Open Call
Curating Concourses

1
The commission

Network Rail is putting passengers first through all aspects of its work. This means helping people to make daily journeys and giving them the best service every step of the way. It also means understanding how people use their network, and how stations help in building a sense of community for all.

Network Rail is continually looking for ways to help build stronger community hubs and meeting places through station design. Stations could play a stronger role in learning and engagement of our communities, and as stations are used by many people at different times of the day. Also, the Covid-19 pandemic is changing the way people travel, but Network Rail's major railway stations continue to play a critical role in keeping the nation moving, learning and engaging.

The London Festival of Architecture (LFA), and Network Rail (NR), invite you to create a reusable prototype exhibition concept including content for the first exhibition, to be installed in one of the mainline stations in London during London Festival of Architecture 2021. This is an opportunity to make maximum use of the station environment and bring a new experience to passenger journeys. It's an opportunity to unused or leftover use space in stations for learning and engagement, and to allow passengers an insight into the processes and initiatives that impact on their everyday journeys.'

We are inviting emerging architects, designers, artists and curators to submit a design proposal for a modular exhibition display that will test and explore the nature and future of creative and cultural exhibitions in Railway Stations. In its first iteration, the display will showcase Network Rail's Design Guidance Series, a suite of up to 29 documents illustrating Network Rail's commitment to quality design.

A winning team will be confirmed in April, and awarded £12,000 (which includes a £4,000 design fee) to develop a fully costed, feasible design that can be delivered in June 2021 as part of the London Festival of Architecture. To coincide with the festival, the delivered scheme will remain in-situ for approximately 1 month. 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

Baghdad Architecture exhibition by the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq
London Bridge Station, June 2018 © Agnese Sanvito

Owned and operated by Network Rail, the UK's railway infrastructure is Europe's fastest-growing network, getting millions of passengers to their destinations on a daily basis. Network Rail's investment in stations and their increasing high-quality retail, dining and cultural offers is a major driver of passenger satisfaction in major railway stations in London.

Stations are an ideal venue for exhibiting creative and cultural works because of their democratic nature. Museums might have problems bringing a broad range of society through their doors, but stations, by their nature are egalitarian.

For the London Festival of Architecture 2018, London Bridge station hosted an exhibition of Baghdad architecture in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in London. This was the first time an exhibition of Iraqi architecture had been exhibited outside the

country for more than 30 years. This used a standard exhibition framework. Whilst the exhibition itself was fascinating, the exhibition stand itself felt rather limited.

3
The site

It is anticipated that the prototype will initially be installed at London Euston Station before potentially being relocated to other stations around the country. The exact location within the station will be confirmed with Station Managers at the shortlisting stage.

4
Design requirements

Prototype Exhibition Display

We are looking for a reusable prototype exhibition concept which can be used to display a range of future exhibitions and engage all passengers, visitors and staff to stations.

The first exhibition will be on Network Rail's Design Quality initiatives. These include new Design Guidance Manuals, such as wayfinding, branding, materials and audio/visual material showcasing new trends in station and footbridge design.

The prototype exhibition concept should encourage passengers and local people to use stations in different ways. The design should include elements of surprise and be creative in terms of what could people do while they pass through the station and/or wait. It should function for visitors (not be purely sculptural) and is realistic to the brief (does not become a pavilion or folly). The design must be safe, durable and offer a low-cost design solution.

We are seeking low-maintenance designs that are flexible and adjustable to different locations and different exhibitions as the decision on where the selected design go will ultimately be made by the Network Rail team.

We are looking for designs which are either:
- Completely mobile and can move from station to station, or
- Standardised and easy/fairly inexpensive to replicate for different stations, or
- Partly mobile which can be moved within a particular station but is stored at that station
- Be innovative, with designs that explore new ways of sharing exhibition content in new and engaging ways
- Designs should be accessible – in that they should allow the widest possible range of people to engage with the exhibition – therefore engaging from a range of viewing heights (e.g. engage children, wheelchair users, tall adults)
- Should be flexible enough that it can accommodate photographs, display boards or multimedia concepts, such as video and/or audio
- Incorporate a display mechanism for at least 8 A3 sheets/boards among other material

Exhibition design

As well as designing a new protype exhibition concept, the winner of the competition will be invited to work with Network Rail and the LFA to produce the first exhibition content, and create an exhibition design proposal for showcasing Network Rail's Design Guidance Series, a suite of up to 29 documents illustrating Network Rail's commitment to quality design to be featured on the exhibition display during the London Festival of Architecture 2021.

Network Rail Technical Authority Buildings & Architecture are developing a logical and structured design guidance with a view to improving the built quality of stations and the built environment across the UK. This will illustrate best practice principles and providing clear benchmarked standards of design.

This new Design Guidance Series covers all aspects of station and operational property planning, design and management. These documents are being produced over the current collaboration with industry leading third party consultants and designers, with a focus on achieving a blend of quality and innovative thinking to address current issues such as sustainability, ease of mobility, and passenger environments. Network Rail's goal beyond this is to establish a legible and consistent NR design identity through standardised elements, materials, detailing and graphic language.

The winner of the competition will be asked to work with the LFA and Network Rail to present this information as a public-facing exhibition, which will be displayed in their installation. The competition therefore has two aspects.

We are looking for exhibition designs which:
- Showcase Network Rail's Design Guidance Series work in a creative and innovative way. This could include but is not limited to printed material, screen and audio display.
- Are accessible to the widest possible range of people (including children, people with vision and hearing impairment, walking disabilities etc.)
- Help the public understand the importance of good design at all scales

An example from Network Rail's Design Guidance Series can be found [here](). Access to the full series will be opened during the shortlisting process.

