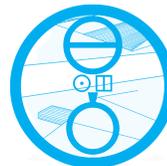
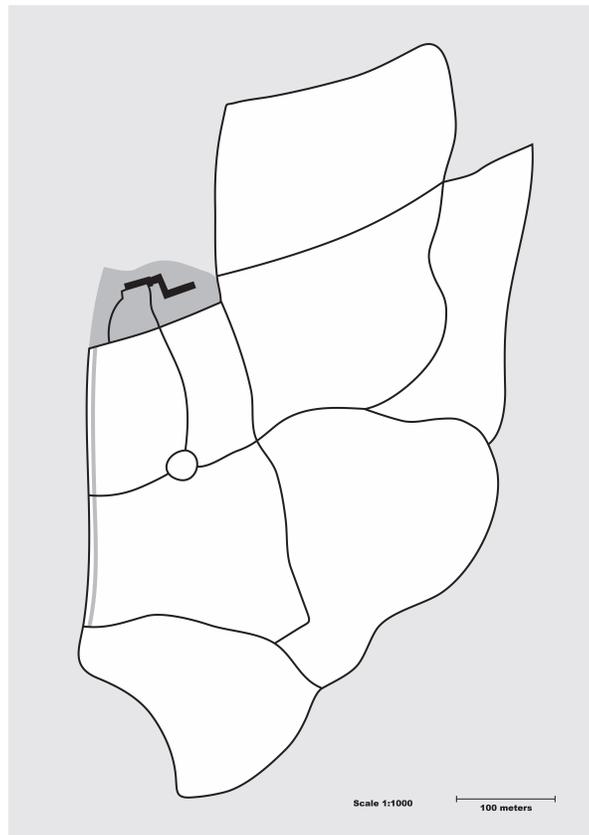


Kestle Barton

Agri/Culture 2.0

2021



1. Introduction

1.1 Brief

The primary objective of the research was to review how Kestle Barton might develop public programming in alignment with Arts Council England's new 'Let's Create' strategy.

The research also set to address a second objective—to discover how Kestle Barton could more deeply integrate its cultural programming with the fifty-six acres of agricultural land that surround the gallery. This second objective should be understood in the context of Kestle's long standing desire to increase the level of food production on its land by implementing a new system of restoration agriculture.



1.2 Executive summary

Our proposal consists of three main elements:

- Audiences become stakeholders in a new participatory land-based economy centred around Kestle Barton
 - Artist-led activity interconnects the land-based economy and the cultural programme
 - Delivery of all the elements are facilitated by digital augmentation
- Kestle Barton is a cultural institution situated within a fifty-six acre estate of productive agricultural land. Our proposal is that Kestle's audience are not only invited to become stakeholders in cultural production at Kestle (in line with the aims of ACE's Let's Create strategy), but also to become stakeholders in a local participatory land-based economy where livelihoods are created and supported through the commercial production of food, thereby entwining the cultural production of the gallery with the agricultural experimentation on the land. Carefully selected artists will envision and mediate exchanges between the different audiences and stakeholders effectively blurring the lines between cultural production and food production, creating a new third form which we are simply calling **Agri/Culture**. In short, Kestle Barton will be opening up its land resource for meaningful audience participation on a grand scale through artistic means. The proposal implies complex relationships between multiple stakeholders, audiences, land-use regimes, and cultural production. Innovative digital solutions will be engineered in partnership with a local company specialised in developing software tools for restoration agriculture to help Kestle Barton manage and deliver the programme, while simultaneously creating new rich digital experiences for new national and international audiences.

1.3 Aims and approach

Our overall aim has been to show how the two elements of the brief are not mutually exclusive. In the case of a rural institution with strong ecological and sociological goals located in a productive rural landscape we believe they should be homogeneous.

At Kestle Barton, the transition from traditional farm to a cultural space has involved artists and artistic processes from the beginning. The agenda of this transformation was set by cultural and artistic prerogatives. The further transition to an experimental participatory farm is a further complex transformation and the presence of art and artists continues to be intrinsic to the process.

Several authors of this report have significant expertise in the area of restoration agriculture. We have considered and discussed a variety of options for a new agricultural system that could build on existing planting schemes at Kestle. We show that provision for audience participation can be built into every part of the productive agri/cultural cycle and have highlighted that there is an integral economic factor that needs to be considered and which will form the foundation of the changes.

This report will show how Kestle can:

- Reach local, national, and international audiences and deliver the objectives of ACE's Let's Create strategy.
- Involve local rural audiences in long-term, meaningful, and transformative engagement.
- Encourage audiences to be active participants and stakeholders in the project at all stages of its development.
- Develop clear roles and opportunities for artists to design, construct, and deliver that participation and stakeholder activity.

A note on our research method

We have worked on this research task as a collective. Our research process involved sharing collaborative documents online with each member of the collective contributing to any subject area they saw fit. The contributions have been collated and edited into this document. The original contributions are kept unchanged on a master document with each contributor's identity attached for future reference and expansion.

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