

Friday 28th May

STUDENTS WIN £50,000 FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS IN NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION DESIGN COMPETITION UK'S LEADING DESIGNER WAYNE HEMINGWAY ANNOUNCES WINNER OF COMPETITION AIMED AT FILLING UK CONSTRUCTION SKILLS GAP

Leading UK designer Wayne Hemingway last night announced Monkseaton High School as the winner of 'Creative Spaces', a nationwide design competition encouraging school children to pursue a career in construction by re-designing their school's built environment for the 21st century.

The competition, run by ConstructionSkills, the sector skills council for the construction industry, invited 11 - 14 year old pupils to submit proposals for improvements to their school's built environment. The winning students from Monkseaton in the North East will see their design become reality with £50,000 worth of building work set to commence this summer.

Monkseaton's design involves redesigning the school toilets, which are in poor condition and regarded by the students as the worst area of their school. The students worked with Warring & Netts, a local architectural practice that offered them professional advice when it was needed.

Commenting on the importance of skills, Wayne said, "I believe we are becoming a nation obsessed by celebrity and so-called glamorous professions and we are in danger of losing skills that are vital to the nation."

Employing 1 in every 14 people, the construction industry is Britain's biggest employer; it is also our biggest exporter, generating over £1 billion a year. To sustain these levels and meet future demand, it needs 83,000* new recruits each year.

In a bid to safeguard the UK's industry skills, Creative Spaces set out to introduce construction into the national curriculum via a teacher resource pack and a competition. By participating, pupils from over 400 schools across the country have had an introduction to the design and build process.

Peter Lobban chief executive of ConstructionSkills, is proud of its work to attract more young people into the industry, "The continued success of the construction industry depends on its ability to attract and retain talented people of all ages and particularly young people. Construction has to compete hard to attract young people and so Creative Spaces is a great example of helping youngsters consider a career in a world-class industry."

The final judging was hosted last night at RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) and the judging panel was made up of industry professionals, including designer Wayne Hemingway. Wayne said, "The UK has a reputation for world-class design, architecture and building innovation. Creative Spaces has introduced the creative world of construction to pupils across the nation. Thousands of students have taken part in the activities and the 12 finalists must all be congratulated for their efforts in creating some amazing building designs."

"Speaking as a designer, I am concerned that too many young people are being diverted by media coverage in their choice of career into professions that are often ultimately "dead end" nor make the best use of their personal talents," he continued. "Creative Spaces has been a superb way of showing students how creative they can be in a huge variety of construction professions from design & planning through to carpentry, bricklaying and site management."

Paul Bower, Senior Project Manager at CITB-ConstructionSkills said, "Creative Spaces has been a real success and has introduced thousands of young people

to construction. They are now more able to appreciate the built environment and might consider building on their success here to pursue a career in construction."

The Creative Spaces competition was created with a full set of curriculum support materials focussed on the Key Stage 3 Design & Technology curriculum. Written by a Design and Technology teacher and supported by the DfES, the resource was available on-line and in a CD-Rom format. Work is already underway with the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the Construction Industry Council (CIC) to develop the on-line resource so it can be used by other subject teachers (history, PSE, geography teachers) and with KS4 students. CABE is sponsoring these developments with grant aid of £30,000. The resource will be promoted to schools from September 2004.

The resource has also attracted the interest of the School Design and Build Unit of the DfES. It has plans to use curriculum-based resources with schools undergoing redevelopment or refurbishment work (as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme) and has expressed an interest using elements of the Creative Spaces resource.

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For further information and photographs, please contact:

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* CITB-ConstructionSkills Skills Foresight Report 2004.

Notes to Editors:

Waring&Netts are one of the North East region's largest and most progressive architectural practices. They currently employ over seventy staff who work across four specialist divisions. Education:Health:Commercial:Residential. The education team, nationally acclaimed for their work on Blyth Community College, have also just been appointed to the major Boldon School project. Whilst their work on Newcastle's famous Quayside makes them the single

largest contributor to the architectural regeneration of that area of the City.