

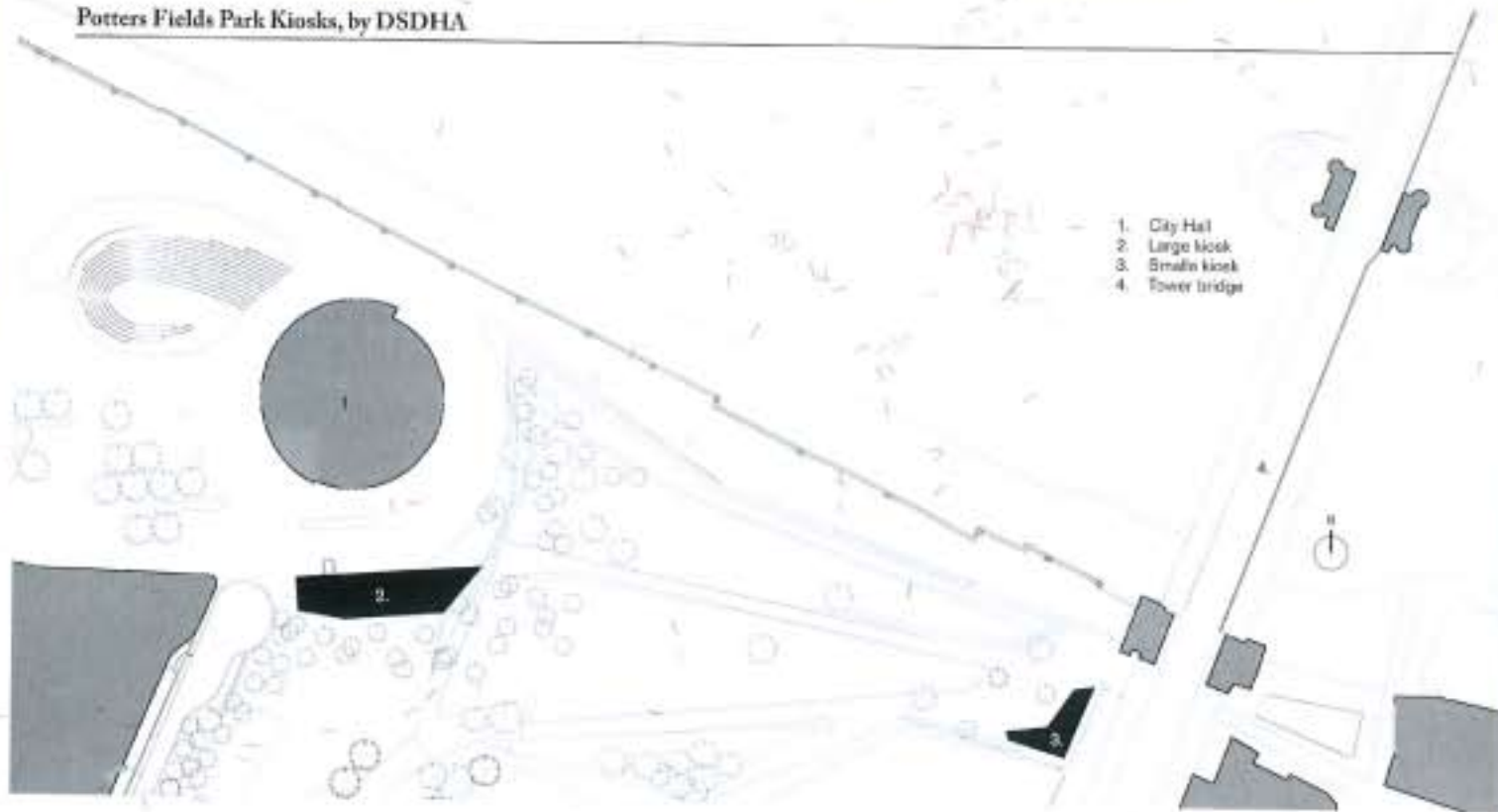


POTTERS FIELDS PARK KIOSKS

Potters Fields Park stands amid heavy-hitting company. Located on the south bank of the Thames, the park touches Tower Bridge to its east and Norman Foster's City Hall stands on its north-west corner. It also faces the Tower of London across the river. It's a dramatic backdrop to two recently completed shed-like kiosks by DSDHA for developer MoreLondon, part of a Foster + Partners masterplan.

