an exceptional opportunity
for a joint venture partner(s)
Introduction

Bilfinger GVA has been instructed by Swindon Borough Council to assist in their wider vision for an enhanced leisure offering at Lydiard House and Park.

Detailed proposals are being sought from potential joint venture partners to work with Swindon Borough Council to enhance and develop all existing income generating commercial aspects of the site, and to provide new leisure services or activities that complement the site’s cultural heritage.

All interest and proposals to be submitted to Bilfinger GVA, acting on behalf of Swindon Borough Council.
Lydiard Park is situated on the western edge of the Borough of Swindon, close to Junction 16 M4. The attraction includes circa 260 acres (105 hectares) of beautiful historic parkland including lawns, lakes, woodlands, pasture, a palladian mansion and museum, with many of its original contents.

Lydiard Park boasts a hotel and conference centre, wedding venue, forest café and coach house tea rooms within a restored horse stalls and stable building, heritage garden centre, together with children’s adventure activity centre and extensive car parking. Lydiard Park is also the setting of one of the country’s most beautiful parish churches (not part of the site).

While the park and mansion are both popular visitor attractions, it is recognised that the on site facilities could be further enhanced.

The Georgian palladian mansion was once the home of the St. John family who reportedly owned the estate between 1420 and the 1940’s. The state rooms of Lydiard House, with its ornate plasterwork, original furnishings and family portraits are open to the public all year round.

During the Second World War, Lydiard Park served three important functions. It served as a large station hospital for the American 101st Airborne Division, and treated casualties from the D Day Landings.

Later, the hospital became a prisoner of war hospital, and housed up to 200 German prisoners of war at a time. Following the war, the military huts were used as a temporary housing estate. Many families lived at Lydiard Park until the 1960s.

Elsewhere in the park, the Great Western Railway Home Guard used the fields and woodland for training and target practice. At the same time, the St. John family decided to vacate their ancestral home and Lydiard Park was sold to Swindon Corporation in 1943.
The house and gardens were opened to the public in 1955 and have been a popular visitor destination for local residents and tourists, hosting events all year round, including an open air theatre, birds of prey and a food and drink festival. The park is also a venue for many high profile events including The Royal British Legion’s Royal Wootton Bassett Field of Remembrance and Cancer Research UK’s Race for Life.

Bilfinger GVA has been instructed to gauge market interest from joint venture partners who might be able to further develop the existing on site facilities and to provide new revenue generators, in collaboration with the Council.

**Heritage Lottery Funding**

In 2005, Swindon Borough Council was awarded £3 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund to begin an extensive project to restore the parkland. As part of this project, the ice house and castellated dam wall were restored; the lake was reinstated; the walled garden was re-planted; a new native woodland was created, and the park had new footpaths and visitor facilities.
Location

Lydiard House is located approximately 4 miles (6.5 km) west of Central Swindon and about 3 miles (5 km) from Junction 16 of the M4 Motorway.

Swindon

Is the largest town in the county of Wiltshire, in the south of England. The town is situated circa 81 miles (130 km) west of London and around 39 miles (63 km) east of Bristol. It is approximately 29 miles (47 km) south-west of Oxford and approximately 76 miles (122 km) south of Birmingham.

Swindon is located close to the M4 motorway: Junction 15 serving the east and Junction 16 serving the west of the town. Swindon is situated on the main London-Bristol line where it branches to Gloucester and Cheltenham.

Swindon has a strong record in promoting itself as a desirable area for the location and relocation of industry and commerce. It has been particularly successful in attracting businesses from the telecommunications sector and motor manufacturing. This success has been built on the Boroughs key strengths, which include:

- GDP, investment and employment per head forecast to rise
- Swindon ranks in top 5 UK towns and cities for business investment
- £350m new Central Business District under construction
- 11% employment in manufacturing – more than Reading and Milton Keynes (ONS (Annual Employment Statistics, 2010, and NOMIS, October 2011))
- Home of the Honda Civic
- Cultural provision and heritage
Visitor Facilities

LYDIARD HOUSE AND MUSEUM
The house is open to visitors as a museum at a charge (£6.50 for an adult). It contains some of the original St. John family furnishings and portrait collection. Located on the ground floor is the entrance to the museum, gift shop, main hall, dining room, drawing room, state bedroom and the Diana Room.

Part of the main house, incorporating the first floor conference rooms, bridal suite, commercial kitchen and ancillary office space, is occupied by Chartridge Venues, under a lease, which expires in September 2016.

HOTEL AND CONFERENCE FACILITIES
The hotel, wedding and conference facilities are currently operated by Chartridge Venues. They are contained within part of the original house and a modern annex adjoining.

These facilities comprise; ground floor reception and adjoining bar, indoor heated swimming pool, fitness room and 36 en-suite bedrooms located in the modern annex with the bridal suite located on the first floor of the main house. There are twelve meeting and training rooms, including the main banqueting suite, which can accommodate up to 120 and is licensed for civil ceremonies for up to 100 guests.

The hotel restaurant, which overlooks the grounds, can accommodate 24 people for a private lunch.

HOTEL ANCILLIARY AREAS
There is a fully fitted commercial kitchen and office space at ground floor level, and a basement cellar including storage.

CURRENT LEASE TERMS
The lease to Chartridge Venues, incorporating the hotel, wedding and conference centre, contained within the annex and part of the palladian mansion expires on 16th June 2016. Swindon Borough Council has agreed an extension to this, until 30th September 2016 under the same terms.
COACH HOUSE TEA ROOMS
Open seasonally, and operated by Swindon Borough Council, are set in the restored horse stalls and stable buildings, located near the Hay Lane entrance of the park, in between the walled garden, main house and hotel entrance. This facility provides teas, drinks, sandwiches and light lunches, with seating inside and outside the stable buildings and within the walled garden courtyard, together with an education/children’s learning centre and toilet facilities.

