Open Call

Making Connections: Custom House to Royal Victoria Design Charrette

Freemasons Road view to proposed Elizabeth Line station – Image Source: Crossrail (TfL Rail)

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The Design Charrette

The London Festival of Architecture (LFA), and The Royal Docks Team (RDT), in partnership with Newham Regeneration, invite you to submit an expression of interest for participation in a design charrette to co-create and share ideas that improve the connections between Custom House and Royal Victoria.

The charrette will explore opportunities to address key challenges in the area and inform a vision and a strategy for the Royal Docks Team to jointly deliver through a coordinated investment. The outputs of this will aim to improve integration of the
Royal Docks and Custom House Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) station to better serve local communities, businesses and attract visitors.

A selected range of 4-5 experienced, diverse architectural and urban planning practices will work alongside and involve local representatives, stakeholders and delivery partners to collectively consider the objectives of a place-making strategy incorporating Royal Victoria and Custom House, including the interface with Custom House station and the surrounding environment. The consultant teams will be asked to identify meaningful design solutions and give rise to visionary, even speculative, propositions that can stimulate debate, progress local engagement, and positively influence the future direction of the area.

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The Context

Custom House is a primarily post-war residential area centred on a local shopping parade at Freemasons Road. To the north, Barking Road provides a more significant town centre, with a supermarket, library and the newly regenerated Rathbone Market. To the south is Royal Victoria Dock, which provides a waterside setting for ExCeL, a residential community, hotels, bars and cafes alongside the Emirates Air Line (cable car) connected to Greenwich Peninsula. However, these amenities are
often difficult to access from the wider area due to the severance imposed by Victoria Dock Road and the wide railway corridor parallel, which was formerly part of the goods rail infrastructure that served the historic docklands.

The Custom House area is likely to see a significant development with 2,000 new homes and improvements proposed to Freemasons Road. As outlined in Newham Council’s proposals for the immediate area to the north, this will combine a new local centre, housing delivery and economic regeneration. Custom House station connects Custom House with the rest of the Royal Docks via Royal Victoria to the south. Once an entrance gateway to world trade and commerce, with custom duties on imported goods controlled and regulated by the former Customs House building that once stood at this location. Today it will serve as the site of a new major transport interchange with direct access to ExCeL London, the exhibition halls and the International Convention Centre (ICC) along with significant new developments proposed in the area, such as Royal Docks West and Silvertown Quays beyond the expanse of dock water. Overall there is a significant growth in jobs and homes expected in the Royal Docks, where improved active walking and cycling routes will be a priority of investment to ensure the integration of existing communities and the overall spread of benefits to the local area. Therefore, the Custom House station will be a critical point of arrival for visitors and commuters to the area, as well as providing residents an important access and a walking route to the Royal Docks.

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The site
The focus of this design charrette is to consider the arrival of the Elizabeth Line station and the extent of other investment that can be delivered to reflect the identity of the existing community and the social and cultural heritage of the area; supporting both physical and social economic regeneration initiatives; and with reference to the Mayor of Newham’s Local Plan policies and the Mayor’s Good Growth policies set-out in the London Plan. These opportunities may include opportunities to deliver:

- **Wayfinding Signage** – reflect local cultural identity, represent current occupiers, and promote activity
- **Public Realm Design** – enhance hard and soft landscaping with interactive, engaging public space
- **Public Events Space** – encourage active use and functional space for events that are accessible to all
• **Amenities** – promote civic facilities and/or initiatives to encourage community cohesion and local engagement

• **Development** – intensify land use to bring about greater enhancement and investment

• **Infrastructure** – improve integration of transport, pedestrian, social, environmental infrastructure and overall access to services

• **Sustainability** – consider environmental improvement measures and maximise the benefit of the existing natural assets and amenities

The geographical focus is around the Custom House Elizabeth Line station (due to be commissioned in 2019) and to explore the role this can serve to positively contribute to the area in the following ways:

1. **A main arrival ‘gateway’** – the station has the potential to influence the identity of the emerging place and the local area with the establishment of a significant transport interchange attracting people from all over London and beyond. How can the station integrate with the existing local area and ensure benefits to the local community of future investment?

2. **An enabler for growth** – the station presents opportunities for transformation enabled by improved transport links, uplift in values, intensified uses as improved by an increased PTAL rating, and the possibility of future infrastructure investment. How can overall investment in the area meet the Mayor’s Good Growth Agenda - (e.g. succeed in delivering wider benefits of affordable housing, consider opportunities for undergrounding powerlines, enable over-station development and further development of the ExCeL estate) to identify viable and deliverable proposals that offer a meaningful contribution to the area?

3. **A connector** – the station connection will provide a walking local route as well as the transport connectivity to overcome the physical severance surrounding the Royal Docks. What needs to be done to ensure the critical transport infrastructure does not further separate the local community from access to the docks, businesses and the amenities, where there are levels of substantial investment anticipated in forthcoming years?

