This is the brief for a new Urban Design, Landscape, Architecture and Public Realm competition for Vauxhall, on London’s South Bank.

Imagine you are visiting a central neighbourhood in a large European city. Your senses are alive to things that are the same but different – sights and smells, tastes and sounds. You notice colourful planting, playful lighting, intriguing public art. Of course there are apartment buildings and office blocks, but it is the feel of the streets around them that makes the real impact. Is it easy to find your way around? Does it feel safe and clean, bland or beautiful, does it encourage you to linger or get through as fast as possible? In short does it feel as though anyone has invested time, energy and ideas here?

Here in London Vauxhall we are asking the same questions of our neighbourhood. What message does our everyday experience of streets and public spaces give to the people who work, live and invest here? How can we make the most of Vauxhall’s new opportunities?

At the moment, the public realm is dominated by a notorious traffic gyratory and a spine of railway arches that cut most of Vauxhall off from the river, yet our neighbourhood is the missing link between the New US Embassy Quarter and London’s South Bank, with its theatres and concert halls.

However investment is coming, with development schemes including Battersea Power-Station and the new Damien Hirst gallery; and with it comes the opportunity to face up to the challenge of the disconnected places and railway arches. We want to create vibrant Green Links and strong Urban connections. We want our public realm to create a striking and strong new identity for Vauxhall, so it’s clear to employees, residents and visitors that ideas and energy are what Vauxhall is all about.

Vauxhall is at the heart of an area of huge new opportunity in London and we plan to make the most of it. Now we want your urban design, landscape and place-making ideas to help us do it.
Introducing the client – who we are and what we want to do

The client for this design competition is Vauxhall One, the new Business Improvement District (BID) for Vauxhall. Vauxhall One came into being in February 2012 when local businesses voted to invest their own money to bring benefits and improvements to the area. Like other successful BIDs along London’s South Bank, Vauxhall One is a business-led organisation whose key priorities are set by its members. They focus on place making and place management – making Vauxhall feel safer, integrating the day and night-time economies, building employment and training opportunities and improving the public realm. This project is central to our strategy for the area.
Introducing the area – opportunities and challenges for Vauxhall

London as a city is going through an incredible period of change and growth and Vauxhall is no exception. It lies within the wider Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea (VNEB) Opportunity Area, which will play a key part of the future prosperity of London, with plans including 16,000 new homes, up to 25,000 new jobs and an extension to London Underground’s Northern line.

Vauxhall today is home to MI6 and the future home of the American Embassy, as well as being known across London and beyond for its thriving nightlife. Sadly it is also known as a difficult and disconnected environment to navigate. There are green spaces, if you can find them, but the most distinctive feature is the dozen or so railway arches that thread across the neighbourhood, creating a barrier to the riverside and an unwelcoming environment for pedestrians.

Yet in the 18th century this area was the height of fashion. If you got lost in the walks of the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens it was probably through choice, but the pleasures here were cultured as well as illicit. In 1749 Handel’s Music for the Royal Fireworks was given its debut in Vauxhall. (It will be replayed, fireworks and all, in an outdoor Handel Picnic concert in June 2013 on Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens!)

We know that Vauxhall has a richer story to tell than our streetscape might currently make you think – and the public realm is the place to tell that story.

SOME OF THE MANY FACES OF VAUXHALL

Glass Manufacture: Mirror, mirror - embarking for a night on the town
From the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries north-shore women of fashion preparing for a night on the town, perhaps in the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, would have checked their beauty spots in a Vauxhall–made glass mirror.

National Intelligence: Welcome to the home of Spooks
It’s no secret that the Secret Intelligence Services have chosen Vauxhall for their HQ – we saw it in Skyfall. Now that the fictional Spooks have shown us into the world of espionage it makes us wonder, how often does James Bond come to Vauxhall?

Art Galleries: A new cultural heart for London
Vauxhall is undergoing a cultural renaissance. The arrival of Damien Hirst’s own gallery on Newport Street will herald a new hub in the art world, celebrating the contemporary and asking what’s next for Vauxhall?
How you can help – design guidance to reconnect and reveal Vauxhall

We are fortunate that some of the best architects in the world have been commissioned for new developments in Vauxhall, including Rogers Stirk Harbour, Foster and Partners, Caruso St. John and Allies and Morrison. This investment in new buildings means we can focus on the quality and feel of the green spaces and streets that link them, giving us a remarkable opportunity for innovation.

