

Open Call Harrow Road Canalside Activation



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The commission

The London Festival of Architecture (LFA), and Westminster City Council (WCC) invite architects, landscape architects, designers and artists to submit an expression of interest for our competition to design a new public realm intervention along a stretch of the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union Canal passing through the Harrow Road area of north-west Westminster.

Situated on a vacant stretch of towpath to the south of the canal, and bounded by railway land behind and the Westway above, the project will deliver an experimental cross section across the Grand Union Canal and adjacent towpath to demonstrate the opportunities to improve the amenity of the area and create a welcoming place that will encourage greater use.

There is a huge opportunity to not only establish the canal as a better connected resource

for the Town Centre and local residents, a place for leisure or culture, but also as an east-west pedestrian and cycle link that serves a large swathe of area and addresses severance. In the longer-term, the canal can form valuable links to the Paddington Opportunity Area and Old Oak and Park Royal, opening up opportunities presented by these major development projects for communities in the Harrow Road, Westbourne and Queens Park wards.

We are inviting architects, landscape architects, designers and artists to submit a design concept that will increase public interest and engagement with the canal and demonstrate the opportunities a revitalised canal can present locally. 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.

A winning team will be confirmed in early April, and awarded £30,000 to develop a fully costed, feasible design that can be delivered ahead of June 2019 as part of the London Festival of Architecture. To coincide with the festival, the delivered scheme will remain in-situ for 1 month.

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The Context

The Harrow Road is home to a diverse and well established community and its location within the North West Economic Development Area means there is a demand for regeneration, growth and improved employment and social opportunities.

Working alongside residents and stakeholders, the Council are producing a 'Place Plan' to describe the existing issues and priorities, establish objectives for the area and give details on a range of realistic projects that will help deliver immediate and longer-term improvement.

The success of the Place Plan is centred upon the successful delivery of four objectives that have emerged through stakeholder and community engagement.

- Create a 21st Century High Street
- Increase green and public open space
- Benefit from Future Development Opportunities
- Ensure a socially sustainable future

This opportunity is seen as a precursor to developing a wider canal side strategy, helping to test early ideas and learn from them in practice. The value of increasing public space, introducing new uses and providing greater permeability and access to the canal should be central to the proposals.

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Canal & River Trust

The Canal & River Trust are a key stakeholder in the development of the Place Plan and the waterway as a critical element of this design brief. Consideration should be given to Canal & River Trust's new strategy which focuses on the wellbeing benefits of being by water.

63% of Westminster's population live within 1km of either the Paddington Arm or the Regent's Canal. This means over 100,000 are in easy walking or cycling distance of the waterways. With our new strategy, Canal & River Trust will aim to reach more of our near neighbours, encouraging them to gain the benefits of being by water. As part of this strategy, we are keen to work in partnership to activate the canal and enhance the environment. This stretch of the canal forms part of our Quietway route currently in development in partnership with TfL. This project will improve the towpath and remove barriers to cycling & walking between Paddington and West Drayton in Hillingdon.

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The sites



-  Main intervention
-  Key connections

This project must deliver a site-specific intervention for all of the sites indicated above.

Main intervention should be located at intersection between the canal and the Westway. A 10-20m cross-section should be proposed at some-point in this area to best describe the opportunities relating to the various spatial conditions outlined in the Open Call.

Alongside the main intervention thought should be given to how local residents, boaters and other users can be better aware of the project and opportunities presented by the wider canal. Two key connections have been identified as potential locations for a smaller physical way-finding intervention.

Identified advantages of the site to consider: Ecology potential, busiest stretch of canal for boaters, tranquil landscape, one of London's last remaining 'dark' spaces, potential value of surrounding businesses – Great Western Studios, engaged local stakeholders – boaters, artists looking to exhibit, history and cultural value of the Canal, links to wider opportunity areas.

Identified disadvantages of the site to consider: Air-pollution, absence of footfall, safety, lack of facilities for boaters, inactive facades linked to adjacent infrastructure, lack of permeability and connectivity to High Street, towpath to south only.

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Design requirements

The applicant is required to provide a creative design solution for the design intervention which connects people with the canal while enhancing the look and feel of the site. We are looking for an intervention that functions for visitors and passers-by (is not purely sculptural) and are realistic to the brief (does not become a pavilion or a folly). It must be safe, durable and offer a low-cost design solution.

The applicant shall undertake the following tasks:

- Provide design intervention for the main and two satellite sites to enhance the look and feel of the canal, to increase footfall and accessibility to the site but be robust enough to cope with being in the public realm in an area with limited passive surveillance.
- Consult with key stakeholders, including the Westminster City Council, boaters, local residents and landowners (Canal and Rivers Trust, Westway Trust and Network Rail).
- Project management and delivery of the winning design.

