

Buildings

MacEwen Award 2023

MacEwen 2023 shortlist: Spark Lab, Ilford, London

12 January 2023

Words: Michèle Woodger

‘A lovely narrative about lost landscapes of Essex’



Spark Lab, London, designed by Jan Kattein Architects. Credit: Jan Kattein Architects

Spark Lab Ilford, London

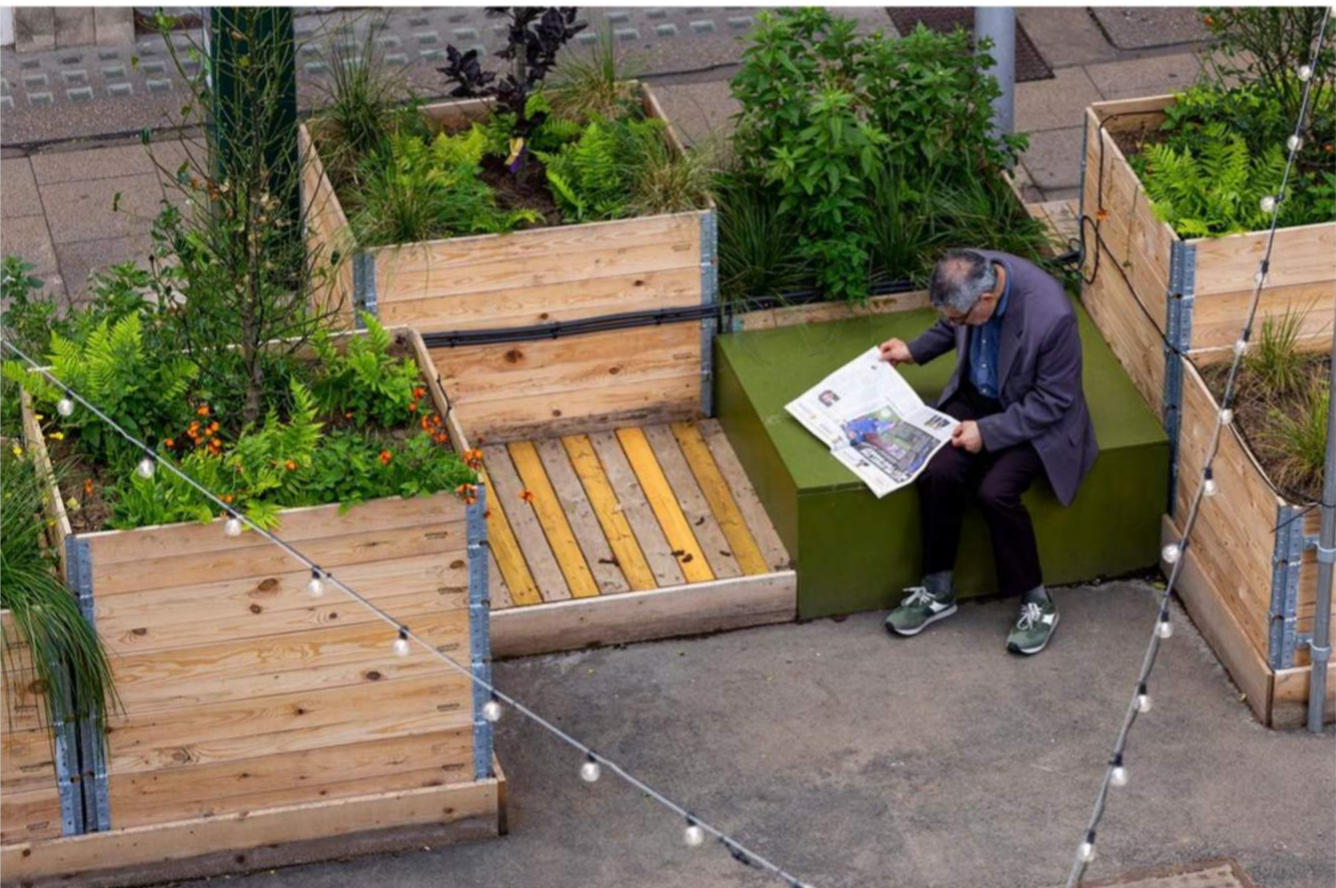
Jan Kattein Architects for Redbridge Council

Contract cost £340,000

GIFA 415m²

‘We’re committed to making our town centres beautiful, safe and enjoyable to visit so local businesses thrive and shoppers and visitors find all they need here in the borough of Redbridge’, says council leader Jas Athwal.

