



Open Call: New Growth on Exhibition Road



Aerial view of Exhibition Road during Great Exhibition Road Festival 2019. Photo credit Thomas Angus.

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The commission

The London Festival of Architecture (LFA), Discover South Kensington and the V&A are collaborating with wider stakeholders to commission a series of installations using regenerative design principles on Exhibition Road this summer through to October, in the lead up to COP26 hosted by the UK in November 2021.

We are inviting architects, designers and artists to submit a design proposal for an installation that celebrates and demonstrates how biodiversity and ecology can be embedded in the public realm along Exhibition Road, while also showcasing the role design has to play in the multifaceted challenge of climate change.

Following the competition process, three winning teams will be confirmed in May, and awarded £20,000, including a design fee of £3,000, to work with the V&A, Goethe-Institute, and the Science Museum, on developing a fully costed, feasible design. The delivered schemes will be revealed in late July and will remain in-situ for 3 months, in the lead up to COP26 in November. 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.

This initiative is supported by the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851.

The Context

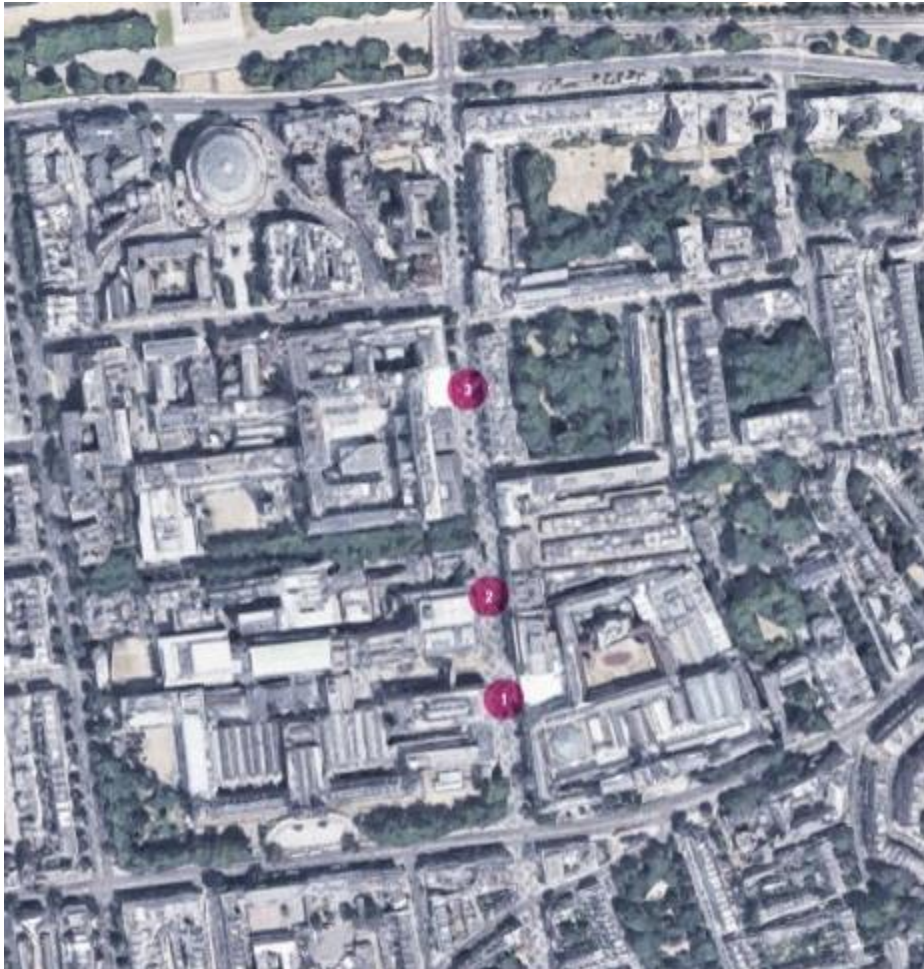


London's arts and science district is looking forward to welcoming people back this summer. The pioneering Exhibition Road shared space scheme was designed by architects Dixon Jones and completed in 2011. Now in its 10th year, the distinctive chequered granite street design features a single surface running from South Kensington Station to Hyde Park. This Open Call celebrates the 10th anniversary while further reinventing the scheme by introducing innovative designs for plants, greenery and biodiversity to Exhibition Road.

The theme for this year's festival is 'Care'. We would like respondents to consider the theme in their proposals. Care for the environment is a focus for all partners across Discover South Kensington. All of us have become more attuned to nature in the last year, from caring for potted plants in our homes to plotting our daily walks via green spaces. These installations will both connect to that lockdown experience and celebrate the return of all forms of life to our public spaces.

