

ARCHITECTURE

Winners of the British Homes Awards 2017

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Winner of the Manser Medal and Large House of the Year: Eldridge London's house in Coombe Park

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Good design needs to be championed. Cookie-cutter blandness all too often blights new properties, but this year's Sunday Times British Homes Awards celebrate the polar opposite. As Britain tries to build its way out of a housing crisis, we highlight the ways in which new-build design best responds to sites and to people — those who will live in it for generations to come.

This is epitomised by the winner of the prestigious **Manser Medal**, our top prize: Eldridge London's house in Coombe Park is a curved spectacle of a 5,400 sq ft home in southwest London.

"This is a house that can't be ignored," says the architect Jonathan Manser, who led the judging for this award. "It has many stunning and surprising elements, and, while unlikely to be copied, will give architects and housebuilders much to think about."

Manser's panel, which visited the shortlisted designs in person, praised the house for its "immaculate detailing" and "innovative" relationship with its sculpted garden.

Across all 17 categories — from the Quest, a slender box framed by trees for a retired couple in Dorset, to the contemporary limestone terraces at Gabriel Square, in St Albans — attention to detail and place-making has "got a lot better", says Teresa Borsuk, chairwoman of the judges.

“Developers have tended to be less forward-thinking and ambitious with design — that’s changing. People realise you can’t just plonk down houses. You’ve got to make places.”

This is evident in the standout scheme of the year: the regeneration of the St John’s Hill housing estate, in south London, where relief sculptures enliven varied brick facades along a new pedestrian avenue towards Clapham Junction train station. It won Development of the Year (under 200 homes), was shortlisted for the Apartment Development award and helped to bag its creators, Peabody and Hawkins\Brown, **Developer of the Year** and **Architect of the Year** respectively.

Peabody, a housing association established as a charity more than 150 years ago, “continues to deliver high-quality homes and exemplary urban regeneration”, Borsuk says. It also won the Affordable Housing category for five social-rent houses built as infill on its elegant Cleverly estate, in west London.

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where new homes are more likely to be “value engineered and lacking joy” — still struggle when assessed against London and the southeast, Borsuk adds. What Peabody has achieved as a charitable housing association, however, shows this need not be the case.

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Winner of the Manser Medal and Large House of the Year



It has no ground floor and almost no straight lines, but **House in Coombe Park** was the obvious winner in this coveted category. Eldridge London's design defies convention to introduce a new genre in residential design: the sculpture. Winner of both the Large House award and the Manser Medal, it is half buried, half hovering above a sculpted garden in Kingston, southwest London. "The building stays in the mind," says Jonathan Manser, who led the judging. "It's a fantastically brave and well-executed 'grand project' of domestic architecture."

Development of the Year (up to 200 homes) **Architect and Developer of the Year**



Estate regeneration is often criticised as social cleansing. Not so this makeover by Hawkins\Brown of Peabody's **St John's Hill** — renamed as Burridge Gardens — in south London. It will almost double the number of homes, make them bigger and rehouse all former residents. Walled-off housing for the poor is making way for a mix of social rent, shared and private ownership, open to all via a pedestrian avenue from Clapham Junction to Wandsworth Common. Each of the three buildings in the 154-home first phase is finished in a different brick, punctuated by Rodney Harris's relief sculptures evoking the site's heritage.

Green and pleasant: the design that got your votes



In the summer we asked you to vote for a design that could be a blueprint for Britain's new garden towns and villages. As Nimbys fight Yimbys over plans for 200,000 homes across 24 communities, our readers have revealed their choice — factory-built flexibility that can grow with a family. Like Lego for adults, **FlexiHouse**, by Buildeco, consists of cassette panels that interlock to create homes of up to three bedrooms and two storeys, with finishes tailored to your taste — inside and out. Residents could walk or cycle in all weathers on paths with canopies made of clear photovoltaic panels. These would power LED street lights, CCTV and car charging points — a truly 21st-century take on the “town-country” ideal of Sir Ebenezer Howard, father of the garden-city concept.

Restoration of the Year



What do you do with a barn the size of a cathedral — especially if it's a grade II listed former model farm? David Nossiter Architects created a vast gallery space at the heart of **Church Hill Barn**, in Assington, near Sudbury, Suffolk, which now regularly hosts village events. Yet the living spaces feel homely, thanks to the use of plywood pods to house bathrooms and utility areas. Oversized glazed sliding doors fill the original openings and 10ft square skylights flood the central areas with light.

Mixed-Use Development



Named for its richly textured terracotta facade, **Tapestry** — part of Argent’s regeneration of King’s Cross — was inspired by the hanging carpets that separated spaces in the ancient world. The cladding is made of lightweight, glass-reinforced concrete to reduce the load on train tunnels below. This unifies an unusual mix of 129 homes, an energy centre, a huge car park and a games area. Niall McLaughlin Architects’ design made the most of a challenging site next to railway lines, yet with views over a park in an old gasholder.

Small House of the Year

Built for a retired couple who love contemporary architecture, **the Quest**, in Dorset, had to be “beautiful while also being practical” in later life, according to Ström Architects. The answer? A bungalow, but not as you know it. An exposed concrete frame, clad in larch and resting on a wall of Purbeck stone, cantilevers a gravity-defying six metres out of the hillside. Judges called it “a timeless piece of modernism”.

Development of the Year (more than 200 homes)

Despite being on the doorstep of the financial hub at Canary Wharf, Canning Town is one of Britain's most deprived areas. **Rathbone Market** is the first scheme to be developed in a £3.7bn regeneration of the area. Its 216-home third phase, by Project Orange for English Cities Fund, is built in pale brick and bronze around a pocket park. A rugged facade of textured grey bricks faces the road, and balconies — one for each flat — cascade down organically.

