

# RIBA

The RIBA Journal

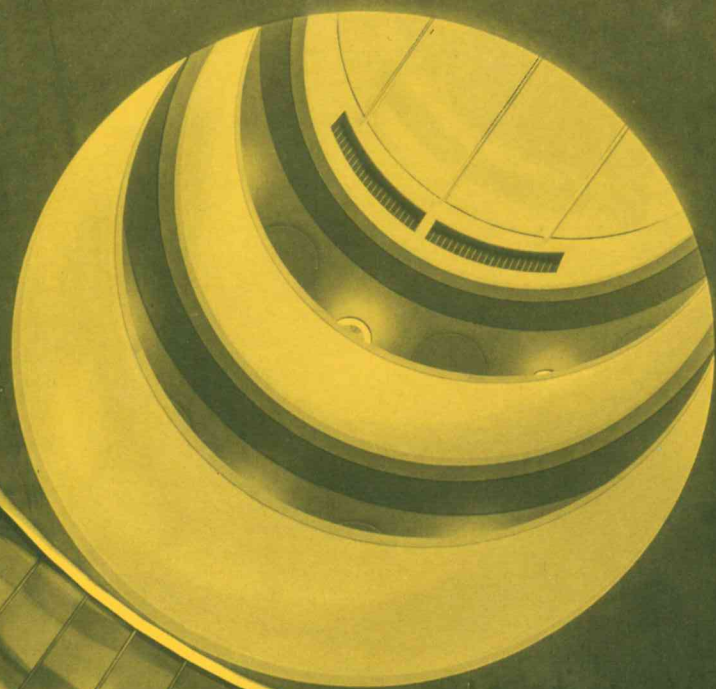
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# J

## The awards 2016



**From Plymouth to Ponteland:** Inspiration and ambition mark the RIBA Regional Awards







# East

**Sarah Potter:** You don't have to have a bicycle to work here but it helps!

Cambridge is a compact, but very popular place to work. It is a city of 'town vs gown'; a hub for science and technology and a convenient 45-minute train journey from London. Famous for its punts and bicycles, it is the only city I have been to where there is more cycle parking at the station than car parking.

Renowned for its wealth of historic structures, Cambridge is home to a number of important 20th century buildings – by Arup, Stirling, and Gillespie Kidd and Coia to name just a few. The city is going through a period of mass development with projects such as

North West Cambridge and CB1 extending it outwards and upwards. It is developing so quickly that sometimes even locals don't recognise it when they pull into the station.

Purcell's studio in Quayside is just five minutes' walk (two minutes' cycle) from the city centre, which makes travelling to sites in Cambridge very sustainable. We are an AJ100 top 10 practice and our distribution of regional studios across the UK (and three in Asia Pacific) offers us a close knit, creative studio feel with the benefits of a large company infrastructure. This gives us the opportunity to work on a wide variety and size of projects in the region.

For me the rich history of building

## Special Awards

**Building of the Year**, sponsored by Marley Eternit:  
Albert Sloman Library & Silberrad Student Centre  
**Project Architect of the Year** sponsored by Tarmac:  
Bell Phillips Architects  
**Client of the Year** sponsored by ET Clay Products:  
Thurrock Council Housing Department  
**Sustainability Award** sponsored by Sika:  
New QEII Hospital  
**Conservation Award:** Cripps Building  
**Special mention:** Gamlingay Eco Hub for its outstanding contribution to the local community

and how we can integrate contemporary elements into the urban fabric makes Cambridge a really interesting place to be an architect. There is also a strong professional community in the area with many local groups organising lectures, building visits and planning networking events for knowledge sharing. The local RIBA group, the Cambridge Association of Architects, meets regularly and publishes a gazette to keep members up to date on the region's architecture scene.

Now I just need to invest in a bicycle to fully embrace the Cambridge lifestyle...●

Sarah Potter is a senior architect with Purcell  
More words and images at [ribaj.com](http://ribaj.com)



**51 Hills Road, Cambridge**  
**Gort Scott for private client**  
Contract value: Undisclosed  
GIA: 780m<sup>2</sup>

This commercial building skilfully defies the usual 'spec office development' title. It responds to the scale and quality of adjacent listed buildings and provides significant lettable office space. External massing and scale respond to the immediate locale with confidence and respect, using enclosed courtyard and setbacks. The street facade relates in scale and materials to the adjacent Claremont Terrace, and the chimneys (outlets for the stack ventilation) give a great urban presence.

Externally, brick and pre-cast stone have been carefully detailed to maximise their inherent qualities. Interior spaces use a limited palette of insitu concrete and European oak with precise, yet robust, detailing.

This development stands out as one of real quality.