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea is working with local partners to create a Bee Superhighway in Kensington and Chelsea. The Bee Superhighway is a project to protect and enhance the Boroughs habitats, increase the amount of wildflower coverage and pollinator friendly planting in Kensington and Chelsea, and introduce other features that support bees, butterflies, moths and other pollinators. These temporary installations in Exhibition Road will contribute to a network of pollinator 'stepping stones' that connect our green spaces and important habitats by providing increased nectar resources and nesting features for pollinators. These installations will be part of a trail of planting schemes across the cultural district in South Kensington.

The sites



Several potential locations across Exhibition Road have been identified for the project. These are areas where there is significant scope for public realm enhancement through greening.

Applicants can provide an indication of a preferred site for the intervention. However, the design should be flexible and adjustable to other locations should there be a change in the site or scope of the project area.

The winning teams will be paired with the V&A, Science Museum and Goethe Institute to develop the brief for final design for each location based on the following:

1. **V&A** - As a museum of art and design, it is absolutely the V&A's role to address questions of what and how we make and consume, and the effect of this on society and the natural environment. The V&A are Design Partner for COP26, and the Festivals programme in 2021 is focusing on design solutions to climate change in the lead up to COP26 taking place in Glasgow in November 2021. The V&A will be looking for imagination and ingenuity in response to the brief to engage all in how regenerative design and biodiversity can have a meaningful impact on the public realm. Our wider programme will explore themes of circularity; reuse of materials and shift to low embodied carbon materials; net positive impact; and climate justice.

2. **Science Museum** – We are looking to create a visually exquisite installation outside the Science Museum which will aim to ignite the curiosity of visitors through a celebration of plants with medicinal properties - to reflect our new *Medicine: The Wellcome galleries*. These galleries explore our relationship with medicine and health through 500 years of history – showcasing iconic objects including the world's first MRI scanner, Fleming's penicillin mould, a professional pianist's prosthetic arm and robotic surgery equipment. The Science Museum Group has set a Science based net zero target and a Sustainability Policy setting out our vision to be leaders in public engagement on climate science. More information here. This includes the launch of our new *Our Future Planet* exhibition– aimed at exploring the nature based and technological solutions for taking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere at scale including the planting of real and mechanical trees. The science museum also launched a series of global debates in the run up to COP26 this year entitled Climate Talks.

3. **Goethe-Institut** – will work with the designers to bring indigenous wildflowers outside the Goethe-Institut London on Exhibition Road. This will form a twin-project with the Kultursymposium Weimar 2021 (16-17 June) for which the Goethe-Institute London has commissioned Scottish artist Natalie Taylor to create a small public re-wilding site in the East German town, to bring native pollinator friendly wildflowers into the urban context. The installation will focus on our relationship to nature and how our knowledge about and impact on it unfold and develop over many generations. The designers would work with Natalie Taylor to develop the design for the sites outside the Goethe-Institut: <https://www.natalietaylor.org.uk>
Kultursymposium Weimar: <https://www.goethe.de/prj/ksw/en/index.html>

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Design requirements

- To create an installation experience that is visually stunning, thought-provoking and enhances the public realm at an architectural scale.
- Enhances the biodiversity of Exhibition Road through planting and other habitat interventions that support wildlife.
- Be experiential, evoking surprise, wonder.
- Explore design's role in inspiring behavioural change – stimulating the profound changes that can come from individuals.
- The team should show an understanding of horticulture and demonstrate how this will be embedded in the design.
- Sustainability is at the core of Open Call and the installations will need to be designed to maximise use of recycled materials, and to have an afterlife beyond October 2021. The designers will need to collaborate with Discover South Kensington to rehome the plants and materials in local schools, community gardens and businesses.
- Designers will be expected to draft strategies and proposals to minimise waste and energy impact.
- Provide an added motivation to visit the arts and sciences district, enhance how it feels to be in South Kensington, and encourage people to stay longer and explore further. As well as supporting the recovery of the visitor economy, the project will create an environment that is attractive and engaging for residents, staff and students many of whom will be returning to the area after a long absence.
- Celebrate the launch of RBKC's Bee Superhighway providing pollinator hotspots and havens for wildlife and biodiversity along Exhibition Road

Partners across the arts and science district are supporting this project with expertise, programme activities and planting schemes that will contribute to a green trail across the district. These include: Natural History Museum, The Royal Parks, Imperial College London, Royal College of Art, Ismaili Centre, Design Museum, The Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Palace and South Kensington Estates.