The 'cross-section' intervention should explore a broad range of interconnected opportunities for the towpath and water; testing ways of improving its appearance, promoting activity that can take place along its length and prompting conversations with local residents and stakeholders about its potential. Proposals could consider:

- Offering a useable and engaging resource
- The potential for local wayfinding and education
- Public realm infrastructure to transform the ability and desire to stop and enjoy the site
- New planting to tackle air pollution and boost ecosystems
- Community uses and other forms of activation that offer a contrasting experience to the town centre
- Methods to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists
- Practical lighting or similar interventions that balance security concerns with the generosity that is valued in such areas
- Boater facilities

The wayfinding interventions should provide better access to the canal and navigate local residents and other users to the main intervention.

Further guidance

- *Budget:* The budget will be managed by the entrant. There is no restriction on how the budget should be divided between various different aspects of the proposal.
- *Materials:* You can use salvaged materials or seek in-kind materials sponsorship to reduce expenses. We would encourage designers to take cues from the historic canal environment
- *Design:* The intervention should be robust enough to withstand all weather conditions and potential damage.
- *Health & safety:* The drawings will be checked by a Westminster engineer who will also carry out a risk assessment to ensure the project is safe for public use. You may be asked to make modifications but after install the project will be the property and responsibility of Westminster City Council.
- *Durability:* The project will exist for 1 month and you should consider the longevity and appearance of your design accordingly, to ensure that no maintenance is required during this period. Subject to durability, parts of your intervention may be able to be in place for longer or moved to a different canal location for an extended period.
- *Maintenance:* Design should also consider sustainability and require minimum maintenance.
- *Insurance:* Your practice / collaboration needs to have Professional Indemnity of £1million to be eligible to go through to shortlisting. The project will require Public Liability of £5million.
- *Project ownership:* This will be clarified at Stage 2 as WCC may wish to retain a right to use any structures in a separate location after the festival.

Budget

The total budget available for this project is £30,000 plus VAT to include all fees, fabrication and installation. The budget outline above includes a design fee of £5,000 inc. VAT for the winning team.

Half of the fee will be awarded in April, on receipt of a signed agreement in which you commit to provide the project as per your submission and any revisions as requested by Westminster City Council. The remaining fee will be given in June after delivery and approval of the project.

Submission

This competition has a two stage submission

This first stage 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. A 200-word description about your practice along with any relevant technical experience acquired through previous experience; please include images of relevant previous work.
4. A short paragraph of max. 300 words on why you are interested in being involved in the project. You may wish to include some thoughts about your vision including any initial written reactions you may have to the brief.
5. No design work is required for the first stage and any included sketches will not be shared with the judges.

These submissions will be shortlisted by the judging panel. Up to 6 shortlisted practices will then be invited to develop a design concept based on the information laid out in this open call and will be awarded an honorarium of £500 Inc. VAT each.

The work required for the second phase of the project will be reflective of the honorarium sum; therefore, we will be expecting the equivalent of an A2 board explaining your proposal. This can come in the form your practice feels will most effectively communicate your design to the judging panel.

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Eligibility

The competition is open to architects, landscape architects, designers and artists. We welcome collaborations however the project must be actively led by a named architect, designer or artist.

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Deadline and submission details

- Deadline for first submission is midday Friday 8 March 2019. Submissions received after this time will not be considered.
- For competition enquires please contact: rosa@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org
- Please send expressions of interest in a PDF format via:
<https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/harrowroad/>
- The PDF should be no more than 5MB and 10 A4 pages.
- You will receive an email confirming receipt of your submission.

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Schedule outline

Submissions open: Thursday 14 February 2019
Submissions closed: Friday 8 March 2019
Successful shortlisted practices notified: w/c 11 March 2019
2nd submission: Friday 12 April 2019
2nd round interviews: w/c 15 April 2019
Winner notified: w/c 15 April 2019
Winning design opens to the public: 1 June 2019
Winning design deinstalled: 1 July 2019

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Judging panel

Ruchi Chakravarty (urban design coordinator, Westminster City Council)
Hannah Gibbs (enterprise manager, London at Canal & River Trust)
Sophie Nguyen (local architect and Westbourne Neighbourhood Forum)
Biljana Savic (local architect & director, Maida Hill Neighbourhood CIC)
Tamsie Thomson (director, London Festival of Architecture)
Frances Williams (technical editor, Architects' Journal)

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Further information

- To process entries to this competition we will share your application and any associated personal data provided on the application with our jury and competition partners.
- 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 design will itself when built will be the property of Westminster City Council.
- Please bear in mind the project requires a fast turnaround and may have peak moments when your practice will need to dedicate sufficient staff to deliver the project on time, to budget and to the high standard expected by all stakeholders.
- Your practice / collaboration needs to have Professional Indemnity of £1million to be eligible to go through to shortlisting. The project will require Public Liability of £5million.
- Significant efforts are made by all stakeholders of the project to ensure wide media coverage; the winning design team will need to provide relevant spokespeople as requested
- London Festival of Architecture and Westminster City Council 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.

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Useful links

London Festival of Architecture:
www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

Westminster City Council:
www.westminster.gov.uk

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Contact

To submit your entry please visit:
<https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/harrowroad/>

For general enquires please contact: rosa@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

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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.

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ARCHITECTURE**

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.

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