such as shared staircases, entrances, lifts etc, where user requirements are not readily compatible).

Where a larger footprint is available, then the workspace could be configured on ground floor only, thus rendering it far more suitable, within the overall building, to separate out uses whilst at the same time keeping a mutually beneficial relationship between them.

Financing and securing new studio developments

The advantages of new-build over conversion are explored in the previous section. But where are the suitable properties or sites and how can projects be financed?

None of the options below represents a solution in itself; future developments are likely to involve a combination of these options and, critically, the intervention and support of, or partnership with, others:

- leasing space on the open market
- leasing space from local authorities
- grants
- loan finance
- cross-subsidy developments
- planning gain
- relocation

SPACE's most recent studio development, The Triangle, is a former technical college, which comprises 67 studios, an exhibition space, East London Printmakers, two digital/networking teaching suites and office space for SPACE, SPACE Media Arts and office tenants. The £1.2 million refurbishment was paid for with regeneration funds from the European Union (EU) and London Development Agency (LDA). The final work was completed in spring 2007 bringing full disabled access, public street frontage and visible gallery and training spaces, a 1,000 sq. ft. commissioning studio for hire, and new small business units. SPACE's brief was for a building which would provide artists with affordable spaces but would also provide real benefits to the wider neighbouring community: local arts organisations, schools, community-based agencies and local residents. The viability of this scheme is contingent on some higher rent facilities for hire and training programmes attracting grant funding from the LDA.



Acme's Copperfield Road building on the Grand Union Canal.
Photo: Hugo Glendenning

Two Arts Council capital awards from lottery funds of £1.2 million in 1997 and £2 million in 2005 have enabled **Acme Studios** to build on their successful long-term capital programme which aims to create 400 new affordable studios in London within 10 years. These funds made it possible for Acme to buy two buildings (Copperfield Road in Mile End and The Fire Station work/live development in Poplar) guaranteeing for the first time a sustainable future in an increasingly expensive property market. With this asset base they were able to secure a third building in Orsman Road, Hackney, through a cross-subsidy development. The first building to be created through the most recent lottery funding is The Galleria Studios, Peckham where 50 new studios have been created as part of a mixed-use planning gain development in partnership with Barratt Homes. See case study, page 25. Of the 12 buildings Acme manages, four are now permanent and provide affordable studios and work/live units for over 200 artists.

ASC is working in partnership with a developer as part of a scheme to convert a school into flats. A Section 106 scheme, if successful, it will deliver a digital gallery space and 20 work/live units for artists.

Leasing space collectively on the open market

Rents for workspace units on the open market are, on average, three times more than those for physically comparable, affordable studios. This is not an option for most individual artists.

However, artists acting collectively will benefit from an economy of scale: the larger the building the cheaper the rent per square foot. Rents will still be relatively high and the premises may require some conversion work to sub-divide for multiple-occupation. If the artists are not a legally constituted group with charitable status they will face the additional burden of full business rates.

Groups of artists do continue to rent commercial space collectively, but it does not produce a long-term solution, affordable rents or good quality spaces. Neither is it a good investment of the artists' time and money.

Local authority intervention would help encourage landlords to create affordable rented workspace for fixed terms i.e. the first five or ten years of a new development, through the use of Section 106 agreements.

Leasing space from local authorities

Most local authorities have a property register of some kind, which may well include buildings which are not easily suited to other purposes. In these cases, discounted rents may be negotiated in relation to anticipated public benefits, particularly those meeting local cultural aims.

Grants

The main sources of capital funding available to the affordable studio sector in the last ten years, for the acquisition of buildings for conversion and new-build, have been the National Lottery and European funding. Both these sources have dwindled.

Grants of up to £100,000 are still available through Arts Council England's Grants for the arts scheme to undertake feasibility studies in relation to a building, or towards purchase, refurbishment or improvement of buildings for arts use.⁷

Some trusts and foundations may provide grants towards aspects of studio development, where there is activity which specifically meets their aims. To access funding, groups generally need to be legally constituted not-for-profit entities able to put forward credible business plans. The London Development Agency (LDA) may provide funds towards capital costs where the facilities to be improved are necessary for LDA funded training programmes supporting the creative industries.

Loan finance

Most studio projects are not financially speculative; the huge demand will ensure 100 per cent occupation as long as rents remain at affordable levels i.e. rent income is very reliable. On this basis studio projects should be a low-risk lending prospect for banks.

However, groups or organisations seeking to part-finance studio developments by borrowing will need to have assets against which they can

secure loans, as well as robust business plans that demonstrate their ability to service repayments. At a time of relatively low interest, loan finance is an attractive funding option, but very few organisations have the assets to secure loans.

The Charity Bank⁸ and others have schemes which provide small-scale loans to the not-for-profit sector, but given the perceived increased level of risk, interest rates are normally higher than those available commercially. Therefore, only those organisations which are financially strong can benefit from cheap loan finance; a solution which is not accessible to the majority of the studios sector.

Cross-subsidy developments

There have been important examples of cross-subsidy schemes helping secure major studio developments, such as Spike Island in Bristol and Acme Studios' Orsman Road project in London. These projects have involved buying a site and developing and/or selling off part to cross-subsidise the acquisition of the whole.