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Budget

The total budget available per installation is £20,000 plus VAT. This is to include all associated production costs (materials, transport, construction and deinstall). The budget outline above includes a design fee of £3,000 inc. VAT for the winning team.

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Further Guidance

- *Budget:* The budget will be managed by the entrant. You can use salvaged materials or seek in-kind materials sponsorship to reduce expenses.
- *Design:* The installation should be designed to prevent use or damage by skateboarders. It should be work as freestanding piece but with the ability to be fixed in a position if needed.
- *Health & safety:* The installation must be designed with accessibility and health and safety in mind. The design must protect the safety and security of visitors, for example by withstanding damage, including blast fragmentation, and reducing the opportunity for concealment of hazards such as contaminants, sharp objects or explosive devices.
- *Permissions:* The project will require planning permission or highways consent from the local authorities. On delivery, the installation will be checked to ensure it is safe for public use. You may be asked to make modifications but on sign-off until the deinstall the installation will be the property and responsibility of the client.
- *Durability:* The installation will be in situ for 3 months and you should consider the longevity and appearance of your design accordingly, both in terms of materials and cand planting choices. Subject to durability, the installation may be able to be in place for longer or moved to a different location for an extended period.
- *Biosecurity:* Teams will need to consider biosecurity when sourcing plants and materials. All plants should be sourced from UK nurseries; if grown from seed, then seed should be from a UK stock, from reputable seed supplier and with provenance information; the designs should meet UK biosecurity policies and follow [The landscape consultants biosecurity toolkit](#)
- *Maintenance:* If selected as one of the winners, a maintenance plan will be required. The maintenance plan should consider what level, frequency and timings of cleaning and horticulture maintenance is required. The installation must be designed with minimum maintenance in mind, as it will be exposed to the outside elements for the duration of its life. Consideration should also be made for where the cleaning and maintenance team will be able to reach – they cannot be expected to use ladders or other working at height equipment.
The installation should not require power in order to operate (with the exception of any integrated lighting). AV, sound and other production, for example, is not weather-proof and would require additional staffing.
- *Timescale:* The installation is expected to be installed in late July 2021 and stay in place until October 2021.

- *Afterlife*: At the point of deinstallation, the installation will become the property of the competition winner. Exhibition Road Cultural Group will work with the successful entrants on re-siting the installation to a more permanent home post October. We will be working with Marlborough Primary School to provide a permanent local home for the plants and materials at the school after the project, and to plan green design activities for children across mixed year groups. This supports the school's ambition to become an exemplar school in the Borough's commitment for 2030 carbon zero in all its operations: external planting will form part of this and integral to their pupil educational environment.

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Submission

This competition has a one-stage submission. The judging panel will select 3 individuals and/or practices which will then be invited to develop their idea into a detailed design proposal in collaboration with one of the organisations on Exhibition Road.

The competition 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. Colour photo of the design team (landscape) for promotional purposes.
4. A 200-word description about your practice along with any relevant technical experience acquired through previous experience; please include images of relevant previous work.
5. 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.
6. One initial sketch of your proposal.

On **Tuesday 27 April 13.30pm** LFA, ERCG and V&A 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 would like to join, please email: hannah.askari@nla.london

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Eligibility

The competition is open to architects, designers and artists. We welcome collaborations and entries from students, trainee and emerging architects, and designers, however we will need evidence of built projects. The judges encourage entries from, or collaborations with groups who are underrepresented in architecture.

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Deadline and submission details

- Deadline for submission is midday, Monday 10 May 2021. Submissions received after this time will not be considered.
- For competition enquires please contact: hannah.askari@nla.london

- Please send expressions of interest in a PDF format via:
<https://lfarchitecture.typeform.com/to/xaFZ15XT#submitted=xxxxx>
- 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 15 April 2021

Submissions close: Monday 10 May 2021

Winners notified: Friday 15 May 2021

Winners paired with Exhibition Road organisations: w/c 17 May 2021

Planning submitted: w/c 7 June

Project install: w/c 19 July

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Judging panel

1. Dame Alison Nimmo, Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851
2. Aindrea Emelife, journalist and Member of the Mayor's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm
3. Meneesha Kellay, Design, Architecture & Digital Festivals, V&A
4. Julia Knights, Deputy Director, Science Museum Group
5. Katrin Sohns, Head of Cultural Programming, Goethe-Institute
6. Kat Scott, ACAN Coordinator for 'Where the Wild Things Aren't' group, Sustainability & Regenerative Design Manager at dRMM, Architects Declare Steering Group member, LETI Circular Economy Workstream Lead
7. Jane Whewell, Brompton Association & Princes Gate Mews Residents' Association

Panel chair: Rosa Rogina, Programme Director, New London Architecture

Additional advisors: Emily Candler, Executive Director, Exhibition Road Cultural Group and Tom McCarter, Wildlife Garden Manager, Natural History Museum.

