The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and National Grid appointed RIBA Competitions to organise a design ideas competition that sought to find the next generation of electricity pylon for the UK.

The competition was an astonishing success attracting media coverage from around the globe and 250 entries worldwide, with many prestigious architects and engineers submitting their designs. Professional, knowledgeable, supportive, efficient and willing to go the extra mile – it was an absolute pleasure to work with the RIBA Competitions team; I cannot recommend them highly enough.”

Cass Martin
Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)
The RIBA is the UK’s most widely recognised provider of competition services with the expertise and experience to support the process from initial client idea through to project commission.

This guidance document for clients has been produced to set out the benefits of running a competition and to outline the different types of competition to help you decide the right route for you. It also outlines the main practical elements involved in managing a competition and explains how the process can work with EU Procurement Legislation. The document is illustrated throughout with images of buildings and structures all of which have originated through an RIBA competition process.

The RIBA has supported the principle of architectural competitions since 1871 and is the only Institute in the UK to have studied the competition system in depth. Its historic, landmark headquarters building at 66 Portland Place was procured through a competition, as was its offices at 76 Portland Place in more recent times.

*Jane Duncan, RIBA President 2015–17*
Leventis Art Gallery, Cyprus

Windermere Jetty Museum of Boats, Steam and Stories

Windermere Jetty Museum

“RIBA Competitions and the architect adviser ably guided our Trust through the competition process for the Windermere Jetty Museum, which is an important project on a stimulating and sensitive site within the Lakeland District National Park. The competition enabled us to produce an excellent shortlist and appoint a world class design team led by Carmody Groarke Architects. The designs secured planning consent in 2013 and the museum is due to open in 2017.”

Gordon Watson, Chief Executive
Lakeland Arts
We all know good design is valuable, bringing immediate and lasting benefits, whether improving people’s lives, raising profile or generating income. But good design can become truly great design when the aims and aspirations of client and architect are well communicated, clearly understood and mutually aligned. A positive client-architect relationship is critical in fulfilling the potential of any project and the use of architectural design competitions and other processes is an excellent way to begin.

This new RIBA guidance is written in two complementary parts – one addressing clients and one addressing competition entrants – because excellent and innovative design should both serve clients and bring fair opportunity for designers. Establishing a balanced and beneficial relationship between the two parties from the outset is key to every successful project.

This guidance is for clients looking to select an architect, design team or a design solution setting out the key elements for a successful competitive process.

The first section describes the relative merits of the different selection processes available to help clients decide whether, in the first instance, a competition is right for their project and, if it is, which process is most likely to help meet their objectives.

The second part describes the process of running a good competition following best practice guidelines.
The appointment of a design professional is the single most important task when undertaking a project in the built environment. Finding a suitable designer, even for a small private project, becomes a priority from an early stage. There are a number of ways of selecting a designer, such as personal recommendation, previous experience, research or existing framework. However, a competition based on evaluating the relative merits of several designers can give a client the best opportunity to make an informed selection. The competition system is the only recognised formal process which provides these specific benefits.

A design competition offers many advantages, but may not always be appropriate, for example, where a client already has a team with whom they have a trusted, established working relationship.

However, a design competition can be a highly successful procurement model as it can help prioritise good design and bring the highest quality of thinking to a project. They have a reputation for giving the best range of design options to choose from at a fraction of the total construction cost of a scheme.

A competition can be used to select a design team including developers, a construction consortium or a design solution.

If you are unsure if a competition is right for your project then it is worth seeking further advice from RIBA Competitions. Mentoring advice is also available from previous clients on request.
“Involving RIBA Competitions allowed us to reach a larger pool of architects within the UK and internationally. The process allows a wider spectrum of practices to put themselves forward for consideration where they may not have otherwise had the opportunity. The LSE are committed to the design competition process and it will be the cornerstone of future major developments.”

Kenneth Kinsella, Director of Capital Development, Estates Division
London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)
“The decision to conduct an architectural design competition for the new Metropolitan Police HQ was influenced by the challenges posed by a refurbishment, turn-key project in the public sector. The professional advice and support from the RIBA Competitions team was especially receptive to the particular aspects of programme, finance, governance and procurement for this scheme in compiling the Competition Brief. The quality and volume of interest shown far exceeded expectations and has resulted in a building which meets all our requirements.”

