Open call to create the new

RIBA President’s Research Medal

July 2015
The new RIBA Research Medal will celebrate the best architectural research; original and rigorous investigation that impacts on the practice of architecture; and research that engages all who are interested in architecture and the practice of architecture.

The design for the medal will reflect the richness and diversity of the fresh insights that contemporary architectural research brings.
The competition is for the design of a new Research Medal to sit alongside the Institute’s other prestigious – and historic – President’s Medals: Gold, Silver, and Bronze. The Research Medal will be given each year to the best research from the RIBA President’s Awards for Research.

The RIBA President’s Awards for Research promote research – and researchers – that contribute new knowledge and understanding to architecture and the practice of architecture. They highlight the need for the insight that nurtures innovation, quality, value and strategic thinking in the practice of architecture. Awards are given across four categories:

- University and Professional Research Organisation research.
- Practice-led research.
- PhD theses.
- Master’s theses

2015 is the 10th anniversary of the President’s Awards for Research. To mark this, and to reflect the importance of research to the Institute and the profession, the RIBA are launching the new Research Medal. The Medal will be awarded to the best award winning submission out of the four categories. It will be presented alongside the RIBA Silver and Bronze medals at the prestigious President’s Medals ceremony.

We have a proud history of holding and promoting open, honest and fair competition for architectural and civic design projects. That is why we are opening the competition to all architects, designers and craftspeople. All are invited to submit designs – contemporary or traditional – that reflect the standing of the President’s Awards for Research and the new Research Medal, the history and prestige of the RIBA’s other medals, and the importance of research to the RIBA and the profession. The prize for the competition winner will be £2000.
The call is to create a design – contemporary or traditional – for the new Research Medal that reflects the importance of research to the RIBA, particularly because of its impact on innovation in practice. The design for the medal:

- should reflect that the medal is for architectural research (including architectural research practice) – but not for other practice activities;
- may use realistic or abstract elements to convey the idea of architectural research;
- should incorporate the RIBA crest, in particular the heraldic lions. The design can respond to the crest in a contemporary and original way, but should remain recognisable;
- may make use of the RIBA motto and/or other text; and
- should be original and inspiring – may be stylistically novel.

Medal specifications:
- 56mm in diameter
- Silver, silver plated or enamelled silver
- Will hang from a blue ribbon

Design constraints:
- The design will be for both obverse and reverse of the medal. Competitors are free to decide which elements might go on the obverse and reverse, though may wish to follow convention (see Image Pack)
- Design should be in relief, with max depth 1.5mm
- The name of the winner and the year will be inscribed on the rim of the medal

Production:
The new medal will be cast by a specialist employed by the RIBA, unless the winner has specific expertise in the area and can produce the medal economically.
The Competition

Competitors may enter as individuals or as teams/practices/collectives.

Stage 1:
Potential competitors are asked to register expressions of interest, submitting a completed Expression of Interest form with relevant professional information and qualifications, as well as examples of previous work in this field. No fee will be given for expressions of interest.

Conditions for Stage 1:
Expressions of interest should be registered using the form on our website: www.architecture.com/ResearchMedalComp

Statements of relevant experience and design proposals should be no longer than 500 words each. Images should be uploaded to an appropriate file sharing service, emailed, or sent by post. See contact details under ‘Essential Information.’

The deadline for expressions of interest is 9am on 10 August 2015. No expressions of interest received after this time will be considered.

Stage 2:
Six entrants will then be shortlisted and asked to take part in a competition to produce a medal design. The six shortlisted competitors will be remunerated £250. The overall winner of the competition will receive a prize of £2,000.

The six finalists will then be notified and will have until 14 September to submit drawings for judgement. The winner of the competition will be announced shortly thereafter. The medal must be produced by 20 November.

Conditions for Stage 2:
NB Further terms and conditions will be issued to the six selected finalists.

In order to keep the competition as open as possible, we request that drawings be submitted for second stage of the competition, and no maquettes (photographs of maquettes, however, will be acceptable).

Production of the Medal

The competition is for the design of the medal. We intend to use a caster with whom we have worked before to produce it.

However, if the six shortlisted finalists, and eventual winner, have the means and desire to cast their own medal, this could be arranged if it proves economical. If the winner is unable to cast her or his own medal within an acceptable timeframe, however, the RIBA will make other arrangements.

Copyright of designs will be held by finalists and the winner, but the RIBA will have permission to use images of the design for publicity purposes and an online gallery following the competition. Copies and images of the design will be kept for the RIBA Archive.

There will be no limit on the period of use for the winning design or plaster pattern.
Essential information

Eligibility
The competition for the design of the new Research Medal is open to all, including members, non-members, architects, craftsmen and lay submissions as long as conditions and requirements set out in these guidelines are met.

Anonymity
Stage 1 (open stage) of the competition will be anonymous. Names and institutional affiliations will be removed for the purposes of shortlisting.

