

Report to the City of Toronto

# Future Arts Programming and Arts Facilities at Guild Park



**Submitted to Arts Services, Economic Development and Culture, City of Toronto  
Prepared by the Guild Park Stakeholders Group, May 2016**

This report is provided as part of the public consultation process for establishing future arts programming at Guild Park (201 Guildwood Pkwy., Toronto). The information includes ideas and recommendations from organizations actively involved in planning and presenting ongoing programs, events and activities at Guild Park.

The Guild Park Stakeholders Group includes Friends of Guild Park, Guild Festival Theatre, Guild Renaissance Group and the Guildwood Village Community Assn.



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Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



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## Summary and Next Steps

This report responds to the request for input on future arts/cultural programming at Guild Park as part of the ongoing community consultation process.

This information represents views and ideas provided by the four stakeholder organizations that focus on Guild Park. These volunteer-driven groups are key users of park facilities. In the past three years, the programs and activities organized by members of the Stakeholders Group, in collaboration with the City of Toronto, have attracted more than 30,000 people to Guild Park.

This submission is based on:

- the collective experience gained by producing hundreds of events at Guild Park since 2013;
- discussions with City of Toronto officials and participants at Guild Park events; and
- research of the best practices in arts and park management found in the City of Toronto and worldwide.

Arts programming and arts facilities are closely linked, as noted in the City's past studies for creating a "cultural precinct" at Guild Park. In this report, the Stakeholders Group identified the types of future programs and activities, as well as the new facilities and infrastructure required in support of these programs.

To ensure Guild Park's future is "sustainable and spectacular", this report:

1. Acknowledges the site's environmental constraints;
2. Respects the park's legacy as the Guild of All Arts, a unique and significant part of Canada's arts and cultural heritage that operated on the site for more than half a century;
3. Considers the requirements of on-site arts programs/activities, in the context of long-term interests and the park's new hospitality-related operations; plus
4. Recognizes the importance of augmenting the City's capital and operating budget for Guild Park with additional revenue-producing and financial partnership opportunities.

This report is both preliminary and negotiable. Many important decisions involving budgets, partnerships, design, operations, legalities and other issues are still being addressed. Discussions between City officials and Dynamic Hospitality continue on many issues affecting Guild Park's future use and operations.

## Next Steps

The Guild Park Stakeholders Group and its member organizations will continue to bring an informed public perspective to the site's long-term revitalization. This includes providing further advice and insights regarding arts programs and arts facilities at the property, plus actively raising funds for future park projects, operations, improvements. The Stakeholders Group and its member organizations look forward to participating actively in ongoing discussions and decisions about Guild Park with other Guild Park officials.

# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



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## Part 1 – Arts/Cultural Programming

### Existing Programs

Guild Park now hosts four main types of events:

#### 1. Major Arts Festivals

**Name of Event:** Guild Alive With Culture (free event)

**Organizer/Producer:** Guild Renaissance Group and Council Paul Ainslie's office

**Audience:** Approx. 5,000 attendees over two days. City-wide and beyond

**Additional Facilities required:**

- Public Infrastructure (washrooms; drinking water)
- Demonstration/studio areas for participating artists
- Enhanced performance area at Greek Theatre

#### 2. Outdoor Professional Theatre

**Name of Event:** Summer Drama Season (ticketed event)

**Organizer/Producer:** Guild Festival Theatre

**Audience:** Approx. 2,000 attendees over three-week season. City-wide and beyond

**Additional Facilities required:**

- Public Infrastructure (washrooms; drinking water)
- Enhanced performance area at Greek Theatre
- Backstage facilities
- Short-term and long-term storage
- Indoor rehearsal/performance space
- Improved public walkways (accessible/illuminated)

#### 3. Community / Neighbourhood Activities

**Name of Event:** Guildwood Day (Community Picnic for paid members)

**Organizer/Producer:** Guildwood Village Community Assn. (GVCA)

**Audience:** Approx. 800 attendees for one-evening event. GVCA members; local residents

**Additional Facilities required:**

- Public Infrastructure (washrooms; drinking water)
- Enhanced performance area at Greek Theatre
- Improved public walkways (accessible/illuminated)
- Sheltered public area
- Alternative indoor area (for inclement weather; all-season activities)

