SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK DESIGN AWARDS 2024

SHORTLISTED DESIGNS

CELEBRATING OUTSTANDING & INNOVATIVE DESIGN

The 2024 South Downs Design Awards recognise and promote high standards of design and raise awareness of the positive contribution that good design can make to the quality of our local environments.

The Awards celebrate projects that have made a standout contribution to landscape, heritage, built environment and our local communities.

The categories for the 2024 Design Awards include:

- **Residential** – includes completed extensions, single buildings, small and large housing developments, and visitor accommodation.
- **Non-residential** – includes completed commercial, industrial, farming, infrastructure, recreation and leisure developments.
- **Conservation** – includes completed historic parks and gardens, historic buildings, monuments, as well as excellent craftsmanship.
- **Future projects** – includes projects that celebrate distinction in unbuilt projects on paper and the potential for positive contribution to the National Park, its communities and the planet.
- **People's Choice Category** – voted for by the communities of the South Downs from the list of shortlisted projects.

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BLACK TIMBER HOUSE, RODMELL

Nestled within the South Downs National Park, Black Timber House epitomises architectural harmony and environmental stewardship. Its design seamlessly integrates with the landscape, embodying the park's conservation ethos while pioneering innovative sustainability practices.

From its inception, the house was conceived to complement its surroundings, blending gracefully amidst ash trees and rolling meadows. The use of charred black timber and natural wood celebrates the beauty of the environment.

At its core, Black Timber House champions sustainability. Utilising advanced technologies, the house minimises energy consumption and its carbon footprint. Moreover, its use of sustainable materials, including FSC® certified timber, underscores its commitment to environmental responsibility.

HOCKING HOUSE, PETERSFIELD

The Hocking House shows how new homes do not need to be self-conscious objects competing for visual attention and shows how an inhabited landscape concept can be reconciled with a very constricted site.

Neighbours look out over a sedum hillside punctuated by a triangular building with an integrated solar photovoltaic atrium roof. This wheelchair accessible net zero home generates as much renewable energy as it uses over an average year, shields a south facing garden from railway noise, and includes private outdoor garden seating areas that are not overlooked by adjacent homes.

The Hocking House proposes a fresh low carbon contemporary vernacular that has considerable benefits for both the occupants, the South Downs National Park and Petersfield.

LANNINGS WAY, MIDHURST

Lannings Way demonstrates that bespoke, energy efficient dwellings can be built respecting its local and wider setting and adding to the richness of the conservation area.

The site is nestled amongst existing dwellings of mainly traditional design with tight boundaries that created both constraints and opportunities. The new dwellings have their own distinct identity, drawn from the historic use of the site, without being contentious or disrespectful of the immediate and wider context. The new dwelling forms are wholly contextual and pay homage to both the heritage of the site as a former ambulance station and the traditional setting of the site within the conservation area.

The architectural response keeps the overall mass of the new dwellings to a minimum and reduces the impact on the existing residents on all four sides. The traditional brick is complemented by the use of contemporary zinc to roofs, dormers, porches, facias and rainwater goods.

THE MILE HOUSE, AMBERLEY

The house is arranged as a collection of three wings placed up to the edge of the slope to maximise views. The plan arrangement also allows for the creation of dedicated amenity spaces including a rear garden and a decked west terrace overlooking Amberley Wild Brooks.

The house is fully Passivhaus certified to produce a building with exceptional thermal performance and airtightness. The dwelling uses continuous mechanical heat recovery ventilation to maintain indoor air quality with negligible loss of energy. Combined with triple-glazed windows and photovoltaic panels, the dwelling will be carbon net-zero across the year.

Externally, a restrained palette of materials is used to respond to both the modern buildings in the immediate vicinity and the historic village centre. Walls are clad in vertically aligned Sussex oak boarding, with the local Fittleworth stone forming the base of the two-story wing.

HANDLEBAR CAFE, WINCHESTER

This cycle café and bike workshop was the brainchild of a group of local teenagers. The building sits on the viaduct cycle and walking path below St Catherine's Hill. The group's concept was of trains passing on a bridge: the two elements conjure the form of carriages linked by a glass divide. A third small building on the same axis houses a cycle workshop.

