

HAUSER & WIRTH
SOMERSET





Introduction

Durslade Farm was originally built as a 'model farm' with unique architectural details adorning the buildings, some of which date from as early as c.1760. However, for many years, the farm buildings were left vacant and have since fallen into disrepair. At the heart of the project is the desire to restore and conserve these buildings for future generations. Hauser & Wirth is well known for its sympathetic approach to restoring historic buildings and giving them a new lease of life as contemporary art spaces: from the former Löwenbräu brewery building which became Hauser & Wirth Zürich in 1996 and the Lutyens-designed former bank that, in 2003, became Hauser & Wirth's Piccadilly gallery, to the location of the former Roxy skating rink, which opened as the gallery's second New York space in 2013.

restore and conserve . . . for future generations

In December 2012, Hauser & Wirth were successful in receiving full planning permission to allow for each of the farm buildings at

Durslade to be perceptively renovated by architectural firm Laplace & Co, whose senior partner, Luis Laplace, has worked closely with the gallery and artists on many previous projects. Under the plans developed by Laplace & Co, the former stables and workshops will form a reading room, library, education space and office. The farmhouse will be for guests, including artists installing changing exhibitions at the gallery. The cowsheds will be converted into a restaurant, visitors' entrance and bookshop, and the barns will become three gallery spaces. Laplace & Co. will also develop two new gallery buildings, designed to sit sensitively in scale behind the barns and cowsheds. In addition, renowned landscape designer Piet Oudolf, who will be awarded an RIBA Honorary Fellowship in February 2013, will design a meadow garden that will sit behind the new galleries. Featuring hundreds of varieties of plants, this meadow will create a special place to contemplate the art and architecture at Durslade.

Clockwise from top left:

Henry Moore, Large Spindle Piece, 1968 and 1974, bronze

Reproduced by permission of The Henry Moore Foundation. Photo Jonty Wilde

Paul McCarthy, Henry Moore Bound to Fail (bronze), 2004

Dan Graham, Sine Curve, 2008. Photo Mike Bruce

Louise Bourgeois, Spider, 1994.

Photo Aaron Schuman, © Louise Bourgeois Trust



Architects

Lead architects, **Laplace & Co**, are a Paris-based architecture and design practice specialising in the delivery of private residential developments for artists, collectors and gallery owners. This project is led by partner, Luis Laplace who has developed the design and concept in consultation with the gallery's artists. Having worked on other projects in the area, Laplace is familiar with the historic town and has an in-depth understanding of the local architecture which has acted as a key influence on the project.

The renovations and restoration will be developed by Somerset-based **benjamin + beauchamp** architects who have considerable experience in the conservation of significant listed buildings and the creation of new buildings within a historic setting. The construction will be managed by **Jackson Coles** and completed in summer 2014.



Previous page: Threshing barn
Photo Aaron Schuman

Left to right:
Threshing barn interior, Piggery,
Durslade Farm, farmhouse
Photos Aaron Schuman

Overleaf: **Ron Mueck**, Woman with sticks, 2008
Installation view, Hauser & Wirth London, 2012
Photo Alex Delfanne

The Somerset Levels and Glastonbury Tor
Photo © Stephen Spraggon

The new gallery and architecture

At the core of the existing site, adjoining barns of varying shape and size form a strong, yet informal ensemble. The plans to develop the site aim to achieve a sense of continuity with the existing built fabric and to reinforce the predominance of the main barn complex in the site. The addition of two new wings, connecting with the cow house at one end and the piggery at the other, will create a continuous internal space and an enclosed external courtyard.

From the main entrance, the new additions will appear to be set back from the cow house, establishing a hierarchy between historical and contemporary interventions. The heights and pitches of gables and roofs have been carefully determined to bring a quiet response to the many conditions found on the site. The alignment of the new volumes is determined by the shape and boundaries of the property, and aims to offer a strong connection with the perennial garden and surrounding landscape. While the scale and proportions of the new buildings will remain sympathetic to the existing buildings, the choice of materials will emphasise the distinction between the new additions and the historical ensemble. The sober material expression is in keeping with the predominantly robust nature of the historic buildings. The use of brick will remain sympathetic to the existing sandstone and brick walls, while pre-cast concrete lintels and jambs will echo the framing of existing doors and windows. New roofs will be clad in profiled aluminium, to contrast with the existing tiled roofs. The junctions between new and existing walls and roofs will be carefully but honestly handled with clarity between old and new.

Exhibition spaces will stretch through five gallery rooms – two new, and three converted buildings – varying in proportion and style, providing a continuous spatial experience, which merges the existing listed agricultural buildings with the new purpose-built structure, and creates a dynamic and engaging dialogue between the new galleries and the agricultural background. From the main entrance at the southwest end of the cow house, visitors will be able to enter the first gallery in the threshing barn, or access the Meadow Garden through the new lobby. This area will be the central axis of public circulation connecting the galleries, the cloister courtyard, the restaurant and its terrace, and the Meadow Garden.

This courtyard is large enough for each building to retain its own identity, while giving a clear sense of the overall cohesion between the old and new buildings. The newly created courtyard garden, lined in part by colonnaded canopies, will provide a contemplative outdoor space for locals and visitors to enjoy, and will be a site for displaying outdoor works of art.



Architect Laplace & Co's impressions of the new gallery and reception area

As a resident local to Bruton, I'm excited that this magical town is being given such a shot in the arm in a way which is full of interesting promise. Art, architecture and cultural activity are not always the most common form of regeneration that small market towns see and it's going to be interesting to chart how the wider pull of Hauser & Wirth Somerset will colour the atmosphere of Bruton. This project will bring culture from our cities into the rural world – one which I inhabit and love – and I'm particularly looking forward to the mix that it will generate.

Kevin McCloud