Such projects are often complex, and not without risk, and would not be open to studio organisations which do not already have a track record in developing property, or appropriate financial support.

Planning gain

See case study, page 25.

Relocation

With large-scale developments to the east of the capital, especially Thames Gateway, there may be significant opportunities for artists to relocate. Local authorities are, in general, keen to attract creative industries as part of their redevelopment strategies and many see artists' studios as a key component.

Even though London is one of the most expensive places to live in the world, artists move to the capital because of the opportunity for increased, intensive, creative interaction and peer networking. Studio organisations will need compensating rewards for relocating and preferential rent levels.



Artist Lolly Batty discusses her work with a visitor at Occupation Studios.
Photo: Naomi Dines, Occupation Studios

Occupation Studios grew out of an artist-led initiative to create affordable studio space in central London. The organisation owns the freehold on its premises which provide 13 separate studio spaces, together with communal areas and facilities, for a changing population of 16 artists. The building is located in the London Borough of Southwark, an area where many of London's artists live, show work and teach, and is at the heart of the busy local community around the Walworth Road.

The studios are central to the professional lives of artists at Occupation Studios. All of the artists support themselves and their work using the skills and knowledge that they have developed through their practices. Many of their public projects attract support from funding bodies and charitable trusts, enabling them to contribute to the cultural and creative life of the UK and its capital.



Work by Chris Jones and Giles Round for 'Hallucinature' at Cell. Photo: Cell Project Space



APT Open Studios weekend. Photo: Liz May

The policy context

The visual arts have never been so popular. Twenty-five per cent of the adult population in Britain visit art galleries. Tate attracted more than six million visitors in 2004/05. Four million went to Tate Modern alone, making it the most visited modern art museum in the world. And with Paris, London is the most visited capital city in Europe.

Arts Council England's recent survey of engagement with the arts⁹ showed that in 2003:

- 13% of adults drew, painted, made prints or sculpted
- 10% created an original artwork or animation using a computer
- 8% did photography
- 6% bought an original work of art

*The upsurge in enthusiasm for the visual arts cuts across all social and ethnic groups. It is a powerful testament to the growing opportunities for people to be involved with visual arts, not only as visitors to galleries but in a vast range of contexts as part of their daily lives and of the visual arts workforce.*¹⁰

Artists are vitally important in supporting this proliferation of the contemporary visual arts in and beyond the gallery and across the public realm. And if artists are to maintain this important role, they need space in which to research, experiment and create work.

In recent years, Arts Council England, the national development agency for the arts in England, has prioritised support for the individual artist, particularly at the level of production. Its *Inhabit* workspace initiative is one of six under the umbrella project *Artists' Insights*, which aim to create an environment for artists to flourish, in which their professional, social and economic status is recognised, respected and valued. In its new ten-year strategy for the contemporary visual arts in England, *Turning Point*, Arts Council England affirms its continuing support for new work and artists' development. One of its five key priorities is support for artists and a commitment to 'continue to give priority to capital investment for the development of artists' workspace.'

Arts Council England also supports the newly-established National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers (NFASP), a membership organisation representing all those engaged in providing affordable studio space for artists working in England, as well as other facilities. The Federation aims to help secure, sustain, improve and increase affordable studio provision. By autumn 2007 the NFASP will be the principal source of information, advice and support on all aspects of artists' studio provision. (See page 32 for contact details)

Creative industries

The creative industries are acknowledged by policy makers as being of major economic significance in the UK and, particularly, in London. In the UK, the creative industries grew at an average of 5 per cent per annum between 1997 and 2004, compared to an average of 3 per cent for the whole of the economy. In 2005, there were an estimated 117,500 creative companies and total employment for the sector exceeded 1.8 million.

The Creative Economy Programme was launched in November 2005 and is the first step in the Government's desire to make the UK the world's creative hub. The initial work of the programme centred around seven issues, all of which are important productivity drivers for the creative industries. One of these is 'infrastructure'. *'A key challenge is to position cultural and creative infrastructure at the heart of place and community, which will allow our cities to flourish as creative hubs that work together and with London and the South East for increased UK creative competitiveness.'*¹¹

The Infrastructure Working Group identified ten infrastructural conditions for creative industries growth and competitiveness, of which the third is: *'... a wide range of specialist and accessible facilities for different parts of the creative industries - such as through media centres, rehearsal space, studio space and workspace. Crucial is affordability and accessibility across the creative industries value chain.'*

A Government Green Paper on the creative industries is due to be published in spring 2007.

The current **Department for Culture, Media and Sport** (DCMS) definition of the creative industries does not include visual artists. Although many artists do not readily identify themselves as part of the creative industries visual arts sub-sector, they show exceptional entrepreneurship and the ability to take artistic risks and their skills are recognised as part of the knowledge economy. Arts Council England is lobbying for the DCMS definition to be expanded to include visual artists. In the meantime, several studio organisations, such as ACAVA, ASC and APT, are actively supporting and have been part of the development of creative hubs and are promoting the advantages of technical and financial support available through the creative industry development agencies.