'What do you do when you're at the foot of a building like City Hall? We ignored it completely', says DSDHA partner Deborah Saunt. It was a good decision, if a little hyperbolic. Potters Field Park was developed under a Section 106 agreement, which required new community-oriented kiosks and the long-term maintenance of the grounds. The larger, 324m² kiosk, clad in burned wood and >>





standing in the shadow of City Hall, contains a number of services for its neighbour, including three vents that bring up exhaust fumes from City Hall's underground plant room. The building also shelters a 5m-high and 12m-long cherry picker used to clean the building's windows and contains a cashpoint, WC, and café.

The second kiosk, which is sited across the park and leans up against Tower Bridge, replaces an ice-cream vendor that had occupied the site, and will create a shop-front exterior which will be able to accommodate up to three separate vendors and a seating area outside. It is smaller, at 75 m² and 3.9 metres tall, and its cladding is less dramatic – its non-descriptive finish keeps the natural colour of the wood. The location of the pavilions came from a plan for the park by landscape-design firm Gross Max.

Once the programme was clear, DSDHA started to determine a research methodology. Saunt and fellow DSDHA partner David Hills were teaching at the AA at the time, working on a project called Personal

Landscapes. Saunt says: 'We put the students out as though they were conducting a survey, and they measured that by standing in key areas most pedestrians would swerve out of their way to avoid interacting with them.'

At Potters Fields, the firm worked with students to map diagrams of views in and around the GLA building and adjacent structures. 'Researching this project, we were reminded of the work of [sociologist] Saskia Sassen and her idea of micro environments with global span' [places that could belong as

much to New York as Tokyo]', says Saunt. Directing the attention of pedestrians toward the Tower of London became paramount to the kiosk. And this goal has been achieved: every corner you turn introduces new and spectacular views of the park's impressive neighbours.

Additionally, the practice wanted to reveal the site's history. Saunt says 'When we first got the call about the project, David and I jumped in a car to head to the site. We had this driver called Roy, and when we told >>

*'Our driver said:
"Potters Fields Park?
We used to play there
on the bomb-sites"'*

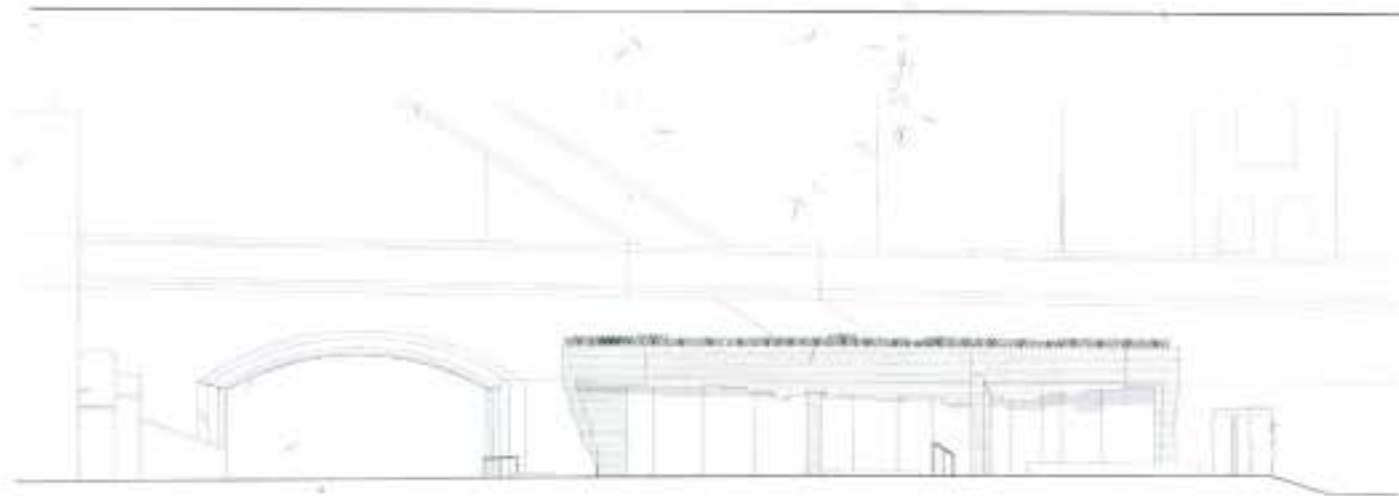


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Clockwise from above The striking charred-wood facade of the larger kiosk; the kiosk in the shadow of City Hall; the second, smaller kiosk; site plan



him where we were going, he said: 'Potters Fields Park, bleeding heck, we used to play there as kids on the bomb-sites'. Saunt and Hills found Second World War bomb maps that confirmed the site's past; the architects allude to this through their use of a charred-wood exterior on the larger kiosk.

