

CIRCULATED ACROSS EAST LONDON

EAST

The Community & Lifestyle Newspaper

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Wood
Street Walls
Restaurant Reviews

SPENCERS
Experts in your area

See a selection of
our properties inside



Over the last year you would be hard pressed to have missed the street art popping up across Waltham Forest. The brainchild of a group of local residents, Wood Street Walls was formed in November 2014, through a mutual appreciation of street art, a desire to give back to the community where they live and a belief that art should be accessible to everybody.

Wood Street



"We moved here in 2012 and were overwhelmed by the community spirit that we witnessed on our street - knowing we had no oven our next door neighbour would regularly leave roast dinners on our doorstep. It was something we had never experienced in London before and knew that we had to make an impact in one way or another."

Mark Clark, co-founder, took a leap of faith and set about trying to persuade local businesses to donate their walls on which to paint the first murals. After a number of knock backs, Metropolitan agreed to let him paint on the boardings that back onto Ravenswood Industrial Estate, home of God's Own Junkyard, Mother's Ruin and Wilford Brewery.

Through the powers of social media Mark met Tom Jackson, co-founder - a Wood Street resident and one half of artistic duo STATIC who were looking to apply their artwork in a new environment outside for the first time.

Whilst working on the mural, the pair discussed at length the difficulties to find affordable studio space in Waltham Forest and Waltham Forest in general. After coming across the Artist Workspaces Study it became apparent that there is a huge shortfall of studios in the borough when comparing it to neighbouring creative hubs such as Hackney and Dalston and so a crowd funding campaign was launched.

"The aim of our crowd funding campaign was to raise money to turn an used building into a creative hub offering affordable rates for artists who in turn would host free workshops to residents. We raised just shy of 40,000 and received a grant from the Mayor of London but we are yet to find a home despite our continued efforts with Waltham Forest Council. We are dedicated to establish ourselves within Wood Street as we truly believe that we can not only create a link between the local and artistic communities but we can inspire the next generation of artists."
Tom Jackson.

Whilst the team continues to focus efforts on establishing a creative hub they have worked with some of the most prolific names in the world of street art. With the project being self funded the collective they put together a list of artists they'd most want to work with and incredibly more often than not pulled it off with names such as Conor Harrington, Pluggn and many & more getting involved.

It's not just about the big names in street art, the ethos of Wood Street Walls is celebrate and support local and up and coming artists. Former



Leyston resident Fankajapan created one of the group's biggest pieces in the car park of The Mall last summer (image attached), whilst Waltham Forest resident Mark McClure's wooden installation can be seen on St Mary's Road. Most recently Wood Street Walls has been joined by Frankie Strand whose start is on the rise with her work popping up across London and being named as an alternative Instagrammer to watch by Elle magazine (image attached).

Community is at the heart of everything Wood Street Walls does and the team has been able to engage residents through a number of activities. Last summer they were part of the Useful and Beautiful section of the Waltham Forest Garden Party giving families a chance to try their hand at spray painting a live mural (image attached). The latest mural was created in partnership with East Thames - on the corner of Forest Rd and Wood St - was developed through a series of workshops with Waltham Forest College students.

Throughout March and April Wood Street Walls are taking their work to the next level - Paint Your London - a street art festival to raise awareness of the lack of affordable studio space for artists who contribute a great deal to the fabric of the community. They hope the event will not only transform the borough into a public art exhibition but apply positive pressure on public bodies and organisation to put their empty buildings back into use. As with their previous work, local will remain central to the artists selected to be part of the event and the team are excited to be working with Andrew McAtee for the first time, a long term Waltham Forest resident.

"Paint Your London will act as a platform to raise further awareness of the ever growing demand for artists workspace and of course bring some incredible art to the borough - people to need to realise that without artist space there wouldn't be any public art."

Having only been formed for less than 18 months that Wood Street Walls have achieved a huge amount in a short space of time and we expect to see even more of their influence across the borough over the coming months.

Wood Street Walls are always on the look out for collaborators and want to paint so if you want to get involved don't hesitate to get in touch via hello@woodstreetwalls.co.uk

For more information visit: www.paintyourlondon.co.uk