

Open Call Morden Moments



Junction of Abbotsbury Road and London Road in Morden Town Centre

1

The commission

The London Festival of Architecture (LFA) and the London Borough of Merton invite emerging architects, landscape architects, designers and artists to propose, develop and submit a design proposal for public realm interventions to brighten and enliven Morden Town Centre, and help test and inform long term improvements to the area.

This competition is looking for proposals for public realm interventions that introduce unique moments within the town centre that embody community-led placemaking principles, in line with Merton's Meanwhile Action Plan for Morden. Proposals should transform spaces into inviting places for residents and visitors to stop, pause and enjoy – inspiring wonder and interest. One of the principle aims of this opportunity is to nurture and build meaningful collaborations with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.

One or two winning teams will be confirmed in June 2025 and awarded £60,000 + VAT for the *Station Yard* site and/or £83,000 + VAT for the *Abbotsbury* sites, to develop and deliver fully costed, feasible designs, subject to procurement and governance procedures, to be installed by Summer 2026, coinciding with LFA in June 2026 and the Morden Station Centenary – celebrating 100 years.

Up to six teams will be shortlisted for round 2 of the competition, with each team receiving an honorarium of £1,000 + VAT to develop their design proposal.

2

Context

Merton is a vibrant outer London borough and encompasses the towns of Colliers Wood, Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon, and is home to a diverse and growing population of more than 220,000.

The borough's connectivity is unbeatable in south London, being at the start of both the Northern and District Tube lines, which offer direct access into central London in just 20 minutes. At Morden tube station alone, more than 10 million people make journeys every year.

It is one of the greenest boroughs in London as well as one of the safest, and Merton is the proud custodian of some of the best sporting heritage in the world. The council's blueprint for the future is the council plan 'Building a Better Merton Together' 2023 – 2026, its bold and ambitious framework to build a better Merton, putting the needs of residents at its heart. It aims to unlock the full potential of what it has to offer in the borough, in the capital and beyond, focusing on three priorities:

1. Civic Pride:

To ensure Merton's places, people and organisations thrive, so everyone can be proud to live and work in Merton and feel connected to their communities.

2. Building a sustainable borough for the future:

To create a place bolstered by more affordable and sustainable homes; that's celebrated for its vibrant town centres, excellent schools, and safe neighbourhoods; a borough where everyone feels connected to their community, embraces diversity, and a place where our residents can lead healthy, active lives.

3. Borough of Sport:

Being London's first Borough of Sport and harnessing the power of sport to connect, inspire and transform our borough.

Morden

Morden is the civic heart of Merton and has diverse residential, commercial and social offerings. It's a quiet, safe, green suburban London town centre but connected to the very heart of the city.

Morden is a town with a rich heritage that continues to offer so much to those who live, work and visit it today. It has beautiful, historic green spaces, including a National Trust Park, a heritage Tube station, state-of-the art leisure facilities, pockets of art deco and mid-century modern architecture, retail, and good family homes. Morden is defined by its strong communities, emerging business networks and arts and cultural scene.

It also has huge untapped potential and Merton Council is working to create a modern, attractive, vibrant and diverse 21st century area that local people deserve. The Council will create a thriving, inclusive and accessible town centre that delivers for the needs of the community now, and for a new generation.

Meanwhile Action Plan

As part of a wider council plan, Merton delivered a [Meanwhile Action Plan](#) for Morden's public spaces.

Over 2024, the Council engaged creatively and innovatively with the residents, businesses and key stakeholders as part of the design process to ensure all proposals were informed by local insight.

As part of the Meanwhile Action Plan, the Council delivered a series of prototype interventions on Abbotsbury Road and will continue to deliver interventions at other sites outside of this competition.

