
News release

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Edward Cullinan CBE wins the Royal Gold Medal for architecture

The British architect Edward (Ted) Cullinan, one of the most highly respected British Architects, has been named as the winner of one of architecture's most prestigious prizes, the Royal Gold Medal. Sunand Prasad, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) made the announcement at today's meeting of the RIBA Council.

Given in recognition of a lifetime's work, the Royal Gold Medal is approved personally by Her Majesty the Queen and is given annually to a person or group of people whose influence on architecture has had a truly international effect.

Cullinan is first British architect to be awarded the honour since Archigram in 2002 and only the fourth in the past 20 years.

The honour recognises Cullinan's work which includes over 110 buildings, his keen awareness of the natural environment, and his deep engagement with those who use and experience buildings. His RMC Headquarters (1990) is perhaps the clearest example of these qualities, through its innovative low energy naturally ventilated offices, pioneering workplace design and exemplary response to the existing buildings and landscape.

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Ted Cullinan (born 1931) was educated at Cambridge University, the Architectural Association and the University of California, Berkeley before working for Denys Lasdun where he worked on the student rooms for the University of East Anglia. Since founding Edward Cullinan Architects in 1965, Cullinan has worked to ensure a holistic approach to building production: sustainability and consultation have been central to the practice's building techniques long



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before they became widely accepted. Ted Cullinan was awarded a CBE in 1987 for Services to Architecture, elected a Royal Academician in 1989, and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland in 1995. In 2005, he was awarded a Special Commendation by the Prince Philip Designers Prize, for his outstanding lifetime achievement in design.

RIBA President, Sunand Prasad commented:

“Over four decades of inspirational practice and teaching Ted Cullinan has shown us how a keen awareness of the natural environment, and a deep engagement with those who use and experience buildings, can generate compelling and poetic architecture. He is also known for being one of the great teachers of our times and hundreds of students continue to be inspired by his enthusiasm, energy and deep insights into architecture.”

From the Horder House (1960), which was Cullinan’s first new building, to the Weald & Downland Museum (2002), an audacious re-thinking of the elements of building and of constructional assembly has characterised Cullinan’s work. He has also built houses himself: six houses have been built with friends, including his own seminal mews house in North London (1965).

Edward Cullinan Architects’ most notable projects include the Fountains Abbey Visitor Centre (1992), the Cambridge University Centre for Mathematical Sciences (2000), The University of East London Docklands Campus (1999) and the Weald and Downland Gridshell, which was nominated for the RIBA Stirling Prize in 2002 and won the American Institute of Architects Excellence in Design Award in 2003. The practice is currently working on the re-development of their office in Islington, which will exceed the Mayor of London’s new target of 20% of energy from renewable sources.

Ted Cullinan is currently a visiting professor at the University of Nottingham, and has been awarded four other professorships at The Bartlett (1978 – 1979), Sheffield University (1985 – 1987), MIT (1985) and Edinburgh University (1987 – 1990).

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This year's Honours Committee jury was chaired by RIBA President Sunand Prasad and made up of: Peter Davey OBE, Sir Jeremy Dixon, Kenneth Frampton, Despina Katsikakis, Pankaj Patel and Jane Wernick Hon FRIBA.

Edward Cullinan will be presented with the Royal Gold Medal at the RIBA on Tuesday 12 February 2008 and will give the Royal Gold Medal 2008 lecture on Wednesday 13 February 2008.

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Notes to editors:

1. For images or further information contact Dorelia Baird-Smith in the RIBA Press Office on 020 7307 3884 or dorelia.baird-smith@inst.riba.org
2. The RIBA Royal Gold Medal; International and Honorary Fellows are managed by the RIBA Trust. 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 (live on Channel 4); the Royal Gold Medal; International and Honorary Fellowships; Architecture Week (with Arts Council England and the Architecture Centre Network); a full programme of lectures, exhibitions, tours and other events; and an education programme.
3. The Royal Gold Medal for the promotion of architecture was inaugurated by Queen Victoria in 1848 and is conferred by the Sovereign annually on a distinguished architect or person "whose work has promoted, either directly or indirectly, the advancement of architecture." Previous winners include: Le Corbusier (1953), Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (1925), Frank Gehry (2000), Archigram (2002), Frei Otto (2005), Toyo Ito (2006) and Herzog and de Meuron (2007).