Roger Harding, Director Real Estate Development Metropolitan Police Service
The benefits of a competition

Drive innovation, stimulate creativity and generate a range of new ideas
Design professionals competing against one another is one of the principal advantages of a competition over other procurement routes. They are a tried-and-tested means of helping prioritise good design from the outset.

Attract new design talent
Competitions bring design talent to the attention of the client that might not fall under their normal radar or knowledge base. This could include up and coming designers as well as more established practices not necessarily known for working in a particular sector.

Deliver more choice
Competitions offer the unique opportunity of exploring a range of approaches simultaneously in response to the same brief, allowing a client to compare entrants’ creativity, understanding of the project requirements and problem-solving abilities.

Achieve high quality design
Competitions can lead to more affordable, sustainable and quality designs. A competition demonstrates a commitment to high quality design whether publicly or privately funded. A competition can also drive neighbourhood, city or regional improvements in both civic environments and public spaces.

Find the right team for the job
Competitions are ideal for getting to know designers to ensure successful working partnerships. They are the beginning of the design conversation to realise the client’s aspirations for a project. When consultants from different disciplines work together on a submission it has the added benefit of forging strong design team collaboration.

Increase community and stakeholder engagement
Competitions provide one of the best ways of engaging with the public and wider stakeholders. A physical or digital exhibition of the competition entries can be an excellent way of involving the local community and seeking feedback.

Raise awareness
Competitions can generate excellent publicity, raising the profile of the client and the project. They provide a useful platform for engagement and can help fire the public imagination, often attracting significant media interest.

Save time and money
When considered against the whole-life cost of a building the benefits of a well-briefed competition can far outweigh the initial investment and deliver real value for money.

A well-run competition is an efficient, auditable and transparent selection process.
Design competitions that lead directly to selecting a design and/or team include the following types of competitions:

- Open Design and Open Ideas Competitions
- Invited Design Competitions
- Competitive Interviews
- Design Charrettes.

If you are required to comply with public procurement legislation, the competition processes available to you are set out in pages 18-19 of this guide.
Open Design and Open Ideas Competitions

Open Design and Open Ideas Competitions allow a client to receive a wide variety of design solutions in response to a project brief, with the potential to generate fresh, exciting and innovative designs.

They involve an anonymous initial design phase and a winner can be selected or anonymity lifted for a second phase where shortlisted teams can be invited to develop their design approaches and/or present them at interview.

The Open Design format generally leads to a design commission, with the Client selecting a concept design and the team to deliver it. Clients may require designers with more limited experience to team-up with another practice to ensure delivery of the project.

The Open Ideas format does not carry any commitment beyond the competition stage.

Key Characteristics

- Shortlist selected on the basis of design response rather than track record and can be a good way to unearth fresh talent and designers not necessarily known for working in a particular sector.
- Can stimulate innovative and creative thinking and is a valuable tool for engaging stakeholders from the outset.
- Can attract extensive trade, regional, national and international publicity.
- Can generate a significant number of entries - for example, previous RIBA Competitions have attracted anything between 30 and 250+ entries.
- Prize money is awarded to authors of best design ideas, or equal honoraria payments made to each shortlisted team.
Invited Design Competitions

Invited Design Competitions generally involve an open expression of interest and application phase, where entrants are required to demonstrate track record and experience of delivering relevant or similar projects in response to a briefing paper.

From the initial applications a shortlist is invited to prepare design proposals in response to a project brief. This ensures those who are invited to take part in the design phase have the experience, expertise and track record to deliver the project. This type of competition commonly concludes with a clarification interview to the evaluation panel before the selection of the winner.

Alternatively, some clients may consider a Private Invited Design Competition where a set number of designers are approached directly to participate in the process.

