



The Neighbourhood

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The Neighbourhood

HTA's equality, diversity & inclusion newsletter

Over the past year, we've shared and celebrated our personal and professional EDI experiences within HTA and the built environment industries. We've also strengthened our external relationships through outreach with educational institutions such as Trinity High School in Manchester, Mossbourne Community Academy in Hackney, and the London School of Architecture in East London. We have continued to develop our relationship with Blueprint for All and Beyond The Box CIC while creating new relationships with organisations such as BADU.

The 7th edition of The Neighbourhood (HTA's EDI newsletter) highlights some of our activities from the past year, guided by our evolving Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy. This year, Lucy Smith, Partner for Communications, Engagement, & Interior Design, Stephanie Warner from the People team, Hussain Al-Khirsan, Senior Graphic Designer, and Outreach Lead, Shawn Adams, have been instrumental in leading activities and producing this issue.

HTA is committed to creating a safe, inclusive workplace where success is driven by contributions from a diverse range of people. We recognise that many communities are underrepresented in our industry, and we're dedicated to making a difference at HTA. We strive to be a role model for positive change within our profession and the broader built environment industry.



We know that an inclusive environment and diverse workforce lead to better outcomes for both our practice and our work. By embracing diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives, we better understand the challenges our clients face and the communities we serve.

In 2021, we launched our first Inclusive Leadership Programme, led by Danna Walker from Built By Us, with the aim of better understanding the experiences of colleagues from diverse backgrounds. Over the past six years, we've also improved the diversity of our graduate intake through our partnership with Blueprint for All (formerly The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust) and Mark Nagle at Rhythm Careers recruitment firm.

"Prioritising equality, diversity, and inclusion is essential for the future of architecture and the UK's built environment industry. By embracing diverse perspectives, we can design more inclusive, sustainable spaces that truly reflect the needs of the communities we serve. This also ensures that the housing and environments we create are more equitable and accessible, benefiting wider society" – Stephanie Warner, Head of People & Inclusion



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With the help of our incl. group, we started the year by celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month. This year's theme '#UnderTheScope' sought to showcase the work of LGBTQ+ staff in the NHS and other medical and healthcare professions. incl. shared information about the month with staff while the London catering team treated us to a beautiful fruit rainbow and some tasty ice cream and sorbet.

For the second year, we held a Pride Pub Quiz, across our offices in London, Bristol, Manchester, and Edinburgh. Hosted by quizmaster Hussain Al-Khirsan, the event included pride-themed drinks and snacks. This year the Manchester office won the quiz retaining their title from 2023.

Members of incl. also got a taste of local nightlife in Hackney Wick by going to Queer East (now known as Queer Edge), they also attended an event at bar and restaurant Two More Years for members of the LGBTQ+ community to socialise.

During Pride Month, we also held a Life Drawing event for Architecture LGBT+ in our London studio, this was a great opportunity to sketch while speaking with other LGBTQIA+ people from the industry.

Managing Partner, Simon Bayliss, attended Freehold, NLA, RICS, and EG's joint LGBTQ+ Real Estate conference at the London Centre. This half day event brought together LGBTQ+ senior leaders and allies across the construction industry.

incl. was launched in May 2017 by staff who identify as LGBTQ+ and wanted to establish a network of support at HTA. Inclusivity is at the heart of the group's ethos and as a result, a space has also been created for allies to join and participate in discussions and events.



Hussain Al-Khirsan leading this year's Pride Quiz



Architecture LGBTQ+ Life Drawing



LGBTQ+ Real Estate conference attended by Simon Bayliss



Pride Quiz at HTA Wallis Road



Women @ HTA

This year's theme for International Women's Day was 'Inspire Inclusion,' highlighting the importance of creating spaces where everyone feels valued. On the day we spoke to women in our Landscape Team and asked them to reflect on their professional journeys. These reflections provided valuable insights into their personal growth and inspiration for the next generation of women entering the field.

