

News

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South Shields' The Word scoops RIBA National Award



Library and digital media centre, The Word, has continued its impressive run of awards with a prestigious RIBA National Award.

The iconic building is part of the first phase of South Tyneside Council and Muse Developments' ambitious £100m South Shields 365 regeneration masterplan to transform the town centre and has already helped to transform an area of the town, as well as providing a vital community resource.

The award follows previous success in the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Awards North East, RIBA NE Regional awards and the Constructing Excellence North East Awards.

Opening to national acclaim in October and welcoming over 236,000 visitors in its first seven months, the building was designed by FaulknerBrown Architects.

The RIBA judges report praised all elements of the building: "The Word is a happy uplifting place and is the embodiment of inclusion for all ages – it caters for all with no compromises. It is a success on many levels and it is a testament to the building and all involved that library membership and visitors have increased dramatically including those from its larger neighbouring conurbations.

"Not only is The Word an outstanding, public-sector project culturally, socially and architecturally, but it establishes an eminently satisfactory relationship with the grade I listed Old Town Hall to the north-east, the listed St Hilda's Church to the south-east and the newly paved Market Square between the two."

David Wells, regional director at Muse, commented: "The whole team are absolutely delighted with the success of The Word – a national RIBA award is a fantastic achievement and due reward for an incredible building that has already become an attraction in its own right. More importantly, it's a bold statement of confidence by South Tyneside Council that the town centre will be regenerated in an equally successful manner and we're very proud to be involved in this project."

Councillor Iain Malcolm, Leader of South Tyneside Council, added, ““We’re delighted that The Word has been recognised as being among the top buildings in the country with yet another prestigious accolade.

“We said from day one that The Word would be a venue of regional and national significance, and now a respected professional body has confirmed exactly that. This award commends not just the superb design quality of the building, but the benefit to the community and its importance in the context of the wider South Shields 365 masterplan.”