Detailed trading information for the forest café, coach house tea rooms and museum will be made available via a designated data site, upon signature of a confidentiality agreement.

The coach house provides access to the walled garden and heritage garden centre.

FOREST CAFÉ
Operated by Swindon Borough Council. A modern detached single story building with restaurant serving hot and cold snacks, takeaway ice cream parlor, inside and outside seating and toilet facilities.

WALLED GARDEN
Built in the 1740’s, and recently restored with Lottery funding, the walled garden provides “premium space” for the wedding experience.

HERITAGE GARDEN CENTRE
Located outside the walled garden with a wide variety of heritage plants on sale.

PICNIC AND BBQ HIRE
The BBQ and picnic field is located south of the forest café. There are static BBQs available to hire, from March to October.

PLAYGROUND
The playground is located adjacent to the forest café, with colourful, state-of-the-art, play and climbing equipment, there is a dedicated play area for toddlers. Entrance is free.
JUNGLE PARC

Jungle Parc is an aerial adventure activity facility that operates a children’s adventurer and adult Xplorer course within the woodlands of Lydiard Park, near the forest café.

The course incorporates 50 different activities, including rope bridges, zip lines and cargo nets. The larger Xplorer course, suspended in the tree canopy, opened in October 2013.

FARM

A large part of the Lydiard estate is let to a tenant farmer. In addition, there is a grazing licence in place that is renewable on an annual basis.

ST MARY’S CHURCH

Contained within the grounds is a small medieval parish church. Forming part of the estate (but not owned by the Council) the church has reportedly stood on the site for around 800 years and has a wealth of history, with the font and northern aisle reportedly dating from the 13th Century and ceiling painting reportedly dating from the 14th and 15th Century. There are relics relating to the St John family including “The Golden Cavalier” a family member killed at The Battle of Newbury in 1645, whilst fighting on behalf of the Royalists. St Mary’s Church provides the perfect setting for the wedding experience at Lydiard House hotel.

SUBSTATION

There is a small electricity sub-station located in the grounds that is leased to S.E.B. Full details are contained within the data room.

ACCESS AND PARKING

The park has two main entrances, Hay Lane and Hook Street. Both entrances have free car parks. Hay Lane is situated near Lydiard House and St Mary’s Church, Hook Street is situated near the forest café.

Key Information

- £3M of Heritage Funding invested in Lydiard Park in 2005
- 351,403 cars visited Lydiard House 2014/15
- 702,806 visitors arriving by car 2014/15
- 19,012 visitors to house and gardens 2014/15
- The Jungle Parc and Lydiard Park and House in the top 5 visitor attractions in the town, at 4 and 5 respectively.
Planning and Listing

The House and Park have been registered as an Asset of Community Value, under the Localism Act (2011).

Lydiard Park – Grade II Listed - The garden and other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage for its special historic interest.

Lydiard House - Grade I listed - The building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Walled garden North West of Lydiard Park – Grade II Listed

Revetments to dam - Grade II Listed

Ice house - Grade II Listed

Stables to Lydiard House (coach house tea rooms) and the walled gate piers enclosing yard - Grade II - This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

This year Lydiard Park has, again, been awarded Green Flag and Green Heritage awards.

Lydiard Park enjoys some measure of protection from development in Local Plan policies. These state:

“Development, which would adversely affect the character or appearance, any special feature or quality of an historic park or garden, or its setting, will not be permitted, unless essential to the maintenance or enjoyment of the park or garden.”
Expressions of Interest

Lydiard House and Park has been described as Swindon Borough Council’s Jewel in The Crown. The estate is steeped in history and provides a variety of different uses which the Council believe can be enhanced and developed further for the good of the estate and community as a whole.

Detailed proposals are therefore being sought from potential joint venture partners to work in partnership with Swindon Borough Council to create new exciting leisure and other commercial offerings at Lydiard Park, that complement the site’s cultural heritage, while maintaining public access to the site.

Detailed proposals and expressions of interest are invited as a whole or in relation to parts.

Interested parties may contact Bilfinger GVA to express their interest. However, no direct contact is to be made with the Council, the management or employees. All requests for inspections will be made via Bilfinger GVA, who are fully retained by the Council to seek out joint venture partners in respect of the property.

The Council reserves the right to refuse any proposal at any stage during the process and will not under any circumstances consider a sale of all or any part of their freehold interest in Lydiard Park, House or Gardens.

Detailed proposals must be returned (in accordance with the instructions contained within the data room (to Bilfinger GVA) by:

12 PM (UK local time) on 11th December 2015

Please note that bid submissions received after this date will not be considered.

Licences

We understand that all commercial aspects of Lydiard House and Gardens benefit from the necessary licences for the conduct of the business.

EPC

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is available upon request or can be downloaded from the data room.

Viewing and Further Information

To discuss this exceptional opportunity, or to arrange an accompanied inspection; please contact Bilfinger GVA.

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Additional Information

Access to the data room will be subject to Bilfinger GVA reviewing the operational expertise and/or the financial standing of each applicant and the applicant completing a Non Disclosure Agreement which is available on request from Bilfinger GVA.
Contacts

For further information and to arrange a viewing, Please contact the Council’s representatives Bilfinger GVA.

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