Vauxhall One has high ambitions. We plan to challenge perceptions of Vauxhall, by improving connectivity and rebuilding a sense of place. In New York the High Line has shown what can be achieved with a sculptural trail and linear urban park. Vauxhall also has an opportunity to create an outstanding new addition to the urban environment.

Vauxhall One is working with the RIBA, Landscape Institute and the Garden Museum to commission a creative urban and landscape scheme. The aim of the scheme is to reconnect the disjointed parts of the neighbourhood, to build a better visual perception of Vauxhall beyond its roundabouts and roads and to create an identifiable pathway and narrative through the area, linking the railway arches, green spaces and public art into a distinctive place once again. Show us your ways to connect the parks, gardens and walkways into a coherent and exciting green trail, from Vauxhall Park and the Pleasure Gardens up to Lambeth Palace and beyond.

The first element of this – the Regeneration of the Rail Arches – is already underway. Working with Network Rail, the developers and Lambeth Council, Vauxhall One has identified a programme for investment and design in the railway arches, linking each developer and their architect to a specific arch and agreeing with them a distinctive design for each that will grow into Vauxhall’s sculptural trail. Responding to the distinctive character of our local area, the individual designs will enrich the experience of walking and cycling around Vauxhall, as well as wider perceptions of our area for continued investment. As more people choose to walk through the arches they naturally become safer places to be. This will turn a barrier into an opportunity.

Rail Arch Regeneration has already been included in Lambeth Council’s new Supplementary Planning Guidance for Vauxhall, published for consultation in October 2012. Following a review of the rail arches and new developments, Vauxhall One has created a map of the Business Improvement District to show where the opportunities lie, and based on anticipated investment, we hope agreement on all 12 arches will be in place by 2017, with new schemes underway by the end of the year.
We are looking for concepts and visualizations to create this sense of place in Vauxhall. As with the High Line in New York, we believe that the answer lies with both architecture and landscape design: we are looking for entries that offer both, whether as combined practices or inter-disciplinary proposals.

What’s next?

If you would like to contribute ideas to the renaissance of Vauxhall we would love to see your ideas.

What we want to see?

a. Two identical A1 Boards with your creative ideas;
b. One A1 Board will be used for Internal Display at the Garden Museum.
c. One duplicate A1 Laminated Board will be used for External Display on our Cultural Trail through the parks and railway arches of Vauxhall.
d. An A3 booklet of no more than 10 pages showing context and strategy.
e. The designs should highlight;
   i. Urban Design interventions and street-scape
   ii. Hard and Soft landscape ideas
   iii. Horticultural, street trees and planting ideas
   iv. Ideas for public art and street theatre
   v. Ideas for outside concerts
   vi. Ideas for Green connections between the parks and gardens
   vii. Ideas for Green connections to the river
   viii. Ideas for pocket parks in under-used areas
   ix. Ideas for a Cultural and Green Trail that improves connectivity
   x. Show us why you would want to walk and cycle from Vauxhall to the South Bank and how this will connect into the broader VNEB plans
COMPETITION PROMOTER

London Vauxhall – The Missing Link Competition is being promoted by Vauxhall One with management and support provided by RIBA Competitions.

COMPETITION FORMAT

The competition will be organised in the following stages:

Stage 1: Submission of concept designs which will be assessed anonymously

Stage 2: A shortlist will be invited to further develop their concept designs and present them at interview in the second stage

ELIGIBILITY

The competition is open (internationally) to registered architects, landscape designers and architects, urban designers and students of these disciplines. Multi-disciplinary design teams are encouraged. Architects should be registered with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) in the UK, or a recognised overseas regulatory authority.

No member or employee of the promoting body, the jury panel, nor any partner, close associate or employee of them shall be eligible to compete or assist a competitor.

POST-COMPETITION

The competition is a call for ideas and whilst there is no firm commitment to develop the winning scheme post-competition, it is hoped that funds may become available to implement the winning scheme.
HOW TO REGISTER / ENTER

You may only submit an entry to the competition if you are officially registered through RIBA Competitions. The competition is subject to a non-refundable registration and administration fee of £50.00 + VAT for design professionals and £10.00 + VAT for design students. Please visit www.architecture.com/competitions and follow the appropriate link under ‘Live Competitions’ to make an on-line payment.

