



RSA

A NEW LEAF

How might we utilise local woodland resources to stimulate inclusive and sustainable economic activity?

Brief 2: A New Leaf

Headline Partner:

John Makepeace

There is one award
available for this brief:

**John Makepeace Award
of £2,000**

How might we utilise local woodland resources to stimulate inclusive and sustainable economic activity?

Background

- Around the world, woodland areas provide rich habitats and ecological networks, and play an essential role in the fight against climate change through the carbon they absorb as they grow.
- Trees can also be a valuable economic resource. The wood they produce is an important natural material for societies the world over; one that has evolved over millennia to be of unique strength, beauty and variety.
- A new engagement with our woodland areas offers an exciting opportunity to bolster the social, economic and environmental benefits they can provide to local communities. Sustainable manufacturing can generate a variety of employment and stimulate local craft.
- Over the hundred years or more it can take for trees to reach maturity, up to 90 percent of the smaller trees (10-35cm in diameter) are gradually removed to allow selected trees to spread their roots and canopy. These 'thinnings' provide high quality timber, ideal for new enterprises in rural areas, but their potential is under-utilised and undervalued.
- In contrast, unmanaged woodlands produce low-grade material only suitable for fuel, fencing, pallets and paper, whose short lifespan means that the carbon is released relatively quickly. Less than a fifth of woodland produce is currently used for sustainable, long-lasting products. Consequently, there is a high level of dependence on imported timber and products from the world's diminishing forests.
- Currently timber growing and manufacturing are separate, with little or no connection between them. By reuniting the economic and cultural relationships between both the woodlands and their wildlife, and the local community and the manufacture of products, there is the potential to offer numerous benefits including meaningful employment and strengthened local identity. The combination

of traditional and newer technologies could create new commercial opportunities for the production and sale of distinctive items.

- The brief calls for a multi-disciplinary approach. The judges will be looking for evidence of market analysis, business administration and manufacturing skills. You are encouraged to submit a joint entry in collaboration with those studying subjects other than your own.

How to approach the brief

- This brief asks you to tap into different perspectives to bring innovative approaches to the design, marketing and manufacture of products from woodlands, at the source or very near to the woodland itself. You should consider the specific product from woodlands and think about how this can be utilised.
- Successful entries will not only consider product range and market analysis but will also demonstrate how the manufacturing process could benefit local communities through employment, skills or community relationships.
- We are looking for surprising and innovative approaches to integrating manufacturing processes into a specific woodland context. This woodland can be anywhere in the world.
- Whilst creating your products we want you to bear in mind that wood products can help address climate change if they displace higher energy materials and are designed to have a long life, so that they don't quickly release carbon into the atmosphere.

For purposes of illustration only, viable responses could include:

- A line of products that support innovative construction systems suited for the local environment
- A brand that incorporates powerful storytelling to promote woodland products and benefits to its bioregion, including wildlife and community
- An educational centre which enables the local community to create bespoke products that substitute steel or plastics
- ... and many more are possible

Partner Information:

John Makepeace

This Award is one of several initiatives by the designer and furniture maker, John Makepeace, to encourage a greater awareness of woodlands, their management, their potential benefits and the more imaginative use of locally-grown timber in products and buildings.

Woodland Heritage

Woodland Heritage was established as a charity 25 years ago by two cabinet makers keen to 'put something back'. A membership based organisation, the charity supports the resilient management of woodlands, the development and protection of the UK timber supply chain and the furthering of knowledge and skills within the forestry and timber sectors, as well as within the general public. Woodland Heritage recognises fine quality work using UK timber with annual awards open to professionals and amateurs. The charity also produces a Journal, runs the 'From Woodland to Workshop' courses and a Field Weekend each year, as well as supporting research into Acute Oak Decline for over ten years. HRH The Prince of Wales has been the charity's Patron since 2005.

Judging Criteria

Your entry should demonstrate a design thinking approach to the brief and clearly communicate the following principles:

Social and environmental impact:

How does your proposal make a positive difference for people and/or the natural world in your chosen context? How is your approach empowering people? Have you considered effective use of resources including materials and processes? Have you considered diversity and inclusion in your proposal?

Rigorous research and compelling insights:

How have you combined your own firsthand research with a review of existing research and wider trends? How can you show a clear path between your key insights and your proposal? How are your insights grounded in people's needs and desires? How did you get feedback and incorporate new ideas through prototyping and iterating?

Systems thinking:

What's the bigger picture? How have you considered the root causes of the challenge you're exploring? How does your idea connect to a wider set of issues? What might be some unintended consequences of your proposal?

Viability:

Have you considered potential models for how your proposal could work in the real world? How could it be funded and sustained financially? What are potential barriers? How would you measure success?

Creativity and innovation:

How is your idea different from existing interventions? Are there unexpected or surprising elements in your proposal?

Entry Requirements (Briefs 1-7)

Open Briefs

The competition will open for entries via sda.thersa.org on 25 January 2021, and the final deadline for entries is 10 March 2021 at 4.00pm GMT.

Online Entry

If you are unable to submit online, please contact us by email at sdaenquiries@rsa.org.uk. As you prepare your submission, please ensure that:

- You do NOT include your name, university/college or other identifying marks anywhere on your submission.
- None of your submission files exceed 10MB – this is the maximum size for each individual file/board when you submit online.

Submission Requirements

For all briefs EXCEPT the Moving Pictures brief, the submission requirements are:

1 x A3 PDF hero image with a 1 sentence description – a singular 'poster image' that conveys the essence of your project and includes your project title plus a 1 sentence description. For example: 'Bare technology: a product and service design proposal to convert old computers (e-waste) into simpler, more straightforward, accessible computers for older people'. Your hero image should aim to bring your concept to life – make sure it is vibrant and engaging. Your 1 sentence description is very important, make sure you take some time to craft an impactful message.

1 x A3 written summary – a single A3 PDF page that summarises your big idea using the following format:

- Problem (50 words max). What is the specific problem you identified within the brief topic? Who experiences this problem, and how does it impact them?
- Process (75 words max). How did you investigate this issue and what were your key insights? What journey did you go through to get to your final proposal?
- Proposal (50 words max). What is your proposed intervention? How will it address the problem?

4 x A3 PDF boards outlining your proposal – 4 pages describing your proposal and responding to the 5 sections of the judging criteria. Number each board in the top right-hand corner, in the order they should be viewed by the judges. You may include relevant hyperlinks in your boards however we cannot guarantee this will be viewed by the panel.

For details on the submission requirements for the Moving Pictures brief, please see the Moving Pictures entry requirements and guidelines. Please note that late submissions will not be accepted, and all entrants are encouraged to submit their work in good time before the deadline.

Competition Timeline

26/08/20

Briefs Soft Launch

The 2020-21 RSA Student Design Awards Competition briefs go live on sda.thersa.org

25/01/21

Submissions Open

Go to sda.thersa.org to submit your proposal

10/03/21

Final Deadline

Submit by 4pm GMT on 10 March 2021

28/05/21

Winners Announced

Stay tuned for the big announcement!

6-15/10/20

Online Launch Events

Sign up to [our newsletter](#) to learn about our in-depth brief launch sessions held by our partners and the SDA Team

10/02/21

Early Bird Deadline

Submit by 4pm GMT on 10 February 2021 for a reduced entry rate of £25

March-May

Judging

Entries will be evaluated in a two-stage process: shortlisting and interviews

29/06/21

Awards Ceremony

Join us to celebrate the 2020-21 RSA SDA Winners!