



PRESS RELEASE

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Dutch success for multiple assignment in Croydon, London.

The team guided by OKRA landscape architects including Urhahn Urban Design (UUD), Peter Brett Associates (PBA), Karakusevic Carson Architects (KCA) and Soundings has won the appealing 'International Urban Design Competition for Wellesley Road and Park Lane in Croydon' in London. In the final round, Field Operations from New York was beaten, after in a previous round, the plans of Hawkins Brown (UK) and Edward Cullinan Architects (UK) were precluded.

The competition is part of the plans to regenerate Croydon, situated in the South of London. The ambition for Croydon is to turn the city district, counting 350.000 inhabitants, into London's 'third town', besides Westminster and the City of London. This ambition is determined in Third City Vision, which is the result of the work of architect Will Alsop in concertation with the inhabitants of Croydon.

The transformation of Wellesley Road and Park Lane, the central long line in Croydon, is one of the key projects in Croydon. The assignment is to reshape the monstrous main road, splitting the centre in two, into a lively and liveable centre.

In the plans of the Dutch-British team, Wellesley Road and Park Lane are transformed into a green core in the city that is easy to cross over and is connected to green 'urban rooms' beside it. The amount of space for automobile traffic is limited drastically in favour of pedestrians and cyclists. The highway exit on the South side is connected to the East-West continual connection while parking garages are concentrated at the North and South side. The profile is transformed into spacious pedestrian strips on the sides, a car connection on the West side, a green median strip with a track for cyclists, pedestrians and skaters and a public transport lane on the East side. Pedestrian zones are activated by transformation of the now dull plinths in active programs and the connection to a diversity of new green (semi)public spaces in the blocks lying behind. The 'Chrysalis' plan unfolds a strategy how the now desolated peace of city can disclose as a butterfly. Through temporary procedures and fast interventions on short term, a start of the transformation is already given. The large public project is executed gradually from the South to the North. Through acupuncture procedures, the urban rooms and plinths of buildings are activated. Simple rules and public private partnership lead to the intended improvements within the blocks.

The exhibits are judged by a broadly composed jury: Chairman Steve O'Connell, Jason Perry, Jason Rouse (all London Borough of Croydon), architect Will Alsop, Joanna Averley (CABE Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment), Colin Mann and Peter Brown (both Transport for London).

The jury praises the quality of the exhibits. The plan is especially praised for the green transformation, the joining of complex ideas in a simple way and the strong execution strategy. Besides the professional jury, the Croydon public were also aloud to send in reactions. It appears from these reactions that the plan of the team could especially count on a lot of credits from the Croydon public.

For more information about the contest see:

www.croydonthirdcity.co.uk

The jury comment of stage 2 can be viewed and heard at:

http://www.croydon.ukcouncil.net/site/index.php?l=en_GB