



Solent's best new developments revealed

A Grade 1 community renovation project and a former factory turned major multi use leisure destination have been named as two of the best new developments in the Solent region.

That's according to judges of the Solent Quality Place Awards and the public who voted for their favourite scheme. The Solent Quality Place Awards is a biennial event that aims to showcase developments that have made a difference to the places around them. The shortlisted schemes were carefully selected from the many entries received, and the judges visited each one to evaluate it against the given criteria. The public were also invited to cast their vote for their favourite scheme to find the People's Choice.

The winner of the judges choice, the Solent Quality Place award (*for a scheme of any size, that the judges feel has created a recognisably high-quality place through new development or refurbishment, and has improved the publicly accessible spaces and places in or around them, creating an area which more people want to use and enjoy*) is **Westquay South, Southampton.**

The winner of the People's Choice award (*voted for by the public online as their favourite scheme*) is the **Hotwalls Studios, Portsmouth.**

The presentations to this year's winners are made by Cllr Sean Woodward, Chairman of Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) at the prize winning locations. Cllr Woodward said: "Initiatives such as the Solent Quality Place Awards are so important in promoting the importance of placemaking. An iconic building may be of interest to many, but bringing to fruition a scheme which creates an environment that makes a real difference to the people around it is more than interest, it is essential to the coherence and development of our communities. Congratulations to both winning schemes and to all who contributed to their success"

Solent Quality Place Award

Westquay South, Southampton

Westquay South, is a leisure development on the site of the former Pirelli factory, comprising a state-of-the-art multiplex cinema and bowling alley with bars and restaurants on three levels facing a new public space abutting Southampton's medieval Town Wall, a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The site which had been empty for twenty years following the demolition of the former Pirelli cable factory has been transformed into a major leisure destination and has created a magnificent new public space, providing an excellent setting to the medieval Town Wall. The development has ingeniously handled the significant levels difference between the existing entrance to the Westquay Shopping Centre at the end of Bargate Street down to Western Esplanade. It has set the standard for the future transformation of Western Esplanade as a key route to the waterfront. It is acknowledged that the scheme has led to much greater public appreciation of the historic asset, particularly through the frequent popular light shows which use the Town Wall as its backdrop and bring in increasing numbers of visitors each year. The new high-quality public space provides generous steps that act as seating for public events with swirls of granite and bubble fountains to reflect that in medieval times this location was part of the tidal river. The imposing roof of the new building uses stainless steel pipes to reflect the history of the site as the Pirelli cable factory. The new space has a full events programme and hosts the popular outdoor ice rink at Christmas and is transformed in June to provide a public venue to watch the Wimbledon fortnight. Sustainable Urban Drainage has been carefully integrated with planting and seating to provide an area of from the main events space, which has proven popular with those wanting to find a quieter space in which to relax for a while on a hot summer's day. The development has undeniably created a major 'big city' place.

Applicant: Southampton City Council

Architect/Designer: ACME Architects/Grants Associates (Landscape Architects)

Client: Hammerson plc.

Councillor Christopher Hammond, Leader of Southampton City Council, said: "I am delighted that Westquay South has received the judge's award, recognising the quality and importance of placemaking within the city, and congratulate all those involved in realising this truly transformational project. It's also fantastic that Southampton's Cultural Quarter in Guildhall Square received a merit award – two projects in one city! Both schemes demonstrate the

increasing importance that our cultural heritage plays in the continuing public life of our vibrant and dynamic city centre.”

Andy Collyer, General Manager at Westquay was delighted with the news: "At Westquay we feel incredibly honoured to be awarded this year's Judges Award certificate at the Solent Quality Place Awards. We pride ourselves on being a community focused venue, putting the people of Southampton in the centre of all we do, whether that be offering a range of fantastic free events throughout the year, or simply just providing the perfect space for friends and family to connect, dine, and relax, all year round."

The People's Choice Award

Hotwalls Studios, Portsmouth

The Hotwalls Studios comprises thirteen self-contained artist's studios and workshops within the historic arches of the Grade I listed Point Battery, a defensive fortification situated at the mouth of Portsmouth Harbour. Artists and visitors are encouraged to engage with one another with the goal of improving communities through cultural and social endeavours. The site hosts regular arts-based events, including exhibitions, seasonal markets and public activities.

The contemporary glass facades reinforce a clear definition between modern addition and historic context. A new restaurant, The Canteen, utilises modern services, concealed beneath a suspended floor and an external terrace and renovated searchlight structure offer fantastic views of the Solent. New seating and landscaping extend the appeal of the arches into the adjoining open space, encouraging people to feel comfortable using the space for leisure, relaxation and socialising.

The Studios have transformed a vacant Victorian fortification into a vibrant new community hub and activity space, that provides financial support for the ongoing conservation of an internationally important Scheduled Ancient Monument. The design was driven by a focus on sustainability and allows the reversion of the structure to its pre-development state should the need arise.

Applicant: ermc

Architect/Designer: Deniz Beck

Client: Portsmouth City Council

Architect of the Hotwalls Studios, Deniz Beck is passionate about the very successful community project: "As a local resident, I care immensely about the Hotwalls Studios and how they can benefit our community, and I felt emotionally involved in successfully delivering a project that I could be proud of. As one of many such sites in Portsmouth that would benefit from similar conversions, Point Battery is part of an area that is very precious to its residents. It is therefore extra special for the Studios to receive the People's Choice Award, as shows how it can bring the community together, even after being subject to petitions both opposing and supporting the proposals. It is a testament to all those who believed in the regeneration of this local icon, where heritage and culture come together in a delightful way, and I would like to thank all those who voted for it."

Cllr Steve Pitt, Cabinet Member for Culture and City Development at Portsmouth City Council said: "We're delighted that Hotwalls Studios has won the People's Choice Award - it shows that people appreciate and enjoy it. The space is modern but the heritage has been maintained to create an area which is both social and creative."

Other local projects which received Merit Awards are:

New Café and Courtyard, Gilbert White Museum, Selborne

Applicant: South Downs National Park
Architect/Designer: Hampshire County Council
Client: Gilbert White & The Oates Collections and GWOC (Trading) Limited

Knowle Lane, Fair Oak

Applicant: Kenn Scaddon Associates
Architect/Designer: Kenn Scaddon Associates
Client: Drew Smith Limited

Cultural Quarter Guildhall Square, Southampton

Applicant: Southampton City Council
Architect/Designer: CZWG Architects/Halcrow Landscape Architects
Client: Grosvenor/Southampton City Council

Previous winners have included Westgate School in Winchester, the Dancing Man Brewery in Southampton and the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth.

To find out more about this year's awards visit www.solentqualityplaceawards.org.uk

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