

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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Houston Endowment (HE), a leading philanthropic organisation based in Houston, Texas, U.S. launched a two-stage global search for an outstanding design team of architects and landscape architects for the philanthropy's new headquarters in June 2019.

The circa 40,000 sq foot new center will be the organisation's new public face and will provide dedicated space for its team and community partners, including healthy workspaces, accessible and inspiring meeting spaces, and flexible and innovative engagement facilities.

The US\$20 million initiative will strengthen the endowment's work bringing people together from public, private, non-profit and philanthropic sectors to achieve lasting positive change for low-income and under-served sections of the local population.

Houston Endowment does not actively fundraise; its funding is financed by an endowment, currently valued at US\$1.8 billion.

The winning team beat 120 others in the course of the competition to secure the commission for this fast-track project, due to open in 2022.

The winning concept envisages an airy, elegant superstructure generously shaded by a large canopy within a grove of oak trees. In the team's words, the new building, which is attuned to Houston's demanding climate, is intended to be 'as welcoming as the shadow beneath a tree'.

Ann Stern, President and CEO, Houston Endowment, said:

We wanted to bring outstanding architecture to Houston to complement Houston's notable architectural wonders, and this design successfully communicates openness and transparency while also providing a tranquil and inviting presence.

The Shortlist

Deborah Berke Partners
with David Rubin Land Collective and Atelier Ten

Kevin Daly Architects
with TLS Landscape Architecture, Productora and Transsolar

Olson Kundig
with Surfacedesign, Inc

Schaum/Shieh Architects
with HKS and Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture

Won by

Kevin Daly Architects
with TLS Landscape Architecture, Productora and Transsolar