# Peckham Square garden competition invites bold designs to honour Damilola Taylor’s legacy



The London Borough of Southwark is undertaking a significant transformation of Peckham Square, centred around the ‘Hope in the Square’ competition. Organised by New London Architecture and Southwark Council, the competition seeks innovative proposals from architects, designers, artists, and creative teams to create a new green space that celebrates youth, community, and the legacy of Damilola Taylor, a local schoolboy tragically murdered aged 10. The intended space aims to foster reflection, positivity, and long-term community engagement, serving as a garden-like area that resonates with the local population for at least 15 to 20 years.

Peckham Square, a prominent civic space planned in the early 1990s, is currently at the heart of a wider £7 million redevelopment under Southwark’s ‘Southwark Stands Together’ initiative. This flagship programme is designed to enhance the area’s vibrancy, inclusivity, and accessibility, benefiting both residents and visitors. The project includes refurbishing surrounding buildings and public spaces, notably involving architects Graeme Massie and Scott Whitby Studio for the next phase of the square’s transformation. Their plans feature significant upgrades such as the refurbishment of 91-93 Peckham High Street to house Peckham Platform, a local arts charity, further embedding cultural and community values into the space.

One of the more controversial elements of this redevelopment is the removal of the Peckham Arch, a 35-metre canopy designed by John McAslan that has marked the entrance to the square since 1994. Its removal underscores the scale and ambition of the redesign, which will rejuvenate the square with new paving, public artworks—including the Peckham Peace Wall—and a garden space that must retain four existing trees. Designs submitted to the ‘Hope in the Square’ competition are expected to be striking and inclusive, mindful of Peckham’s cultural diversity and youth perspectives, and to incorporate features such as sculptural elements, seating, soft planting, lighting installations, and paving treatments.

Central to the garden’s concept is its dedication to the legacy of Damilola Taylor and the ongoing work of his family and the Hope Collective. This has been further emphasised by Southwark Council’s collaboration with the Damilola Taylor Trust, which is commissioning a new public artwork intended to inspire hope and connection within the community. The council has also advanced the appointment of a project consultant to oversee this important public art installation, signalling a strong commitment to embedding meaningful cultural narratives within the redevelopment.

Spheron Architects have been confirmed as key collaborators in reimagining Peckham Square, with designs that are sensitive to local heritage, sustainability, and community engagement. Their approach incorporates elements inspired by Peckham’s industrial past, such as its timber wharf history, and celebrates the area’s multilingual and multicultural identity.

The competition process invites initial submissions without design work, focusing on team profiles and vision. Up to six shortlisted teams will be financially supported to develop their concepts further, with the final winner appointed to deliver the design with a budget of up to £100,000 plus VAT. The project aims for installation to take place in 2025, providing Peckham with a revitalised public space that supports creativity, inclusivity, and legacy.

This comprehensive redevelopment not only reflects an architectural and urban design ambition but also serves as a cultural and social investment in Peckham’s diverse community, honouring local stories and nurturing a hopeful, connected future.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/competitions/peckham-square-garden-london), [[5]](https://www.damilolataylortrust.co.uk/news/zx3d29pbdtm4l8dhkk58enngmgp77m), [[7]](https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2024/peckham-square-public-art-project-advances-appointment-project-lead)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/competitions/peckham-square-garden-london), [[2]](https://www.southwark.gov.uk/planning-environment-and-building-control/current-and-future-development/peckham-and-nunhead-0), [[3]](https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2023/jun/peckham-square-new-design-teams-and-a-new-home-for-local-arts-charity)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/competitions/peckham-square-garden-london), [[3]](https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2023/jun/peckham-square-new-design-teams-and-a-new-home-for-local-arts-charity)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/competitions/peckham-square-garden-london), [[4]](https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2021/mar/architects-confirmed-for-6m-council-remodel-of-peckham-s-library-square), [[6]](https://spheronarchitects.co.uk/peckhamsquareredevelopment/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/competitions/peckham-square-garden-london), [[5]](https://www.damilolataylortrust.co.uk/news/zx3d29pbdtm4l8dhkk58enngmgp77m), [[7]](https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2024/peckham-square-public-art-project-advances-appointment-project-lead)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/competitions/peckham-square-garden-london), [[4]](https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2021/mar/architects-confirmed-for-6m-council-remodel-of-peckham-s-library-square), [[6]](https://spheronarchitects.co.uk/peckhamsquareredevelopment/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/competitions/peckham-square-garden-london)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/competitions/peckham-square-garden-london> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/planning-environment-and-building-control/current-and-future-development/peckham-and-nunhead-0> - Southwark Council has allocated £7 million to upgrade Peckham Square, aiming to create a vibrant, inclusive, and accessible meeting place for local residents and visitors. The redevelopment includes refurbishing existing buildings and enhancing public spaces to foster community engagement and economic growth.
3. <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2023/jun/peckham-square-new-design-teams-and-a-new-home-for-local-arts-charity> - Southwark Council has appointed Graeme Massie Architects and Scott Whitby Studio to lead the next phase of Peckham Square's transformation. The project includes refurbishing 91-93 Peckham High Street to provide a new home for the local arts charity, Peckham Platform, and enhancing public spaces to reflect the community's diversity.
4. <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2021/mar/architects-confirmed-for-6m-council-remodel-of-peckham-s-library-square> - Southwark Council has confirmed the appointment of Spheron Architects to redesign Peckham Square as a vibrant public space. The project is part of the 'Southwark Stands Together' initiative, aiming to create a space that reflects the local community's aspirations and promotes inclusivity.
5. <https://www.damilolataylortrust.co.uk/news/zx3d29pbdtm4l8dhkk58enngmgp77m> - The Damilola Taylor Trust is collaborating with Southwark Council to commission a new public artwork for Peckham Square. The artwork will honour Damilola Taylor's legacy and the work of his family and the Hope Collective, aiming to inspire hope and connection within the community.
6. <https://spheronarchitects.co.uk/peckhamsquareredevelopment/> - Spheron Architects has been selected to redesign Peckham Square, incorporating elements inspired by the area's timber wharf and multilingual heritage. The project focuses on sustainability and community engagement, aiming to create a space that reflects Peckham's unique identity.
7. <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2024/peckham-square-public-art-project-advances-appointment-project-lead> - Plans for a new public artwork in Peckham Square have progressed with the appointment of a project consultant. The artwork will celebrate Damilola Taylor's legacy and the efforts of his family and the Hope Collective, aligning with Southwark Council's commitment to meaningful public art.