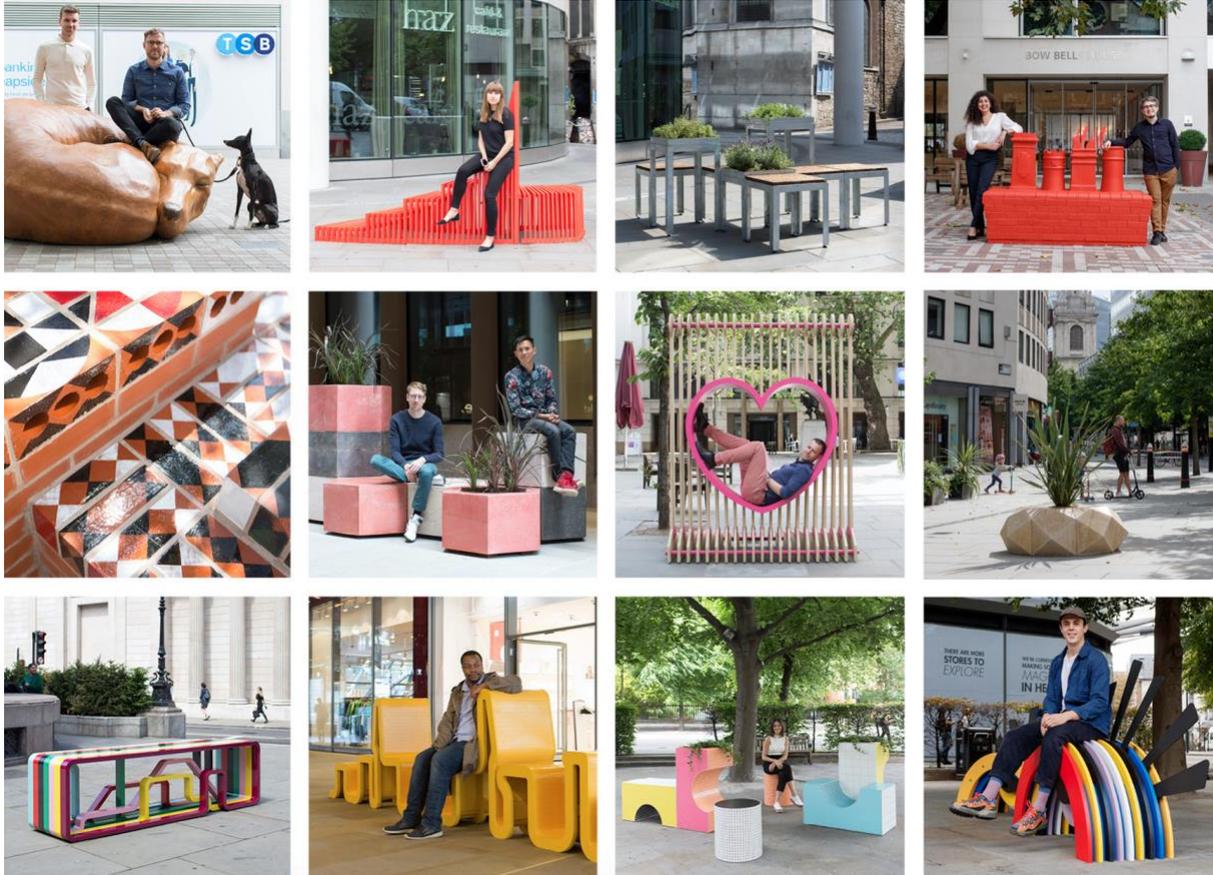


Open Call City Benches 2021



City benches 2018 - 2020 © Agnese Sanvito (left 9), Luke O'Donovan (right 3)

1

The commission

The London Festival of Architecture, Cheapside Business Alliance and Aldgate Connect Business Improvement District invite you to create one of several one off public benches, to be installed in the public realm of Cheapside, City of London and the Aldgate area ahead of the London Festival of Architecture 2021.

Following the success of the 2018, 2019 and 2020 series of benches installed across Cheapside, we are excited to expand the project footprint into the wider City and City Fringe area in Aldgate.