For International Women's Day, our London office organised a fundraising event that raised £150 for ActionAid, a charity dedicated to supporting females in poverty. Meanwhile, our Edinburgh office collected clothing donations for Smart Works. This charity empowers unemployed women by providing them with professional attire, coaching, and the confidence they need to succeed in the workplace.

These efforts reflect our commitment to fostering inclusion, both within our company and in the broader community. By celebrating International Women's Day we aim to uplift women, advocating for equality and creating opportunities for all. International Women's Day has been celebrated globally since 1911, marking a pivotal moment in the fight for gender equality.



“My advice for women would be to be bold, speak up, and don't be afraid to lead on the decision-making process because you are very well placed to do so! – Natalia Roussou, Landscape Design Director at HTA Design

BLACC x Black History Month

This year for Black History Month, BLACC@hta organised a series of exciting events. We had an educational seminar and workshop led by EDI Specialist and Architectural Activist, Kudzai Matsvai, an African Lino printing workshop by architect Bianca Baidoo, and all studios across HTA participated in Wear Red Day, supporting anti-racism education charity, Show Racism the Red Card. Finally, to end Black History Month, we celebrated with a big finale lunch and fundraiser for BADU in our London office.

For this lunch, we enjoyed some fantastic food prepared by the wonderful HTA Lunch team and Steph. It was an important time to sit, talk, and reflect with colleagues on the learnings we'd shared throughout the month.

The Black African Caribbean Collective (BLACC@hta) is a group for members identifying as Black. The forum provides a safe and supportive space for black colleagues at HTA to discuss issues around racism and equality within the workplace and wider society.



Race Equality Week

On 7th February 2024 during Race Equality Week, we spoke with Associate Partner Kwame Ohene-Adu who has worked at HTA for 15 years. We also spoke to Level 6 Apprentice Sia Musa who has worked at HTA for less than a year under our new training programme.

The result was a short video that captured what they'd both like to see more of to achieve better diversity in the architecture industry. Head over to our Instagram Account (@htadesignllp) or our website to watch the full video.



“One tip for employers would be to surround yourself with a variety of voices and opinions and listen to them – Kwame Ohene-Adu, Associate Partner at HTA



Blueprint for All

In April, members of staff attended a seminar hosted by Blueprint for All. Formerly known as the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, the charity supports young people and communities through training programmes, mentoring, and skills workshops. Former member of the HTA Landscape team, Dan Bilsborough raised **£2,229** for Blueprint for All by running the London and Leeds Marathon.





Outreach work in Hackney

Mossbourne Community Academy

On November 8th, 2023, Outreach Lead Shawn Adams, and interior designer Mattia Treccani teamed up with architectural assistants Sven Gillet and Rebecca Jak from Lynch Architects and Malcolm Ebose from Wright and Wright Architects to deliver an exciting design workshop at Mossbourne Community Academy in Hackney. During the session, students did a survey of the railway arch located on their school's grounds using lasers and measuring tapes then later worked with the designers to sketch out options for the railway arch.

'It was truly inspiring seeing students who were so passionate and excited about architecture.' says Architectural Assistant at Lynch Architects Rebecca Jak.

In December 2023, students from Mossbourne Community Academy visited our Hackney Wick office on Wallis Road. The young people were given a tour of our 19th-century building before undertaking a career speed dating session.

“It was brilliant to meet the students and hear what made them consider a built environment career. - Rob Mitchel, Landscape Architect at HTA

Mossbourne Victoria Park

On 21st June, 2024, we hosted students from Mossbourne Victoria Park Academy, Hackney at our Wallis Road studio. The young people went on a tour of the building led by partner at HTA, James Lord. After the tour, the students heard from planner Arjun Singh and architects Kyriacos Contonou, Tanatswa Borerwe, and Rebecca Rose. The pupils later asked them questions about their careers.

"It was a real treat for us to take such a bright group of students around the studio, it was a positive experience for us, and we hope it was for the students too." says Partner at HTA, James Lord.

"James was a remarkable host and was incredible with our students, his tour was absolutely brilliant" says Careers & Inclusion Officer at Mossbourne Victoria Park Academy, Angela Judd.



