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press release

Subject

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A world famous square, an historic railway and a public loo vie for this year's Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award

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An innovative public lavatory, an historic timber railway viaduct, a transformed Trafalgar Square, a dramatic glass bridge and a school for children with special educational needs are just some of the highlights of this year's Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award.

Now in its fourth year, this annual award recognises excellence in design quality and procurement practices of publicly funded building schemes. This year a total of 17 schemes have been nominated for the award from a record number of entries.

In Brockenhurst, New Forest District Council commissioned an innovative public convenience reminiscent of agricultural barns, demonstrating how a modest building can make an important contribution to the public realm.

Architect Magnus Ström from John Pardey Architects, said: 'We wanted to break away from the so familiar traditional dark and smelly public toilet and replace it with a light and airy design. This was achieved by a simple steel frame enabling the walls to be lifted off the ground and the roof to hover above the walls. These gaps have more in common with a

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European sense of openness about private functions, such as the French *pissoires*, yet sightlines are carefully controlled to maintain a more English modesty.'

In London, Trafalgar Square, once an isolated traffic island for tourists, has been transformed into a grand public space with increased pedestrianisation, and a resulting 25 per cent reduction in noise and air pollution. Judges said: 'This project has taken more than a decade from conception to delivery – but has proved well worth the wait. Trafalgar Square is now a cleaner, safer, and more pleasant place to visit.'

London Mayor, Ken Livingstone said: 'Trafalgar Square is now recognised as a focal point where visitors can sit and relax and is a place that all Londoners can take pride in and visitors can share. The work to improve the square highlighted the importance of creating safe and accessible spaces. It was also an opportunity to showcase the importance of the highest quality design and provides a template for enhancing other public spaces in the capital.'

In Bury, an award winning early years centre for children with special educational needs has brought imaginative thinking to the table in the design of facilities where children can learn and think. The Head Teacher of Hoyle Early Years Centre, Clare Barker, said: 'The building is super – it is light and airy – the total opposite of the previous building.'

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In Inverness, the Grade A listed Moy Viaduct – the oldest timber railway viaduct of its kind – had been deteriorating to the extent that speeds had been reduced to 40 mph for passenger trains and 20 mph for freight. By replacing the central track-supporting section, *Arup Scotland* and *Carillion Rail*, have according to the judges made ‘a successful response to the challenges of working in the rail environment with the safety requirements that that entails and a careful, sensitive treatment of a valued listed building.’

Launching this year's short list, Lord Falconer of Thoroton, Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Chairman of the Ministerial Design Champions Group, said:

‘This year's wide range of projects reflects the scale and ambition of the Government's construction programme and demonstrates the success of the Better Public Building initiative, which has done so much over the last four years to raise awareness of the need for design quality in all our public buildings and spaces – regardless of size, cost and procurement route.

While there can be only one overall winner, all these projects should act as an inspiration to public sector clients. We have to learn from these successes. Not seeing them as one-offs, but seeing them as the benchmark, a foundation on which to build.’

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Paul Finch, Deputy Chairman of CABA and a judge of the awards, said: 'This year's shortlist is a real cross-section of building types from the very largest to the smallest. However, they all have in common an excellence in design quality which as these awards demonstrate is becoming an increasing feature of our public services.'

John Oughton, Chief Executive of OGC, said: 'OGC is proud of its association with CABA in sponsoring this prestigious Award. I am pleased that this year has seen a significant rise in entries. This demonstrates an ever-growing recognition of the role that good design can play in ensuring optimal value for money in public sector projects, and ultimately in delivering high-quality public services.'

The complete short list is as follows:

- Architecture Building, Lincoln University
- Wolfson Medical School for the University of Glasgow
- City & Islington College Life Long Learning Centre
- Raines Court, London, N16
- A1 Haddington to Dunbar Expressway, East Lothian
- Masshouse Circus Redevelopment, Birmingham
- A650 Bingley Relief Road, Yorks
- World Squares for All - Phase I: Trafalgar Square & Environs
- New Accommodation Project, GCHQ, Cheltenham
- Hoyle Early Years Centre, Bury
- Brookley Road Public Conveniences, Brockenhurst, Hants

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- Wildern Basic Needs Secondary School, Southampton
- Past Masters: Three Aqueducts, Wootton Wawen, Warwicks
- UB 289 Moy Viaduct, Inverness
- Whittle Arch and Glass Bridge, Coventry
- A6116 Rockingham Road, Corby
- Newton's Cove Coast Protection Scheme, Weymouth

The Award has been jointly sponsored by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the Office of Government Commerce (OGC). It is part of the British Construction Industry Awards and the winner will be announced at a ceremony in London on 28th October.

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Notes for editors:

- The shortlist was announced by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer at an evening ceremony at the refurbished MOD Main Building in London on Monday 5 July
- **Images** of all shortlisted projects and information showcasing all the schemes are available from the CABE Press Office, contact Katherine Heaton on 020 7960 2421
- Further information on each of the 17 short listed schemes can also be found at www.betterpublicbuildings.gov.uk
- The Award is made annually to new projects commissioned by central or local government and paid mainly with public funds. It is part of the Better Public Building

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Initiative launched by the Prime Minister in October 2000 to encourage the adoption of quality design principles in all new public sector buildings, regardless of size and cost

- The winner of last year's Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award was the Bournemouth Library
- CABE champions the creation of great buildings and public spaces. It is a non-departmental public body set up by the Government in 1999. Through public campaigns and support to professionals, CABE encourages the development of well-designed homes, streets, parks, offices, schools, hospitals and other public buildings - www.cabe.org.uk
- The Office of Government Commerce (OGC) is an office of HM Treasury which works with central civil Government as a catalyst to achieve best value for money in commercial activities
- Judges for the 2004 Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award were:
 - John Armit CBE (Chairman) Chief Executive, Network Rail
 - Douglas Oakervee OBE (Deputy Chairman) President, Institution of Civil Engineers
 - Philip Dilley Partner, Arup
 - Paul Finch OBE Editorial Director, The Architects' Journal
 - Councillor Richard Leese CBE Leader, Manchester City Council
 - MJ Long Partner, Long & Kentish Architects
 - Antony Oliver Editor, NCE

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- Jane Priestman OBE Design Management Consultant
- Mike Winney Editor Emeritus, New Civil Engineer
- Andrew Wyllie Managing Director, Taylor Woodrow Construction

The UK judges were assisted by John Ioannou, Assistant Director, Guidance & Skills, OGC, and Kevin Myers, Chief Inspector of Construction, Health & Safety Executive.