

Open Call Pews & Perches



Buoys Are Back In Town by McCloy + Muchemwa, 2019. © Luke O'Donovan

1

The commission

The London Festival of Architecture (LFA) and The Royal Docks Team (RDT) invite you to create one of several public benches, to be installed in the public realm of the Royal Docks this autumn.

Following the success of the 2019 design competition, we are now inviting architecture and design students, recent graduates and emerging practitioners to submit a design proposal for a bench that will transform the public realm of the Royal Docks as a place to sit, rest and play.

If your design is one of the winners, you will be awarded £2,000 including a design fee of £500 to develop, build and install your bench in the Royal Docks. This will be a chance to participate in a unique project and showcase your imaginative design to the public and the many festival producers involved.

The Context

Once London's gateway to world trade, today the Royal Docks is one of the UK's most important regeneration stories. This vast area in the borough of Newham is re-emerging as a commercial and cultural hub of global significance, and an exciting new waterfront.

The docks lie immediately east of Canary Wharf in the London Borough of Newham, covering over 500 hectares of land and 18.4km of waterfront. With the support of funding from the London Economic Partnership (LEAP), this unique part of London is starting a journey to become one of the best examples of regeneration in the world. Located at the intersection of the Thames Estuary, Royal Docks and Beckton Riverside Opportunity Area, and the UK's Innovation Corridor, this is a large area with enormous potential. Through cooperating across municipal borders, the Royal Docks is poised to become a flourishing and diverse commercial district.

The Royal Docks Team is a multi-disciplinary team that brings together officers from across the Greater London Authority, the London Borough of Newham and the London Economic Action Partnership. The team was established in 2017 to help deliver the cohesive transformation of the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone, where seven million sq ft of commercial space will see business rates reinvested for the benefit of the local community.

For the second year running, the Royal Docks Team are commissioning a series of public benches to be placed around the Royal Docks, see below for details. The benches should celebrate the Royal Docks and the communities that live here whilst also promoting healthier lifestyles.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the London Borough of Newham is one of the hardest hit councils and has seen the highest death rate in England and Wales. The borough has a high level of obesity and promoting healthier lifestyles and increased use of public spaces is key to its recovery.

The sites



Map of the wider area

A variety of locations across the Royal Docks have been selected for the benches. These are areas where there is significant scope for public realm enhancement or seating provision:

1. Along the Thames at Royal Wharf (site TBC)
2. Thames Barrier Park
3. Connaught Crossing Northern side
4. Dockside Lawns, Royal Albert Dock 2 1
5. London Design and Engineering University Technical College (UTC)

You can indicate a preferred site in your design submission. However, please bear in mind that you might not be granted the preferred site. The design proposal should therefore be flexible and adjustable to other locations. Ultimately the decision on where benches go will be made by the Royal Docks Team.

Following the selection process, Royal Docks Team will facilitate a call/visit to a community organisation local to each bench location. We encourage collaboration and input from these organisations into the design of the benches. This consultation process will be used to discuss the proposed bench design, how it responds to the existing community feedback around seating needs in that specific area and to make sure any key feedback from the community organisation is factored in the final design.

4

Design requirements

- Each bench must offer a comfortable seat for a minimum of 2 adults (with consideration for social distancing)
- We are looking for pieces that function for visitors (are not purely sculptural) and are realistic to the brief (do not become pavilions or follies)
- They must be safe (deter anti-social behaviour), durable and offer a low-cost design solution
- The designs should be playful and creative; potentially encouraging a second use, such as integrating elements that involve children's active participation with the design and improving health and wellbeing by integrating design features that enable a physical workout, encouraging social interactions, or enhancing people's connection with nature and their surroundings.
- Maintenance is a key consideration and costs should be minimal, particularly if the bench has planting: designers must consider how plants will be watered and change over a year. The benches must be easily kept clean, litter-free and in good condition
- The benches must be sustainable and able to withstand the strong winds in winter months
- We are also interested in seeing creative ways to reuse/recycle materials in the bench designs
- Design proposals must actively consider the surrounding communities. They should build on outcomes of community engagement on the Public Realm development process to date which express communities' needs and aspirations for public space and street furniture and demonstrate willingness to develop designs in coordination with local communities – a process the Royal Docks Team will facilitate.