Profiled natural timber cladding was used to root the project within its setting. Great care was taken to provide security to the isolated building, using purpose-designed shutters featuring laser cut panels depicting cogs and wheels, linking the site to the old railway line and new cycle route.

Internally, a simple palette of materials was adopted, giving the building a clean, simple aesthetic. The internal lining mimics the external form with panels aligned to elongate the perspective of the building. Wrapping the southern and western facades of the building, a generous linking deck ties the buildings to each other and to their landscaped setting.

COCKSHUT STREAM RESTORATION, LEWES

The project is located in the Lewes Brooks SSSI and consists of the realignment of 700 metres of the degraded Cockshut chalk stream complimented by 6 hectares of wetland creation and formation of wetland meadows. It includes public access with interpretation panels outlining the importance of chalk streams and local landscape history.

This wetland environment provides exceptional habitat for freshwater species as well as over-wintering birds, which are declining as a result of the impact of coastal development. The design enabled a spoil neutral development with no arisings imported or exported from the site. This was achieved through the construction of a raised earth circular walk around the wetland, which encourages community interaction and engagement with nature and the local environment.

The wetland has delivered improvements in landscape function, balancing conservation, community engagement and climate resilience.

NEW TEMPLE COMPLEX, LISS

This multi-faith temple is characterised by peace and simplicity and is open to the local community. The building comprises a temple, library, chapels, a multi-use community hall, public foyer and catering kitchen within newly landscaped grounds. The rationalised plan is organised as a series of orthogonal, timber framed pavilions connected by a cloistered walkway, facing onto a central planted courtyard garden.

Sustainability is at the core of the design, with a fabric-first approach, off-site construction of the timber frame and the use of a ground source heat pump powered by on-site photovoltaic panels. The two congregation spaces also showcase a low carbon alternative to air conditioning.

The off-grid location and unique spiritual dynamics of the site were integral to the development of the project, adopting a whole systems approach to tread lightly, give back to the landscape and to ensure continued biodiversity net gain.

PRINCE'S MEAD SCHOOL EXTENSION, WINCHESTER

The scheme focuses on essential facilities: a new dining hall with on-site kitchen facilities and four teaching spaces. Architecturally, the extension adopted a restrained aesthetic, harmonizing with the Georgian facade of the main house through subtle brickwork and fenestration detailing. Materials echo those of the original structure, ensuring visual cohesion. Landscaping enhancements included a rationalisation of existing parking to improve the setting of the main school house, and a collegiate courtyard between the new extension and the listed coach house, preserving historical context while providing functional outdoor space.

The design balances modern educational needs with respect for historical significance, enriching both academic and architectural legacies at Prince's Mead School.

WALLANDS PRIMARY COMMUNITY SCHOOL RAINGARDEN, LEWES

The school playground was a typical large hard, impermeable surface, with high laurel hedges blocking far-reaching views. Play opportunities were limited and during rainfall large puddles sat on the surface and water eroded a bank, ultimately heading off site.

The design reimagined the playground as an inspirational rainscape that directs runoff from roofs and hard surfaces through a 'dry-stream river' and around various undulating play islands. Water then leads to a network of wildflower meadow swales with playful cascading SuDS features on the opened-up grassy bank.

The school staff and pupils greatly fed into the design and the result has been extremely well received for both play purposes and education around the importance of sustainable drainage.

WOOLBEDING GLASSHOUSE, WOOLBEDING

A feature kinetic glasshouse, 15 metres high, at Woolbeding National Trust Gardens made up of ten openable segments (sepals) designed to open and close in the manner of the opening and closing of a flower. The glasshouse is the focal point of expansion of the formal visitor gardens at Woolbeding, with the creation of a natural pathway and planting narrative charting a route through the 'Flora of the Silk Road'.

Landscaping changes were made to create the formal garden enlargement; the wider paddock area has been made less formal with the removal of existing built form; the existing ha-ha wall has been extended across the site, creating a natural delineation of the garden; and the fencing that demarcated the paddock area has been removed entirely, returning the wider area to the south of Woolbeding House and Gardens to a more natural environment with species-rich grassland reintroduced.

