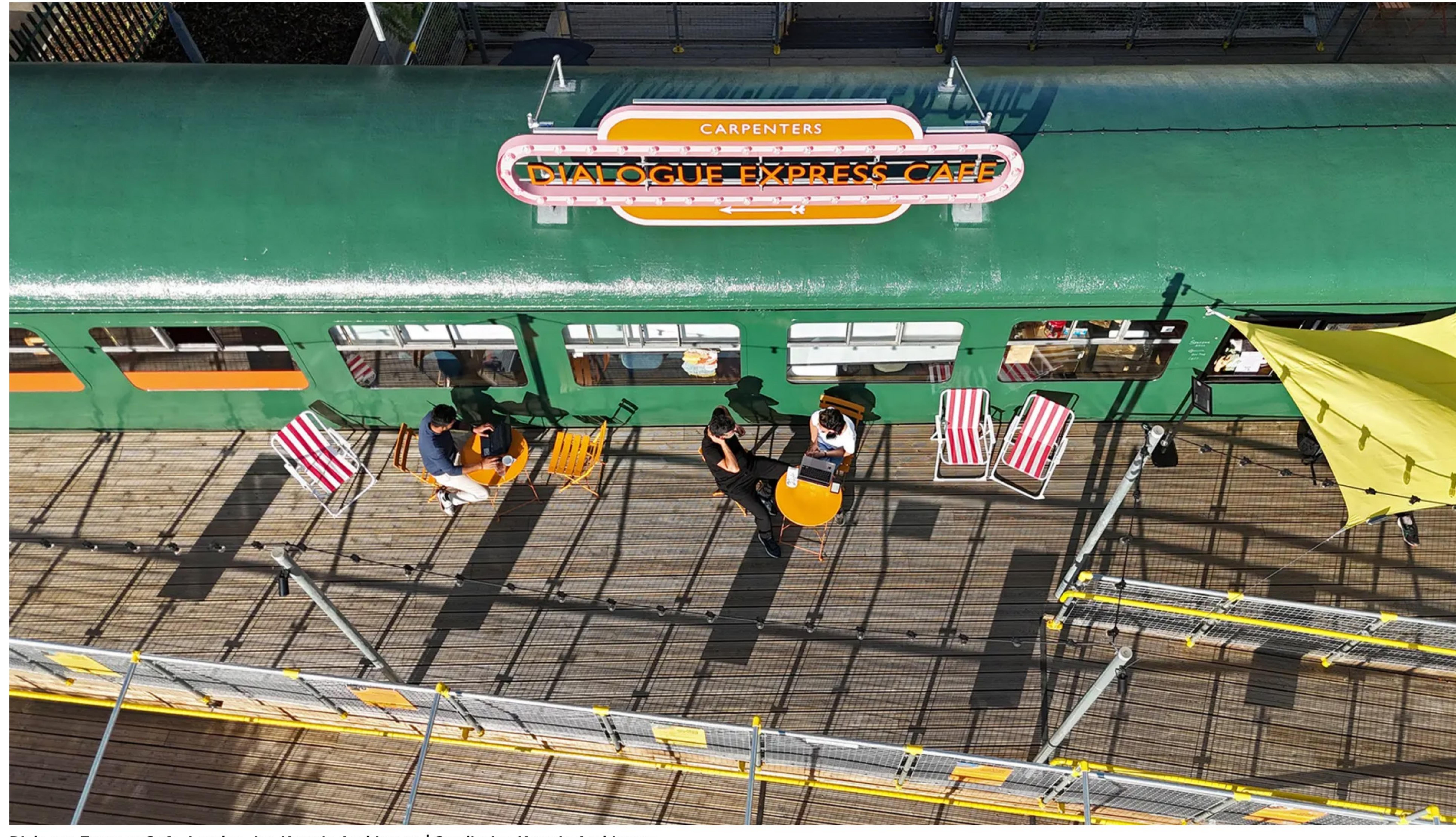


## Dialogue Express Café, London, by Jan Kattein Architects

Shortlisted for the MacEwen Award 2026

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Jan Kattein Architects has given an old train carriage a new lease of life with this striking café promoting British Sign Language and sparking conversation between visitors and deaf baristas



Dialogue Express Café, London, Jan Kattein Architects. | Credit: Jan Kattein Architects

Dialogue Express is a new café promoting dialogue and exchange with Londoners who are deaf or hard of hearing. The café is located inside a converted train carriage, sited outside Stratford Station's new Gibbins Road entrance. On board, customers receive instructions for ordering in British Sign Language (BSL) and can attend classes in BSL. This is helping to spark conversation between visitors and their deaf baristas.

Over 18 million people in Britain are deaf or have a hearing impairment. Unemployment and associated economic deprivation are disproportionately high for this group. Dialogue Hub provides pathways into employment, breaks down social and perceptual barriers and fosters dialogue through teaching BSL.

The judges commended the project for its "striking" and "fun" nature. It is part of Newham Council's plan for the Carpenters Estate, which foregrounds inclusive regeneration, prioritising long-lasting community benefits.

Dialogue Express is part of the council's meanwhile programme, which represents an important vehicle for trialling new approaches and strategies and for building local people's skills and capacity.

The programme is helping start-ups, third-sector, and community organisations to transition into new commercial and community spaces as they become available during the phased regeneration.

The café is the train carriage's third reincarnation after its previous deployment as a visitor attraction at the Eureka Children's Museum in Halifax, which particularly impressed judge Dafydd Tanner.

"It is a genuine example of reuse and repurposing – this is the third or even fourth reincarnation of the carriage," he said. And there are further plans to relocate the carriage to a new site after the expiry of the current tenure.

The project has also created a 528m<sup>2</sup> biodiverse community garden on a plot with previously low biodiversity, creating, as judge Hugh Pearman remarked, "an astonishing little oasis in this part of town".

 **It is a genuine example of reuse and repurposing – this is the third or even fourth reincarnation of the carriage**

**Dafydd Tanner, Pentan Architects**

MacEwen Awards juror



Interior | Credit: Jan Kattein Architects



Aerial view in context | Credit: Jan Kattein Architects

### About the MacEwen Award

The MacEwen Award is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2026. The yearly award commends projects that demonstrate 'architecture for the common good' across any field – social, economic, environmental and more.

Explore the [11 projects that were selected by the judges to this year's shortlist](#) and the [23-strong longlist](#).

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