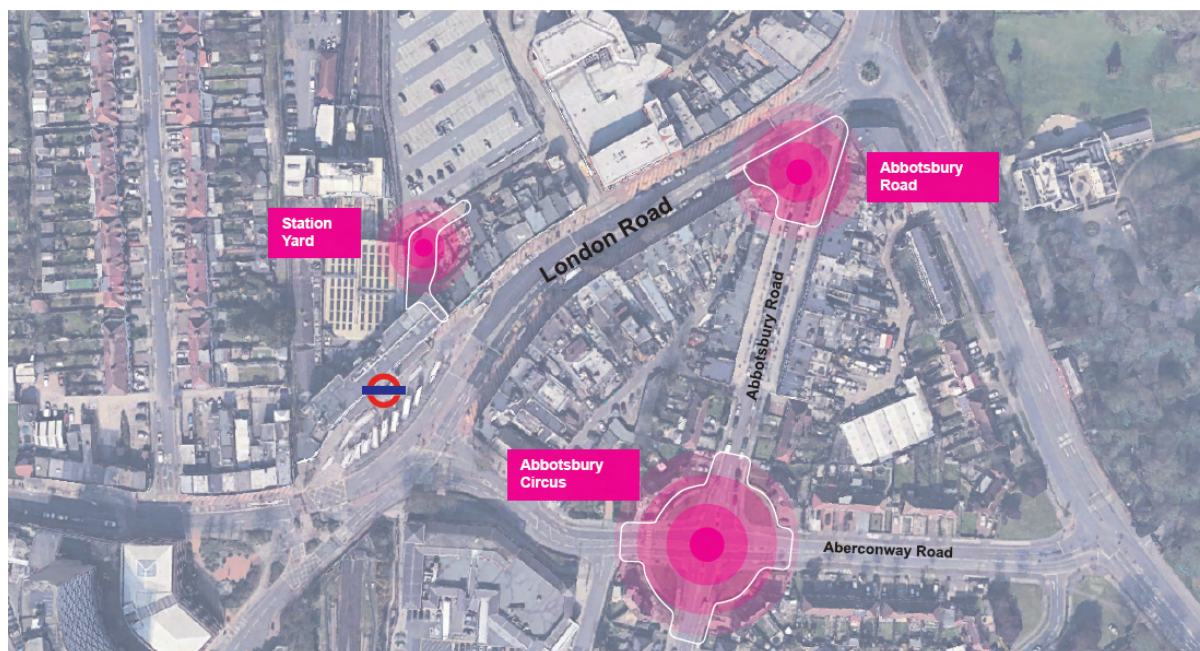
This competition provides two opportunities across three identified sites for applicants to propose unique interpretations of these public spaces in the town centre. Applicants can submit ideas for one or both sites.

3

The Sites

Meanwhile Triangle

The 'Meanwhile Triangle' in this project has been identified within the Meanwhile Action Plan as priority spaces for activation, in response to extensive public engagement which took place with residents and local businesses. Sustrans initially reviewed existing engagement, [MoreMorden, Your Merton 2021](#), and then held a series of collaborative workshops and pop-up stations, undertaken between July and September 2024.



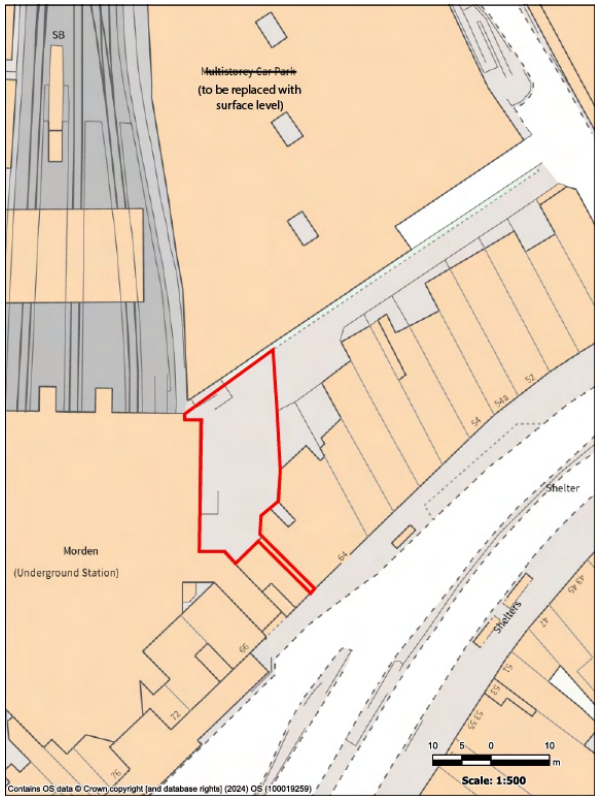
Aerial view from google earth: the pink circles on this plan mark the approximate sites for public realm intervention.