How to Register
To enter the first stage of the competition, please visit our website and fill out the ‘Expressions of Interest’ form. The form requires personal and contact information, a brief curriculum vitae with relevant experience, a brief statement and images/examples of completed work in this field.

Deadlines
The deadline for expressions of interest will be 09:00AM (BST) on 10 August 2015. The deadline for shortlisted candidates will be 09:00AM (BST) on 14 September 2015.

Declaration
The decision of the judging panel will be final, and not subject to appeal.

Judging Panel
The judging panel will comprise:

Jane Duncan
RIBA President Elect

Stephen Hodder
RIBA President

Philip Attwood
Keeper of Coins and Medals, British Museum and President of the British Art Medal Society

Charles Hind
Chief Curator and H.J. Heinz Curator of Drawings

Ruth Morrow
Chair of RIBA Research Awards Panel

Flora Samuel
Chair of RIBA Research and Innovation Group

Juliet Leach
RIBA Brand and Marketing Manager

Anne Dye
Head of Technical Research

Contact and submission method
Questions and enquiries, including press enquiries, should be directed to MedalComp@riba.org

Electronic submissions should be emailed to MedalComp@riba.org or sent via a file-sharing site (such as Dropbox or Hightail).

Supporting documentation/images/etc can, if necessary, be posted to:

RIBA Research
Royal Institute of British Architects
66 Portland Place
London,
W1B 1AD

While electronic submissions are preferred, submissions in hard copy are accepted.
About us

The RIBA champions better buildings, communities and the environment through architecture and our members. We provide the standards, training, support and recognition that put our members - in the UK and overseas - at the peak of their profession.

The RIBA was granted its Royal Charter in 1837 by the Privy Council under King William IV. As the professional body for registered architects, we have supported craft and design throughout our 178 year history. This is reflected in our headquarters – 66 Portland Place, designed by George Grey Wornum and opened in 1934 – which includes sculptural decoration (plaster reliefs, Portland stone carvings, cast bronze doors, bronze balustrading etc.) by Bainbridge Copnall, James Woodford and Seaton White, and glass-cutting by Jan Juta amongst other decorative highlights.

The RIBA crest

Our crest, itself a badge featuring Mycenaean Lions and the Institute’s motto Usui civium, decori urbiwn (Public Service, Civic Ornament) has been in use since the 1830s. Designed as a bookplate for the library and an emblem for publications, it was in use from 1835 until it was redesigned by J H Metcalfe in 1891. Eric Gill produced a new version in 1931, and it was again reimagined in 1960 by Joan Hassall.

The heraldic description, from the 1837 by-laws, is: Gules, two lions rampant guardant or, supporting a column marked with lines chevron, proper, all standing on a base of the same; a garter surrounding the whole with the inscription ‘Institute of British Architects, anno salutis MDCCCXXXIV’; above a mural crown proper, and beneath the motto ‘Usui civium, decori urbiwn’.

The RIBA Badge and the Mycenaean lions are a core part of the our identity, recognised and used by members across sectors. The RIBA’s current identity was designed by Quentin Newark of Atelier Works in 2001. Newark drew inspiration for the lions from the bronze balustrading of 66 Portland Place, executed by Seaton White in 1934.

Medals at the RIBA

The RIBA currently awards two types of medals the Royal Gold Medal and the President’s Medals, which the new Research Medal will complement.

Royal Gold Medal

The current Gold Medal, with a diameter of 56mm, was designed in 1851. Originally the obverse was designed by William Wyon RA depicting the profile of Queen Victoria (it still depicts the reigning monarch), and an inscription was added by Prince Albert. Ambrose Poynter designed the reverse with modifications by Wyon. The name of the medallist and the year of award are inscribed on the rim of the medal. It is struck by the Royal Mint and presented with a blue ribbon.

President’s Medals

The awards were established in 1836 – when the RIBA awarded the Silver Medal for the first time for the best architectural essay – making these the RIBA’s oldest award (preceding the Royal Gold Medal, formally established in 1848). In 1855, the Institute changed the awards’ criteria to award to the Silver Medal for the best ‘Measured Drawings’ produced by a talented graduate.

The President’s Medals current format was established in 1984, when the Institute created a Bronze Medal to reward the design work produced by a student at Part 1. The silver Medal is awarded to a Part 2 student. In 2001, a Dissertation Medal was added to reward written work produced at either Part 1 or 2.

Suggested reading


The Architectural Review, vol 76 (December, 1934) special issue for the opening of the new headquarters

Journal of the RIBA (14 April 1934), p566ff

M Richardson; C Hind, *66 Portland Place* (2008)

J A Gotch, *The Growth and Work of the Royal Institute of British Architects* (1934)

All the above are available at the RIBA Library at 66 Portland Place. See also:
