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It is hard to put into words how challenging and upsetting the last few months have been. Aside from the personal fall-out that we are experiencing in our roles as children, grand children, parents, neighbours, colleagues and friends, the pandemic has had a profound impact on how we work too. What is the future of a practise that is concerned with bringing people together? When so much of our work relies on building trust amongst communities, how can we succeed without face to face encounter? And how can we justify spending public funds on design when so many families are struggling to put food on the table?

This newsletter will only scratch the surface of such profound concerns. Maybe the answer lies somewhere between the realisation that the point of extreme crisis calls for particular acts of creativity, and that we must invest in the future generation. Yet, in the meantime, life and work have carried on and we are finding that more than ever people are yearning for some good news. It's in this spirit that I wanted to share what has been happening behind the scenes at JKA.



skills hub were completed last week. The Wandsworth Food Bus was designed in close dialogue with **Feeding Britain** and food charity **Be Enriched** who bring affordable, fresh food to chronically underserved areas in Wandsworth and Lambeth. With so many food shops in London, it's easy to forget that they're not accessible to many low income families.

Our design responds to a functional brief providing safe food storage, a fully operational cafe kitchen with running hot and cold water, working refrigeration and gas hob on the lower deck of a moving double decker bus. Place making was a key design parameter from the beginning. With colourful outside seating set-up on the pavement and a quirky facade, the bus brings a moment of excitement to a potentially challenging daily routine. Plywood tables and benches and carefully conceived solar-powered lighting create a warm and welcoming interior on the upper deck. We started work on the project 2 years ago, initially helping to prepare the GLA Good Growth Fund application and it's really great to see that perseverance and commitment on behalf of the entire team has led to the launch of a service that is so essential in mitigating the outfall of the pandemic amongst some of the most deprived communities in London. Feeding Britain have plans for an entire fleet based on our project and word goes that the launch of their South Shields Food Bus is just around the corner.

The Food Bus was converted by **Building BloQs** with funding from **DWS**, **L+Q**, the **Mayor of London** and **Peacetrain**.







High Streets have once again been in the headlines with photographs of closed shops signifying the economic consequences from the pandemic. Yet, as discussions around the 15 minute city (a city where childcare, education, work and essential services are all within 15 minutes walk or cycle from people's homes) have gained pace, high streets are in a better position than ever to reap the benefits. That is, if they learn to adapt and to provide what communities need locally.

Our Aberfeldy Street project is a case in point. With our partners **Meanwhile Space**, **Poplar Harca** and **Eco World** we have developed a 3-pronged approach that provides affordable business space for new and innovative businesses, involves the community and young people in a programme of events and engagement activities and visually transforms the high street to celebrate it's significance as a space of culture and creativity. The epiphany of the strategy manifests in a piece of facade artwork reproduced across some 26 buildings. When developing the concept for the piece, we referenced the Bangladeshi Kantha tradition of recycling old textiles to create something new as well as Poplar's legacy of garment and fashion manufacture. A community call-out for fabric swatch donations provided the basis for the designs. We scanned the swatches and processed the images digitally to create a compelling patchwork which were applied to the buildings using some 200 different colours of paint. With over 10 years experience of working across London's 600 high streets we can say with confidence that Aberfeldy Street is London's most colourful high street yet - at least for now. Here's a link to a short video report by **ITV**.

Aberfeldy Street was commissioned by Poplar Harca + Ecoworld and the facades were painted by **Cuttle Construction** and the **London Mural Company**. Photography by **Luke Fullalove**.



A different approach was taken in Elephant and Castle. **Lendlease** appointed us, **BD Landscape Architects** and lighting designer **Michael Grubb** in 2018 with the unusual challenge to design *half* a high street. On a strip of land, only 4m wide and 100m long, the design was to encompass all that represents the social life of some of London's best loved public spaces. Whilst works on a permanent building are progressing behind a construction hoarding, the project is to complement a carefully curated food and beverage offer that recently opened on the opposite retail parade.



experience economy re-define activities on the high street?' and 'What role can architecture and design play in the future-proofing of a key civic space that significantly defines people's sense of belonging in the city?' have guided our design response.



The project takes the form of a linear folly. Playful canopies alternate with event decking, micro parks, seating nooks and three workspace shacks aimed at creative practitioners. Our interpretation encompasses all that's pleasurable about walking in the city; providing reason to wonder, a vantage point for watching life go by and opportunities to meet safely, outside. The cycles of activities in the city have moulded a series of spaces that transform as they are animated by people, events and with the change of the weather and the seasons. Sunlight hitting, translucent screens tint surfaces and the space lighting concept heightens the experience of the street at dusk and in the evening.

Greening is not just decorative, it is an integral part of the spatial experience of the street. Re-usable scaffolding is the basis for all the superstructure and the three workspace shacks are made off-site and can be disassembled and re-deployed as part of a future meanwhile project or donated to a school or community group when the structure is removed to make room for the permanent building in 3 years' time. Community radio station **Run Dem Radio**, flower shop **The Nunhead Gardener** and Flat 70 Gallery have recently moved into the workspaces on site. If you are near, come and visit London's newest high street and let us know what you think.

Structural engineering by **EngineersHRW**, mechanical engineering by **Buro Happold** and photography by **Jack Hobhouse**.



For those interested in high streets, look out also for our Streeterly project supporting family-run businesses in Drummond Street at the end of October and our Key Corridors project which is looking at strategies for sustainable high street intensification along Hackney's key arteries.

As many people re-evaluate their work-life balance and make an effort to mitigate the risk associated with travelling, affordable workspace and civic space close to home has become more important than ever. Ebury Edge is our youngest project completed on site in Westminster this very week. Whilst **Westminster Council** is working with residents on the re-development plans for the Ebury Estate, Ebury Edge will provide much needed community space, workspace and retail space arranged around a public garden. Colourful wooden shingle facades and a permanent scaffold feature visually emphasize the civic purpose of the buildings in their wider urban context.

All too often the success of large scale regeneration projects is measured by their ultimate contribution in terms of housing yield and quality, discounting the impact that they have on communities for many years whilst works are ongoing. Ebury Edge seeks to address this conundrum by reversing the delivery sequence. The project is re-providing the highest quality of work-, amenity- and community space at the outset and before works progress on other parts of the project. Long term, the Council is looking for Ebury Edge to inform the design of permanent spaces on the estate, seeking to create a home grown retail offer arranged around softer public spaces designed through a bottom-up process that involves local people. We have been exploring how exactly this can be done through our Claridge Way Commonplan project with **Peabody** in Thamesmead which is nearing completion too. And finally, great news that our **Drummond Street**

shortlisted for an [NLA Award](#) last week. Vote for us in the People's Choice Awards if you can!  
More on this in the next edition. Stay safe.

Ebury Edge was commissioned by Westminster Council and built by [HA Marks](#). The workspace operator is [Meanwhile Space](#). Structural engineering and M + E by [Arup](#).



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