Site 1 – Station Yard

Station Yard close to Morden Station, connects London Road, to the North towards Kenley Road and Kendor Gardens. The site includes a dark and unappealing alleyway which opens out onto an underutilized large open space.

The site currently suffers from anti-social behaviour due to lack of surveillance and is currently bound by inactive frontages on all sides. The adjacent car parking structure is planned for demolition and a new surface level car park is being developed.

This area currently sees decent footfall but is not attractive and there are little opportunities to stay and spend time. Considerations for this site include improving greening along the alleyway (there are some existing planters introduced by volunteers), cycle infrastructure, improving wayfinding through the area and activating the spaces. There is potential to host pop up businesses and kiosks.



Site 1 – Station Yard Plan (left), Site Photo facing south (right)

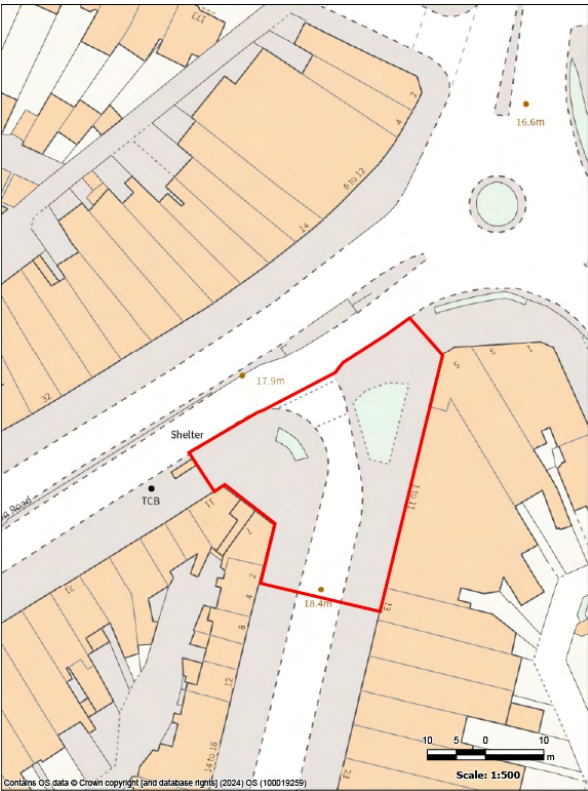


Site 1 – Station Yard Site Photo facing north

Site 2a – Abbotsbury Road

Abbotsbury Road holds a central location in the town centre with a varied business offer, yet benefits from a quieter environment compared to the bustle of London Road. The site sits at the junction of Abbotsbury Road and London Road. A key priority at this site is to increase footfall to this part of the town centre and improve economic activity for local businesses.

Abbotsbury Road’s current one-way direction and presence outside the strategic road network means that vehicle flows are relatively low. This, coupled with wide pavements and human-scale buildings creates the potential for place and people focused interventions. There is the potential for carriageway narrowing at both ends of the street to improve walking, cycling and ‘play on the way’ journeys.



Site 2a – Abbotsbury Road Plan (left), Site Photo facing south (right)

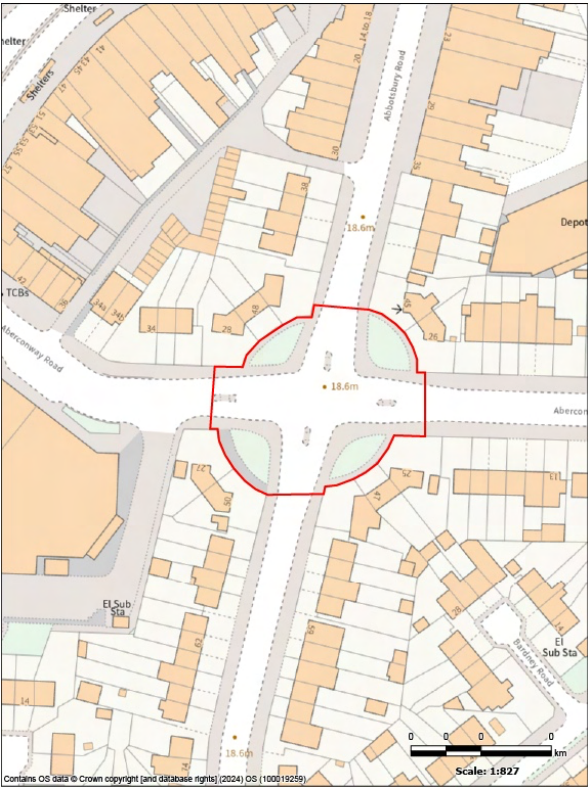


Site 2a – Abbotsbury Road Plan Site Photo facing West (left), Site Photo facing North (right)

