

Outdoor Living Room

Jan Kattein Architects creates a temporary high street in south London



Photos
Jack Hobhouse

Appointed to design “half a high street” in a meanwhile use project for developer Lendlease, Jan Kattein Architects conceived an “outdoor living room” – a 100-metre-long, four-metre-deep strip of workspaces, event decks, micro-parks and seating nooks that screen the hoardings to a construction site behind.



Located on Sayer Street in Elephant Castle, south London, and delivered in collaboration with lighting designer Michael Grubb Associates, the project “takes the form of a linear folly”, says the architect. “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. Sunlight hitting translucent screens tints surfaces, and the space lighting concept heightens the experience of the street at dusk and in the evening”.



As the project has a three-year lifespan, reuse of materials was an important aspect of its sustainability strategy. Scaffolding is the principal structural material, and the three ‘workspace shacks’ can be disassembled and redeployed as part of a future meanwhile project or donated to a school or community group, suggests the architect. A short distance to the west, BD Landscape Architects has installed an ‘urban wildflower meadow’ to make a pedestrian route from Elephant & Castle station to the centre of Lendlease’s mixed-use development.

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