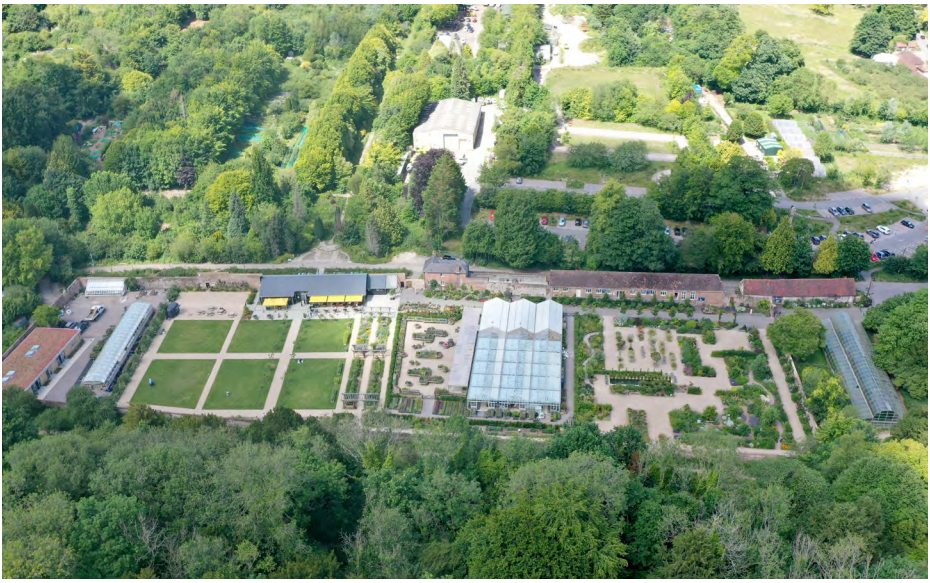
THE DOWER HOUSE, CHAWTON

An extensive programme of repair and conservation work to the house and gardens, including the removal of unsympathetic additions. The project focuses on the oldest part of the house (c.1450), a timber-framed jettied cross-wing of a former hall-house. With the removal of cement render and a 'lean-to', the orginal timber-frame and jettied gable is now exposed.

Rotted frame sections have been sensitively replaced by splicing new sections, with an emphasis on retaining as much of the original fabric as possible. Wattle and daub panels, some thought to be original, have also been repaired. Those panels that had failed were re-panelled using a remix of the original daub. A period window has also been added to the original, second storey 'solar', after evidence was found in the timber-frame of a previous window aperture in that location.

The restoration of the jettied gable-end now allows the house to sit properly in its original setting, slightly set back from the roadside and separated from the boundary wall. Removal of plastic-based paint on 18th century brickwork has also revealed a historic narrative that increases the understanding of the building's evolution and improves its aesthetic appeal from Winchester Road.

THE RESTORATION OF STANMER PARK, FALMER



The project focused on 20ha of parkland and included extensive landscape, wall and building works that were central to the project in the Walled Garden to recreate an attractive and floristically diverse working garden environment with a cafe, farm shop and extensive education facilities, managed by Plumpton College as One Garden Brighton.

The works included improved visitor welcome through restoration of the historic Lower Lodges entrance, sensitive car park improvements, a new kiosk housing public toilets, café, bicycle hire orientation and interpretation.

The historic recreated C18th Green Drive, provides a shared easy access route through car-free parkland to the heart of Stanmer Park and village. New carparks and signs provide access and guide visitors to all historic features, restored views and themed trails.

TOTE HILL BARN, STEDHAM

Sympathetic conversion of a traditional stone Sussex Barn into a 3 bedroom dwelling. The Barn was built in 1810 from local stone with a clay plain tile roof and had a lean-to open sided cart shed side extension; it remained largely unaltered until its last use as a lambing shed for the former St Cuthman's School until it closed.

The retention of the shape and form of the building and its setting in the landscape were necessary design constraints. The new side extension replaces the former lean-to open sided shed, designed to be subservient to this building in scale and height. It is cut into the fall of the topography, uses a muted palette of matching materials, and minimises light-spill to neighbouring properties and the long views within the National Park.

The fabric of the existing barn building has been retained where possible and renovated sensitively to provide an additional residential unit on a brownfield site.

WISTON ESTATE WINERY, WASHINGTON

The redevelopment of Wiston Estate Winery comprised an expanded wine production facility alongside visitor attractions, set within a high-quality context.

