

## Press release

26 March 2004

### Foster + Partners wins 5 Civic Trust Awards

At a ceremony held in Bristol Foster + Partners were presented with five Civic Trust Awards for UK major city projects, including a Hard Landscape Special Award for the transformation of Trafalgar Square, Phase I of the World Squares for All Masterplan. The other awards included a regional award for offices at 10 Gresham Street and three commendations for Tower Place, Capital City Academy in Brent and Bexley Business Academy.

Civic Trust Awards are unique as they take into account not only the quality of design but also the benefit each project brings to its local area and community. The scheme runs on a two-year cycle with one year for projects in the UK's major cities and the alternate year for countryside and country town areas. The Hard Landscape Special Award is one of nine Special Awards given to outstanding examples of architecture and environmental design.

Working with Atkins and Space Syntax, Foster + Partners designed the World Squares for All Masterplan to improve the historical heart of Central London including Parliament Square, Whitehall and the river frontage between Hungerford and Westminster Bridges, creating a more civilised setting for its world-famous buildings, monuments and spaces.

The award citation described Trafalgar Squares redesign as '...an extraordinary contribution to the environment, creating an urban space representative of its true

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potential and role in the capital. The transformation of Trafalgar Square, St Martins Place and Northumberland Avenue, realised in close collaboration with Transport for London, the GLA, English Heritage and City of Westminster was completed in July 2003. The removal of traffic from the north side of Trafalgar Square connects the National Gallery with the heart of the square through a broad flight of steps, replacing the cramped pavement with a generous pedestrian space the new North Terrace. This not only provides the National Gallery with an appropriate plinth, greatly improving its architectural composition, but also transforms the Square from an isolated traffic island into a truly grand urban space. Below the North Terrace a new café and free lavatories provide much-needed facilities for visitors to the Square.

Regional award winner, 10 Gresham Street, responds to the historical grain of the City of London, respecting the nature of this sensitive conservation. The space between the old and new buildings creates a new urban walkway with a pavement garden with a fountain wall. The building is anchored to the site by its corner stair towers with natural limestone walls. Internally, the 18m-wide floor plates surround a generous atrium with natural sunlight penetrating deep into the building with its own internal walkways and garden meeting spaces.

Both Bexley Business Academy and Capital City Academy, Brent were opened by Tony Blair, in September 2003 and February 2004 respectively, as part of the governments radical new approach to raise educational standards in the most disadvantaged and needy areas, using innovative approaches to tackle local problems. Bexley is characterised by its open-plan compact design based around three courtyards and is environmentally unique through its double-layered faade with external shading louvres that track the suns path for heat in the winter and act as a shade to reduce heat gain during the summer. At Capital City Academy, Brent the sloping site of the former

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Willesden High School produced a long curved building with two storeys at one end rising to three at the other. There is a central street running its entire length making it the social focus of the school with informal research and study areas. The schools facilities such as a floodlit all-weather pitch, 400 seat theatre and 400 seat sports hall are also available to the local community forging strong relationships with Brent Council and Willesden Sports Centre.

Tower Place, opened by The Princess Royal in May 2003, provides highly energy-efficient office space in two blocks, triangular in plan, which are linked by one of the largest glass atriums in Europe. This landscaped public plaza with trees and water features bisects the site and allows pedestrians to use it as a sheltered route. The building also incorporates blade-like aluminium louvres for solar shading, displacement ventilation and high insulation levels.

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