



**3 October 2011**

## **inmidtown Habitats: New International Design Competition Launched**

Today, The Architecture Foundation (AF) announces the launch of a new open and international competition that calls on design teams to submit proposals for urban beehives, bird-boxes and planters.

The competition is being organised by The AF on behalf of **inmidtown, the business improvement district for the central London areas of Holborn, Bloomsbury and St. Giles**. The competition calls for submissions that **offer distinctive yet functional designs that help enhance biodiversity in this urban context**. It is envisaged that the winning proposals will be mass-produced and installed in a variety of sites across the inmidtown area.

The competition is inspired by and is envisaged to complement inmidtown's existing initiative, "Midtown Buzz", which provides free beehives and bee-keeping training to its members who wish to produce their own honey on site. The project has now completed its first year, with the first honey harvest collected this September.

During this first phase, it has become clear to the members of the scheme that although beehives exist whose designs have stood the test of time for bees and beekeepers alike, these hives are not in fact ideal when relocated from the traditional rural context into urban areas. As a natural continuation of the "Midtown Buzz" scheme, and in order to ensure its success and expansion, the Client has commissioned The Architecture Foundation to run this competition for a truly urban beehive.

Recognising the growing need to accommodate nature in the city and to build upon the success of the new hives around the area, the competition is not simply for beehives, but also solicits proposals for bird boxes and planters that will be installed throughout the area to ensure adequate forage and pollination.

### **Tass Mavrogordato, Chief Executive of inmidtown said:**

"We are very excited to be running this competition with The Architecture Foundation and are keen to see how designers respond to the brief. It is important for us to improve the area not just for people but also wildlife too. Our member businesses are firmly behind this initiative, to provide homes and added pollination through the planters, which in turn will increase the biodiversity within central London."

### **Sarah Ichioka, Director, The Architecture Foundation said:**

"This competition offers people the chance to produce innovative designs that set a new standard for welcoming nature into the city. The client's commitment to produce the resultant bee-hives, bird-boxes and planters in volume make the opportunity particularly appealing."

Architects, designers, artists as well as those from other disciplines are invited to respond to the brief, available for download from the AF website: [www.architecturefoundation.org.uk](http://www.architecturefoundation.org.uk).



**A public event will be held on 13 October in collaboration with artist, Fritz Haeg and Arup's gallery** that all entrants are encouraged to attend. This event, entitled Meet the (Animal) Clients will be held as part Fritz Haeg's 'Animal Estates London HQ: Urban Wildlife Client Services' in Arup's exhibition space, Phase 2. Experts will advocate for those of the 11 'clients' identified by Fritz and his team that this competition caters for namely bees, the house sparrow and bats.

**Fritz Haeg, artist said:**

"I'm so pleased that the 'Animal Estates London HQ: Urban Wildlife Client Services' will be able to serve as a resource center and meeting place for the inmidtown Habitats competition entrants. As the latest edition of the Animal Estates series, the London headquarters at Arup Phase 2 provides a place to consider selected 'animal clients,' urban wildlife to welcome back to the city with thoughtful designs. The inmidtown Habitats competition is a promising indication of our evolving attitudes towards wildlife and city-making. I can't wait to see the responses from the competition entrants."

**Entrants are also invited to attend one of inmidtown's Bee Walks at 1pm on 12 and 14 October** where they can learn more about Midtown Buzz and visit one of the hive sites.

**Deadline for submissions is 28 November 2011** with a shortlist announcement expected in January 2012. Shortlisted designs will be prototyped and displayed in February 2012 with the winner announced following the exhibition.

Entries will be judged by a **high-profile jury** that includes: The Urban Birder, Writer and Broadcaster, **David Lindo** and Architect and Designer, **Nigel Coates**.

- Ends -

For further information, press should contact:

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Notes to Editors:

**About The Architecture Foundation**

Established in 1991 as the UK's first independent architecture centre, the Architecture Foundation is a non-profit agency for contemporary architecture, urbanism and culture. The foundation carries out a number of programs designed to facilitate international and interdisciplinary exchange, stimulate critical engagement amongst professionals, policy makers and a broad public, and shape the quality of the built environment. [www.architecturefoundation.org.uk](http://www.architecturefoundation.org.uk)



### **About inmidtown**

inmidtown is a company limited by guarantee, run by and for its members. It has no share capital. Any surpluses generated are reinvested in the company's services.

inmidtown an expansion of inholborn BID. A Business Improvement District (BID) is an independent, business-owned and led company, which seeks to improve a given location for commercial activity. inmidtown's members are the 560 businesses in the BID area who pay its annual 'levy'. Many of these are heavily involved in the governance of the company.

[www.inmidtown.org](http://www.inmidtown.org)

### **About Meet the (Animal) Clients**

This event will be held at Arup's exhibition space, Phase 2, 8 Fitzroy Street, 13 October, 7pm – 9pm  
More info: [www.architecturefoundation.org.uk](http://www.architecturefoundation.org.uk). Speakers will include Peter Holden [insert title]

### **About inmidtown Bee Walks**

Find out about inmidtown's work to encourage our city's bees. The walk lasts 60 minutes and ends with a visit to Bedford Square to see one of inmidtown's hives. Meet at 1pm at inmidtown's information kiosk outside Holborn Tube station.