The competition aspires to continue the public conversation on the power of architecture at all scales, helping to welcome commuters, visitors and Londoners back to the area with inspiring and much-needed seating opportunities for everyone to enjoy.

We now invite architecture students, recent graduates and emerging architects or designers across all disciplines to submit a design proposal for the fourth edition of the City Benches competition.

We are seeking for proposals that will transform the public realm of Cheapside and Aldgate as a place to pause, sit and relax – public furniture fit for a festival.

The benches should be sustainable and colourful but most importantly must invite the community to sit, enjoy and take note of the surroundings they are in. We strongly encourage applicants to explore designs that allow people with different access needs and requirements to interact with and use the benches.

Following the competition process, a minimum of 7 winning teams will be revealed in April 2021 and will work with the Cheapside Business Alliance, Aldgate Connect BID, City of London Corporation, Tower Hamlets and the London Festival of Architecture in delivering a fully costed, feasible design. Successful entrants will be awarded £800 to make their bench ahead of the London Festival of Architecture 2021.

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.

2

The Context

The City of London, also known as the Square Mile, is the historic heart of London and one of the world's leading financial centres. It is home to 8,000 residents and a working population of over 513,000 people. Each year the City welcomes over 10 million tourists, in addition to those visiting for business.

Cheapside

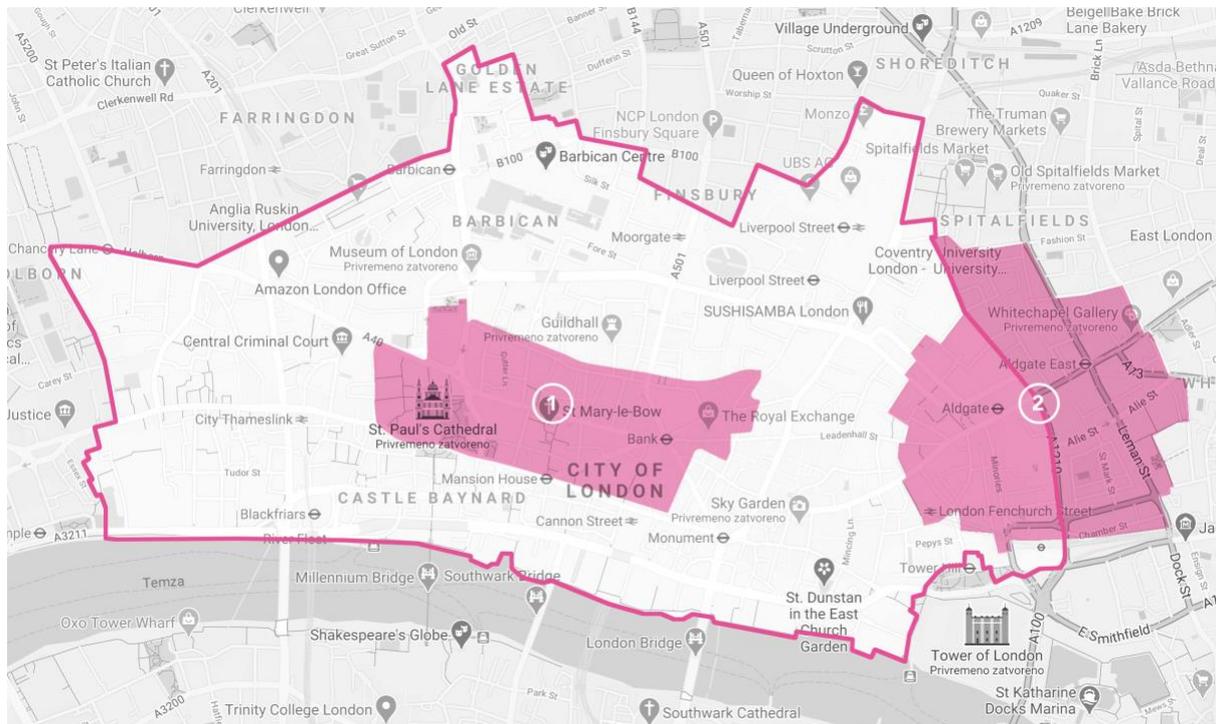
Cheapside continues to evolve into a leading London destination, with the past years seeing further investment through the opening of more businesses and leisure offerings within the footprint. Many Cheapside Business Alliance (CBA) programmes have been challenged with the pandemic however the CBA is proud to have continued to deliver key projects to showcase this fantastic part of the Square Mile.