Lunar New Year

In February, we celebrated the start of the year of the dragon by sharing East Asian food and getting crafty with a special Makery Make workshop.

Sue and Zarah treated staff to Gà Nướng, a Vietnamese dish made of lemongrass and ginger chicken with egg fried rice or a veggie option of tofu. In the afternoon, fresh mango and lychee bubble tea was served.

In the London, Edinburgh, and Manchester offices, staff learned about the history of Chinese Silk Pouches and made their own under the guidance of Landscape Architects Kexin Zhu and Esther Li. We used a mixture of fabrics inspired by the year of the dragon and decorated them with glass beads.



Black Females in Architecture CV Workshop

On Wednesday 25th October, we hosted Black Females in Architecture's 'CV & Portfolio Skills' workshop. This was a fantastic opportunity for students and recent graduates to have a 1-to-1 review of their portfolios with an experienced mentor and receive advice on applying for architecture-related jobs.

Black Females in Architecture (BFA) is a social enterprise and membership network founded to connect and support black women within the architecture, design, and construction industry. BFA was born out of the drive to advocate for better diversity, race and gender equity in the built environment.



Work Experience

In July 2024, we hosted a student from City of London, Hackney for a week in our Hackney Wick-based office at 75 Wallis Road. During this week the student did research into different types of homes, designed a small house on Sketchup, and put together a ten-page architecture portfolio. As this student is interested in real estate and the built environment this was an invaluable experience for her.

Over the last year, we have hosted over 20 work-experience students across our offices in London, Manchester, Edinburgh and Bristol.

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I enjoyed that I was given a new task each day which kept me busy. I was surrounded by a great group of people who helped me develop many different skills and boosted my confidence! - Work experience student



Drummond Community High School Visit

On Friday 10th May, 2024, Partner, Sandy Morrison took Drummond Community High School students on a tour of our Edinburgh office. Drummond Community High School is a comprehensive secondary school in Edinburgh city centre.

During their tour, Sandy spoke to the students about careers as a designer and the what types of work architects do. Students also got to view our projects, saw physical models, and learned about the software we use in the office.

Over the last year we have also offered work experience placements to students from Drummond High School.

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I really liked the visit. The displays were cool and the models were very intricate. Also, everyone explained what they do really well - Drummond Community High School Student



Make Space For Girls

In May 2024, we teamed up with Make Space for Girls to run a workshop for the Jamal Edwards Delve Youth Group. The session focused on a mapping exercise to identify young people's concerns and needs in the local area. During the workshop, the young people discussed why they feel safe or unsafe in certain areas and what could be done to improve these places.

In June 2024 we did another workshop with Make Space for Girls where we worked with young people to design public spaces. Using images the young people made collages of how they wanted spaces in their local area to look. All the young women and most of the young men proposed chill out spaces over designated play areas or activity zones.

'Make Space for Girls' campaigns for facilities and public spaces for teenage girls. The organisation uses research and campaigning to ensure that the voices of young women are heard in the planning process. MSfG is currently working on a range of projects that improve parks and other outdoor spaces in order to support opportunities for teenage girls and improve their mental and physical well-being.



World AIDs Day

For World AIDS Day we had a bake sale which raised a total of **£166**. World AIDS Day is an international day which takes place on 1st December. The day seeks to raise awareness of AIDS which is caused by the spread of the HIV infection. On this day, people around the world come together to remember those who have lost their lives and are affected by the disease.



South Asian Heritage Month

This South Asian Heritage Month, we celebrated South Asian culture with delicious food and interactive workshops. The London and Manchester studios held a Batik workshop where participants learned about the origins of Batik and created prints on tea towels.

We shared South Asian films, books, musicians, and cultural events through a special email newsletter, offering everyone the opportunity to explore and appreciate the vibrant creativity coming from this region.

As ever, food was at the core of our celebrations, with Sue Gerald and Craig Jones Rowley cooking South Asian dishes for lunch in London and Edinburgh. Manchester and Bristol got involved too, sourcing lunch from a South Asian-owned business.