Creative industries in London

The creative industries represent the second biggest sector in London, after the financial/business services, with a total estimated £25 to £29 billion annual turnover. More than half a million people are employed in the sector, and one in five of all new jobs in London are in the creative industries. London is a global centre for the development, production,



Gasworks. Photo: Gasworks



Annika Eriksson, *we are not who you think we are*, event at the opening of *Lapdogs of the Bourgeoisie*, Gasworks, 2006.
Photo: Gasworks

"The process of being an independent, non-funded organisation committed to helping artists develop all their practice across their professional lives has allowed us to respond directly to them, as well as to respond directly to our partners and clients in the community. This has brought a recognition and relevance to our organisation that has created a sophisticated support network, helping those outside agencies to understand us and what we deliver in real terms. This, we feel, is of vital importance if artists are to have an affordable and sustainable place in the future of this changing community."

Marcel Baettig, Trust Director,
Bow Arts Trust

financing and trade of creative products and services, from architecture to crafts and from pop music to software.

Creative London is part of the London Development Agency, the Mayor's agency for economic development. Its ideas, policies and programmes are based on the findings of a six-month inquiry by the Mayor's Commission on the Creative Industries. Access to property on reasonable terms was identified by the Commission as a '*common bottleneck to success.*'

*But besides the sums, the creative industries also provide ideal opportunities to achieve social inclusion in the capital - challenging existing economic and social barriers, promoting diverse workforces, engaging with disadvantaged communities and allowing individuals to use talent and innovation alone to shine.
And that's priceless.*

Creative London

As part of its strategy to support the creative industries, Creative London is establishing ten 'creative hubs' across London. Creative Hubs are creative networks within geographical areas of London such as Deptford, City Fringe and Barking and Dagenham, and which focus on encouraging enterprise, generating more jobs, training and opportunities in the creative industries sector. Property is one of the main focuses for Creative Hubs, which aim to provide access to '*appropriate and affordable workspace across the creative business lifecycle.*'

The Mayor's Culture Strategy 2004 acknowledges the need for a range of support for the creative industries: in particular, ensuring that creative individuals and businesses have access to suitable and affordable workspace at all stages of their development. It highlights the '*interdependence of creative businesses for exchange of technical skills, economies of scale, collaboration and networking*' which has resulted in artists and creative enterprises tending to cluster in certain locations, for example in East London. It also urges local authorities to use their planning responsibilities both in terms of local development plans and approving planning applications, and in terms of their overall responsibility for strategically developing their areas.

Key deliverables of the Culture Strategy include:

- *Promote the use of Section 106 and percent for art in major development to develop the creative and cultural industries, and*
- *Develop initiatives to address the property issues of the creative and cultural industries*

The **Department for Communities and Local Government** was created in May 2006. Its vision is '*of prosperous and cohesive communities, offering a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all.*'

It defines **sustainable communities** as, '*places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.*'

This provides the policy framework within which local authorities operate and deliver local services. A sense of community identity and belonging and opportunities for cultural, leisure, community, sport and other activities are seen as important components of sustainable communities. Increasingly, studio organisations are recognised for the role that they play in contributing to this agenda.

Local strategic partnerships

Under the Local Government Act 2000, local authorities must prepare a community strategy to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and its residents.

Local strategic partnerships that involve public, private, community and voluntary sectors are at the heart of the community strategy planning process, with responsibilities to improve services and respond to people's needs and aspirations.

Many London boroughs have cultural strategies which frequently feed into or form part of their community strategies. Cultural strategies provide an important policy framework for the development of artists' workspace.

Similarly, **local development frameworks**¹² provide an opportunity to identify particular sites or buildings for cultural space and, more specifically, artists' workspace, especially where this is supported by strategic cultural aims.

Local area agreements set out priorities for a local area around four themes:

- children and young people
- safer and stronger communities
- healthier communities and older people
- economic development and enterprise

They are negotiated by local authorities on behalf of their local strategic partnerships and their government office, and are intended to make the best use of available funds. Studio organisations can play a role in supporting and delivering all four themes.

Specification for an artist's studio and a studio building

What is an artist's studio?

The answer depends on the medium: painting, sculpture, new media and so on. Artists need a choice of spaces. Some can work in proximity to others; others need to work in isolation.

Michael Craig-Martin, artist, *Creating Places* conference, Tate Modern, July 2003

There is no blueprint for an artist's studio. Contemporary visual artists, more than ever before, produce an extraordinarily wide range of work in terms of nature and scale, involving diverse materials, working methods



Lorraine Clarke in her studio, Euroart Studios and Gallery. Photo: Euroart Studios



Mother Studios, Hackney. Photo: Mother Studios

Uniquely amongst studio organisations **Acme Studios** also provides affordable housing for artists and was the largest manager of municipal short-life housing stock in London in the 70s and 80s. Through this provision many hundreds of artists moved permanently to East London attracted by low-cost combined working and living space.

Acme's work/live residencies (at The Fire Station in E14 and The Sugar House in E15) mark a return to this original activity. They are highly subsidised programmes which complement Acme's principal activity of providing affordable, non-residential studios for artists.

Since the workspace, the studio, is at the heart of the residency programmes, Acme uses the term *work/live*, rather than the more commonly used *live/work*. The accompanying living space helps to take pressure off artists financially; they avoid having to pay two rents on a separate living space and studio. By living and working in the same space they also gain time which would otherwise be spent commuting.