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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 Exhibition Road Cultural Group until the point of deinstall. At the end of the project the installations will need to be removed, rehomed or recycled.
- If in the future Exhibition Road Cultural Group decides to fabricate the design in more copies this will have to be agreed and approved by the designer. In this instance, LFA will help to negotiate conditions of the agreement.

- 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 will need to liaise with LFA to organise the following insurance (of £10million): Product Liability, Professional Indemnity, and Employers Liability (in case you have employees). If your practice/collaboration does not currently hold the requested level of insurances, you can liaise with LFA to use part of the project budget for uplifting the existing or getting a new insurance policy.
- Significant efforts are made by all stakeholders of the project to ensure wide media coverage.
- London Festival of Architecture and Exhibition Road Cultural Group reserve the right to use images from the submissions for promotional purposes in press, social media and publications. All endeavors will be made to ensure accurate accreditation.

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Useful links

London Festival of Architecture:

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

Discover South Kensington

www.discoversouthken.com

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Contact

To submit your entry please go to:

<https://lfarchitecture.typeform.com/to/xaFZ15XT#submitted=xxxxx>

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



V&A

The V&A is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance, housing a permanent collection of over 2.3 million objects. The Museum holds many of the UK's national collections and houses some of the greatest resources for the study of architecture, furniture, fashion, textiles, photography, sculpture, painting, jewellery, glass, ceramics, book arts, theatre and performance. The V&A is home to 5000 years of human ingenuity in art, design and performance. We champion creative industry, inspire the next generation and enrich everyone's imagination.

www.vam.ac.uk



Science Museum

The Science Museum is part of the Science Museum Group, the world's leading group of science museums that share a world-class collection providing an enduring record of scientific, technological and medical achievements from across the globe. Over the last century the museum has grown in scale and scope, inspiring visitors with exhibitions covering topics as diverse as robots, code-breaking, cosmonauts and superbugs. 2020 marked a decade of transformation for the museum with the opening of the largest medical galleries in the world - Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries - and the story of how London became a hub of discovery in Science City 1550-1800: The Linbury Gallery. This incredible year saw the museum named a winner of the prestigious Art Fund Museum of the Year prize for 2020. More information can be found at www.sciencemuseum.org.uk



Goethe-Institut London

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. We promote knowledge of the German language abroad, foster international cultural cooperation and convey a comprehensive image of Germany with 159 locations in 98 countries. The Goethe-Institut London attracts a public interested in culture and education and is located on Exhibition Road with nearby access to world-class institutions.

www.goethe.de/uk



Discover South Kensington

Discover South Kensington is a partnership of the leading cultural and educational organisations in South Kensington – London's home of science, arts and inspiration. This is one of the world's most popular cultural destinations and home to an extraordinary cluster of world-leading organisations pioneering innovation and learning in science and the arts. Here we generate and share knowledge and inspire the engineers, designers, scientists, musicians and artists of the future and before the pandemic we welcomed over 20 million visitors a year.

Discover South Kensington is a trading name of the Exhibition Road Cultural Group. We are a registered charity and our members are Natural History Museum, the Science Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, Imperial College London, Goethe-Institut, Institut français, the Ismaili Centre, Kensington Palace, Royal Albert Hall, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Royal College of Music, Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), Serpentine Galleries, Westminster City Council, The Royal College of Art, The Royal Society of Sculptors, South Kensington Estates, The Royal Parks, the Design Museum and Japan House London.

www.discoversouthken.com



Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851

The Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 was established in 1850 to organise the Great Exhibition of 1851. The Exhibition made a surplus of £186,000 which the Commission, under the guidance of Prince Albert, used to purchase an estate in South Kensington. This estate has developed to become a centre of scientific, cultural and educational excellence which now houses the Natural History, Science and V&A museums; Imperial College London; the Royal Colleges of Art and Music; and the Royal Albert Hall. The Commission continues to support all the 'Albertopolis' institutions (ie those on its original estate) in their work in education, research, science and the arts and works closely with them to improve the experience of all those visiting, working, studying and living in South Kensington, one of the world's most popular cultural and educational destinations.