#### 4. Park-Specific Programs

**Name of Events:** Doors Open/walking tours; movie nights; seasonal events (Christmas; Clean-ups; etc.)

**Organizer/Producer:** Friends of Guild Park; GVCA; Guildwood Business Network

**Audience:** From 20 to 300 attendees per event. City-wide and beyond; Scarborough area; local residents

# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



## Additional Facilities required:

- Public Infrastructure (washrooms; drinking water)
- Enhanced performance area at Greek Theatre
- Improved public walkways (accessible/illuminated)
- Sheltered public area (outdoor)
- Alternative indoor area (for inclement weather; all-season activities)

## Expanded Capacity and Visitor Use

New facilities, including permanent buildings with space designed for arts activities, will allow Guild Park to operate as an all-season arts program venue. This will greatly increase the park's capacity to serve visitors and expand the number of events and range of programs.

Currently, Guild Park events are held outdoors (mainly in summer) and are weather-dependent. This limits the size, scale and frequency of park programs. Nevertheless, the popularity of these volunteer-led activities demonstrates Guild Park's potential as a cultural hub and provides a strong foundation for future arts/cultural programming. Adding new infrastructure and permanent facilities can easily double the number of arts/cultural programs held by existing Guild Park groups. The ability to hold indoor events will encourage many more arts groups, as well as community groups, schools, businesses and other organizations, to use the park year-round.

In addition, the new 37,000 sq. ft. restaurant/event/community facility operated in partnership by Dynamic Hospitality and the City of Toronto will bring thousands more visitors, wedding and special event guests to Guild Park annually. The new activity and additional visitors at Guild Park are expected to start in 2017.

## Returning Arts and Culture to Guild Park

An opportunity exists to re-establish a wide range of arts/cultural programs at Guild Park. This aligns with one of the City's key policy objectives: To ensure affordable and sustainable cultural spaces operate throughout the city, including outside the downtown area.

Guild Park's potential as an arts/culture hub for the City of Toronto is recognized by the recent Scarborough Renewal initiative of local Rotary organizations, as well as in previous City studies, such as the 2014 Making Space For Culture.

Renewed arts and culture programs at the site is in keeping with the legacy of the Guild of All Art, Canada's unique artists' community that began on the property in 1932. The founding principles of the original Guild of All Arts state it will "emanate a cultural influence for truth and beauty though all ... creative art." The Appendix includes a partial list of the wide range of arts, and creative pursuits created by professionals at the studios, facilities and grounds of what is now Guild Park.



# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



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## Create a Sustainable Cultural “Hotspot”

Looking ahead, what types of arts programs are best suited for Guild Park? More than 20 years have elapsed since Guild Park hosted formal arts programs. This gives a “clean slate” for arts programs and activities appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Establishing Guild Park as a successful, all-season art’s activity hub requires arts programming that complements and augments existing local activities, rather than repeating or duplicating similar programs already available at institutions or other facilities.

As an initial approach, we recommend applying the successful formula of the City’s Cultural Hotspot program. This grass-roots approach encourages integrating arts and culture activities with schools, community hubs and other partners. As a result, Cultural Hotspot activities are accessible and bring together professionals, emerging creators and community members.

Demand for arts programs will evolve and build over time. Long-term sustainable arts programming at Guild Park will require a flexible strategy that encourages participation by arts/culture professionals and emerging artists, as well as the community. This approach has been successful at art hubs elsewhere in Toronto, such as Artscape Wychwood Barns and UrbanArts.

## Future Arts Programs for Guild Park

Below is a preliminary list of potential arts programs that the site can host with improved infrastructure and adding permanent facilities:

### Major Special Events

- **Nuit Blanche** – The City is examining ways to include Guild Park in 2017
- **Festivals** – Special events for arts/dance/music (i.e. Scarborough Town Jazz Festival) etc.
- **“Animate the Guild”** – Based on Waterfront Toronto’s new “Animate the Waterfront” artists’ program
- **Curated Shows** – Using Guild Park as a venue to display works curated by art professionals with a local connection - i.e. Scarborough Arts; Restless Precinct.
- **Touring Exhibits** – Hosting appropriate arts/crafts/heritage displays, such as from Toronto Museums; IIDEXCanada (innovative prototypes designed with wood recycled from Toronto ash trees); University of Waterloo Archives (Clark family records)
- **Canada 150** – Hold a special event in 2017 celebrating Canada’s birthday as well as 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Guild of All Arts. Done in partnership with federal government, City of Toronto and private sponsors.

# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



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## Ongoing Arts Programs

- **Waterfront Arts Walk** – Add to the existing shoreline sculpture “Passages” by commissioning a series of permanent art installations between Guild Park’s shoreline and the nearby artist’s residence at Doris McCarthy’s former home.
- **Creator-In-The Guild Program** – Hosting a professional creator to produce works in any medium and provide insights to the public at Guild Park
- **Permanent Guild Collection** – Displays and interpretation of items now in storage from the Clark’s Guild of All Arts collection (100-inch loom; copper engravings, artwork, memorabilia, etc.)
- **Restoring Existing Artifacts** – Partnering with heritage institution/schools to establish an ongoing program to repair the site’s outdoor artwork/artifacts. Potential partners include National Trust of Canada, OCAD, community colleges, Canada’s Willowbank School of Restoration Arts.
- **Nature & Art** – Create a series of instructional/experiential programs themed around the art and nature found at Guild Park. These programs can range from conventional painting/drawing to digital photography/art. Can be organized by specific age groups/ art experience/ duration (one-afternoon/one-day or longer). Includes exhibitions by program participants.

## Performing Arts

- Provide performance space for recitals, small-scale concerts, creators’ events. Can be organized in conjunction with Guild Park events or as rentals
- Hosting ongoing events, such as Dinner and a Song, Acoustic Harvest club concerts
- Establish a Media Creative Studio where performers, sound artists and the public can record and edit music, video and digital images
- Work with Toronto Arts Council to launch outdoor dance programs used to animate historic sites (i.e. Kaeja Dance’s “flock dance”, “wedding brigade”, performances at sites such as Montgomery Inn, etc.)

## Other Activities

- Partnership programs with Toronto Public Library to bring authors and other speakers to Guild Park year-round as an extension to the existing facilities at the Guildwood library
- Add to Guild Park’s volunteer-led walking tours, by including a series of presentations covering the history/heritage/artistry and/or environment of the site
- Special arts talks by visiting experts – AGO, ROM, McMichael, OCAD University, UTSC, University of Waterloo etc. – focussing on different aspects of Guild Park, such as the works of Emmanuel Hahn; the architecture of Ron Thom (Greek Theatre); the life of Loring/Wyle; the innovative stone carving of E.B. Cox; the works of Dorsey James; the Clark collection
- Gallery showings in partnership with Cedar Ridge Creative Centre, UTSC, Scarborough Arts, East End Arts etc.

# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



- Arts / Nature programs in partnership with local institutions and organizations that reach out to young people, First Nations, seniors, local residents. A wide range of potential partners exist including: Cedar Ridge; local schools (from primary to university); East Scarborough Storefront; Scarborough Arts; East Scarborough Boys & Girls Club; Chartwell Guildwood; Momiji Seniors Residence; Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities; and service groups.

The above list indicates Guild Park's potential as a popular destination for a wide range of arts activities – from ongoing programs to special events. Opportunities exist to develop many other activities in keeping with:

- City-wide objectives for improving culture services outside the downtown core
- Guild Park's legacy and location
- Growing interest by established and "next-generation" creators
- Increased visits to the site's new restaurant/events facility
- A diverse local community seeking more venues for arts/cultural programs and facilities

## Part 2 – Arts Facilities

In addition to considering future arts programming, the Guild Park Stakeholders Group was asked to offer suggestions about the type of arts facilities and infrastructure required for program delivery.

Member organizations considered future use of the three existing buildings in Guild Park's "cultural precinct":

- the **Sculptor's Cabin** – a 288 sq. ft. one-room log cabin with stone fireplace; built in 1942;
- the **Pioneer ("Osterhout") Cabin** – a 220 sq., one-room log cabin with clay brick fireplace; built circa 1850; and
- the **Clark Building** at 191 Guildwood Pkwy. – a 6,400 sq. ft., two-storey concrete brick office and storage building; built in 1963.

Each building has been closed to the public for years and currently vacant.

The Stakeholders Group also considered ways to upgrade the "**Greek Theatre**" structure, an arts facility integral to the site. The theatre opened at Guild Park in 1982. It was made from repurposed marble features preserved after the demolition of the 1912 Bank of Toronto head office.