Residencies are time-limited so that as many artists as possible may benefit from this creative breathing space. The programmes are advertised nationally and artists are selected from an open submission with the help of external experts. To add value to the schemes special bursaries are available, including rent-free space and grants, for artists with disabilities and others.

and technologies. Studio organisations work hard to provide flexible space that can accommodate these varying requirements. Some studio providers have developed design guidelines, or a performance specification, particularly for new-build studios. Whether for the conversion of existing buildings or new-build, certain basic features are essential.

Physical features: in seeking an individual studio space, most artists want:

- self-contained space
- good natural light
- higher ceilings than normal office or domestic space
- good access e.g. for large paintings
- a good run of unfettered working walls
- a place to wash and clean up; preferably a sink in their studio, or a shared washing and clean-up area on each floor and a shower
- 24-hour access (to enable artists to combine part-time earning and domestic responsibilities with their practice)
- good security

Size of space: this will vary according to availability, price and the particular needs of an artist's practice. An average London studio is 340 square feet and many artists will find a space of 300 to 350 square feet adequate for their needs. For most artists £250 a month is the maximum rent they can afford.

Some artists, particularly those working in 3D and on a large scale, may need relatively large amounts of space, or access to shared space that can be used for wet or dry, clean or dirty activity using heat, water, chemicals and power tools. They will also need doors that are high and wide enough for large and/or heavy tools and materials to be brought in and out as well as floors that can accept heavy loading. Some artists need extraction facilities and to be in an area where noise and fume pollution is permissible.

The studio building

There is no standard specification for a studio building. However, there are certain features and economies of scale which, combined, can deliver an appropriate and sustainable working environment for artists:

- studio buildings may house any number of artists, but 20 to 25 is the optimum number to enable sustainability. This number should provide sufficient income to allow for repairs and maintenance and some paid staff time to administer the facility, adequate space for wash and clean-up facilities, storage and, perhaps, some communal space
- a supportive environment which allows for informal networking with peers and the potential for joint initiatives such as 'open studios'
- good disability access
- reasonable access to local facilities such as shops and public transport

Studio buildings should be located in an area where there is a high demand for studio space, but demand may be determined in a number of ways. Such is the shortage of studio space in the capital that the provision of good quality, affordable studio space will *create* demand and artists will follow.

Work/live studios

Work/live studios are often more suitable for single artists who need workspace and are unable to afford a studio in addition to a separate place to live. They are also suitable for artists who may want to relocate temporarily due to the changing needs of their practice or other circumstances. To be successful, such schemes must provide genuine workspace with ancillary accommodation and ensure that the workspace provides some of the basic features of height, natural light and unfettered walls, referred to above.

A number of 'live/work' schemes have been commercially developed throughout London in recent years. Many of these fail, largely because they do not provide adequate workspace, are too often designed as living space with one room set aside for work and because their use is not regulated. Such developments often drift into residential use against the planning policies of local authorities who wish to maintain employment use. Several local authorities are now refusing to grant consent for live/work schemes because they cannot guarantee the continuation of employment use. An exception should be made for workspace providers where genuine work/live provision - such as Acme Studios' Fire Station, Sugar House and Orsman Road projects - and the creation of employment forms part of their charitable objectives. These projects fulfil the very policies - mixed-use and the creation of employment - local authorities had hoped to secure through live/work schemes.



Acme Studios' work/live Fire Station building in Poplar. Photo: Jonathan Harvey



Perminder Kaur in her Fire Station work/live unit. Photo: Hugo Glendenning

The Galleria - a planning gain case study

The Galleria is a ground-breaking project developed by Acme Studios in partnership with Barratt Homes where affordable artists' studio space has been created by the private sector through the planning gain mechanism. In the same way that affordable housing is often achieved, this partnership provides a vitally important model showing how 'social workspace' can be achieved through planning gain.

Speaking at the launch of The Galleria Studios in June 2006, David Lammy MP, Minister for Culture said: *"I think it's wonderful that we can create mixed communities in this way - I hope this will be replicated across the country. We have to make more space available to artists. This scheme is precisely what the Government and local authorities should be supporting."*

The Galleria Studios

At the end of 2003, Acme Studios entered into a partnership with Barratt East London to create 16,000 square feet of new-build studio space, providing 50 affordable and accessible artists' studios. The studios were completed at the end of December 2005 and fully occupied by artists at the beginning of January 2006.

The studios are part of a larger housing development, a major landmark building called The Galleria, in Sumner Road, Peckham SE15, overlooking Burgess Park.

In addition to Acme's 50 studios, the project includes 98 apartments and four live/work units. Twenty-three of the apartments are for social housing, both for rent and shared ownership.



The Galleria Studios, Sumner Road, Peckham. Photo: Jonathan Harvey



Artist in Residence, Isa Suarez and David Lammy MP, Minister for Culture at the opening of The Galleria, June 2006. Photo: Emma Bowkett

Acme's studios form part of a five-floor block, which has four floors occupied by studios with the top floor given over to apartments. The 50 studios range between 300 and 500 square feet and are fully accessible. Each studio level has a main washroom area with toilets and sinks for cleaning up.