4. **A catalyst for social mobility** – the station and wider environment needs to reflect the local population with access to a young, active and diverse job labour market where an influx and movement of people can be expected to support businesses and employment opportunities. How can the station and wider environment benefit all local residents, supporting people of all ages?

5. **A place specific and area-wide cultural strategy** – the station will be a new public realm that will serve to welcome people and generate an increased footfall to the area. It will provide a focus of public life and create an opportunity for an
active street and public space alongside the dock water. How should we be curating and enhancing the experience of arrival of passengers to the area?

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Participants and expert panel

Participants involved and engaged in the design charrette (stage 1) to inform proposals and provide briefing information will include representatives from:

- Royal Docks Team
- Newham Regeneration Team
- Transport for London
- Mayor of London’s Design Advocate
- Chair or member of Newham Design Review Panel
- Local Councillor(s)
- Local Community representatives
- ExCeL London
- Mount Anvil
- LendLease
- ABP
- Siemens

Final proposals will then be judged by a critic’s review panel (stage 2) consisting of local stakeholders, landowners, and community members with expert knowledge and experience on the subject.

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Schedule

This design charrette will take place in over 2 separate days and will include a specialist facilitator. Attendance to both days will need to be considered and successful selection is subject to the availability of the practice and their capacity to engage within the proposed timescales.

Stage 1 – November 2018 (exact date TBC)
- Design charrette commencing with a full briefing, site visit with invited local experts and panellists, location Freemason Road to Custom House Station, ExCeL London and Western Gateway.
9.00 - 10.00am  Briefing session over breakfast
10.30 - 11.30am  Site visit
11.30 - 12.00am  Tea break
12.00 - 13.00pm  Participants are given all the materials and further briefing from the expert panel
13.00 - 14.00pm  Lunch - with an opportunity for the participants to talk with the expert panel and other representatives
14.00 - 16.30pm  Participants working up their initial proposals and ideas
16.45 - 18.00pm  Final thoughts and conclusion

**Stage 2** – December 2018 (exact date TBC)
The final presentation and critic’s review panel will be held at ExCeL or a site at Freemason’s Road.

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**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. Provide 3 relevant examples undertaken by your practice along with any other relevant experience. Please include brief description any images of previous work.
4. A short paragraph of max. 400 words on why you are interested in being involved in this design charrette. You may wish to include some thoughts about your vision including any initial written or illustrative reactions you may have to the brief.

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**Honorarium**

Submissions will be shortlisted by LFA, RDT and Newham. Up to 5 shortlisted practices will then be invited to participate in the design charrette on the information laid out in this open call and will be awarded an honorarium of £700 plus 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 critic’s review panel.

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Applicant Requirements

Applicants must meet the following requirements:
• Practicing architects / urban planners (collaborations will be accepted, providing a lead partner is nominated)
• Have capacity and availability to participate in the design charrette and presentation during November and December 2018 (exact dates TBC)*
• Have relevant previous experience of managing and implementing design strategy and/or design proposals within a regeneration area and an urban context
• Have previous experience and skills to engage local stakeholders effectively in a design process

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Deadline and submission details

• Deadline for first submission is **19 October 2018 at 3pm**. Submissions received after time this will not be considered.
• For open call enquires please contact: rosa@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org
• Please upload your submission via the following link: https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/customshouse/
  followed by your practice/collaborations name
• The PDF should be no more than 5MB and no more than 5 A4 single-sided pages.
• You will receive an email confirming the receipt of your submission.

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Schedule outline

Submissions open: 19 Sept 2018
Submissions closed: 19 Oct 2018
Presentation/interviews for shortlisted applications (if required): w/c 22 Oct 2018
Announcement of shortlist for participating teams: w/c 29 Oct 2018
Design Charrette Stage One: Nov (exact Date TBC)*
Judging Panel Stage Two: Dec (exact Date TBC)*
Winner announced: Dec (exact Date TBC)*

* updates to follow via LFA media newsletters confirming dates

Further information

• Submissions will be judged on design quality of submission – 40% (including originality, demonstration of creativity); previous experience and resource – 30% (with specific relevance to the brief); and how the initial proposal works in the context of the site – 30% (considering feasibility and delivery)
• 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 if the winning design is taken forward it will be the property of The Royal Docks Team
• Significant efforts are made by all stakeholders of the project to ensure wide media coverage. London Festival of Architecture, and The 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.

Useful links

London Festival of Architecture
http://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

The Royal Docks Team
https://www.royaldocks.london

Custom House Crossrail station
http://www.crossrail.co.uk/route/stations/custom-house/

Platform for Design: Custom House station
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9pJ5OaAsTM
Contact

To submit your application please go here: https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/customhouse/

For general enquires please contact: rosa@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

Disclaimer

The design charrette 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.

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

ROYAL DOCKS

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