

Press release

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30 St Mary Axe wins the 2004 Stirling Prize

Foster and Partners are delighted to announce that the Swiss Re Headquarters at 30 St Mary Axe, popularly known as the Gherkin, has won the Stirling Prize for 2004. Named after the British architect Sir James Stirling (1926-1992), the Prize is awarded by the Royal Institute of Architects in conjunction with *The Architects Journal* to the building that has made the greatest contribution to British Architecture in the past year. For the first time in the nine-year history of the award, the judges were unanimous in their decision.

Developed on the precedents of green architecture for which the practice is renowned, the Foster designed 30 St Mary Axe is the capital's first ecologically progressive skyscraper, and its uncompromising quality has set a benchmark for an emerging generation of tall buildings. Noting that the tower's iconic form has become synonymous with London, the judges' citation praised how the level of discrimination, careful detailing, and power of the structure combine to sustain the initial impression that this is a memorable building of international standing."

Accepting the award from George Ferguson, the President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Norman Foster thanked the jury for acknowledging the significance of its design. Winning the Stirling Prize is a great honour, he stated, It is a credit to the commitment and vision of an exceptional client and a talented team. 30 St Mary Axe is an embodiment of the core values that we have championed for more than thirty years: values about humanising the workplace, conserving energy, democratising the way

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people communicate within a building, and the way that building relates to the urban realm.

Foster and Partners were in the unique position of having two projects - 30 St May Axe, and the Bexley Business Academy - selected as finalists from among sixty-three award-winning buildings. The other shortlisted finalists were: Peter Cook and Colin Fournier, Kunsthaus, Graz; Ian Ritchie Architects, The Spire, Dublin; Studio Daniel Libeskind, Imperial War Museum North, Manchester; and MacCormac Jamieson Prichard, Phoenix Initiative, Coventry. The Stirling Prize judges were: Isabel Allen, Editor of *The Architects Journal*; Antony Gormley, sculptor; Deborah Bull, Dancer and Artistic Director of the Royal Opera House 2; Ted Cullinan, the principal of Edward Cullinan Architects; and Francine Houben, Architect Director, Mecanoo.

The award was presented during a nationally televised ceremony at the Old Billingsgate Market, London. This is the second time that Foster and Partners have been awarded the prestigious Stirling Prize; the first being for the American Air Museum at Duxford in 1998.

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