Key Characteristics

- Shortlist selected on the basis of track record and relevant experience with no design work required at the initial phase
- Provides reassurance in terms of an entrant's experience in delivering projects, particularly where the project requires specialist knowledge
- Equal honoraria payments are made to each shortlisted entrant
- Depending on the complexity of the project, typically a client could expect to achieve close to Stage 2 in the RIBA Plan of Work 2013 by the conclusion of the competition.

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- Equal honoraria payments are made to each shortlisted entrant
- Depending on the complexity of the project, typically a client could expect to achieve close to Stage 2 in the RIBA Plan of Work 2013 by the conclusion of the competition.
Competitive Interviews are used to select a designer or team at the early stage of a project.

Competitive Interviews generally have an open expression of interest phase with designers submitting examples of previous work and relevant experience in response to a briefing paper.

Shortlisted designers are then invited to interview, to outline their initial thoughts, understanding of the project requirements and possible approach, before a winner is selected.

This process enables the client and the designer to develop and evolve the design together. It is particularly useful in projects of a complex and sensitive nature and can also ensure that the working relationship is right. It typically can have a shorter time frame and be more cost effective as detailed design proposals aren’t required.

**Key Characteristics**

- Shortlist selected on basis of track record and relevant experience
- Can have a shorter timeframe as design work isn’t required
- Contribution paid to shortlisted teams to cover time and expenses to attend the interview.

Design Charrettes

A Design Charrette is a process of exploration with a small number of designers who are given a short timescale to generate proposals based on their interpretation of the client’s requirements rather than a formal brief.

It is suited to clients who are less constrained by stakeholder involvement and who can be less prescriptive about their aspirations.

Typically it involves a group briefing session where the client describes their desired outcomes followed by a presentation by the entrants a short time later (1-2 weeks) from which a winner is chosen.

**Key Characteristics**

- Shortlist selected on basis of track record and relevant experience
- A quicker process
- Contribution is made towards the cost of the shortlisted teams participating in the process.

Once the differences between the competition types are understood, an informed decision can be made regarding the merits of each.
A client should not underestimate the resources required to manage and administer a well-executed competition. They will have to commit significant upfront time and money for a successful, value-adding competition outcome. However, the benefit of this is far outweighed by the potential cost of selecting the wrong design approach or team from the outset.

The fundamentals of a good competition are a brief with a clear vision, an evaluation panel comprising relevant expert design professionals, and a strong client commitment. This should be planned carefully and consideration given to appointing specialist competition managers.

Well-run competitions can provide better choices for clients and more opportunities to architects and designers and produce an outcome that is better than anticipated. However, poorly conceived or badly managed competitions may result in wasted effort for a client and competing teams, and an undeliverable project.

**Define the project**

Before starting to prepare the competition brief it is important to define the project with a strategic planning document which sets out the parameters within which the project will be delivered and can include:

**Who are you?**
It is useful to define the background and context to the project, to develop a view of the client’s vision particularly where there may be a number of routes to achieve their desired outcome. Entrants will need to understand who the client is and what motivates them.

**What do you want to achieve?**
Before launching it is essential to establish the overall viability of the project and identify potential funding streams. This might involve commissioning a feasibility study. A clear statement about the project and the desired outcome is vital. Is the project new build or an extension, a refurbishment or replacement? What is the size and scope of the project? Develop a vision for the project which can be translated into a simple brief for entrants.
It is important that you spend time getting this right and key points are:

Be clear about what you want
Define the purpose of the competition, provide background, introduce yourself ‘the client’ and articulate your vision, aspirations and priorities for the project.

Provide the right level of information
Competitions are about ideas and approaches, typical information should include:
- Functional and technical requirements
- Site information (photographs, maps, plans, relevant surveys)
- Aesthetic considerations
- Planning guidance and site constraints
- Environmental standards
- Web links to other sources of information.

Set a budget for the project
It is important to set a realistic or outline budget that matches your project aspirations. Entrants will base their design submissions or fee proposals on this budget. There should be a robust link between total area, specification and budget to give a cost per square metre that is consistent with the anticipated specification. Seek professional advice from an external cost consultant where appropriate.