Site 2b – Abbotsbury Circus

Abbotsbury Circus is an underutilised area of public realm at the confluence of Abbotsbury and Aberconway Road. In its current form, the circus sits on a key pedestrian and vehicle movement corridor and acts as a gateway into the town centre.

The site sits at the junction of three distinct areas: the Town Centre and Abbotsbury Road – primarily commercial and retail focused arterial routes; the St Helier Estate – a large 1930’s residential development with parallels to the Beacontree Estate in Barking; and Morden Hall Park – a National Trust landscape with rich biodiversity and wildlife.



Site 2b – Abbotsbury Circus Plan (left), Site Photo facing south (right)



Site 2b – Abbotsbury Circus Site Photo facing East (left), Site Photo facing North (right)

4

Community Engaged Practice

Morden is a place defined by its strong communities and Merton Council prides itself on putting community engagement, for the benefit of residents, at the heart of Merton's public realm strategy. This competition is seeking proposals which raise the voices of community organisations, groups and residents.

Proposals which take a socially engaged approach, to deliver positive outcomes for residents and local communities, are encouraged. Shortlisted practices will be expected to provide detail of how they will work with the local community, to develop design ideas, if appointed.

The design proposals need to foster participation and respond to the local context, but the strongest submissions will propose a collaborative approach with local organisations including schools, groups or residents. Your proposal could be in partnership with existing groups or outline how this collaboration would realistically work in the design development phase.

5

Design Requirements

The applicant should provide creative design solutions for localised site-specific public realm interventions that inspire wonder and interest at two sites within the town centre. Applicants may submit proposals for one or both sites.

Overall, the key objectives of the project are to deliver a series of public realm interventions that

- are bold, refreshing and visually striking, contrasting Morden's existing public realm
- are accessible and inclusive for all
- activate; enable activities and events to take place
- improve wayfinding and access to existing public green spaces such as Morden Hall Park
- promote sustainable modes of transport
- support high street uses and commercial offers that will aid in activation
- collaborate with potential occupiers or local organisations
- create a lasting legacy by encouraging community partnerships and building on the Meanwhile Action Plan

Site 1: Station Yard

At the Station Yard site, proposals should seek to:

- improve boundary treatments
- improve bicycle-parking infrastructure
- support existing activities delivered by stakeholders on site such as community planting initiatives

- encourage activation and address anti-social behaviour with a focus on engaging youth

The winning scheme at Station Yard may include – but is not limited to – the following components:

- Planting and greening
- Wayfinding and information
- Pavement treatment
- Murals and public art
- Seating areas
- Cycle Infrastructure
- Lighting
- Flexible events space

Site 2: Abbotsbury

At the Abbotsbury sites, proposals should seek to:

- improve walking, cycling and ‘play on the way’ journeys
- improve biodiversity
- consider how the space may be reconfigured to facilitate new and exciting uses within the town centre
- reduce car dominance

The winning scheme at the Abbotsbury sites may include – but is not limited to – the following components:

- New tree pits
- Planting and greening
- Seating areas
- Play elements
- Highway and paving treatment
- Wayfinding and signage

Further guidance:

- Designs should consider materials and design quality
- Any winning design will be robust enough to withstand all weather conditions
- The project will need to last for a minimum of 5 years, and you should consider the longevity and appearance of your design accordingly, to ensure that little or no maintenance is required during this period
- Where possible the final installation should be able to be constructed or assembled in situ
- Non-movable elements rather than movable elements are encouraged
- Free-standing designs without the need for installation of fixings or additional street works are preferred. If required, appropriate fixings and security measures should be incorporated into the design
- To include accessibility considerations, allowing people with different abilities to interact with the interventions. Seating elements should consider back rests and armrests where needed

6

Budget

The total budget available for this project is circa £143,000 + VAT.