Recent efforts to turn Ilford, within the borough, into a welcoming and cultural place – and reassert the value of the high street and community life – include a new food market, urban rooftop farm, street art gallery and modular homeless shelter. Created in collaboration with urban events company Things Made Public, in 400m² of disused retail space on the ground floor of an empty department store, Spark Lab provides a bursary and incubator space for seven businesses and community organisations. Nearby is Wilderness Street, a temporary 1000m² ‘living urban landscape’ along Oakfield Road, which links Ilford’s cultural venues with the high street. Intended for relocation during 2022, its success means it will now remain until spring 2023.



Wilderness Street is a 1000m² temporary urban living landscape. Credit: Jan Kattein Architects



Spark Lab, London, designed by Jan Kattein Architects. Credit: Jan Kattein Architects

The inspiration for Wilderness Street is the area’s pre-urban heritage. ‘Ilford, Barkingside and Hainault were characterised by forests, fields and meadows. Our design strategy temporarily revives these lost landscapes,’ explains Jan Kattein. Redbridge Council and Ilford Business Improvement District held community events including planting workshops. Once dismantled, all plants will be given to community organisations. ‘Enticing local people to adopt the plants will see elements of the ancient Essex landscape reinstated in public places, in people’s gardens, front gardens and allotments’ says Kattein.

‘I was taken by the forest references,’ said Takeshi Hayatsu. ‘The clients are incredible in the way they’re rethinking their relationship with residents, really questioning what a high street is for,’ added Anthony Staples. ‘This is a lovely narrative about lost landscapes of Essex.’

See more on MacEwen shortlisted projects and architecture for the common good [here](#)

Credits

Client Redbridge Council

Architect Jan Kattein Architects

Landscape architect Mosspace

Event concept Things Made Public

Public consultation Kanda

Contractor Kenson Highways

Funding Mayor of London + Redbridge Council

Region: London

More: Jan Kattein Architects, Workplace, Ilford, Design construction & technology, Sustainable architecture, Michèle Woodger

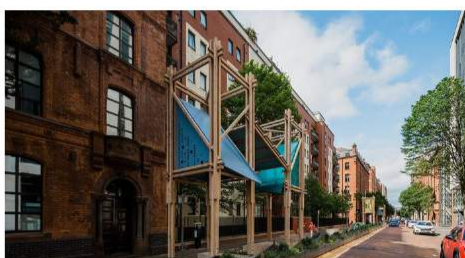
Share this article



Most popular

- 1 Battersea Power Station starts a new era with Wilkinson Eyre...
- 2 Post growth: Pro-planet alternative to expansion
- 3 What does the latest RIBA data say about the year ahead for ...
- 4 What will design codes in local plans mean for you?
- 5 How to calculate embodied carbon for the 2030 Climate Chal...
- 6 Re-use, insulation, solar power: What bees can teach us abou...
- 7 Kevin O'Neill: astounding draughtsman with subversive design...
- 8 Lessons on reusing steel-on a refurbished building

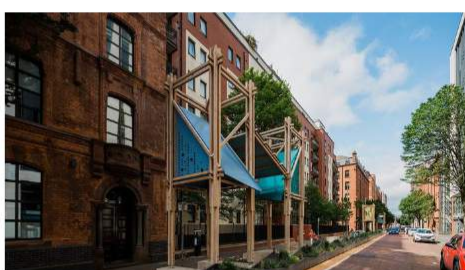
Related



MacEwen Award 2023 shortlist announced



MacEwen 2023 shortlist: St Hilda's, Redcar



MacEwen 2023 shortlist: The Adelaide Street Project, Belfast