**The Avenue, Saffron Walden**  
**Pollard Thomas Edwards for Hill**  
Contract value: £14m  
GIA: 9,110m<sup>2</sup>

The Avenue represents the best of new housing developments: a committed client, a skilled architect, and a site with a mature landscape. Retaining as many trees as possible, the team has created a striking lime avenue at the heart of the scheme that forms a well used public route. Housing off the main avenue forms a series of courtyards that mix coherence and community. This is a great lesson in defensible space without any need for signage: urban design in action.

Attention is drawn naturally to the magnificence of the existing landscape but it would be a disservice to the architect to pin the success of the scheme on this. The Avenue would be a fantastic place to live even if the lime trees still needed another 50 years to mature.



**St Bede's Extra Care, Bedford**  
**PRP for Orbit Homes**  
Contract value: £12.9m  
GIA: 10,993m<sup>2</sup>

PRP has made a scheme of great quality and richness on the site of an old school, supplying 104 one and two bedroom homes for independent living for the over 55s.

Despite the number of homes on a tight site, internal spaces are generous, clearly laid out and well-lit by roof lights, adding to a feeling of calm in communal areas. A diverse but complementary palette of materials is used. Balconies allow both interaction and personalisation of space as well as supplying an external front door. The scheme incorporates community facilities such as a restaurant, hair salon and guest suite. The jury commends the architect for skilfully providing so many units and, on an extremely limited budget, showing what can be done with expertise.





**Boardman House, Norwich**  
**Hudson Architects for Norwich**  
**University of the Arts**  
 Contract value: £3.5m  
 GIA: 1,474m<sup>2</sup>

Hudson Architects has transformed a grade II\* listed Sunday School building built in 1879 into an impressive new facility.

The extensive level of renovation and refurbishment internally is only hinted at outside. A double height entrance atrium acts as a focus for orientation, but is not revealed until you enter the space, as the focus is the new stair. This acts as a sculptural object with oak treads and a delicate water-cut steel balustrade which echoes the balcony detail of the existing building.

Various activities throughout the building have been thoughtfully placed by the architect according to environmental need: the lower ground floor contains a black box studio space while the upper, well-lit floors are design studios.

The building's controlled palette of materials provides the setting for the students to occupy and colonise their spaces.

**Cripps Building, Cambridge**  
**R H Partnership Architects (RHP) for**  
**St John's College**  
 Contract value: £16m  
 GIA: 7,000m<sup>2</sup>

The Cripps Building at St John's College opened in 1967 with undergraduate study bedrooms and apartments for the fellows. R H Partnership's tenacious attitude and conscientious approach has reinvigorated this Cambridge icon, which had gradually deteriorated.

RHP undertook months of detailed investigation into the fabric failures and trials of repairs and alterations were carried out to agree the standards required before refurbishment began.

This included replacing flat roofs, removing screed that had been added to increase falls but overloaded the structure; upgrading heating systems; adding extra insulation to external soffits; exemplary concrete repairs; non-abrasive cleaning of the external faces; discrete safety modifications at parapet level and so on. The jury noted that the longer the list of replacement and intervention, the more impressive control over visible alterations became.

RHP and its team's attention to detail has given an object lesson in how to maintain and conserve these classic projects from the 1960s and 1970s.





#### Le Petit Fort, Jersey

Hudson Architects for private client

Contract value: Undisclosed

GIA: 471m<sup>2</sup>

Le Petit Fort is a family home on an earlier farmstead. This was enclosed within massive granite walls, which have been restored to offer much needed shelter from

the elements, just metres from the Jersey shoreline.

The house completes the concept of the 'fort' by building the missing fourth wall and creating a central 'keep'. Like the perimeter walls, this three-storey entrance block is built from reclaimed Jersey granite.

The whole design is intelligent and confident.

Designed wings rotated around a helical stair, while the house is reassuringly contained by the granite walls

(part original, part new). The granite keep pops up from the 'hinge', containing guest accommodation and a study with an outlook to die for.

Juxtaposition of natural materials set against highly engineered surfaces is always an emotive counterpoint, and here is no exception. Precision Corten and Iroko are used as cladding to complement glazing and in contrast to the granite blocks.



EDMUND SUMNER



#### The Narrow House, East Sussex

Sanei Hopkins Architects for private client

Contract value: Undisclosed

GIA: 159m<sup>2</sup>

It is impossible to imagine this home resulting from any combination other than this architect and client. Built on the footprint of the owners' single garage

and squeezed between neighbours, the house is idiosyncratic to the point of eccentricity.

Its cool exterior does not prepare one for the assault on the senses that the privilege of an invitation brings. The house is part home, part look-out and part gallery for an outstanding collection of artwork and sculptures that uses every conceivable inch of available space.

Given the labyrinthine nature of the house, the main circulation is reassuringly simple, with a single stair climbing from the front door and living and sleeping accommodation organised to one side. Even the stair treads are laser cut to spell out the shipping forecast in Morse code for the observant visitor.

In Sanei Hopkins Architects, the owners have found their spiritual partners.



PETER LANDERS (2)