



## GORT SCOTT WINS ST HILDA'S COLLEGE, OXFORD'S INVITED DESIGN COMPETITION



### Project will redefine the College estate and realise the potential of its exceptional riverside site

St Hilda's College has selected Gort Scott to design a new £10m+ front-of-house development for its exceptional riverside site in the conclusion of the *Redefining St Hilda's* invited design competition, organised by Malcolm Reading Consultants.

A five-strong shortlist was asked to produce concept designs for the new gateway to the College, approached from Cowley Place, which will include social and conference spaces, suites of academic and teaching rooms, a new Middle Common Room and accommodation for students and Fellows. The project will form the centrepiece of St Hilda's 125th anniversary celebration.

The winning Gort Scott concept design features a slender tower – announcing the entrance to the College on Cowley Place – rooftop gardens with wild-flower planting, and a riverside pavilion. The proposal positions much of the residential and teaching accommodation on the



urban boundary of the site, and creates new open spaces which run from the re-positioned College entrance to the River Cherwell and set-up views to Christ Church Meadows and beyond.

The practice was shortlisted for BD's Architect of the Year awards and their recently-completed office building for Jesus College, Cambridge has been shortlisted for a number of awards this year.

The other finalists in the St Hilda's private invited competition were 6a architects, DRDH Architects, Hall McKnight and Tim Ronalds Architects.

**St Hilda's College Principal, Professor Sir Gordon Duff, said:**



*The selection of Gort Scott is an exciting moment for St Hilda's as this development will transform the College's public face, refresh our rare and lovely riverside setting, and provide much-needed modern spaces and amenities.*

*Gort Scott won the College over because their concept design displayed the most intuitive and natural fit to our organic site. Though this initial design will be refined and developed in the coming months, the scheme is sympathetic to the garden feel of the College: opening-up new vistas and allowing the space to flow. It also positions the College more elegantly on Cowley Place, improving St Hilda's visibility within Oxford.*



**Competition organiser, Malcolm Reading, said:**



*The five finalists each produced wonderful proposals and models – we would like to thank them all for their hard work and application.*

*We were impressed that Gort Scott really engaged with the challenge and the wider site. It is an ambitious brief and it was a pleasure to see the dedication shown by the team in resolving some complex issues.*





**Fiona Scott, director of Gort Scott, said:**



*This commission means an enormous amount to us: the whole team here worked incredibly hard and everyone is thrilled to have won.*

*The competition process gave us confidence – there was a well thought-through brief and an engaging process that really gave us the opportunity to explore the potential of the project.*

*Our proposal focused on responding to the riverside setting – making a lyrical pavilion set within the College's picturesque gardens, framed by a robust building that defines the boundary of the College. The pavilion balances a sense of decorum and gravity from the rhythm of strong brick piers, with a lightness and delicacy that is in dialogue with the changing qualities of the river.*



The College will now work with Gort Scott to develop the winning concept. Construction is due to begin in July 2017.

St Hilda's College was one of the original group of five women's colleges founded at Oxford at the end of the nineteenth century. Since 2008, it has selected its undergraduates and graduates without regard to gender. St Hilda's now has one of the highest proportions of international undergraduate students of any college within the University.

The College's alumnae include The Economist's Editor-in-Chief, Zanny Minton Beddoes; novelist, Barbara Pym; crime writer, Val McDermid; biographer and President of Wolfson College, Oxford, Professor Dame Hermione Lee; former United Nations' Goodwill Ambassador and International Olympics Committee representative, HRH Princess Haya bint Hussein; and news presenter, Zeinab Badawi, BBC World News.

Ends

**MEDIA  
RELEASE**

17 MARCH 2016



St Hilda's College  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

**MALCOLM  
READING  
CONSULTANTS**



#### **COMPETITION MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

Catherine Reading

T: +44 (0) 20 7831 2998

E: [catherine.reading@malcolmreading.co.uk](mailto:catherine.reading@malcolmreading.co.uk)

#### **ST HILDA'S COLLEGE MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

Claire Harvey

Communications Manager

E: [claire.harvey@st-hildas.ox.ac.uk](mailto:claire.harvey@st-hildas.ox.ac.uk)

T: +44 (0) 1865 276824

#### **FOR IMAGES**

Sarah Mattok

E: [sarah.mattok@malcolmreading.co.uk](mailto:sarah.mattok@malcolmreading.co.uk)

All images copyright Malcolm Reading  
Consultants/Gort Scott



## NOTES TO EDITORS

- **St Hilda's College, Oxford**

St Hilda's College is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and innovation, from the world-leading research of its academic staff to the intellectual achievements of its students. St Hilda's was founded to open up university education to women. Today, the College has close to equal numbers of women and men at both undergraduate and graduate level, but remains true to its founding principles. The College continues to promote equal opportunity and social inclusivity while expanding the boundaries of knowledge and human potential. St Hilda's prides itself on cultivating pioneering, independent thinkers, whatever their background. Its students are people with spark and flair who seek original solutions to intellectual and practical problems, as shown by the diverse successes of the College's alumnae.

<http://www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk>

- **Gort Scott**

Gort Scott's practice statement says their aim is to create enduring buildings and places that are 'inspiring, enjoyable and accessible'. Strategically-minded, all of their projects begin with a strong concept that drives the initiative through to completion. The practice recently won an international design competition for a unique, high-value single family house and guest house in Whistler, Canada. The practice was shortlisted for MRC's recent competition for New College (New Quad), Oxford. They recently completed an office building for Jesus College, Cambridge (also won through a competition), and have experience of working for Darwin College and Trinity College at Cambridge.

<http://gortscott.com>

- **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 Museum of London, the Art Mill, Qatar, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Culture & Education Quarter, the Mumbai City Museum, the UK Pavilion at Milan Expo 2015 and New College, Oxford.

<http://malcolmreading.co.uk>