

BLAKE COTTAGE VISION

June 2014

THE COTTAGE. The Cottage is to be a home for the dissenting imagination in England's Green and Pleasant Land that honours William Blake's uncompromising pursuit of truth, beauty and freedom.

First stage

- **ROOMS.** Some rooms will be fitted as **museum rooms**, which would also function as **work spaces**; other rooms will be fitted for **accommodation & living**, fit for a variety of residents: guests involved in creative projects; artists seeking refuge from persecution (a House of Refuge); and paying visitors on a Landmark Trust-style scheme. The balance of these visitors is yet to be confirmed.
- **ACTIVITIES.** The Cottage will be open one or two days a week for **day visitors**; for the rest of the week, the rooms will be at the disposal of individuals and groups invited to work on creative projects (i.e. the Cottage acting as a space for writers' and **artists' retreat**). Each month the Cottage will host **public events**: conversations of Blakean interest with an artist or scholar, for instance, or exhibitions, or intimate concerts. Ideally those who are currently working in the Cottage would host these events; it would be a chance to display the fruits of their work. Again, the balance of these activities is yet to be confirmed.

Second stage

- **VISITOR CENTRE.** Once the Cottage is established and self sufficient, we could turn our attention to the possibility of a separate visitor centre, either on the plot of land near the Cottage, or elsewhere in the local area. This would be a **place for creation**, whose core values are imagination and dissent. It would facilitate more **day visitors**, and it would provide a larger, more flexible **collaborative space** for groups of artists and minds (i.e. invited artists, authors, thinkers, philosophers and scientists) where they could produce work that reaches local galleries, universities and other institutions. It would be a true *museum*, a home for the muses.

We have discussed many proposals for the Blake Cottage, so it's helpful to be clear about what Blake Cottage will not be. The Cottage **will not be**:

- a **community centre**;
- an **educational centre**;
- a **literary museum**, even if there are some museum-fitted rooms.