How did the building come about?

A print company employing around 30 people sold the site when the company wished to relocate. Barratt was originally refused planning permission to build on the site because its proposed development consisted entirely of housing and no employment space. By including artists' studios on the site, it was possible to replace most of the employment floor space and most importantly, many more jobs could be created than had existed in the old buildings. The inclusion of studio space was a key factor in the London Borough of Southwark's decision to grant consent.

Designing studios into the scheme

Acme provided Barratt with a clear performance specification setting out their user requirements, enabling Barratt's architects to design a scheme which met artists' space requirements, particularly their need for high ceilings. The specification subsequently formed part of the contract between Barratt and Acme, with Barratt committed to meeting the specification, subject to Building Regulations.

Planning gain

Southwark granted planning consent in January 2003 on the basis that the proposal fully met the council's regeneration objectives and their encouragement of mixed-use schemes as well as making a significant contribution to the local economy and immediate environment.

Through this ground-breaking project studio space has been created by the private sector using the 'planning gain' mechanism. In this instance, the provision of social workspace did not form part of the Section 106 agreement, but it was an explicit element of the proposal by Barratt to Southwark Council.

Acme's 30-year track record and core charitable objectives effectively provide the covenant that ensures that affordable workspace will be maintained at the building in perpetuity, obviating the need in this case for a separate Section 106 agreement.

The cost

Barratt sold the finished studio block to Acme at a price well below the construction cost of the building. This has enabled Acme to provide affordable workspace in the same way as the scheme provides affordable housing. Studios are rented out to artists on ten year (renewable) leases at a fully inclusive rent of £8.50 per square foot per year.

Part-funded by Arts Council England's Grants for the arts - capital programme, the project has released capital to Acme which it can invest in future schemes.

Replacing studios

This new development has more than replaced the 30 studios which Acme managed in Bermondsey, north Southwark, until the lease expired in December 2006. Soaring land values had put rents beyond Acme's reach. However, this new project not only provides additional floor space but also space which is low-cost, high-quality, accessible and permanent.

Benefits for the developer

Not only was Barratt able to achieve its development, but the pre-sale to Acme provided Barratt with a known outcome. Often the development of light industrial space can be speculative, but with the huge demand from artists Acme was able to guarantee 100 per cent occupation from day one. The inclusion of artists' studios also provided Barratt with a marketing theme which has attracted buyers.

Value of mixed-use

The Galleria project is a living and working example of the compatibility of housing and artists' studios in a mixed-use scheme. Already, through open studio events and an artist in residence scheme, supported by the local authority, the residents of The Galleria, and the wider community, are beginning to benefit from their proximity to professional artists.

Notes

1. *Turning Point, Arts Council England: a strategy for the contemporary visual arts in England*, Arts Council England, June 2006.
2. Creative Economy Programme Infrastructure Working Party full draft report, August 2006 www.cep.culture.gov.uk
3. 'Non-commercial fine art practice' is used as a term to encompass the activity of artists who primarily make art work for its creative, cultural, intellectual or philosophical value, rather than its commodity value.
4. Cubey, Michael, *Commercial workspace provision for visual artists - a comparison with the affordable sector*, Acme and Capital Studios, February 2006. For the full report and an executive summary see www.acme.org.uk
5. *Artists' studios: creating public benefit*, Acme and Capital Studios, December 2006.
6. The 2004 *Survey of Artists' Studios Groups and Organisations in England* indicates that around 13 buildings housing over 300 studios were likely to be vacated by 2008, with at least a further four buildings and 130 studios by 2013.
7. www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding
8. www.charitybank.org
9. Fenn, C et al, 2004, *Arts in England 2003: attendance, participation and attitudes*, Arts Council England.
10. *The power of art: visual arts: evidence of impact, regeneration, health, education and learning*, Arts Council England, 2006.
11. Creative Economy Programme Infrastructure Group full draft report, August 2006, DCMS www.cep.culture.gov.uk
12. The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a non-statutory term used to describe a folder of documents, which includes all the planning authorities' local development documents.

Studio groups and organisations in London

Key:

F - freehold

L - leasehold

S - studios

A - artists

Where an organisation manages more than one building the local authority listed is where it is principally based.

ACAVA (Association for Cultural Advancement through Visual Art)

54 Blechynden Street, W10 6RJ
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

T - 020 8960 5015

E - dsmith@acava.org

W - www.acava.org

Studio provider/developer

F = 3, **L** = 16, **S** = 270, **A** = 300

Acme Studios

44 Copperfield Road, E3 4RR
London Borough of Tower Hamlets

T - 020 8981 6811

E - mail@acme.org.uk

W - www.acme.org.uk

Studio provider/developer

F = 4, **L** = 8, **S** = 365, **A** = 440

APT (The Art in Perpetuity Trust)

6 Creekside, SE8 4SA
London Borough of Lewisham

T - 020 8694 8344

E - aptlondon@btconnect.com

W - www.apstudios.org

Studio group/organisation

F = 1, **L** = 0, **S** = 37, **A** = 39

Art Services Grants Ltd (SPACE)