CBA, now in its second term, is committed to continue delivering for the businesses, community and visitors of Cheapside harnessing the great potential of the seven-day destination through supporting their strategic themes: Environmental, Tourism and Culture, Marketing Business Alliance and Employment and Enterprise.

Aldgate

The historic area of Aldgate is an area at a crossroads both physically in terms of its geographical boundaries but also in terms of its evolution as a place. It is the gateway between the City, the East End and East London – it's administrative boundary adjoins the City of London Corporation with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, and within it an array of diverse communities which have evolved with it's interesting history, making it both culturally diverse but also an area of many layers of infrastructure and historical points of interest.

3 The site



City of London map, including Cheapside (1) and Aldgate (2) areas

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

Previous locations in Cheapside included Bow Church Yard, Bloomberg Arcade, One New Change, public realm in front of the Royal Exchange, Cheapside 150 and Sunken Garden. Individual sites will be revealed in parallel with the winning designs in March 2021.

The Aldgate benches will be split across the City and Tower Hamlets. At least one is confirmed for the southern end of Middlesex St where there is an existing ambition to enhance the character and the ambiance of the block with place making objectives of colour, people and light. There is some existing ambition of street furniture, planters, and floor murals. The bench must compliment this piece of work.

There is also a larger Petticoat Lane Market enhancement strategy. We would be interested to see a competition entry to form part of a gateway to the market.

4

Design requirements

Each bench must offer a comfortable seat for a minimum of 2 adults. 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, durable and offer a low-cost and sustainable design solution.

We encourage submissions that take into consideration City of London's Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2017/18-2020/21. As an example, this could be done through designs that:

- stimulate social interaction in a Covid-19 secure way
- increase feeling of safety
- increase sense of belonging
- achieve greater awareness of surroundings
- allow less abled workers and visitors to access, interact with and use the benches
- demonstrate joy, humour and colour
- demonstrate local community links

We encourage submissions that take into account the festival's 2021 theme of 'Care' in a creative and interesting way.

Some greening is desirable, but maintenance should be considered. Consideration should also be paid to materials used and whole life sustainability of the design.

5

Further Guidance

- *Budget:* If successful, the £800 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, for example by withstanding damage, including blast fragmentation, and reducing the opportunity for concealment of hazards such as contaminants, sharp objects or explosive devices.
- *Health & safety:* The drawings will be checked by City Highways team for which you will also 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 the project client.

- *Durability:* The project will exist for 3 months 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, the benches may be able to be in place for longer or moved to a different location for an extended period. Most of the previous benches have been donated to schools across London.
- *Property:* The bench will be the property of the Cheapside Business Alliance / Aldgate Connect BID for the duration of the installation. At the point of deinstallation the bench will become the property of the London Festival of Architecture.
- *Timescale:* The bench is expected to be installed between 1 June to 31 August 2020.
- *Installation:* Unless otherwise agreed, installation will take place on 31 May 2020.
- *Deinstallation:* Unless otherwise agreed, deinstallation will take place on 31 August 2020 and lead by the winning entrant.
- *Afterlife:* London Festival of Architecture will work with you to secure a permanent location for your bench after the deinstall. A small additional budget will be available for re-siting the bench.

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Budget

The total budget available for this project for one bench is £800. This is to include all fees, fabrication, installation and deinstallation costs (materials, transport and construction).

Half of the fee will be awarded in April, on receipt of a signed agreement in which you commit to provide a bench as per your submission and any revisions as requested by the Cheapside Business Alliance, Aldgate Connect BID and the City of London Corporation. The remaining fee will be given in June after delivery and approval of the bench.

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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. 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; please include a selection of relevant previous work.
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.

