

# RIBA



## News release

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### **North Wall Arts Centre, Oxford wins national architecture award**

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) tonight celebrates the latest architecture in the South of England by giving an RIBA National Award to the North Wall Arts Centre at St Edward's School in Oxford

This new Arts Centre, designed by Haworth Tomkins architects, is built in the school grounds and shared with the town. The architects were praised for their ability to unite an ancient stone boundary wall, a Grade II listed former Victorian swimming pool and a new building, to create a place for innovation and creativity within a sensitive historic environment.

The RIBA National Awards were presented tonight, Friday 27 June, at a dinner in London at the Hilton Hotel. The winning Oxford project is joined by 15 other buildings across the UK in receiving an RIBA National Award, along with 10 RIBA European Award winners. The Stirling Prize shortlist will be drawn from the 16 RIBA National Award winners, and the RIBA European Award winners who are eligible for the prize. The shortlist will be announced on Thursday 17 July.

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The RIBA Stirling Prize in association with *The Architects' Journal* is awarded to the architects of the building that has made the greatest contribution to British architecture in the past year. The £20,000 prize will be presented in Liverpool on Saturday 11 October 2008 and broadcast on Channel 4 on Sunday 12 October.

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RIBA National Award winners, together with the winners of RIBA Awards, are also eligible for a series of special awards to be presented at the RIBA Stirling Prize. For details of these and the other RIBA National winners please visit [www.architecture.com/awards](http://www.architecture.com/awards).

Speaking at the awards dinner RIBA President Sunand Prasad said:

“RIBA awards are only made to buildings that really work for their users. They are a studied response by architect and lay judges not only to the submitted material but most importantly to tours of buildings conducted by the clients and architects of the schemes.

The RIBA's National Awards represent the best of this year's RIBA Awards and are selected by the Awards Group on the basis of reports-back from the visiting juries.

The Awards Group, having already visited the shortlisted European schemes, will in July visit all 16 National Award winners before determining a shortlist of six for the RIBA Stirling prize in association with *The Architects' Journal*. These will in turn be visited by a third jury in September. It is the thoroughness and rigour of the whole process that makes any tier of the RIBA awards scheme so worth winning. We are very grateful to the AJ for their continued generous support for all the RIBA's awards programme.”

The RIBA National Awards were sponsored by Ibstock Brick Ltd and InterfaceFLOR.

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## Notes to editors

1. For further information on the RIBA National Award Winner in the East, images or interview, please contact Press Officer: Carri Crook, Carisma Communications, Telephone 01842 815910, Email [carri@carismacommunications.co.uk](mailto:carri@carismacommunications.co.uk). More information can also be found at [www.architecture.com/awards](http://www.architecture.com/awards).

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2. RIBA South consists of 1,600 registered architects and 300 registered practices. The RIBA South Region covers Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and Oxfordshire.
3. For further information on the RIBA National Awards, please contact Linda Mills, Regional Director, RIBA South on 0118 969 8051 or email [linda.mills@inst.riba.org](mailto:linda.mills@inst.riba.org) or Amanda Hockley on 0118 969 8051 or email [Amanda.Hockley@inst.riba.org](mailto:Amanda.Hockley@inst.riba.org).
4. Editors are kindly requested to acknowledge the architects of the winning schemes and the photographic credits supplied.
5. Full citation follows:

**North Wall Arts Centre**

St Edward's School, Woodstock Road, Oxford

Architect: Haworth Tomkins

Client: St Edward's School

Structural Engineers: Price & Myers Consulting Engineers

Services Engineer: Max Fordham LLP

Contractor: Benfield & Loxley (Oxford) Ltd

Contract Value: £2.7m

Date of completion: August 2006

6. The new Arts Centre is built in the school grounds and is shared with the town. It houses a flexible 300 seat theatre, a rehearsal space, dance studio and art gallery. The design unites an ancient stone boundary wall, a grade 2 listed former Victorian swimming pool and a new building, to form a carefully scaled streetscape to the public side and a new courtyard to the school. Vernacular forms, contemporary detailing and traditional but unfamiliar materials emphasise the building's role as a place for innovation and creativity within a sensitive historic environment.

The design concept involves a series of barns strung out along the old wall. The conservation approach was to accept what was there, rather than disturbing old fabric. Weathering and patination were left untouched, but where changes to the old fabric were necessary, these were subtly marked. So the new theatre was expressed as a timber structure within the brick fabric of the old swimming pool.

The design and execution throughout are exemplary. Clarity of concept is matched by inventive and direct use of materials, together with careful integration of structure and services – not least in the way the theatres stalls occupy the old swimming pool.

The client claims that the building has become an essential part of the school's life since it was opened in Autumn 2006. The quality of all performances – be they concerts, plays or music, have been enhanced by the new environment.

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7. InterfaceFLOR, leading manufacturers of modular commercial flooring, are new Associate Sponsors of the RIBA National and European Awards joining Ibstock Brick Ltd, supporters of the Awards in the RIBA regions for over twenty years. *The Architects' Journal* is the Media Partner. The RIBA welcomes Mercedes-Benz (UK) Limited as the first sponsor of the RIBA International Awards and the Lubetkin Prize. *The Architectural Review* is the Media Partner for the International Awards and the Lubetkin Prize.
8. The RIBA Trust also wishes to thank Matt Hill, Jack Newton, Ben Nicholls, Steve Westcott and Chris Wilkinson for designing the installation 'Exercise One – Kite Assembly' in the Grand Ballroom at the London Hilton for the Awards Dinner on 27 June. Thanks also to Carl Robertshaw of Kite Related Design for realising the group's ideas and supporting the project by fabricating and installing it. The installation will be on display at the RIBA, 66 Portland Place for summer 2008.
9. The RIBA awards programme, was re-organised in 2007 in a pyramid structure. **RIBA Awards** are judged and presented locally. The next level is the **RIBA National Awards** which are judged and presented nationally. **The RIBA Stirling Prize** shortlist is selected following further visits to winners of the RIBA National Awards and of **RIBA European Awards** for buildings in the rest of the EU.
10. The RIBA Stirling Prize jury comprises architecture specialists and lay judges from the arts. The 2008 judges are Gordon Murray – architect, Murray Dunlop Architects; Shelley McNamara – architect, Grafton Architects; Ben van Berkel – architect, UN Studio in the Netherlands; Kieran Long – Editor, *The Architects' Journal* and Lauren Laverne – presenter of BBC's *The Culture Show*.
11. The RIBA Trust manages the cultural assets of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), including the internationally recognised collections of the British Architectural Library. It is the UK's national architecture centre, delivering the RIBA Awards and RIBA Stirling Prize (broadcast on Channel 4); the Royal Gold Medal; International and Honorary Fellowships; a full programme of lectures, exhibitions, tours and other events; and an education programme.