

BDP returns to the top of the AJ 100: 2010's leading architectural practices are named

Last night, BDP reclaimed its status as Britain's largest architecture practice when it was named leader of this year's AJ 100 survey, which ranks the UK's top one hundred architecture practices by number of qualified architects employed.

BDP returned to the number one position, replacing last year's leaders Atkins & Partners Ltd which is now ranked third. Meanwhile, this year's new entrants to the top ten include Austin Smith:Lord, Broadway Malyan and Sheppard Robson.

The top 10 practices from the AJ 100 survey were confirmed as:

1. BDP
2. Foster + Partners
3. Atkins Ltd
4. Capita Symonds Architecture
5. Aedas Architects Ltd
6. Archial Group
7. Austin Smith:Lord
8. PRP
9. Broadway Malyan
10. Sheppard Robson

The annual AJ 100 survey is the authoritative barometer for the state of the UK's architectural sector, with the vast majority of UK practices submitting commercial information on their performance in the last 12 months.

The data submitted into the AJ100 rankings provides a vivid snapshot of the performance of the sector, with awards presented based upon findings from the data and nominations made by senior architects and industry observers. This year, Imperial College London worked with the AJ to analyse the data and provide greater insights into the current state of the sector.

Speaking at the AJ100 awards, Paul Finch, editorial director, The Architects' Journal said, "We can't deny it has been a tough year, but it's heartening to see how the AJ100 practices have weathered the storm, and I think that some of the findings are very encouraging.

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“The survey remains a celebration and a showcase for global architecture, and we’re very grateful for the industry’s continuing support. My congratulations to the AJ100 practices, and to the individual category winners, each of which celebrates considerable innovation and achievement”. Across eight individual categories, prizes included:

- Highest First Time Entrant – PLP Architecture, ranking number 35 out of the AJ 100
- Fastest-Growing Practice – Devereux Architects, where staff numbers grew by 50% in the last year
- Employer of the Year – Architecture PLB, who focus on transparency and job satisfaction
- Most Sustainable Practice – Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, an enviable reputation, but continuing to drive forward knowledge and design
- Building of the Year – Kroon Building, School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University, Connecticut, USA by Hopkins Architects
- International Practice of the Year – Aedas, which employs 482 architects overseas and has 38 offices around the globe
- Practice of the Year – Austin Smith:Lord, which has jumped 9 places in the AJ100 in a single year
- Greatest Contribution to the Profession – Laura Lee, Chief Executive of Maggie’s Centres, the cancer care centre pioneer

The eight regional AJ100 awards winners were:

- Midlands – BDP
- North East and Yorkshire – HLM Architects
- South East and London – Architecture PLB
- South West – Capita Architecture
- Wales – Austin Smith:Lord
- North West – Taylor Young
- Northern Ireland – HLM Architects
- Scotland – Reiach and Hall Architects

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In addition to the top 100 companies ranked by number of qualified architects, and individual category winners, the survey also revealed other fascinating facts about the state of health of the sector, including:

- ADP has the highest ratio of female architects among the top 20 practices, accounting for 40% of their design staff, with Foster + Partners ranking second with 30%.
- When the top 20 practices were asked “what constitutes good architectural practice”, 25% answered “client satisfaction and repeat business”, 21% responded with “creativity” and 17% responded “high staff morale”. Meanwhile, “ability to win new business” and “profit margin” accounted for 15% of responses each and 7% responded with “professional recognition”.
- There are 5,835 qualified architects employed in the AJ 100 practices. Outside of London (3,131), the greatest concentration of architects is in Scotland with 507, followed by the South East with 464 and the North West with 452. The region with the lowest number of architects is Northern Ireland with 63.

The AJ100 Awards took place on Wednesday 19th May at the Grange Hotel St Paul’s London, and were organised by The Architects’ Journal magazine, published by Emap. Supporters and sponsors include Passionate about Cinema, BST Global, SIV Human Resources, Griffiths & Armour and Beale and Company, Hilson Moran and Schuco, with FD as the Official Communication Partners to the AJ100.

Full details of the AJ 100 rankings are available at www.architectsjournal.co.uk/aj100/

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