## Existing Buildings: Innovation and Flexibility

Guild Park – where "Art Meets Nature" – is a complex site with much potential and many constraints. The plans now being developed for the site represent a once-in-a-generation opportunity to revitalize the park's unique and irreplaceable collection of buildings.

# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



The three buildings within the park's cultural precinct have diverse histories, uses and future potential. Each has a historical designation and is located within or adjacent to recognized Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs).

We recommend taking a long-term, innovative and flexible approach to the design and features of these buildings. One way to maximize design possibilities and flexibility for these buildings' future use is by launching an open "ideas competition."

This innovative approach was recently adopted for the Toronto's new Green Line Park project. The results of this from ideas competition is helping the City of Toronto move ahead on this project in partnership with community advocates, professional groups and the Park People Alliance.

Applying a similar process to Guild Park built facilities will be a cost- and time-effective way of bringing forward some of the latest multi-disciplinary ideas to combine arts programming with arts-related design.

## Common Features

For long-term sustainability, the buildings used for arts programming should be:

- Open for year-round public use
- Repaired and upgraded to existing building, operating and safety standards;
- Able to accommodate a variety of arts-related uses for professional creators and the public
- Adaptable to new uses by growing numbers of park visitors and expanding demands of the creative community

It is recommended that all three buildings are upgraded for all-season use with the following features:

- Insulation, heating and ventilation
- Security and anti-vandalism provisions
- Provisions for adequate electrical power, water, high-speed Internet; Wi-Fi, recharging stations for public/visitor use
- Permanent washroom facilities, including hot and cold water (either on-premises or nearby)
- Adequate long- and short-term storage space for art, archival and theatrical materials
- Certification as a recognized "green" facility (i.e. LEED-certified) for design, construction, operations and maintenance.



# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



## Specific Buildings

### 1. Sculptor's Cabin (1942)

**Theme:** Welcome/Info Centre

**Focus:** Provides visitors with initial information/ orientation to Guild Park.

**Features to include:**

- four-season access and usability
- Includes running water, electricity, high-speed Internet/ Wi-Fi
- Proximity to washrooms
- 24-hour security
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Flexible interior space to allow for community use (small-scale meetings/events – see image below)



An inspiration for Guild Park's Sculptor's Cabin is this modern interior of a log cabin in Europe

**Additional Details:**

- Outdoor noticeboard with
  - detailed park map,
  - events/schedule for park programming/ info about upcoming events
- Signage / displays (inside and outside) with introduction to Guild Park
- Cabinets/showcases for merchandise/art displays
- Incorporate permanent artwork display by Dorsey James, Guild of All Arts resident sculptor. He used this cabin and created the carvings which adorn its exterior.
- Plans are for the Guild Renaissance Group to provide James' wooden sculpture for permanent display inside this cabin (or at another suitable location in Guild Park).
- Use for volunteer orientation and rendezvous space before and after events – Walking Tours, Holiday Events, Festivals, Art in the Park, Craft Fairs, Community BBQ, Cultural Celebrations,
- Includes flexible retail area for visitor purchases
- Building is staffed /animated on limited scheduled (based on high-traffic time). Volunteers are important part of operations.



# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



## 2. Pioneer Cabin (1850s)

**Theme:** Natural /Cultural History Centre and Creative Retreat

**Focus:** Provides flexible space that can be used for:

- visitors
- creators
- community meetings
- special event operations
- small-scale studio, classes/presentations



Cabin can be available for rentals (arts programs, Creator Retreats, special events, instruction photo shoots, on-location filming etc.)

**Features to include:**

- four-season access and usability
- Includes running water, electricity, high-speed Internet/ Wi-Fi; 24-hour security
- Proximity to washrooms;
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Flexible interior space to allow for community use (small-scale meetings/events)

**Additional Details:**

- Provides on-site information about Guild Park's natural history and cultural landscape (i.e. geology of Bluffs, Carolinian forest, First Nations, pioneers, site's residents, artists, visitors etc.)
- Can operate in partnership with Toronto Culture, Museums, Heritage Toronto, Scarborough Archives
- Furnished to accommodate creative work space, meetings, instructional area (see image)
- Includes short-term storage
- Pioneer exterior/sightlines retained so cabin can be used for photo shoots/ on-location filming
- Nearby grounds can include "pioneer" garden with natural herbs and vegetables (for community and Guild Inn Estate restaurant use).