Outstanding Place-Making

Berkeley Homes has been lauded for its regeneration of **Woodberry Down**, the north London estate used to film ghetto scenes for Schindler's List — and lambasted for reducing the number of social-rent homes. But it is clear that this £2bn, 25-year project is creating a destination in its own right. It has Green Flag parks, a wetland (with 10% Berkeley funding) that was opened by Sir David Attenborough and a community trust that won the Queen's Award for Enterprise, as well as a new secondary school, a river walk, a play area and 13 new shops. Half of the 1,443 homes built so far are affordable.

Home of the Year (in a multi-unit scheme)

The honey-toned limestone of the modernist terraces at **Gabriel Square**, by Meyer Homes, echoes the pale yellow brick and stone of some of St Albans's historic architecture. The layout of the townhouses is flexible, and each one has a roof terrace, two balconies and a garden.

Outstanding Landscaping for Housing

The manmade lakes and grid of green pathways at **Finberry**, a development of 1,100 homes in Ashford, Kent, are not just for looks. Crest

Nicholson faced so many obstacles on the site — near flood plains, and surrounded by wetland — that it was not viable without government aid. It built £16m worth of flood defences, integrated hedgerows housing dormice, improved central woodland and created a reserve for great crested newts. The result, says Teresa Borsuk, chairwoman of the judges, is “very much of its place”. It also helped sales: the developer says homes sold for 10% more than at comparable local schemes.

Apartment Development

With Vivienne Westwood’s design studio and the Royal College of Art around the corner, Claridge Architects’ **Radstock House**, in Battersea, southwest London, had a lot to live up to. Eight lateral flats, sold by Banda from £3.5m, are set in two limestone blocks resting on a ground-floor plinth of smoked black brick.

Affordable Housing Development

The prewar **Cleverly Estate**, in Shepherd's Bush, west London, was Peabody's first social housing to be built with private bathrooms. Decorative swirls once lent grandeur, but were tarnished by the tatty outbuildings that sprung up later. Lyndon Goode Architects' crisp design of five social-rent homes replaced some of these garages in what Peabody hopes will be a blueprint for future infill. It has lifted the whole estate and reduced antisocial behaviour.

Community Living

Eighteen years in the making, Britain's first senior co-housing project opened this year in Barnet, north London — becoming an unintentional role model for those who want to support each other in later-life living. The 25 flats, common house and shared gardens at **New Ground Cohousing** were funded by the Hanover housing association and a £1m Tudor Trust grant. Pollard Thomas Edwards's pyramid roofs and asymmetric pitches lend the scheme distinction.

Housing Project

After 400 years as a cloth mill and carpet factory, the derelict **Ham Mill**, in Stroud, Gloucestershire, is set to be turned into 100 homes, including 55 townhouses, thanks to a sensitive scheme by Assael Architecture.

Home Transformation of the Year

It took £1.6m to turn **Heath House**, a subdued Arts and Crafts manor in Hampstead, north London, into a modern home. Patalab redesigned the internal layouts and treated the dark timber staircase at its heart in a

white wash, using a steel frame to turn it into a triple-height space that's bathed in sunlight thanks to a new skylight. An extension wraps the house around its terraced garden.

Innovative Living

With **Urban House**, Berkeley Homes became the first large builder to patent a house. The 14ft-wide design could yield 120 homes per hectare, as opposed to 48 for traditional terraces, yet this pilot property in Greenwich, southeast London, sold for £915,000. A roof terrace and electronic skylights allow back-to-back design.

Refurbishment/Conversion of the Year

When British seaside holidays became unfashionable, the guesthouses of Morecambe, Lancashire, stood empty, some for as long as 10 years. Others became run-down bedsits. Then PlaceFirst transformed 27 of these properties into 44 houses and flats exclusively for private rent. The £5.5m **West End One** project restored the Victorian streetscapes, but demolished all rear extensions to create a modern courtyard, overlooked by private gardens and balconies, where neighbours can interact. The

first homes released were all let off-plan — proving that build-to-rent can work for lower-income families.

Interior Design

The ornate smallest room at **Montacute Down** is just one of the surprises in this five-bedroom Victorian villa in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. A makeover by the Vawdrey House used joinery to disguise an overhanging boxed-in staircase as a cosy reading nook in what is now an indigo-hued winter sitting room. And the old pastel kitchen was adapted into a blue-black show stopper in the slate-clad extension.

Judging panel

Chairwoman

Teresa Borsuk Senior partner, Pollard Thomas Edwards

Assisted by

Marcus Adams Managing partner, JTP

Tim Bell Director, Bell Phillips Architects

Lewis Blackwell Strategy director, The Building Centre

Sue Cooper Director of business development, Catalyst Housing Group

Dominic Eaton Architect director, Stride Treglown Architecture

Liz Gibney Head of place, Home Group

Harry Harris Managing director, SUSD London
Martina Lees Writer, The Sunday Times Home
Raluca Rugina Senior architect and interior designer, Taylor Howes
Susie Rumbold President, British Institute of Interior Design
Lynne Sullivan OBE Founder, LSA Studios
Ken Trew Senior projects director, Argent LLP

For the Manser Medal
Jonathan Manser Chief executive, The Manser Practice
Assisted by
Chris Loyn Architect and founder, Loyn + Co Architects
Sandra Coppin Director, Coppin Dockray Architecture & Design

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