For more information on outcomes of community engagement on the Public Realm development process to date visit:

- [Appendix 1](#) – key themes, comments and recommendations specific to Seating/Street Furniture and other relevant themes
- [Appendix 2](#) – Community feedback on other public realm elements

5

Further Guidance

- *Authorship:* The judges welcome entries from, or collaborations with groups in the Royal Docks area and LB Newham who are underrepresented in architecture. This is in line with the Mayor of London's recently launched Supporting Diversity Handbook, a pdf and online version of which can be found [here](#).
- *Budget:* If successful, the £1,500 will need to cover all associated production costs (materials, transport, construction and deinstall). You can use salvaged materials or seek in-kind materials sponsorship to reduce expenses. The budget will be managed by the entrant.
- *Design:* The bench should be designed to prevent use or damage by skateboarders.
- It should be free-standing without the need for ground fixings. The seating design must protect the safety and security of passers-by, and reduce the opportunity for a group of people to take it away.
- The design must also take into account of the site conditions and any slopes.
- *Health & safety:* The drawings will be checked by a Royal Docks / Newham Council engineer for which you will need to carry out a risk assessment. On delivery, the bench will be checked to ensure it is safe for public use. You may be asked to make modifications but on sign-off the bench will be the property and responsibility of Royal Docks Team.
- *Durability:* The project will exist for 12 months and you should consider the longevity and appearance of your design accordingly, to ensure that no or minimal maintenance is required during this period. Subject to durability, the benches may be able to be in place for longer or moved to a different location in Royal Docks for an extended period.
- *Timescale:* The bench is expected to be installed in November 2020 and stay in place until at least November 2021.
- *Installation:* Unless otherwise agreed with the Royal Docks Team installation will take place during November 2020.
- *Deinstallation:* Unless otherwise agreed with the Royal Docks Team deinstallation will take place in November 2021.
- *Afterlife:* There might be an opportunity to re-site the bench within the Royal Docks area after October 2021.

6

Budget

The total budget available for this project for one bench is £2,000 including a design fee of £500. This is to include all fees, fabrication, installation and deinstallation costs (materials, transport and construction).

Half of the fee will be awarded in October, on receipt of a signed agreement in which you commit to provide a bench as per your submission and any revisions as requested by Royal Docks Team and London Festival of Architecture. The remaining fee will be given in November after delivery and approval of the bench.

7

Submission

This submission should include

1. Full name and contact details including postal address, contact number and email of project lead.
2. Brief biographies of all the project team.
3. Coloured photo of the design team (landscape) for promotional purposes
4. A 200-word description about your practice along with any relevant technical expertise acquired through previous experience.
5. Hand or computer drawn 3D design visualisation
6. Construction detail drawn to scale, with key dimensions noted
7. Outline all materials, budget and production process

On Wednesday 2 September 4.00-5.00pm LFA team will host a Zoom session to discuss how to put together a successful competition submission. This will also be an opportunity to ask questions specific to this competition process. If you are interested to join please email: rosa.rogina@nla.london

8

Eligibility

The competition is open to students and emerging architects and designers. We welcome collaborations however the project must be actively led by a named emerging architect or designer. Emerging is defined by being no more than 7 years post graduate.

9

Deadline and submission details

- Deadline for submission is 8.00am, Monday 28 September 2020. Submissions received after this time will not be considered.
- For competition enquires please contact: rosa.rogina@nla.london

- To submit expressions of interest in a PDF format go [here](#).
- The PDF should be no more than 5MB and 10 A4 pages.
- You will receive an email confirming receipt of your submission.

10

Schedule outline

Submissions open: Monday 24 August 2020
LFA Zoom session: Wednesday 2 September 2020
Submissions closed: Monday 28 September 2020
Winners notified: Monday 5 October 2020
Community consultation: October 2020
Bench fabrication: November 2020
Benches installed: end of November 2020
Benches deinstalled: November 2021

11

Judging panel

Dan Bridge (Programme Director in the Royal Docks)
Pedro Gil (Founder, Studio Gil)
Tamsie Thomson (Director, London Festival of Architecture)
Kevin Twyford (Principal Landscape Architect, London Borough of Newham)
Frances Williams (Technical editor, Architects' Journal)
Community representative TBC