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 Midday, Friday 26 March 2021. Submissions received after this time will not be considered.
- For competition enquires please contact: hannah.askari@nla.london
- To submit expressions of interest in a PDF format [click here](#).
- 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 25 February 2021
Submissions closed: Friday 26 March 2021
Winners notified: w/c 29 March 2021
Benches installed by: 1 June 2020
Benches deinstalled: 31 August 2020

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Judging panel

Charlotte Fletcher (Chair, Cheapside Business Alliance Board and Senior Director, CBRE)

Laura King (Director, KPF)

Ellie Stathaki (Architecture Editor, Wallpaper*)

Yigong (Eco) Zhang (Urban Designer, Perkins+Will)

Rosa Rogina (Programme Director, New London Architecture)

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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 Cheapside Business Alliance.
- 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.
- Your practice/collaboration needs to have the following insurance, to a sum relevant to the project budget, in order to be eligible to be selected: Employers Liability, Professional Indemnity
- Significant efforts are made by all stakeholders of the project to ensure wide media coverage.
- London Festival of Architecture, Cheapside Business Alliance, Aldgate Connect BID and City of London Corporation 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

Cheapside Business Alliance

www.incheapside.com

Aldgate Connect BID

www.aldgateconnect.london

City of London Corporation

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Contact

To submit your entry please go [here](#).

For general enquires please contact: hannah.askari@nla.london

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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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London Festival of Architecture

The London Festival of Architecture celebrates London as a global hub of architectural experimentation, practice and debate. The festival returns to the capital from 1-30 June 2020 with a lively and diverse programme of public events across London exploring the theme 'power'. The London Festival of Architecture began in 2004 and has since grown to become Europe's biggest annual architecture festival. The festival attracts a vast public audience – 800,000 people in 2019 – and a global media audience of millions. The vast majority of events are free and are staged by a core festival programming team working alongside architecture and design practices and practitioners, leading cultural and academic institutions, artists and many others. In 2017 the London Festival of Architecture was named by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan as one of his design advocate organisations and is working alongside the Mayor's team to champion architecture, provide expertise and guidance, and help to make London a better city.

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

Twitter: @LFArchitecture



Cheapside Business Alliance

The Cheapside Business Alliance takes a more innovative approach ensuring the area thrives and prospers over the coming years as a 7-day destination. The number of smaller businesses in the area, whose contribution and presence make a valuable contribution in shaping the location, is recognised by the business community as an important element of our activity. As such we want to ensure that we support small businesses through a range of projects that help to promote their services and further enable them to thrive as part of our local economy and community. From inward investment through to increased footfall and spend we will work hard to develop and influence a strong mix of assets to maximise the areas potential.

<https://incheapside.com/>

Twitter: @CheapsideBA

ALDGATE CONNECT BID

Aldgate Connect Business Improvement District

The Aldgate Connect is a cross borough boundary Business Improvement District (BID) with the City of London and Tower Hamlets. The district represents a new opportunity for the diverse mix of businesses and stakeholders across this iconic area of London.

Through the critical mass of our businesses and collaborative community approach, we can achieve much more, jointly investing in a better future that allows all sectors and residents to benefit from the improvements and commercial growth of the area. We will see a stronger more influential push to shape our area post Covid, our environment and our business community will become a thriving and sustainable Aldgate neighbourhood.

Aldgate's heritage and place in the capital's history, combined with its distinctive cultural amenities and diverse artistic community, provide a rich resource, which can support the repositioning of Aldgate as one of the most vibrant business and residential quarters of London.

www.aldgateconnect.london

Twitter: @AldgateBID



'Here Lies Geoffrey Barkington' bench by Patrick McEvoy, June 2018

City Benches 2018 - 2020

In 2018, London Festival of Architecture, in collaboration with the City of London Corporation and the Cheapside Business Alliance for the first time organised a competition for a series of one-off public benches installed around Cheapside and the Eastern City Cluster areas. The winning designs responded to their settings with imagination and air, and were enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people during the LFA in June. Following the success of the 2018 design competition, London Festival of Architecture, in collaboration with the City of London Corporation and Cheapside Business Alliance are now running the competition annually.