Creative space in a modernized log cabin similar in size to Guild Park's Pioneer cabin

# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



## 3. Clark Building - 191 Guildwood Pkwy. (1963)



**Theme:** Creative Hub/ Arts and Cultural Centre

**Focus:** Large, flexible, multi-use space for displaying, creating, performing and enjoying a variety of creative work. Building recognizes the life work of Rosa and Spencer Clark, founders of the Guild of All Arts and the Guild Inn.

**Features to include:**

- Four-season access and usability
- Includes ample electricity and ventilation; 24-hour security
- Public washrooms; high-speed Internet/ Wi-Fi
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Flexible, multi-purpose interior space for displays, creative studios, performances, program administration

**Additional Details:**

- Space for special creative events/performances such as artist/author talks; readings; small-scale recitals/concerts/dance etc.
- One level of public gallery space to showcase a variety of creative works (sculptures, multi-media, paintings, performance etc.)
- Multi-purpose gallery includes sprung floor (for performances) and display areas protected from direct sunlight.
- Working studio space for artists, and accessible for demonstrations, workshops and visitor observation.
- Restoring Spencer Clark's original oak-paneled office
- Includes office/meeting space for rentals
- Retail space/gift shop for artists' / gallery merchandise
- Provision for secure storage (see Greek Theatre notes)



# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



- Adding a third storey enlarges the building without encroaching on adjacent ESAs.
- Cantilevered design for third-floor addition increases square footage with no change to the building footprint (see images this page)
- Use of glass, skylights, atrium will bring in natural light and provide public vistas of park.
- Open concept design provides opportunities to look down from upper floor to studio or performance space below.
- Visitors experience a creative transition from the dark ground floor to the airy, light-filled third floor.
- Flexible performance space in Clark Building used as rehearsal space for Greek Theatre productions when outdoor facility is unavailable due to other use / inclement weather.
- Portions of the building exterior can display banners, murals that complement existing artifacts / exhibitions / events (see image above).

A cantilevered glass addition creates space and light without increasing building footprint. Mural adds new visual interest to existing artifacts



# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



## 4. Greek Theatre (1982)

**Theme:** Outdoor Performance/  
Special Event Space

**Focus:** Spectacular signature  
space at Guild Park. Marble  
stage area used for live  
performances, theatrical/ special  
events/ festivals, photography  
and on-location filming

**Features to include:**

- Retain original design by Canadian architect Ron Thom
- Provide seating for 300+ (temporary lawn seats; easily removed between shows)
- Upgrade utilities, outlets, switches etc. to accommodate modern theatrical equipment (i.e. additional power outlets; 200-amp/3-phase power)
- Enlarge performance area with a thrust stage
- Add permanent backstage facilities
- Extend seasonal use of theatre by installing protective retractable covering for stage and seating areas



Guild Festival Theatre's 2014 production at Greek Theatre (above); example of thrust stage (top right); example of retractable covering at Redding California (bottom right).



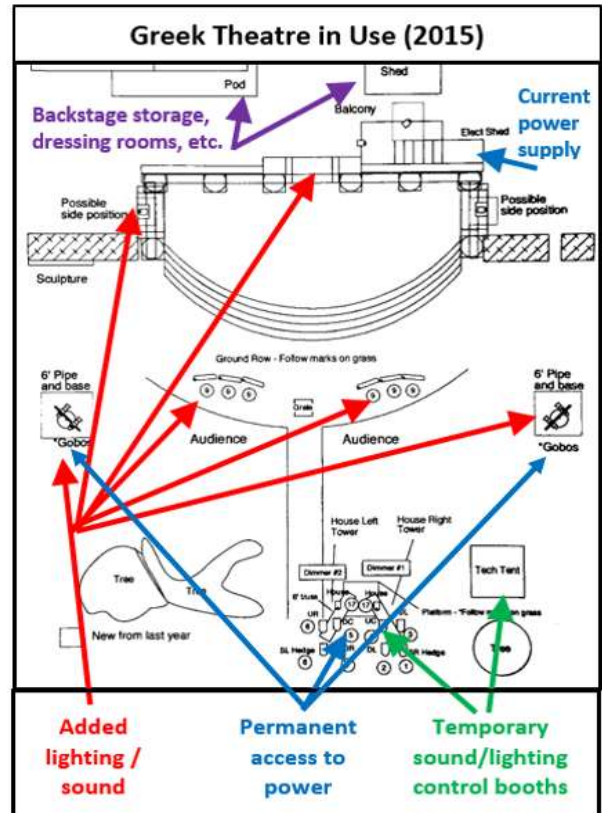
# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