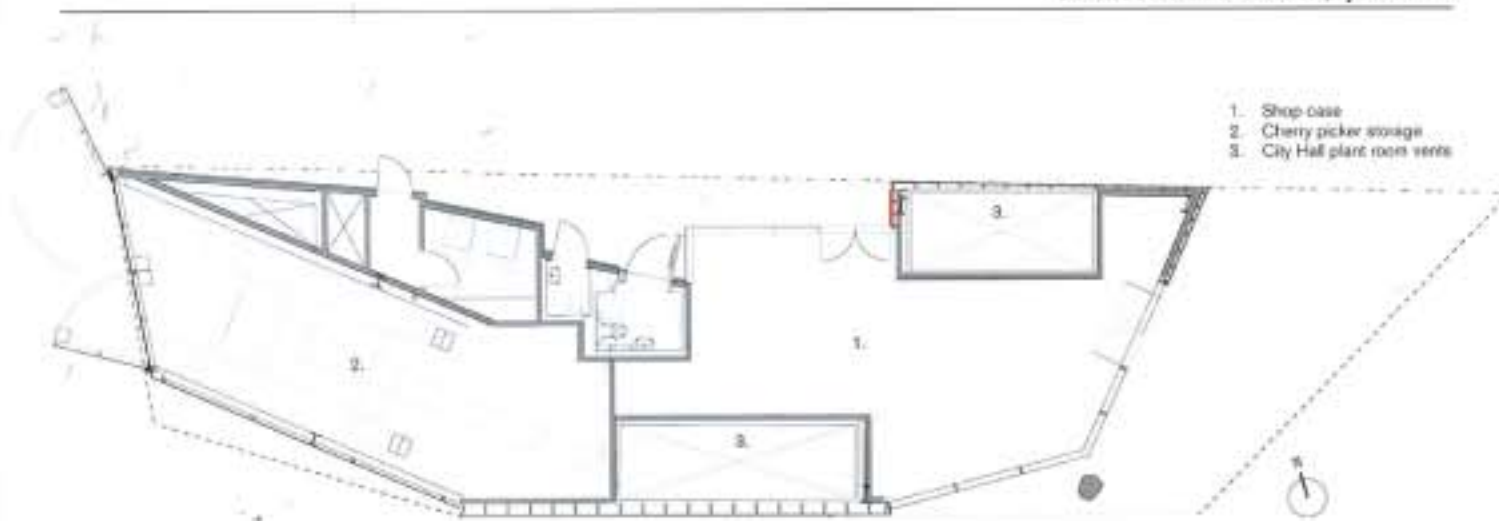
DSDHA experimented quite a bit with the process of charring the wood, trialling various types of timber and ultimately settling on Siberian larch. The architects did much of the burning themselves before leaving the rest with contractors, and even then when the wood was undercooked, they returned and burned on site.

From afar, the effect is a bit lost. You almost long for the wood to appear more burned. The message could be clearer—signalling more violence and destruction. But up close the effect works better. It's shiny and charred, reflecting a rainbow sheen when the light is right. The material also deteriorates on your hand when you touch it.

It was a good decision, too, to keep the second pavilion a more modest, unstained colour. It will probably turn grey as it ages, and with tall grasses planted on its roof, could fit in nicely into a seaside town. The cladding on both kiosks emphasises how shed-like they are, like something your father might have

built by hand on a lazy weekend. I'm not sure if this effect is intentional, but the rough appearance works as a counterpoint to the rather overly polished corporate park next door.

