

**MEDIA
RELEASE**

26 NOVEMBER 2015



ST MARY REDCLIFFE DESIGN COMPETITION LAUNCHED



FAMOUS BRISTOL CHURCH WITH LINKS TO AMERICA SEEKS ARCHITECT FOR NEW SOCIAL, EXHIBITION AND SUPPORT SPACES

JURY INCLUDES AUTHOR AND BROADCASTER SIMON JENKINS AND ARTIST LUKE JERRAM

St Mary Redcliffe and Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) today [November 26, 2015] launched the St Mary Redcliffe Design Competition.

The two-stage design competition seeks an outstanding architectural team for the £12-15m project, which will give the church new community, social and support facilities. The initiative is linked to wider regeneration plans, placing the church at the heart of a new urban village within Bristol's city centre.

Grade I listed and the architectural equivalent of many European cathedrals, the church is one of the largest parish churches in England and notable for its connection with many important historical figures, including George Frederick Handel and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It has links with America through artefacts relating to John Cabot's voyage of 1497 and Admiral Penn; the latter, the namesake of Pennsylvania, is buried within the church.

Elizabeth I described it as *'the fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England'*. St Mary Redcliffe attracts tens of thousands of visitors and tourists annually. Built, and then re-built, over a 300-year period from the early 13th century to the 15th century, the church embodies magnificence, but has always lacked sufficient community and support spaces for its vital work in one of the most deprived wards in the country.

The development project, the focus of this design competition, will incorporate a range of facilities within a building or buildings: administrative and support spaces, exhibition spaces, a café, a shop, a meeting hall, and an expanded/new community centre.

The Reverend Dan Tyndall, vicar of St Mary Redcliffe, said:

“

St Mary Redcliffe is both a living church and a national landmark. Not only do we plan to expand our local outreach and mission but also increase people's delight and enjoyment of the church. Our ambition is to create an outstanding experience for all, creating a welcoming atmosphere, offering hospitality and showing off some of our many treasures – which are currently locked away.

We're searching for a team who will be really energised and excited by this project, who will understand the local and the international, the historic and progressive aspects of this fascinating challenge.

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Malcolm Reading, architect and competition organiser, said:

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This is a heart-stoppingly beautiful building, which has suffered from unsympathetic post-war planning – it has been stranded in a road network.

The proposed redevelopment will position the church at the centre of Redcliffe, presenting the opportunity for it to become a true centrepiece, serving both its neighbouring community and national and international visitors.

This is a project that has diverse appeal. The project budget is good and, we think, this is a great opportunity for architects. We can see a place for start-up practices as well as established names on the shortlist. The client has spent two years carefully planning the competition and is genuinely open-minded about finding the right team to work with them over the long term.

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The competition project will run concurrently with a wider regeneration project, The Redcliffe Neighbourhood Development Plan, which makes the church the focus of a new urban village within the Redcliffe area.

At the first stage of the design competition, Expressions of Interest are sought (rather than designs); at the second stage, up to five shortlisted teams will be asked to produce concept designs. To enter the competition, architects will need to visit:

<https://competitions.malcolmreading.co.uk/stmaryredcliffe>

The competition is being run in accordance with European Union procurement guidelines under the Restricted Procedure. Competitors will need to upload their responses through the Delta procurement portal via the web address above.

The competition jury includes journalist, broadcaster and author Simon Jenkins, and Bristol-based contemporary artist Luke Jerram, who was responsible for the Park and Slide installation, which last year turned Bristol's Park Street into a giant water slide.

Malcolm Reading will advise the jury.

The deadline for Expressions of Interest is Friday, 15 January 2016, the shortlist for the second stage will be announced in February and, following a public exhibition of the shortlisted entries, the winning team is expected to be announced in late May 2016.

Ends

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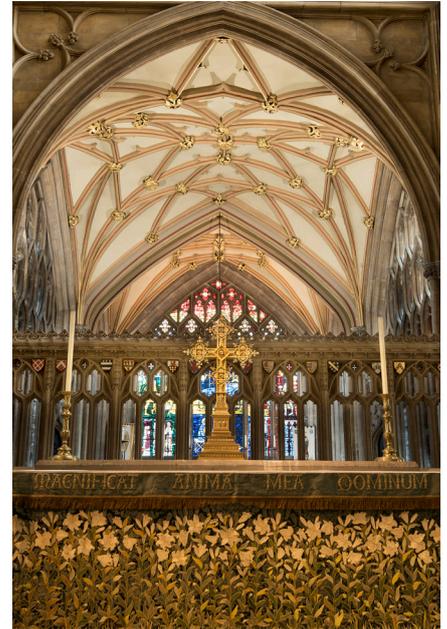


For media enquiries regarding St Mary Redcliffe, and interviews with the Reverend Dan Tyndall, please phone Rhys Williams on +44 (0)117 231 0068 or contact by email at: rhys.williams@stmaryredcliffe.co.uk

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NOTES TO EDITORS:**St Mary Redcliffe**

The Christian community has worshipped continuously on the site occupied by St Mary Redcliffe Church for nearly 900 years. The first church here was built in the early 12th century. The present church is a treasure of international importance. A Grade I listed building that is a masterpiece of Gothic architecture – a wall of glass surmounted by a roof of glittering gilded roof bosses of exquisite beauty, elegant 18th century ironwork, carved wood and stone, all framed by light flooding in through vast clerestory and stained glass windows. The oldest parts of the present building date from 1185 although most of the nave, transepts and choir was created by highly skilled yet unrecorded stonemasons in the 14th century.

The building's floor plan is the traditional cruciform shape – symbolic of the cross used for crucifixion, the Roman method of execution by which Jesus Christ died. The physical location is fundamental to the historic maritime and mercantile importance of Bristol generally and the district of Redcliffe in particular. To the north side of the church lies the line of the medieval Portwall, to the west the quayside and harbour plus the red coloured sandstone cliffs from which the area derives its name. Indeed the church's boundaries to west, south and east have remained fundamentally unchanged from its medieval plan. All of this makes the location itself of both national and regional significance.

Malcolm Reading Consultants

London-based Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) is a strategic architectural consultancy which specialises in the selection of contemporary designers. MRC believes in the power of design to create new perceptions and act as an inspiration – whether at the local level, or internationally.

The consultancy offers a service to find the very best designers for clients with capital projects, whether through open-international, or private-invited competitions. Recent competitions include those for the Guggenheim Helsinki, the Art Mill, Qatar, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Culture & Education Quarter, the Mumbai City Museum, the gold medal-winning UK Pavilion at Milan Expo 2015 and New College, Oxford.

www.malcolmreading.co.uk