129-131 Mare Street, E8 3RH
London Borough of Hackney

T - 020 8525 4330

E - mail@spacestudios.org.uk

W - www.spacestudios.org.uk

Studio provider/developer

F = 0, **L** = 17, **S** = 435, **A** = 500

Artists@Redlees

Redlees Park, Worton Road, TW7 6DW
London Borough of Hounslow

E - artists@redlees.org

W - www.redlees.org

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 9, **A** = 30

ASC (Artists Studio Company)

3rd Floor, 246 Stockwell Road,
SW9 9SP

London Borough of Lambeth

T - 020 7274 7474

E - info@ascstudios.co.uk

W - www.ascstudios.co.uk

Studio provider/developer

F = 0, **L** = 6, **S** = 250, **A** = 300

Barbican Arts Trust / Hertford Road Studios

12-14 Hertford Road, N1 5SU
London Borough of Hackney

T - 020 7241 1675

E - bag.trust@btconnect.com

W - www.artworksproject.com

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 24, **A** = 19

Bow Arts Trust

181-183 Bow Road, E3 2SJ
London Borough of Tower Hamlets

T - 020 8980 7774

E - mbaettig@bowarts.com

W - www.bowarts.com

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 90, **A** = 93

Brightside Studios

9 Dartford Street, SE17 5UQ
London Borough of Southwark

T - 07815 927211

E - emoticon@cybele.freemove.co.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 4, **A** = 7

Cell

HQ, 4-8 Arcola Street, E8 2DJ
London Borough of Hackney

T - 020 7241 3600

E - info@cell.org.uk

W - www.cell.org.uk

Studio provider/developer

F = 0, **L** = 3, **S** = 85, **A** = 101

Chisenhale Art Place

64-84 Chisenhale Road, E3 5QZ
London Borough of Tower Hamlets

T - 020 8981 1916

E - mail@chisenhale.co.uk

W - www.chisenhale.co.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 39, **A** = 39

City Studios

Alpha House, Tyssen Street, E8 2ND
London Borough of Hackney

T - 020 7254 0601

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 11, **A** = 12

Creekside Artists

Units A110-114, Faircharm Estate,
8-10 Creekside, SE8 3DX

London Borough of Lewisham

T - 020 7254 0601

E - info@creeksideartists.co.uk

W - www.creeksideartists.co.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 12, **A** = 25

Cubitt Artists Ltd

8 Angel Mews, N1 9HH
London Borough of Highbury & Islington

T - 020 7278 8226

E - info@cubittartists.org.uk

W - www.cubittartists.org.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 31, **A** = 33

Dalston Underground Studios

The Basement, 28 Shacklewell Lane,
E8 2EZ

London Borough of Hackney

T - 07941 715 888

E - info@dalstonunderground.org.uk

W - www.dalstonunderground.org.uk

Studio provider/developer

F = 0, **L** = 2, **S** = 13, **A** = 22

Diesel House Studios

Kew Bridge Steam Museum, Green
Dragon Lane, TW8 0EN
London Borough of Hounslow

T - 020 8569 8780

E - elizabeth@dieselhousestudios.com

W - www.dieselhousestudios.com

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 3, **S** = 30, **A** = 30

Euroart Studios

Unit 22F, 784/788 Tottenham High
Road, N17 0DA

London Borough of Haringey

T - 07802 502 136

E - nayoung@euroart.co.uk

W - www.euroart.co.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 3, **S** = 41, **A** = 46

Florence Trust Studios

St Saviours, Aberdeen Park, N5 2AR
London Borough of Highbury & Islington

T - 020 7354 4771

E - info@florencetrust.org

W - www.florencetrust.org

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 12, **A** = 11

Gasworks

155 Vauxhall Street, SE11 5RH

London Borough of Lambeth

T - 020 7587 5202

E - alessio@gasworks.org.uk

W - www.gasworks.org.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 10, **A** = 10

Lewisham Arthouse

140 Lewisham Way, SE14 6PD

London Borough of Lewisham

T - 020 8244 3168

E - lewishamarthouse@btconnect.com

W - www.lewishamarthouse.co.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 42, **A** = 44

Limehouse Arts Foundation

Towcester Road, E3 3ND

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

T - 020 7515 9998

E - mail@laf-arts.org

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 37, **A** = 50

Lounge Gallery and Studios

2nd floor, 28 Shacklewell Lane,
E8 2EZ

London Borough of Hackney

T - 0786 606 3663

E - monikabobinska@onetel.com

W - www.lounge-gallery.com

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 5, **A** = 6

Maryland Studios

2nd Floor, 80 Wallis Road, E9 5LW

London Borough of Hackney

T - 020 8986 2555

E - jgeorgiades@hotmail.com

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 10, **A** = 15

Mother Studios

9D-F Queens Yard, White Post Lane,
E9 5EN

London Borough of Hackney

T - 07968 760 550

E - jo@motherstudios.co.uk

W - www.motherstudios.co.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 34, **A** = 45

Occupation Studios

7 - 10 Occupation Road, SE17 3BE

London Borough of Southwark

T - 020 7639 8792

E - n.dines@csm.arts.ac.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 1, **L** = 0, **S** = 14, **A** = 16

