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Riba Stirling Prize 2014: Saw Swee Hock Student Centre



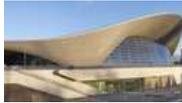
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27%	London Aquatics Centre		27%	Library of Birmingham	
22%	London Bridge Tower (the Shard)		11%	Everyman Theatre, Liverpool	
6%	LSE Student Centre, London		7%	Manchester School of Art	

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The UK's most prestigious prize for new buildings, the Riba Stirling Prize, will be awarded on 16 October. BBC News Online, in partnership with Riba, is taking a look at each of the contenders for the prize. The London School of Economics Saw Swee Hock Student Centre was designed by O'Donnell and Tuomey Architects.

Standing in the middle of medieval London streets and period properties, its sharp edges and irregular geometric facets stand out from its surroundings. At the same time, the red brick structure has also been designed to fit in.

The Royal Institute of British Architects (Riba) has described it as a "lesson in mobilising the limitations of a site into a startlingly original building which makes a massive contribution to its townscape".

The initial site was small, according to architect Sheila O'Donnell, but she adds that the emphasis on "giving back space" was an important part of the design. Areas have been created for students to congregate and chat.

Every sharp angular side is a response to the building next to it, according to the architects. The corners and brickwork have been constructed to enhance and protect the size and light requirements of the building's neighbours.

The student centre, called the Saw Swee Hock Student Centre after a donor to the project, cost £24,115,600. The basement accommodates a nightclub and bar, which is lit from the daylight at street level. It also comprises a cafe, career office, gym and a multi-faith centre, where students can spend time together and learn about different faiths, or take time alone to meditate.

The building was constructed from 46 varieties of standard-shape bricks and 127 specially designed and shaped ones. Out of a total of 175,000, not one of them was cut. Every brick was shaped and baked individually - some are straight, others kink to fit the oddly shaped corners. They are laid in a variety of styles to create subtle patterns, with a section of latticed bricks drawing in light from outside.

Rory Olcayto of the Architects' Journal, describes the building as "a very odd looking building".

He says: "Its facades are irregular and have a triangular geometry that seems at odds with the bricks it's made from, but it's this uncanny appearance that sets it apart."

BBC Riba Stirling Prize 2014

[London Aquatics Centre](#)

[Library of Birmingham](#)

[London Bridge Tower \(The Shard\)](#)

[Liverpool Everyman Theatre](#)

[Manchester School of Art](#)

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