The landscape-led approach focused on enhancing the historic farmstead and taking a sustainable approach towards the design, construction, and operation of the Winery. Locally sourced materials with a connection to nature, or that would express the site's identity and sense of place were prioritised, such as the locally extracted flint for the gabion wall, retention of existing timber roof trusses, reclaimed clay tiles and oak cladding (sourced on the estate itself).

Two historic flint barns were sensitively restored into a fine dining restaurant and private dining room, maintaining a visual reference to the site's former farm use, while opportunities for direct sales are now possible within new build elements that house facilities for wine production and a visitor shop.

KINGS RIDE FARM, ALFRISTON

Kings Ride Farm is located at the edge of Alfriston by the South Downs Way, marking the boundary between the village and the agricultural landscape of the Downs. It contains a group of agricultural buildings dating from the 1930's and 1950's which are integrated into the site and its setting. The scheme proposes to re-use these structures in varying degrees, to provide 7 new homes whilst maintaining the landscape qualities and character of the site.

The design proposes a car-free shared yard at the centre of the scheme, as well as allotments and private gardens. The existing scrub around the edge of the site is protected to preserve the existing biodiversity. New planting, rain gardens and a drainage pond provide additional new habitats for downland wildlife.

The homes are designed to Passivhaus principles, with excellent form factors, glazing distribution and insulation levels. Adaptive re-use and the choice of timber for the primary structure reduces the embodied carbon.

FERNHURST PARK, FERNHURST

The aspiration of the project is to develop a landscape-led masterplan for the integrated and planned redevelopment of this area of underperforming commercial land to deliver a new residential community. It is a 'Design-Led' masterplan that seeks to determine an appropriate organisation of generous new streets, parks, dwellings and community uses. The proposed development consists of approximately 210 dwellings at the existing site; along with ancillary non-residential floorspace to compliment the amenity of the new community (retail and shared spaces). The masterplan is set in an existing parkland/brownfield setting, providing landscape and recreational amenity to residents.

THE CHALK YARD, LEWES

Located on Malling Street, the development has been designed to repurpose an outdated and unsightly office building into 8 apartments and 5 architecturally striking mews houses.

The design process has been extremely thorough, working painstakingly through every detail to integrate the existing concrete and steel structures to create unique open-plan living spaces. Externally, the façade design uses a contrast between charcoal render and oak cladding, and to the rear of the site the iconic 'sawtooth' style roof has been retained as a nod to the local area's industrial history.

The development is an example of urban regeneration, and shows how developing brownfield land can create thriving new communities and breathe new life into areas most in need.

WILD PARK, BRIGHTON

This is a water quality project and is designed to manage road surface water in a more natural and sustainable way.

Surface water from a 4 km section of the A27, at the junction with Lewes road, Brighton, passes through a flow control chamber at a detention pond. The detention pond currently stores water before piping it to soakaways at the southern end of Wild Park, where it goes directly into Brighton's aquifer (chalk block) without any further treatment. This presents a pollution risk to drinking water.

The Wild Park project will deliver a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) to prevent polluted highway runoff infiltrating directly into the underlying groundwater. The existing highway drainage and detention basin form the first element of an innovative SuDS treatment train, linked to a series of drainage basins, called a Rainscape, in Wild Park. Key benefits include, cleaner drinking water for the city, significant biodiversity net gain and enhanced amenity value to local people.

CHALK-BASED RENOVATION, REMEDIATION AND REGENERATION

AN APPROACH TO SHOREHAM CEMENT WORKS

This project proposes utilising Waste Chalk Filter Cake (WCFC, spoil from chalk tunnelling) as the primary construction material. WCFC is used for chalk grassland regeneration and infilling of quarries, but can it be used for the renovation of buildings? And for bringing the industrial site back to life? How might an alternative construction curriculum emerge?

This project renovates, remediates and regenerates the site, transforming it into a Chalk Cob Production Facility and Construction School. A system of industrial symbiosis is established and through physical prototyping it is found that WCFC mixed with straw, a local and abundant bio-waste, can produce a non-toxic and entirely cyclic chalk cob at an industrial scale. Architectural and landscape interventions then work to address the site's existing conditions whilst enabling remediative architectural, ecological, and social processes to be inserted.

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South Downs
National Park Authority