



Design Competition

# BUTRINT NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTRE

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) specialises in achieving outstanding design for clients with capital projects. Expert in all methods of selecting and appointing architects, we believe in the power of design to act as an inspiration.

Whatever the commission — cultural or commercial, high-profile or discreet — MRC creates a unique search strategy around it. We devise original intellectual and visual content for our project briefs in order to engage designers and attract the best minds.

We are the leading independent organiser of design competitions based in the UK, with a dedicated global following and an unrivalled reputation for finding new talent.

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An exceptional UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) on Albania's Ionian coastline, the ancient city of Butrint is the country's most significant archaeological site and its chief cultural attraction.

A cultural and historic icon for Albania, Butrint National Park is distinguished by a rare combination of archaeological ruins and natural beauty. Ruins within the Park, including the surviving Epirot Theatre, Roman Forum and early Byzantine Baptistery, along with other Hellenic, Roman, Byzantine, Angevin, Venetian and Ottoman monuments, manifest the historical depth of the city.

A new Visitor Center within the Park will further crystallise the site's role as a national and international attraction. The Park has been inspiring communities for millennia, and the Center will help manage rising visitor numbers the site now attracts from both within and outside Albania.

For this open, international design competition, MRC devised the brief to promote a charismatic yet practical architecture which complements the inspirational setting and respects the Outstanding Universal Values of the WHS.

A jury of local and international experts, including the Minister of Culture, selected Kengo Kuma & Associates (KKAA) as the competition winners. The Tokyo and Paris-based firm was praised for its sensitive engagement with Albania's vernacular architecture — their mass timber and steel design reinterprets the traditional cross wood structure found in the south of the country.

#### The competition jury said:

*Kengo Kuma's design is global in projecting a universal timeless serenity but with naturalness that is utterly site specific. It has the potential to become an icon, and we congratulate the team on their vision.*

The new Visitor Center is anticipated to open in September 2025.

#### Finalists

Kengo Kuma & Associates  
Phillipe PROST / AAPP  
Lahdelma & Mahlamäki Architects  
William Matthews Associates

#### Won by

Kengo Kuma & Associates