Align the design brief to the RIBA Plan of Work 2013. The level of detail required in a project brief depends on the competition format, the project complexity, and how much design work is required. Most competition briefs require a document similar to Stage 0-1 as outlined in the RIBA Plan of Work 2013. A competition which involves design work generally requires entrants to produce design proposals broadly equivalent to the output described in RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design).

In competitions that lead to a design commission, clients may only be able to state that the level of post-competition commitment will initially extend to the end of RIBA Stage 3 ( Developed Design), either due to the construction procurement route being followed, or further progression of the project being subject to successful funding, planning applications and other statutory consents.

Professional input
A competition managed by RIBA Competitions would always involve an independent RIBA Architect Adviser. The role of the Adviser is to help prepare tailored briefing material and provide an independent opinion when evaluating the entries. The Adviser is typically a former competition winner or judge who has an appreciation of the time and effort invested by entrants and will help to achieve the best possible outcome for the competition.

Making the brief accessible
Open Competitions commonly have a dedicated website to host the briefing material which often includes site photos and plans, together with any other useful information. A website also helps create an identity for the project. It is a great way to promote the competition to an international audience, provide a central place for the documentation and raise the profile in general.

Where is the site and what are the constraints?
What information is available for the project in terms of location and size, current conditions, existing buildings, planning conditions, external constraints?

When do you want to do it?
What timescales apply to the project, what statutory processes are involved, what reports and surveys need to be undertaken and how long will they take?

How is the project to be delivered?
Is money available to fund the project, or does funding still need to be obtained? What contractual arrangements will be necessary to complete the project?

Develop a good brief
The success of a competition is largely influenced by the quality of the brief as it will have a critical bearing on the entrants’ response. The brief should be well presented, unambiguous and as informative as possible, clearly setting out the requirements but enabling the entrant freedom of design interpretation.

“Well-run design competitions are behind many of the best, most cherished buildings we have. They often stimulate new thinking and consistently bring out the best in architects and designers.”

Sunand Prasad, Past RIBA President 2007–09
“RIBA Competitions were excellent to work with and their international reach created real excitement in the project. I would not hesitate to recommend them. The RIBA competition resulted in a real commission which is influencing how London looks at its Urban Public Realm.”

Chris Law RIBA, Public Realm Director
Vauxhall One Business Improvement District
The Hepworth Wakefield
Shortlisted for the RIBA Stirling Prize 2012

Olympic Velodrome, London

Clay Field Affordable Housing, Elmswell

Pegasus Court, Grahame Park, London

BBC The Listening Project
Regulated Procurement

If you are required to comply with the EU public procurement regulations you must follow one of the prescribed* procurement processes. The procurement rules apply to contracting authorities when procuring services, supply and works contracts which are above the thresholds published by the European Commission. If you are unsure as to whether the rules apply to you, you should seek further advice.

The key procurement routes which are most suitable for use within the design competition process are identified here.

*As defined by EU Procurement Legislation

The current thresholds can be viewed at:

1. Design Contest*

In an open Design Contest, designers submit their design solutions in response to the client’s brief. The designs are assessed anonymously by a jury and in accordance with the published criteria.

It is possible to add restrictions to a Design Contest, where designers initially submit details of their relevant experience and only those shortlisted by the client are invited to submit design solutions for assessment by the evaluation panel.

Prizes or payments can be awarded to the winner(s) of the Design Contest. The winner(s) will not necessarily be awarded a contract for the project.

Following a Design Contest the client may negotiate and award a service contract to a winner to deliver the project with the works contractor. If there is more than one winner, all winners must be invited to negotiate. The client must make its intention clear in the Contract Notice, if they wish to retain the right to award a negotiated contract to the Design Contest winner.
Advantages

• Allows the client to choose from a wide range of designs, increasing the chances of receiving an innovative design solution
• Gives unknown designers an opportunity to win the competition
• Enables the client to receive design solutions even if it might not yet be certain that the project will go ahead
• Allows the client to negotiate the contract terms with the winning designer(s).

Disadvantages

• In an open Design Contest, the client may be inundated with responses from the market, all of which must be evaluated
• No scope to interview.

2. Open Procedure*

A one stage process to award a contract to a designer to develop a design for a project.

Open to all applicants who satisfy minimum standards.