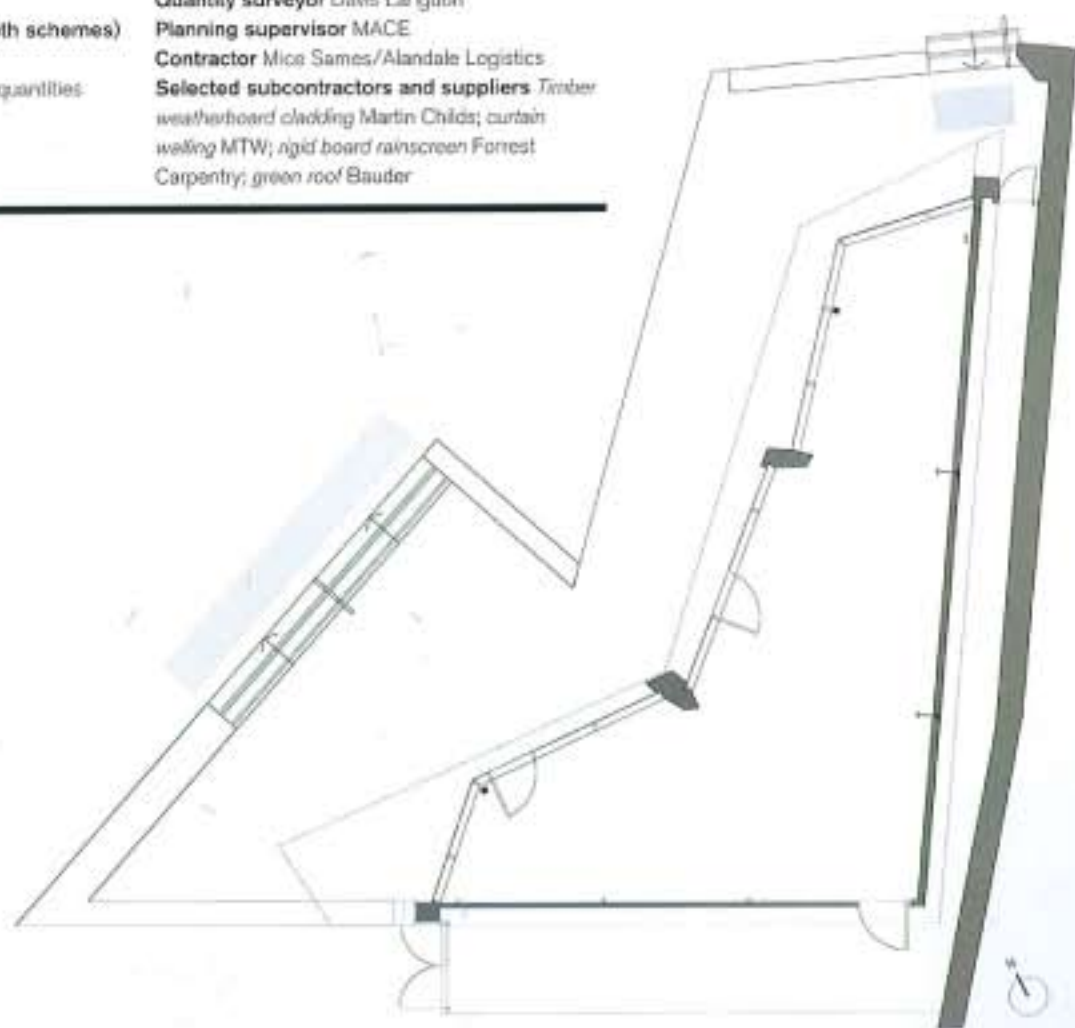
The two kiosks share irregular plans marked by sharp angles and grotto-like overhangs (shapes that were chosen based on experimentation with small-scale study models), but their different cladding succeeds in creating something more multivalent. In a site dominated by steel-and-glass office buildings and stone monuments, the kiosks provide a moment of small-scale and diverse materials – a nice change of scenery. ■



Above left section of the larger kiosk
Above Plan for the larger kiosk

Start on site date December 2006
Contract duration 10 months
Gross external floor area (for both schemes) 295m²
Form of contract JCT 98 without quantities
Cost £956,100
Client More London
Architect DSDHA

Structural engineer Jane Wernick Associates
Quantity surveyor Davis Langdon
Planning supervisor MACE
Contractor Mica Sames/Alandale Logistics
Selected subcontractors and suppliers Timber weatherboard cladding Martin Childs; curtain walling MTW; rigid board rainscreen Forrest Carpentry; green roof Bauder



Left and far left framed views from the interior of the kiosks are the result of intensive sightline research
Right Plan for the smaller kiosk