

News

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The Word triumphs at North East RICS Awards

The Word, National Centre for the Written Word, has been hailed as the region's best building winning three separate categories of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) North East Awards, as well as the prestigious Project of the Year.

The iconic building is the first phase of South Tyneside Council and Muse Developments' ambitious £100m South Shields 365 regeneration masterplan to transform the town centre.

More than 50 of the region's most impressive property projects were aiming for top honours in eight separate categories at the award ceremony held on Friday 21 April at Newcastle Civic Centre. The Word won three categories – Community Benefit, Design Through Innovation and Tourism and Leisure, in addition to winning overall Project of The Year.

Opening to national acclaim in October and welcoming over 200,000 visitors since then, The Word was designed by FaulknerBrown Architects and constructed by lead contractor, Bowmer & Kirkland, as a library for the 21st century. The building incorporates a library, exhibition space, FabLab with 3D printers and vinyl and laser cutters, television and radio studio, children's immersive storytelling area, OpenZone IT suite, café, and a rooftop viewing terrace with views out over the River Tyne.

So far it has loaned almost 10,000 books and library memberships have increased by nearly 400% compared with the town's previous library during the same period.

Councillor Iain Malcolm, Leader of South Tyneside Council, commented: "We are thrilled that The Word has won these prestigious awards, and in particular the Project of the Year, which is a tremendous accolade. More than 200,000 visitors have now seen for themselves what an outstanding facility this is and we are extremely proud of it.

"The Word has exceeded all our expectations and has won six awards in as many months. Recognition from industry professionals is testament to the vision and commitment of everyone who helped deliver this superb asset.

"This is just the beginning of South Shields' journey of transformation and we are now pressing ahead with the next phase of the 365 masterplan which will bring a state of the art transport interchange to the town."

David Wells, regional director at Muse Developments, added: "The recognition the building has received in the RICS Awards is an accolade by fellow building and development professionals and an acknowledgement to the work that not only went into this, the first phase of the 365 regeneration project, but also continues to be carried out for future phases. We're delighted to have won these prestigious awards and to be part of this exciting partnership with South Tyneside Council."

The Word now goes through to the RICS Awards Grand Final in November.