

Future perfect

It's been a tough year, but creative flair and ingenuity were much in evidence at the British Homes Awards, says **Helen Davies**

This has been the year when we have discovered a new pride in being British. Instead of booing, crowds took to the streets and hosted jubilee parties; and, rather than fleeing the country, they sat glued to the Olympics, marvelling as much at the engineering achievement, smooth-running transport and cheery volunteers as at the sporting prowess on display.

So this is a great year in which to be British and house-proud. We are pleased to champion the Sunday Times British Homes Awards, in which entries were invited from builders, developers, housing associations, architects and interior designers. And the work of all the shortlisted projects (see page 10) that caught the eye of the judges in some way, be it for innovative architectural style, the clever use of technology or exquisite craftsmanship, is to be commended.

The house-building industry has had a tough couple of years, but this makes the achievements of the contenders for a Sunday Times British Homes Awards all the greater.

"These awards are about all-round architectural quality," says Sunand Prasad, senior partner at the architects Penoyre and Prasad, and chairman of this year's judging panel. "The healthy mixture in the entries of very modern as well as traditional homes contradicts lazy assumptions about the aesthetic conservatism of the British." The judges were also encouraged by the levels of sustainable design, and by the fact that better energy conservation is starting to become the norm.

It is worth highlighting the winners in the two blue-riband categories:



Homebuilder of the Year went to United House, which was behind two featured schemes, the Renzo Piano-designed Central St Giles, in central London, and City North, which won the Housing Project of the Year. Also of special note is the work of Studio Egret West, which won not just Architect of the Year, but Apartment Building of the Year and Best Conversion, Restoration or Refurbishment of the Year. There's much to be proud of.

britishhomesawards.com; to register interest in the 2013 Sunday Times British Homes Awards, email mg@britishhomesawards.com



Studio Egret West's Library Building and, above left, United House's Renzo Piano-designed Central St Giles

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