Used for standardised or commoditised construction outcome – not typically appropriate/recommended for procuring architectural services.

Advantages

• Relatively quick and simple process.

Disadvantages

• The client may be inundated with responses
• No negotiation or discussion of the contract requirements or terms and conditions are permitted.

3. Restricted Procedure*

A two stage procedure to award a contract to a designer to develop a design for the project.

Designers are initially required to complete a standard Selection Questionnaire (SQ) or European Single Procurement Document (ESPD), which requires designers to set out their relevant experience amongst other selection criteria.

Shortlisted bidders are then required to respond to an Invitation to Tender (ITT) issued by the client, setting out their approach to developing a design.

Advantages

• The process can be used to procure both a designer and works contractor under one competitive process.

Disadvantages

• Limited scope to interview (clarifications only)
• Cannot enter into negotiations with any of the designers.

4. The Competitive Procedures*

(Competitive Procedure with Negotiation and Competitive Dialogue)

The Competitive Procedures can only be used for complex projects.

Reserved for contracts where the client knows the desired outcome but is unsure as to the best technical and financial approach to meet their needs or where design and innovative solutions are required.

Similar to the Restricted Procedure, designers are initially required to complete a SQ or ESPD. The shortlisted designers submit their initial tenders and then enter into a structured dialogue (Competitive Dialogue) or structured negotiation (Competitive Procedure with Negotiation). The client can reduce the number of solutions at each stage by applying the published award criteria.

Advantages

• Enables the client to engage with different designers to come up with the optimum approach to meeting the project outcomes.

Disadvantages

• May be more time-consuming and resource intensive than any of the other procedures (requires a lot of upfront planning).
Halley Research Station is an internationally important platform for global earth, atmospheric and space weather observation in a climate sensitive zone. Built on a floating ice shelf in the Weddell Sea, Halley VI is the world’s first relocatable research facility. This award-winning and innovative research station provides scientists with state-of-the-art laboratories and living accommodation, enabling them to study pressing global problems from climate change and sea-level rise to space weather and the ozone hole – first discovered at Halley in 1985.

Halley Research Station is designed to provide UK polar researchers and their collaborators with access to state-of-the-art facilities for studying a wide range of disciplines, particularly in the field of atmospheric sciences, space weather and glaciology.
The competition, launched by BAS and RIBA in June 2004, attracted 86 Expressions of Interest. Six of those were selected to submit concept ideas and, in October 2004, three were commissioned by BAS to develop their concepts. The aim of the competition was to bring innovation and creativity to the challenge of building a scientific research station on a floating ice shelf.

The relocatable design of the research station will be put to the test when BAS moves it to a new site in 2016/17. Halley is the first Antarctic research station to be designed specifically to cope primarily with the movement of the ice shelf towards the sea, as well as with the annual 1.5 m of snowfall and significant snowdrift. This will be the first time that the station has been moved since it became operational in 2012.

The Research Station, located on the Brunt Ice Shelf, is currently sitting downstream of a crack that could eventually cut the station off from the rest of the ice shelf. The relocation of the station further upstream will move it away from the crack and ensure Halley’s continued safe operation into the future.

Linda Capper, MBE, MCIPR
Head of Communications
British Antarctic Survey (BAS)

Designed by Hugh Broughton Architects with Aecom

More information can be found at:
www.bas.ac.uk/polar-operations/sites-and-facilities/facility/halley/
RIBA Competitions has extensive experience of delivering high profile competitions and provides a comprehensive management service to clients.

The team runs competitions to the very highest standards of governance, meeting EU regulations, and following best practice guidelines developed over the past 50 years.

The team can provide advice on the most appropriate type of competition, help develop the brief and support you throughout the process. A dedicated Competitions Manager would be assigned to manage your competition, supported by other colleagues as required.

The services provided by RIBA Competitions include:

- Scoping of the project and client requirements
- Strategic advice on the most appropriate competition format to meet your needs
- Development of the competition brief
- Management and advice throughout
- Full day to day administration
- Use of secure custom-built Digital Entry System
- Communications and Media Strategy including international reach
- Website and Brand Identity Design
- Digital Gallery of Entries
- Stakeholder Consultation and Public Exhibitions to engage with a wider audience
- Comprehensive audit trail throughout the stages
- Feedback to entrants.

