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# THE CHANGING RICS PROPERTY AWARDS 2019 + 2020

By Andrew Harris



**The Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre.**



**Hanover, NOMA, Manchester.**

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors – RICS – in the north west have announced seven property projects which have benefitted the community the most and won the 2019 RICS Awards in our region. A new and different awards programme for 2020 has also been announced – of which more later.

The highly acclaimed ‘2019 PROJECT OF THE YEAR’ award is presented to the scheme which demonstrates outstanding best practice overall and an exemplary commitment to adding value to its local area. The winner of this accolade was the University of Manchester’s spectacular ‘Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre’. This £60 million state-of-the-art research facility upstaged nearly 30 other projects in the Design through Innovation category before going on to win the overall prize. The new Centre was delivered by Arcadis, Laing O’Rourke Construction and Raphael Vinoly Architects and is the first new building on



**The Radius Campus, Crewe.**

the University's North Campus for 40 years. It is expected to provide a huge boost to regeneration by promoting the area as the future 'Graphene City' promising an economic impact of more than £100 million! Graphene is an amazing new material 100 times stronger than steel yet lightweight with many uses and enormous commercial potential.

The winner of the Building Conservation Award was the Hanover in the NOMA district of Central Manchester. It is a £34 million refurbishment project providing 90,000 sq ft of Class A office space with 30,000 sq ft of retail and leisure space to follow. Assent Building Control Ltd, NOMA, Russells Construction and Sheppard Robson were judged to have restored an iconic building by blending heritage with a stunning hi-spec contemporary design.

The new £14 million 64,000 sq ft Radius Campus in



**Perseverance Mill, Padiham.**

Crewe was the winner in the Commercial Category. It is the headquarters of Radius Payment Solutions and has an emphasis on the well-being of those who work there – with Grade A offices, an on-site gym, café and relaxing breakout areas equipped with Play Stations plus pool and table tennis tables. The RICS judges paid tribute to the collaborative working of Space Invader Design, Walker Sime Ltd and AEW Architects who delivered the project. It is expected to enable Radius – one of Crewe's largest employers - to grow their business.

The next award is for Community Benefit and the winner was Mustard Tree in Manchester – the transformation of a dreary 1950s warehouse into a welcoming and attractive building where the Mustard Tree charity help and support

those trapped in poverty and homelessness. It is described as a harmonised space where the charity engage with users in a safe space without stigma. This project was delivered by Armitage Construction, OMI Architects and Pool Dick Associates.

The Perseverance Mill in Padiham won the Regeneration Award. It is a new housing development near Padiham town centre. The new houses respect the design and layout of the surrounding streets without just being a modern imitation of them. The project aims to foster and enhance community and neighbourliness. The project is also a demonstration of successful partnership working between Ainsley Gomon Architects, Calico and Pool Dick Associates plus the community and the local council. An additional benefit is that the river previously concealed beneath the mill from which the scheme gets its name has been revealed!



**Mustard Tree, Manchester.**

The Awards have another category for housing which was won by the first phase of The Welsh Streets in Liverpool's Toxteth area which aims to ultimately transform 400 derelict Victorian terraces and restore them to their former glory. The first phase provides houses to rent with a range of tenures to accommodate large and small families who benefit by energy efficiency being improved by 60%. The traditional enclosed rear yards and alleys have been transformed into high quality landscaped areas. The mean streets have become generous! The project team of Placefirst and MCAU Architects were highly commended.

Last but not least, the Tourism and Leisure Award was won by the new and modern facility at the Birdoswald Roman Fort at Hadrian's Wall near Brampton. It has replaced a tired and failing centre for visitors and is already attracting many more – especially from schools and various interest groups. The project was achieved by English Heritage, the RNJ Partnership, MawsonKerr Architects and Heritage Building and Conservation and has the added distinction of being adopted as a template for other English Heritage sites nationwide. The model includes attractive museums, shops and cafés.

The RICS has now launched a new and different awards programme for 2020. Called Social Impact Awards they will – for the first time – encourage, recognise and celebrate the positive impact that the built environment can have on people's lives. There will be 9 categories of awards for Commercial, Education, Healthcare, Heritage, Infrastructure, Land & Rural, Leisure, Residential and Student Accommodation projects. The judges will consider



**The Welsh Streets, Liverpool.**



**Birdoswald Roman Fort at Hadrian's Wall.**

how they sustainably enhance lives and communities. From the winners in all 9 categories the one that is judged to demonstrate inspirational best practice and the best wider social contribution will be awarded the title of NORTH WEST PROJECT OF THE YEAR 2020. Later in the year all category winners will compete with other regions for the RICS national awards.

Nominations for the 2020 RICS Social Impact Awards North West are invited and should be submitted by the 31st January. Further details can be found at [www.rics.com/awards](http://www.rics.com/awards) and the regional results will be announced at a ceremony in the late spring.

**Andrew E. Harris FRICS FCIM** ([www.andreweharris.co.uk](http://www.andreweharris.co.uk)) is a chartered surveyor but not involved in the judging of the RICS Awards. The pictures of the Graphene Centre and other winners are reproduced by kind permission of the University of Manchester and the RICS respectively. The RICS Awards headline sponsor is SIKA UK.