## Additional Details:

- Maintain structure in good repair
- Ensure improvements/additions retain the structure's design and visual integrity
- Install permanent electrical supply in front area for sound / light boards / recordings
- Accommodate lighting and sound equipment, with hidden cables/wiring) throughout stage. Performance and seating space
- Add permanent backstage facilities, change rooms, washrooms, with temporary storage.
- Additional long-term theatrical storage to be available nearby in Clark Building.
- Expand performance area with a thrust stage extending one level (to existing drain)
- To ensure flexibility of park lawns/gardens permanent seating not required
- Recommend temporary, stackable, moveable seating suitable for use on sloping lawn area.
- Include space for appropriate signage (notice boards, heritage/memorial plaques)
- Well-marked, illuminated accessible path between theatre and parking areas, restaurant, washrooms and other park areas.



Examples of retractable covering (right) and moveable seating for Greek Theatre




# Future Arts Programming & Facilities at Guild Park

Report to City of Toronto, prepared by



## Appendix

<b>Guild Park Partial Listing of Arts &amp; Culture Activities</b> 				
Prepared March 2016 by Friends of Guild Park				
Activity	Location	Date	Artists /People Involved	Notes
Sculpture	Sculptors' Cabin (built 1942)	1942 - 1980s	Sculptors in residence: Michael Clay, Dorsey James (1970s), Aage Madsen (1940s)	Sorel Etrog, E.B. Cox and Frances Gage also created commissions for the Guild
Sculpture / sculpture lessons	original sculptor's cabin (288 sq.ft) now demolished	1970 - 1995	Sculptor in residence during this time was Elizabeth Fraser Williamson	Worked and instructed each summer
Drama	Greek Theatre	1980s - current	Robin Phillips described Greek Theatre as among Canada's most spectacular outdoor theatres	Designed by notable Canadian architect Ron Thom. Opened in 1982
TV programs /Commercials	Grounds/ Greek Theatre	1960s to current	CBC's White Oaks of Jalna series; Relic Hunter / Tim Hortons & others	
Music Videos	Grounds/ Greek Theatre	1980s - current	Drake, Martha & the Muffins, others	
Woodworking studio	Studio Building west side, main floor	1930s - 1960s		Made furniture and accessories for Guild Inn
Craft Studio	Studio Building - south side 2nd story	1930s - 1980s	Batiks, weaving, leather, ceramics, leather	2 innovative hand looms were designed and used on-site - a small lap loom and the 100-inch loom (once stored in S. Clark's office)
Pottery	Studio Building	From 1937		Coal-fired pottery kiln built adjacent to Studio Bldg in 1937 by English potter J.H. Eardley
Pewter & copper studio	Studio Building - south side main floor	1930s - 1960s	Albert Gilles	Decorative plaques were displayed in Guild Inn
Meeting facility; public washrooms, kitchen	Studio Building, main floor & 2nd storey	1960s- 2008	Available for rent for public and weddings. Closed in 1995; \$300,000 spent on building reno in 2008. Studio damaged by fire while under repair Dec 2008. Structure valued at \$200,000 and was uninsured. Building demolished in 2009.	
Exhibit displays and craft store	Studio Building - East wing	1930s - 1960s	Sold items made on-site and other hand-made items	A larger craft store operated in main Guild Inn building
Music/ Composing	Guild Inn grounds	1930s	Sir Ernest MacMillian	Spent summer at Guild Inn
Music/ Entertainment	Guild Inn -front hall	circa 1950s	Cecil Barnum-Kappey	
Music Lessons	Corycliff House	1930s	Virginia Knott	
Photography - darkroom and lectures	Studio Bldg ?	1930s		Notable photos of the Clarks displayed in lobby area of Guild Inn
Main meeting facilities (Hotel)	In original Guild Inn building and east wing addition	1930s to 2001		Hotel addition used for meetings from 1965 to 2001