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP AND ACCEPTANCE OF COMPETITION REGULATIONS

Once your payment has been processed, you will be issued with a unique registration number, a Declaration Form and a DWG site plan. The declaration form acknowledges authorship of the design ideas submitted and by signing it, competitors agree to abide by the competition conditions and the decision of the jury panel. The completed Declaration Form should be placed in a sealed envelope to accompany the design material and should clearly bear the unique registration number in the top right hand corner of both the form and the envelope.

The declaration form must accompany the design submission – see Anonymity and Stage 1 Submission Requirements.

COMPETITION TIMETABLE

The anticipated programme, which may be subject to variation, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition launch</td>
<td>w/c 14 January 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site Visits</td>
<td>Wednesday 6 February 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for Questions</td>
<td>Friday 15 February 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response to Questions</td>
<td>Friday 22 February 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration deadline</td>
<td>Thursday 7 March 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission deadline</td>
<td>Tuesday 12 March 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibition of All Designs / Public Consultation</td>
<td>w/c 8 April 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment of Stage one designs and shortlist identified</td>
<td>w/c 22 April 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Interviews / Presentations</td>
<td>w/c 20 May 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Result</td>
<td>End May 2013</td>
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SITE VISITS

Registered applicants only will have the opportunity of attending an organised site visit which will be held on Wednesday 6 February 2013. Please contact RIBA Competitions to reserve a place. Places will be reserved on a first come first served basis with places limited to two per registered competitor in the first instance.
JURY PANEL

The Jury Panel (which may be subject to change) is expected to comprise:

Chris Law, RIBA Adviser, Public Realm and Development Director, Vauxhall One
Christopher Woodward, Director of the Garden Museum
Stephen Crisp, Head Gardener to US Ambassador
Sue Illman, President of the Landscape Institute
Richard Tice, Chairman of Vauxhall One
Angela Brady, President of the RIBA
Doreen Lawrence, Founder of the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust
Joanne Wallis, RIBA Competitions Consultant (observer)

In the event of a jury panel member being unable to continue to act through illness or any other cause, the promoter in consultation with the RIBA, reserves the right to appoint an alternative panel member.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Designs will be assessed against the following criteria:

Stage 1:
- Quality of the design and Green Links
- Opportunities and ideas for Green interventions
- Inventiveness and flair
- Response to brief in making connections to the river and parks
- Response to site and context
- Clarity of presentation

Stage 2:
- Viability of the submission
- Ability to deliver the project

HONORARIA

It is the intention to shortlist 3 schemes for the second stage and each shortlisted entrant will receive an honorarium of £2,000 + VAT. There will also be a prize for the best student entry of £500.

QUESTIONS

Questions relating to the competition brief and conditions must be sent to RIBA Competitions at riba.competitions@riba.org by Friday 15 February 2013. A statement in response to all questions raised will be emailed to registered competitors by Friday 22 February 2013.
SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS - STAGE 1

Competitors should note the Anonymity requirements and submit the following:

1 x A1 lightweight foam board to outline the design proposal. An identical but laminated copy of this A1 board should also be provided.

Two exhibitions of the designs will run concurrently. One board will be exhibited at the Garden Museum and the laminated copy board will be displayed in an outdoor architectural trail through the Vauxhall area, therefore authors should ensure that this board can withstand the elements.

A written report in an A3 bound document with a maximum of 10 pages. Two copies of this report should be provided.

The completed declaration form, placed in a sealed envelope marked ‘declaration of authorship’.

A CD containing electronic copies of the design board (PDF format) and design report (Word format). The PDF of the design boards should be <5Mb in size, since they may subsequently be uploaded to the dedicated competition website. The CD should also contain a publicity image for use in the printed and electronic media. These should be submitted in JPEG format with low (72dpi) and high (300dpi) resolution versions of each image. The publicity images should be representative of the design ideas proposed and be readily identifiable as such.

STAGE 2

Shortlisted designers will be asked to further develop their schemes and attend an interview to explain their scheme to the Jury Panel.

ANONYMITY

Designs and accompanying material shall be submitted without name, motto, distinguishing marks or readily identifiable projects. The submission should be accompanied by the completed declaration form, which should be placed in a sealed envelope marked ‘declaration of authorship’.

Each entry must clearly display the unique registration number issued upon registration prominently on the front face of each and every board/page of your submission material. Please refer to the section on ‘How to Register’.