12

Further information

- Submissions will be judged on originality, demonstration of creativity and relevance to the brief, as well as feasibility and how the proposal works in the context of the site.
- The ownership of Copyright of the design will be in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, that is Copyright rests with the author of the submitted design.
- All designs remain the intellectual property of the designer however the winning designs when built, will be the property of the Royal Docks Team.
- Please bear in mind that the project requires a fast turn around and may have peak moments when your practice will need to dedicate sufficient staff to deliver the project on time, on budget and to the high standard expected by all stakeholders.
- If selected, your practice/collaboration needs to organise: Professional Indemnity, and Employers Liability (in case you have employees)
- Significant efforts are made by all stakeholders of the project to ensure wide media coverage.
- London Festival of Architecture and Royal Docks Team reserve the right to use images from the submissions for promotional purposes in press, social media and publications. All endeavours will be made to ensure accurate accreditation.

13

Useful links

London Festival of Architecture:

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

The Royal Docks Team

<https://www.royaldocks.london>

14

Contact

To submit your entry please go to:

<https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/pewsandperches2020/>

For general enquires please contact: rosa.rogina@nla.london

15

Disclaimer

The competition organisers are not liable for lost, misdirected, or late entries. Decisions of the jury represent their professional judgments and all decisions are final. While it is the intent to construct the winning scheme, the organisers reserve the right to not proceed with construction for any reason. Material submitted by you shall be your sole responsibility, shall not infringe or violate the rights of any other party or violate any laws, contribute to or encourage infringing or otherwise unlawful conduct, or otherwise be obscene, objectionable, or in poor taste. By submitting such material, you are representing that you are the owner of such material and/or have all necessary rights, licenses, and authorization to distribute it.

16

Reference

The first edition of the 'Pews and Perches' project - a series of benches designed by emerging architects as part of the London Festival of Architecture (LFA)'s growing year-round programme - has been unveiled across the Royal Docks in autumn 2019. From a bench incorporating changing facilities for swimmers to another using reclaimed marine buoys, the benches represent extraordinarily imaginative responses to a competition organised by the LFA in partnership with the Royal Docks Team.

Together, the benches celebrate a fresh perspective on design, and offer imaginative places for the public to sit, relax and interact with the unique waterside setting. Architecture and design students, recent graduates and emerging practices were invited to enter the competition to create a playful series of benches, that can welcome visitors to the area throughout the next year. With innovative and creative visions for enlivening the Royal Docks' distinct waterfront at the forefront of their proposals, the five winning teams were

selected by an expert jury including Dan Bridge (Programme Director, Royal Docks Team), Tamsie Thomson (Director, London Festival of Architecture) and David Ogunmuyiwa (Principal, ArchitectureDoingPlace and Mayor's Design Advocate).

The benches are still in place and can be seen around the Dock edge.



Semaphore by Parallel Collective, 2019 competition winner
Royal Albert Wharf



Roly Poly by Nasios Varnavas and Era Savvides of Urban Radicals, in collaboration with Millimetre and Sanne Visser, 2019 competition winner
RAD London



Royal Breath by Studio Who, 2019 competition winner
Dock edge in front of ExCeL



Peekaboo by Portia Malik, 2019 competition winner
Dock edge in front of The Crystal



The Buoys are Back in Town by McCloy + Muchemwa, 2019 competition winner
Dock edge near Building 1000 (this bench is not on display at the moment)

17



London Festival of Architecture

The London Festival of Architecture was founded in 2004, and is now firmly established as Europe's biggest annual architecture festival. The London Festival of Architecture 2018 will feature events across the capital from 1-30 June, and this year will explore the theme 'identity'. The London Festival of Architecture celebrates London as a global hub of architectural experimentation, practice and debate, provoking questions about the contemporary and future life of the city, and promoting positive change to its public realm. The London-wide programme is delivered by a diverse mix of architecture and design practices and practitioners, cultural and academic institutions, artists and many others.

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

Twitter: @LFArchitecture



The Royal Docks Team

The Royal Docks in the London Borough of Newham was once a global centre of innovation and industry, supplying goods and services all over the world. Today the Royal Docks prepares for London's largest and most significant regeneration project, with up to 20,000 new homes and 40,000 jobs being delivered over the next 25 years. The Mayor of London

and Mayor of Newham have established a new delivery team to drive forward the area's exciting transformation. The team are in the process of finalising a 5-year delivery plan setting out the investment and interventions that will re-establish the Royal Docks as a world-class centre for enterprise and ideas.

www.royaldocks.london

Twitter: @YourRoyalDocks