Standpoint Studios

45 Coronet Street, N1 6HD

London Borough of Hackney

T - 020 7739 4921

E - standpoint@btopenworld.com

W - www.standpointlondon.co.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 7, **A** = 8

Stockwell Studios

39 Jeffreys Road, SW4 6QU

London Borough of Lambeth

T - 020 7978 2299

E - stockwellstudios@uk2.net

W - www.mccallheritage.co.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 21, **A** = 23

Studio Voltaire

1A Nelsons Row, SW4 7JR

London Borough of Lambeth

T - 020 7622 1294

E - info@studiovoltaire.org

W - www.studiovoltaire.org

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 30, **A** = 45

Tannery Arts

Brunswick Wharf, 55 Laburnum
Street, E2 8BD

London Borough of Hackney

T - 020 7729 8008

E - admin@tanneryarts.org.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 2, **S** = 26, **A** = 36

The Delfina Studio Trust

50 Bermondsey Street, SE1 3UD

London Borough of Southwark

T - 020 7357 6600

E - admin@delfina.org.uk

W - www.delfina.org.uk

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 30, **A** = 32

Wimbledon Art Studios

Unit 10, Riverside Yard, SW17 0BB

London Borough of Wandsworth

T - 020 8947 1183

E - enquiries@

wimbledonartstudios.com

W - www.wimbledonartstudios.com

Studio group/organisation

F = 0, **L** = 1, **S** = 104, **A** = 120

Summary

Total studio organisations - 31

Studio providers/developers - 6

Studio groups/organisations - 25

Buildings - 89

Freehold buildings - 9

Leasehold buildings - 80

Total studios - 2,128

Total artists - 2,497

London boroughs (principal
location of studio organisation):

Hackney - 10

Haringey - 1

Highbury & Islington - 2

Hounslow - 2

Kensington & Chelsea - 1

Lambeth - 4

Lewisham - 3

Southwark - 3

Tower Hamlets - 4

Wandsworth - 1

Affordable studios in London - key facts and figures

- London has 58% of the total studio space in England
- 31 organisations manage 89 buildings, providing studios for 2,500 artists
- 65% of London studios are in the east and south east of the city
- Four organisations - ACAVA, Acme Studios, ASC and SPACE manage 54 buildings
- More than half of all studio buildings are also resource spaces for the public providing exhibitions and education programmes
- There are more than 3,500 artists on waiting lists for studios in London
- Many buildings are in poor condition. 75% are over 50 years old with resulting high maintenance costs. Only three buildings are fully accessible

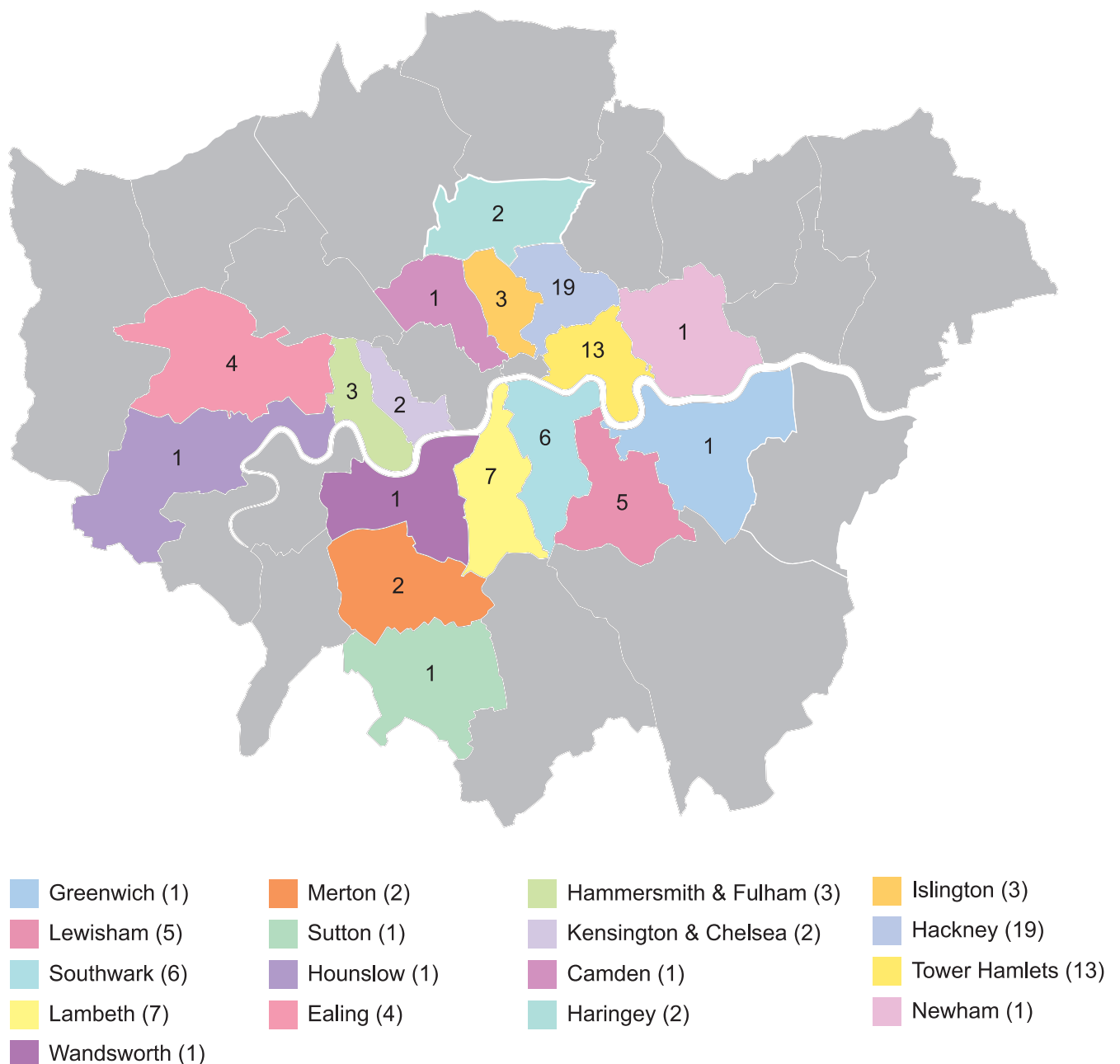
- Only nine buildings are permanent - nearly 90% of the total space is rented
- The average, inclusive rent for a studio space in the affordable studios sector in 2004 was £7.54 per square foot per year - nearly £215 for an average size studio of 340 sq. ft.
- The average inclusive rent for a studio in the commercial sector (based on a survey in 10 boroughs in November 2005) was £22.38 - nearly £635 for an average size studio of 340 sq. ft. - three times as much as a studio in the affordable sector
- The annual value of business rate relief provided to London artists by the affordable studios sector is around £1.4 million
- The annual value of subsidy provided to London artists by the affordable studios sector, through affordable rents, is £9.3 million