The budget for the Station Yard site is £60,000 + VAT and the budget for the Abbotsbury sites is £83,000 + VAT.

This needs to include all fees, fabrication, installation, other capital costs and contingency. Minimum contingency within the budget should be 10%, although we recommend allocating 15% contingency in your stage 2 submission, if shortlisted.

Each site budget includes a 12.5% design fee for the appointed team(s) to cover on-going design fees and other costs required to deliver the concept. If your practice is not VAT registered, you will need to consider this when preparing your budget.

The winning team(s) will be expected to undertake the following tasks:

- Provide a feasible and on-budget design intervention that is robust enough to be in the public realm for circa. 5 years
- Consult with key stakeholders, including the London Borough of Merton, Transport for London (Station Yard site), local residents and businesses, and community and cultural organisations
- Project management and delivery of the winning design(s)

7

Submissions requirements

This competition has a two-stage competition.

This first stage submission should be single PDF submission of no more than 10-pages and maximum 5MB and include the information below. Alternatively, you can submit your application in another format (e.g. video) but the content should not exceed the equivalent of a '10-page limit'.

Your submission should include the following:

Your experience:

- Brief biographies of all the project team.
- A 200-word description about your practice along with any relevant technical and consultation experience acquired through previous projects.
- A selection of relevant previous work, including images.

Your response to the brief. Please provide reflections on the following prompts:

- The overall design brief - why you are interested in being involved in the project?
- Specify which site you are applying for (Site 1, Site 2 or both)
- Your initial vision for the project
- Your approach to working with the local community and stakeholders to inform and deliver your proposal if selected

You can submit your response to these prompts in any format. For guidance, this should be (equivalent to) a short paragraph of max. 300 words per prompt or 90 second video per prompt.

No design work is required for the first stage.

Shortlisting

Submissions will be shortlisted by the judging panel. Up to five shortlisted practices will then be invited to develop a design concept based on the information laid out in this open call and will be awarded an honorarium of £1,000 + VAT each. The work required for the second phase of the project will be reflective of the honorarium sum.

At shortlisting, the second stage submission should include:

- Maximum 10-page PDF explaining your proposal to be shared with the jury for review, prior to interview. Your submission should (but is not limited to) include:
 - Detailed design drawings (we accept a variety of formats including hand or computer drawn 3D design visualisation)
 - Key construction details drawn to scale, with key dimensions noted
 - An outline of all materials, budget, delivery and fabrication process
 - Engagement plan (including how the team will work with the local community to develop design ideas if appointed and a programme of how the proposal will be activated once installed)
- PowerPoint presentation for the purposes of judging

*If your practice is not VAT registered, you will need to consider this when preparing your budget.

Submission information

For any questions about the competition or submission process, please email:

info@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

8

Eligibility

The competition is open to emerging architects, landscape architects, designers and artists. We welcome collaborations; however, the project must be actively led by a named emerging architect, designer or creative.

Applicants need to fulfil at least **two** of the following criteria to be eligible for this competition:

- being no more than seven years post-graduate, from your most recent qualification
- young professional*
- set up your practice / collaboration in the past three years

*this refers to individuals in the early stages of their professional careers, regardless of their age

The judges strongly encourage submissions from, or collaborations with groups who are underrepresented in architecture. They are particularly interested in seeing applications from local organisations or those working in partnership with community groups based in Morden.

9

Deadline and submission details

- Deadline for first submission is Midday, Thursday 8th May. Submissions received after time this will not be considered.
- For competition enquires please contact:
info@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org
- To send your expression of interest in a PDF format go [here](#).
- The PDF should be no more than 5MB and 10 A4 pages (both portrait or landscape are acceptable)
- You will receive an email confirming the receipt of your submission.