The RIBA Competitions brand is recognised as an indication of fairness and an assurance of best practice procedures. The team have a wealth of knowledge, expertise and advice to help guide clients through the process.

A highly skilled, impartial RIBA Architect Adviser is appointed to each competition to help clients prepare the competition brief and evaluate the entries. The RIBA Architect Adviser will be an RIBA Chartered Member with an appreciation of a wide spectrum of possible approaches to the project. Typically they will be a senior partner, principal or founding director who is:

- recognised within the profession and highly regarded by their peers
- of sufficient profile and gravitas to encourage fellow professionals to make a submission and attract a good response
- knowledgeable about the competition system
- able to interpret and frame competition briefs
- experienced in design critique, assessing design excellence
- and has extensive knowledge and an appreciation of different architectural styles.

A tailored shortlist of RIBA Architect Advisers will be provided by RIBA Competitions.

Following the competition, some clients retain their RIBA Architect Adviser as a critical friend or design champion, who can subsequently provide periodic advice about the development of the scheme against the original design intent and project aspirations.
Competition Conditions

It is important to set out clear information and conditions to ensure transparency and fairness for entrants.

In addition to a comprehensive brief, the conditions will outline the structure, rules and programme and as a minimum should include the following information.

Eligibility criteria
The design disciplines that can enter, whether this includes students and if it will be open to UK based or international entrants. If you are running a competition under public procurement legislation, you must treat all entrants equally irrespective of where they are located.

Post-competition commitment
A clear statement outlining whether you will commission the winner or if this is a call for ideas only with no post-competition commitment. Only commit to what you can deliver. If the commission is subject to securing funding or planning permissions make sure this is clear.

Timetable
Ensure the key dates are set prior to launch and where a competition is subject to public procurement legislation, minimum mandatory timescales must be adhered to.

Submission requirements
For each phase of the competition, the submission requirements (design content, reports, fee proposals) should be clearly explained.

Evaluation criteria
The criteria against which entries will be evaluated should be identified and it is important to ensure that they can be appraised. Where appropriate, criteria can be given relative weightings which should be consistent with the project aspirations. The evaluation panel should assess each submission against the published criteria and not deviate from them. For public procurement processes, the evaluation criteria must be relevant to the subject matter of the contract and enable the client to identify the most economically advantageous tender objectively (i.e. an appropriate combination of quality and price criteria). The client must also ensure that they comply with the EU principles of transparency and non-discrimination. All evaluation criteria must be published and must not include criteria which could favour domestic suppliers.

Feedback
It is important that comprehensive notes are taken as part of the evaluation process, to not only provide a record of the decision making, but also to be able to provide feedback to unsuccessful entrants. In a public procurement process, the client is required to provide feedback in a form prescribed by procurement legislation. The client cannot enter into a contract with the successful entrant for a period of 10 days (standstill period) after feedback has been provided to all the entrants. This allows time for unsuccessful entrants to raise any queries on the decision if necessary.

Evaluation panel
The panel should comprise professionals with relevant industry or sector experience as well as key decision-makers from the client body and other stakeholders. If the panel’s decision will be subject to ratification – for example by a governing body – this should be stated. The evaluation panel may require support from specialist advisers as necessary, such as an external cost consultant to undertake cost

Honoraria or Prize Money
In design competitions it is accepted practice that clients should make a contribution towards the cost incurred by the shortlisted teams in preparing their design work. The amount of honoraria or prize money should be stated at the launch of the competition.

Copyright
In competitions there should be a commitment to protect copyright, which should be in accordance with the UK’s Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Presentation material may however be used for promotional purposes associated with the competition.
When we started planning for the Whitworth’s transformation we were keen to find the very best architectural practice to help us achieve it. We wanted to go beyond the ‘usual suspects’, to find smaller, less high profile practices, but those who would really understand our objectives and deliver the best possible building for our visitors and our collections. Although the financial commitment of an RIBA architectural competition had to be carefully considered, we felt it was the best way to widen our reach, and we committed significant resources to ensure we really used the process to our advantage, showing all the long-listed teams around the building, discussing the brief and introducing them to all aspects of our work.