- 430 studios are 'at risk' over the next 10 years, 300 of these over the next five years

These findings are drawn from a national survey of artists' studios carried out by Acme Studios in 2004 and published as a report in May 2005. The information on studio providers and buildings was updated in November 2006. A *register of studio groups and organisations in England* was published at the same time as the national survey. Updated in June 2006, the register is available from www.acme.org.uk

A *London Digest* presents information on the 27 London groups and organisations and the 72 buildings they operated in 2004 and is available from www.acme.org.uk

Map showing the distribution of studio buildings in London in 2004



East London has been at the centre of the development of artists' studio space with groups and organisations attracted, in the past, by the availability of suitable and cheap property. The London Borough of Hackney has the

largest number of studio buildings and units (24 per cent of the London total of units), but Tower Hamlets has the largest square footage (30 per cent of the total). Hackney, Greenwich, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark and Tower

Hamlets have 68 per cent of the total number of studio units. Four of these boroughs - Greenwich, Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets - fall within the London 2012 zone.

Useful contacts

a-n The Artists Information Company

An arts information and advocacy organisation which focuses on visual artists. The website has information on developing studios and case studies. www.a-n.co.uk

Artquest

Artquest is an advice and information service for London visual artists and craftspeople. The Artquest website includes information on studios and resources and provides contact details for many organisations. www.artquest.org.uk

Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts in England. Between 2006 and 2008, it will invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and the National Lottery in supporting the arts. www.artscouncil.org.uk

Arts Council England, London

2 Pear Tree Court, London, EC1R 0DS
Tel: 0845 300 6100
www.artscouncil.org.uk

CIDA - The Cultural Industries

Development Agency is currently funded to deliver projects and services that offer practical support to creative individuals, businesses and arts organisations, helping to make their existence in East London tenable in an increasingly expensive part of the city. www.cida.co.uk

Creative Economy Programme

Government programme to make the UK the world's creative hub, managed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. www.cep.culture.gov.uk

Creative London is the strategic agency for London's creative industries, part of the London Development Agency. www.creativelondon.org.uk

Creative Hubs

Part of Creative London's strategy to support the creative industries, creative hubs are creative networks within geographical areas of London which focus on encouraging enterprise, generating more jobs, training and opportunities in the creative industries sector. www.creativelondon.org.uk

Creative Space Agency is a brokering service enabling creative individuals, cultural organisations and businesses to identify potential spaces in London to work, exhibit, rehearse or perform. The project mainly focuses on a website with a searchable directory, enabling space providers and those seeking space to match their needs. Working across all art forms, the Creative Space Agency is facilitated by the Cultural Industries Development Agency (CIDA) and Urban Space Management and funded by Creative London and Arts Council England. www.creativespaceagency.co.uk

Local authority contacts

Arts Council England, London maintains a register of local authority arts and cultural services officers for London. Or, contact individual boroughs for details.

National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers (NFASP)

c/o Acme Studios, 44 Copperfield Road, Bow, London E3 4RR
NFASP Administrator
E: admin@nfasp.org.uk

Established in June 2006, the NFASP is the new professional body for organisations providing affordable studios for artists in England. The NFASP will help secure, sustain, improve and increase affordable studio provision by providing advice and support to studio organisations, and will campaign to influence public policy and decision-making in support of the studios sector and artists. Working in cooperation with other advisory agencies across England, the Federation will become the principal source of information, advice and support on all aspects of artists' studio provision.

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