The purpose of South Asian Heritage Month (SAHM) is to commemorate, mark, and celebrate the diverse cultures, histories, and contributions of South Asian communities, particularly in the UK. SAHM aims to foster understanding and appreciation of the rich heritage that connects the UK with South Asia, which includes countries like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh



Winstanley Show Flat Design Competition

Working in collaboration with Wandsworth Council, we launched an exciting interior design competition for young people to design a show flat in Mitchell House as part of Winstanley and York Road Regeneration. As part of the council's commitment to genuine engagement with residents, proposals were made to provide a 'show home' which would allow future residents to view a typical new flat.

The competition was structured as a live project, enabling participants to gain real-world experience designing and pitching their interior design proposals for the flat. HTA Interiors team worked closely with the participants for over a year, helping them respond to a set brief and budget and produce a design based on their ideas.

The competition winner, Ricky Le, was able to see his design be brought to life in the Mitchell House show flat. Ricky impressed the judges with his creativity and outstanding design concept. The 126 families who will be moving in to Block 5 will meet with the Council in Ricky's show flat to see the potential of their new homes.



“We have been working with young people for over a year training them to be interior designers. Ricky's design was outstanding, he is so creative. You can see that he kept true to his original concept of vintage maximalism - Lucy Smith, Partner at HTA

Winstanley Engagement Day

The Winstanley project team and client team from Wandsworth Council organised a half-term family day on May 30th at the new temporary event space in front of Pennethorne House, which will eventually be developed into a new block for other estate residents as part of the York Gardens Park project.

The event featured a range of activities including basketball, table tennis, crazy golf, and football, providing children aged 4-14 and their parents with an afternoon full of fun and friendly competition.

We led the arts and crafts on the day and invited participants to use the Lavender Road hoarding as an "ideas board" to share what they'd like to see on the estate. This quickly turned into a heartwarming opportunity for young people to write meaningful messages to their friends and families.



The People's Pavilion Build Volunteering

In July 2023, members of staff volunteered to build the 2023 People's Pavilion which was constructed in Lea Bridge Library's garden. The structure was built solely by Beyond The Box, project collaborators, and volunteers, there were no contractors involved, which is quite an impressive feat.

Titled 'Roots of Heritage' the pavilion was designed by three aspiring architects from the East London Borough of Tower Hamlets. One of the main features of the pavilion design was to allow for anonymous messages to activate the pavilion, with visitors invited to write things down that they wished to share but may have never said aloud.





BADU

In July, 2024, HTA's BLACC group teamed up with community development organisation BADU to deliver an interactive model-making workshop for a group of young people. This session was led by Architectural Apprentice Sia Musa, Part II Architectural Assistant Aaliyah Lawal, Outreach Lead Shawn Adams, and Architect Tanatswa Borerwe.

After a brief introduction and icebreaker, the young people learned about a variety of built environment career paths and what steps they might take to pursue them, including architecture, landscape architecture, planning, and engineering.

Next, we took the students on a tour of Hackney Wick, showing them the local area. Once back in the studio, they worked in groups to plan and design a model of a building that they felt would benefit Hackney Wick.

The students created a variety of colourful building models which they presented back to their peers in the style of a group crit.

“It was inspiring to see the enthusiasm on the young people’s faces. Having been in their position not long ago, it was fulfilling to help them!” – Sia Musa, Architectural Apprentice at HTA



Useful resources & activities

HTA subscribes to Health Assured - Employee Assistance Programme providing 24/7 help and support when you need it. Now available in the palm of your hand via their Health e-Hub App.

The Architect's Benevolent Society has teamed up with Anxiety UK to launch a new mental health support helpline specifically for Architects, Architectural Assistants, Landscape Architects, Technologists, and their families.

D&I: Do you have any Diversity & Equality events planned?

If you are planning to arrange or attend any diversity and equality related events or meetings within the next few months, please let us know about it!

We would be interested to hear what others are doing both internally and externally, please also send any photos of the event if appropriate to do so.



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