10

Schedule outline

Submissions open: 12:00, Thursday 3rd April

Submissions closed: 12:00, Thursday 8th May

Successful shortlisted teams notified: w/c 19th May

Site visit with shortlisted teams: 12:00-14:00, Wednesday 28th May

Round 2 submission deadline: Thursday 19th June

Final judging / interviews: w/c 23rd June

Winner notified: w/c 30th June

11

Judging panel

- Quincy Haynes, Architect and Urban Designer, London Borough of Merton
- Paul McGarry, Head of Regeneration and Economy, London Borough of Merton
- John Merriman, Metronome Café in Morden
- Jennifer Nieslony, Merton Youth Parliament
- Tony Samuel, Station Manager, Transport for London
- Cllr Eleanor Stringer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Civic Pride and Climate Change, London Borough of Merton
- Beatrix Young, Design Review Panel

NLA Chair – Rosa Rogina, Director, London Festival of Architecture

12

Judging criteria

Round 1

At round one expressions of interests will be given two scores:

- **Practice/team profile (60%)**

Does the team have skilled professionals for delivering the proposal in line with eligibility outlined in the Open Call? Does the team have a diverse set of skills and experience? Are the previous work experiences and/or their work methodologies and wider design aspirations relevant to the competition? Does the team proposed align with the eligibility criteria stated in the brief?

- **Initial vision/response to the brief (40%)**

Does the proposal's initial written reflection to the brief suggest innovation, surprise and creativity? Does it explore a new and original way to use and engage with the area? Is the team thinking beyond possible barriers or restrictions, and pondering how they might be broken down? Is the vision something which could be developed into an appropriate and achievable scheme for the area, in line with the brief?

Round 2

At round two design proposals, budgets and supporting documentation will be assessed on five criteria.

- Overall Design (30%)
- Costs and Feasibility (25%)
- Safety and Equity (15%)
- Sustainability and Longevity (15%)
- Contextual Design and Public Engagement (15%)

Our evaluation criteria are alignment with [New London Agenda](#) – NLA's framework for best practice in city-making. The jury will be assessing submissions on the criteria above as well as the six pillars of placemaking set out in the agenda.

13

Access

Accessibility, diversity and inclusion are core values of the LFA at all levels of our organisation (New London Architecture), and we are committed to delivering projects that are representative of the whole city and can be enjoyed by everyone. At the same time, we recognise that there are still significant barriers for groups in our society to be able to enjoy and participate in festival activity.

We will support with any resources and adjustments for anyone who needs it, to make applying for this role easier e.g. alternative document formats, interpreters, hybrid meetings. In the application form you will be asked how we can support you throughout the process; this will not influence your application.

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/access/

14

Further information

- Submissions will be judged on originality, demonstration of creativity, relevance to the brief as well as feasibility and how the proposal works in the context of the site.
- To process entries to this competition we will share your application, and any associated personal data provided on the application with our jury and competition partners.
- All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application, but due to the volume of submissions we may not be able to provide feedback to entrants individually.
- Applicants may not be assisted in any way in their submission by members of the judging panel, the client body, organisers, members of their family, close business associates or employees.
- 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 design will itself when built will be the property of Merton Council.
- Please bear in mind 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, to budget and to the high standard expected by all stakeholders.

- If your practice/collaboration is appointed to deliver the project it will need to have the following insurance: Employers Liability, Professional Indemnity, Public Liability.
- Significant efforts are made by all stakeholders of the project to ensure wide media coverage.
- LFA 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.

15

Useful links

London Festival of Architecture:

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

London Borough of Merton:

www.merton.gov.uk

[Building a Better Merton Together: London Borough of Merton Council Plan 2023-26 | Merton Council](#)

[Remaking Morden: town centre regeneration | Merton Council](#)

[Morden Town Centre: Meanwhile Action Plan Report | Merton Council](#)

[MoreMorden, Your Merton 2021](#)

16

Contact

To submit your entry please go [here](#).

For general enquires please contact: info@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

17

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.

18

Commissioning organisations



The London Festival of Architecture (LFA) is a month-long celebration of architecture and city-making, taking place every June across London. LFA's mission is to open up discussions around architecture, test new ideas and promote emerging talent. LFA brings together the public and built environment professionals for the whole month of June and seeks to inspire and engage our audience with a programme that showcases London as a global architecture hub. LFA is run by NLA, London's built environment community.

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

X: @LFArchitecture

Instagram: @LondonFestivalofArchitecture



London Borough of Merton

merton.gov.uk

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