

LAUNCH OF DESIGN COMPETITION FOR JAMES STIRLING'S CHARISMATIC FLOREY BUILDING



Oxford Modernist landmark to be restored and updated

The Queen's College, Oxford is delighted to announce the launch of the Florey Design Competition. The College seeks a dedicated team to restore and add new facilities to James Stirling's modernist masterpiece, The Florey building, which is Grade II listed.

Admired worldwide for its boldness and heroism, the Florey has been beset with infamous technical and practical failings since it opened forty years ago. Despite this, the building has remained largely popular with undergraduates for its sociable spaces and views of the river setting.

Queen's College Home Bursar, Dr Linda Irving-Bell says the College is determined to fulfil Stirling's original vision:

Queen's has the benefit of the long view now. The Florey is emblematic. With hindsight, the building was way ahead of the original, available technology but with recent innovations, many of the problems can be addressed. Queen's wants to conserve and upgrade the building and set an example in energy design and sustainability.'

Malcolm Reading, competition organiser, commented:

The building was the product of two titans of modern culture, Lord Florey, who wanted a distinguished building to attract the best minds and James Stirling, who was regarded as the most brilliant architect of his generation.

'This is a fascinating project because it needs to balance a respect for Stirling's original vision with a high-quality upgrade of fabric and services.'

Teams must also address the wider site for the inclusion of new accommodation, social and modern facilities, as well as improving and refreshing the overall river setting. For further details please see <http://competitions.malcolmreading.co.uk/florey>

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) an independent, expert organiser of design competitions is managing this two stage design competition on behalf of the College.

The deadline for Expressions of Interest is 9th October 2013. The shortlist will be announced in the autumn and the winning team is expected to be announced in February 2014.

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AVAILABLE IMAGES



For images: please email Oliver McGhie at ollie.mcghie@malcolmreading.co.uk

All images can be supplied at a high (300dpi) and low resolution for print

NOTES TO EDITORS

- **The Queen's College**, one of the oldest constituent Colleges of the University of Oxford, was founded in 1341 by Robert de Eglesfield, a chaplain in the household of Queen Philippa of Hainault, who named it in her honour. Parts of the current College date back to the 17th century and replace the earlier medieval College buildings that had fallen into disrepair in the 16th century. The Baroque Front Quadrangle has been called 'the grandest piece of classical architecture in Oxford' and was heavily influenced by Nicholas Hawksmoor. Since the late nineteenth century Queen's has developed a strong academic reputation and recently endowed a scholarship in memory of the Iranian student, Neda Agha-Soltan. Today, although candidates from all possible backgrounds are welcomed and northerners no longer have preference, the College remains conscious of its history and traditions and values its ancient links with Cumberland, Westmorland and Yorkshire.

www.queens.ox.ac.uk

- **The Florey Building (1971)** was designed by James Stirling, one of the most inventive and often controversial, British architects of the post-war period. The building, which provides accommodation for undergraduates and postgraduates, was commissioned by Lord Howard Florey, the Queen's College Provost and a Nobel Prize winner, who sought 'the best building by the best architect to attract the best students and also research funding'. Architectural historians often group the Florey with Stirling's other two university buildings of this phase of his career: The Engineering Department at Leicester University (1959) and Cambridge University's History Faculty and Library Building (1964). However, the Florey remains distinctive in its response to context: the river setting, endlessly captured and replayed in its glittering, faceted courtyard façade.

The American critic, Amanda Reeser Lawrence in her book *James Stirling Revisionary Modernist* has described the Florey's design as, '...perhaps the purest moment of release – Stirling's "wildest" moment, in which he strays further from anything else in either his own work or the work of others.'

The annual Stirling Prize for Architecture commemorates James Stirling's original talent and is now Britain's leading architectural prize. English Heritage listed the Florey Building Grade II in 2009.

- **Malcolm Reading Consultants** provides pre-project services, briefing and strategic and master planning advice on capital projects in the UK and worldwide. Its team specialises in the arts, culture, heritage and public realm, helping clients achieve world-class design for their buildings through selecting, briefing and managing teams.

MRC is the leading independent organiser of international architectural competitions based in the UK. Recent competitions include those for Canterbury Cathedral, Oriel College, Oxford, the Olympic Park Legacy Company, the Cadogan Estate, the Victoria and Albert Museum's Exhibition Road project, the UK Pavilion for Shanghai Expo 2010 and the Glasgow School of Art.

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