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Budget

The total budget available for the project is £12,000 plus VAT. This is to include all associated production costs (materials, transport, construction and deinstall). The budget outline above includes a design fee of £4,000 plus VAT for the winning team.

Part of the fee will be awarded in April 2021, on receipt of a signed agreement in which you commit to deliver your proposal as per your submission and any revisions as requested by Network Rail and London Festival of Architecture. The remaining fee will be given in June 2021 after delivery and approval of the project.

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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 prototype should be designed to prevent use or damage by skateboarders. It should be work as freestanding, self-supported piece that does not need to be fixed to the floor. The stability of the exhibition is therefore a key concern. Your design should assume no access to mains electricity.
- *Size:* Stations can be constrained in terms of space. It is envisaged the prototype should take up no more than 9m^2 and not obstruct flow of passengers. A minimum of 3 to 4 people should be able to engage with the exhibition at any given time, in a Covid-19 secure way.
- *Health & safety*: The design must protect the safety and security of passengers, for example by withstanding damage, including blast fragmentation, and reducing the opportunity for concealment of hazards such as contaminants, sharp objects or explosive devices.
- The drawings will be checked by a Network Rail / station engineer for which you will need to provide a risk assessment document. On delivery, the prototype 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 prototype will be the property and responsibility of Network Rail.
- *Durability*: The prototype will be in situ for a minimum of 1 month 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 prototype may be able to be in place for longer or moved to a different location for an extended period.
- *Timescale*: The project is expected to be installed in June 2021 and stay in place until July 2021.
- *Afterlife*: There might be an opportunity to re-site the prototype at another Network Rail station after deinstall.

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Submission

This competition has a two-stage submission. After the first stage submission, the judging panel will shortlist up to 6 individuals and/or practices which will then be invited to develop a design concept for a protype exhibition concept only based on the information laid out in this open call and will be awarded an honorarium of £500 each. Shortlisted teams will not be expected to work on the content for the first exhibition. Following the second stage submission, one winner will be selected to design and produce their exhibition concept.

They will also be invited to work with the LFA and Network Rail to produce the content for the first exhibition using their prototype exhibition concept.

LFA and Network Rail are offering the opportunity to answer any questions you may have specific to this competition. Please submit your questions by Wednesday 24th February at midday. After all the questions are in, LFA and Network Rail will collate and publish all the answers online. Please send all questions to: hannah.askari@nla.london

This first stage submission will 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. No design work is required for the first stage and any included sketches will not be shared with the judges.

The work required for the second phase of the project will be reflective of the honorarium sum.

We would like to showcase the shortlisted designs as part of the public exhibition to celebrate all the shortlisted entries. Therefore, as part of your submission we would like the content you submit for the judges to be useable for public audience.

We will be expecting:
- A short 2-minute video explaining your proposal. This can come in the form your practice feels will most effectively communicate your design to the judging panel.
- PowerPoint presentation for the purposes of judging.
- The submission should but is not limited to including hand or computer drawn 3D design visualisation, key construction details drawn to scale, with key dimensions noted, an outline all materials, budget and fabrication process.

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Eligibility

The competition is open to emerging architects, designers, artists and curators. We encourage 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.

We actively encourage entries from outside London as we foresee that the exhibition may be used in stations across the country. Any travel to London during installation would need to be covered from the design fee.

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Deadline and submission details

• Deadline for submission is Midday, Thursday 18 March 2021. Submissions received after this time will not be considered.
• For competition enquires please contact: rosa.rogina@nla.london
• To submit your expression 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: Friday 19 February 2021
Submissions closed: Thursday 18 March 2021
Successful shortlisted practices notified: w/c 22 March 2021
2nd submission: Friday 23 April 2021
Winners notified: w/c 26 April 2021
Winning design opens to the public: June 2021
Project deinstalled: July 2021

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Judging panel

Anthony Dewar (Professional Head Buildings and Architecture Safety, Technical & Engineering, Network Rail)
Frank Anatole (Principal Architect, Network Rail)
Francesca Perry (Editor, ICON Magazine)
Dinah Casson (Co-founder and Director, Casson Mann)
Tamsie Thomson (Managing Director, New London Architecture)
Sumitra Upham (Public Programmes Curator, Design Museum)
Jason Bruges (Artist and Designer, Jason Bruges Studio)

Further judges to be confirmed shortly.

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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 Network Rail.

If in the future Network Rail 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 needs to organise: Professional Indemnity, and Employers Liability (in case you have employees). Public liability insurance for the project will be organised by the client.

Significant efforts are made by all stakeholders of the project to ensure wide media coverage.
London Festival of Architecture and Network Rail 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

Network Rail
www.networkrail.co.uk

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Contact

To submit your entry please head here.

For general enquires please contact: rosa.rogina@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

Network Rail

Network Rail own and operate the railway infrastructure in England, Wales and Scotland on behalf of the nation. That's 20,000 miles of track, 30,000 bridges and viaducts and thousands of tunnels, signals, level crossings and points. Network Rail also manage rail timetabling and 20 of the largest stations in England, Scotland and Wales. They work round-the-clock to provide a safe, reliable experience for the millions using Europe's fastest-growing railway each and every day.

www.networkrail.co.uk
Twitter: @networkrail

Reference

Sitting Pretty, 2020

(c) Luke O'Donovan

At the end of 2019 the LFA and Network Rail launched a competition to explore the future of seating in Network Rail stations. A series of witty and challenging benches by emerging architects and designers were displayed at some of London's largest railway stations during autumn 2020. These explored new ideas including the use of plants, natural materials and movement in benches. From a playful oversized rocking chair to seating that uses the clay beneath Londoners' feet to absorb the pollutants around them, this engaging series of new installations demonstrates how inventive architecture and design can make a real difference to the everyday travelling experience in Britain's railway stations.