

DESIGN CHAMPION

Steve Rotheram, mayor of Liverpool



There is more than meets the eye to Liverpool's metro mayor Steve Rotheram. He left school to become a bricklayer before setting up his own company aged 22. He later started a master's in contemporary urban renaissance at Liverpool Hope University.

In May 2017, he was elected to become the first ever Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region – securing 59 per cent of the vote. It was only a month later that UNESCO threatened to strip Liverpool of its coveted World Heritage status unless the city 'reverse course and stop the granting' of harmful planning permissions.

Leap forward a year and Rotheram announced that developers in Liverpool were being offered free design reviews until March 2019 – a £100,000 initiative

delivered by Places Matter and supported by the RIBA.

And in November he appointed Paul Monaghan, founding director of Stirling Prize-winning practice Allford Hall Monaghan Morris as Liverpool City Region Design Champion.

Rotheram is not the first mayor to care about architecture. Bristol had former RIBA president George Ferguson.

But, as Monaghan pointed out when he took on his role, Liverpool has built-environment issues that need addressing, not least a swathe of 'low-quality' student housing blocks that have sprouted up across the city.

Look out too for the RIBA's Forgotten Spaces contest, creating ideas for neglected public spaces, which is set to come to Liverpool in 2019.

BIG-LEAGUE BREAKTHROUGH

Feilden Fowles



MAX DINSDALE

The next 12 months could see Feilden Fowles, which has regularly been described as 'emerging' since it formed in 2009, properly catapulted into the public eye.

The last two years have sown the seeds for a significant leap up the ladder for the Waterloo City Farm-based firm founded by Fergus Feilden and Edmund Fowles.

The practice's Bigham's Food campus (don't call it a pie factory) in Somerset turned heads around Europe. Completed in late 2017, the building was nominated for the EU Mies Award for Contemporary Architecture and, this May, was crowned

Building of the Year in the RIBA's South West region.

There has been a series of planning and competition successes too, including a new student accommodation block at Oxford University's Green Templeton College, for which it beat entries by Sergison Bates, Stanton Williams and Haworth Tompkins.

However it is the imminent opening of a £3.6 million visitor centre (*pictured*) at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, a well-known patron of good-quality architecture, that could well herald the start of an exciting new phase for the highly talented practice.

JOB SWAP

Public Practice cohort



19

TIM SMYTH

A pioneering scheme that places architects in council planning departments sparked huge interest, with the first call for entries 13 times oversubscribed and the second recently closing for entries.

Social enterprise Public Practice sifted through 200 applicants to pick 17 architects who would spend a year working as 'associates' for councils in London and the South East. The idea is to provide local authorities with talent at a time when almost half have no in-house design capacity and to give architects the chance to work in the public sector.

A month into her placement, lone Braddick, who went from emerging practice Archio to Epping Forest Council, said it had been a 'learning curve like no other'.

While mystified by 'endless processes, mind-boggling acronyms and BYO teabags', Braddick said this was a small price to pay for 'power to make small changes that could amount to big things'.

Six months in, there are signs the scheme is bearing fruit with, for example, associate Hana Loftus getting stuck into a village design initiative in Cambridgeshire.