We had 139 submissions to the competition and selected five to prepare design proposals. The designs were shown in an exhibition which formed the basis for extensive public consultation. Having a public showing of the designs really created a lot of debate about how our visitors saw the Whitworth and gave them a voice in the gallery’s future. It was the starting point for schools projects and stakeholder visits and the completion of 454 face to face interviews and a visitor questionnaire.

The final interviews were overseen by a high profile panel and they made a unanimous decision, which reflected the results of the public consultation, to appoint MUMA, whose design showed innovation and flair whilst addressing all issues raised by the brief sensitively and intelligently. We were struck by MUMA’s genuine desire to build us the gallery we needed rather than just the one they wanted to build – delivering a great new space for our audiences and collections, making sympathetic improvements to the historic building and giving us new green spaces for outdoor activities. It was brilliant to hear their imaginative ideas right from the start of the project as they came at it with their fresh approach – questioning all our presumptions and embedded ideas.

The competition meant that we found an architectural practice that shared our vision and with whom we could work successfully over a long period of time. Right from the start of the project they showed a real understanding of the organisation and how we saw our future.

Since re-opening in February 2015, the Whitworth has attracted over half a million visitors, along with fantastic public and media feedback. In our first year of operation MUMA were shortlisted for the Stirling Prize, and the gallery attracted 18 cultural, architectural and tourism awards including Art Fund Museum of the Year, Visit Britain’s Best Large Visitor Attraction 2016 and received a Special Commendation at European Museum of the Year 2016 who described the gallery as “A beacon of elegance and intellectual sophistication”.

MUMA’s Whitworth offers better physical access for all, the chance to see more of our internationally important collections and the chance to show larger, more ambitious exhibitions that would have been impossible before the building project. The relationship between the building and its surrounding park is transformed physically, visually and conceptually and we’ve become a significantly more sustainable organisation through MUMA’s rational decisions and commitment to deliver a 10% reduction in carbon output as set out in the brief.

Dr Maria Balshaw, Director
The Whitworth, University of Manchester and Manchester City Galleries
The Whitworth
Shortlisted RIBA Stirling Prize 2015
Contact us

RIBA Competitions has been responsible for delivering some of the highest profile, most dynamic building projects in the UK through competition. They have considerable experience having worked with a variety of interesting and sector-leading clients.

If you would like to discuss a competition project with the team, or talk to one of their previous clients for some mentoring advice, please contact:

T +44 (0)113 203 1490
riba.competitions@riba.org
www.architecture.com/competitions

To view competition briefs from previous projects and digital galleries of entries visit www.ribacompetitions.com

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This guide provides general information only and is not intended to be an exhaustive statement of the law. Although we have taken care over the information, you should not rely on it as legal advice. We do not accept any liability to anyone who does rely on its content.

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Designed by New Level
There was considerable interest with 284 entries – 66 of which came from overseas. The entries were judged on the intelligibility of their plans and sections, and on the all-important facade designs to Portland Place and Weymouth Street.

In 1932 Grey Wornum’s design was selected as the winner; it was generally commended for its clever use of plan and section and subtle balance of modernity and classicism. The building was carefully designed to meet the needs of the professional institute in the 1930s. As a piece of architecture, it was a clear statement of its time, but clearly has relevance to architecture today.

The RIBA headquarters building is an exemplar of high quality 1930s craftsmanship that straddles both traditional and classicist tastes and modernist aspirations. Moreover, the fact that the building was designed by, selected by, and built for architects in open competition makes it highly significant as a physical realisation of the aspirations of the profession in the early twentieth century.

Today, the building is still recognised as an iconic piece of British Architecture and remains central to RIBA activities.

Source: RIBA Conservation Management Plan by Julian Harrap Architects April 2009

Image: © RIBA Collections
With thanks to the following architectural practices and projects that originated through the RIBA Competitions process

MUMA The Whitworth © Alan Williams
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