A successful competitor must be able to satisfy the judges that he/she is the bona fide author of the design he/she has submitted.
SUBMISSION METHOD

The design of each competitor is to be contained in a single package and is to be sent, postage paid, addressed to:

Vauxhall - The Missing Link
RIBA Competitions
The Studio (5th Floor)
32 The Calls
Leeds
LS2 7EW

Overseas competitors should note that for Customs purposes no commercial value should be assigned to the design submission. If a commercial value is given, this may result in your submission being delayed and/or returned to you unopened, as the RIBA will not be liable for any Customs charges otherwise incurred.

Your submission should arrive no later than 2.00pm on Tuesday 12 March 2013. Late submissions will not be accepted and it will not be possible to submit entries via e-mail. UK competitors should note that First Class post does not necessarily guarantee next-day delivery and should plan their submission schedule accordingly.

Competitors requiring proof of delivery are advised to use a ‘signed for’ delivery service and should check with their courier provider.

Competitors are advised to retain copies of designs submitted as they will not be returned. Whilst the promoter and RIBA Competitions will exercise all reasonable care, they will not be responsible for loss or damage to the submission material that occur either in transit, during exhibition, storage or packing.

DISQUALIFICATION

Submissions shall be excluded from the competition:

- if received after the latest time stated under the Submission Method
- if, in the opinion of the jury panel, it does not fulfil the requirements of the brief
- if a competitor shall disclose his or her identity, or improperly attempt to influence the decision
- if any of the mandatory requirements of the competition brief and conditions are disregarded.
COPYRIGHT

The ownership of Copyright in the work of all competitors will be in accordance with the Copyright, Designs & Patent Act 1988, that is Copyright rests with the author of the submitted design.

PUBLICITY

The promoter and the RIBA reserve the right to exhibit or publish any design submission entered to Vauxhall – The Missing Link Competition and the result in any way or medium they consider fit for the purpose of publicity. Illustrations of any design - either separately, or together with other designs, with or without explanatory text - may be used without cost.

Competitors will be expected to honour a confidentiality agreement and must not release their designs for publication, or identify the name of the successful or unsuccessful designers to any third parties until after an official announcement has been made and/or anonymity lifted.

Once anonymity has been lifted, authors will be credited and recognised in all associated media and publicity.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARD

At the conclusion of each stage the RIBA will publish the winning names after communicating it individually to each of the competitors.

ENQUIRIES

The competition is being managed and administered by RIBA Competitions on behalf of the client group. All enquiries relating to the general conditions of this competition should be directed to:

RIBA Competitions
The Studio (5th Floor)
32 The Calls
LEEDS
LS2 7EW
T : ++44 (0) 113 2031490
E : riba.competitions@riba.org

Neither the promoter, RIBA Adviser, nor other members of the jury panel should be solicited for information as this may lead to disqualification from the competition.
Links & Downloads

Links

Vauxhall SPD
Picasa Web Albums: Vauxhall Area photos
Photographic Record [photographer: David Scheinmann]
Information on Green Infrastructure from the Landscape Institute
GLA Urban Greening
Garden Museum - Green spaces film

SOME MORE INFORMATION THAT MIGHT HELP

A good guide for Historical Context for Vauxhall is:
Vauxhall – A Little History; Ross Davies (Chair of the Vauxhall Society)

Research the history of Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens - A good guide is
The Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens; Vauxhall Gardens: A History (Yale University Press, 2011)
– David Coke with Dr. Alan Borg

Research the founding of Royal Doulton Pottery in Vauxhall
wikipedia
The Potteries

Research the first Vauxhall motor car
wikipedia
vauxhall civic society

Research Glass Making in Vauxhall
nazeing-glass
vauxhall civic society

Research MI6 Headquarters featured in James Bond 'Skyfall'

Research the New American Embassy in Nine Elms
us embassy is key to revival of nine elms in battersea
New American Embassy Revealed

Research New Covent Garden Market.
wikipedia
Essential Guide 2009 - PDF
Research Vauxhall Night Life.
Well Hello Voho

Research Galleries.
Damien Hirst's record-breaking show attracts 463,000 visitors
Gasworks Gallery
Delivering variety, inspiration and value to clients through expertly run design and architectural competitions

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tel: +44 (0)113 203 1490
e-mail: riba.competitions@riba.org
web: www.architecture.com/competitions