

# Community & Faith Project of the Year

## Vajrasana Buddhist Retreat Centre by Walters & Cohen Architects



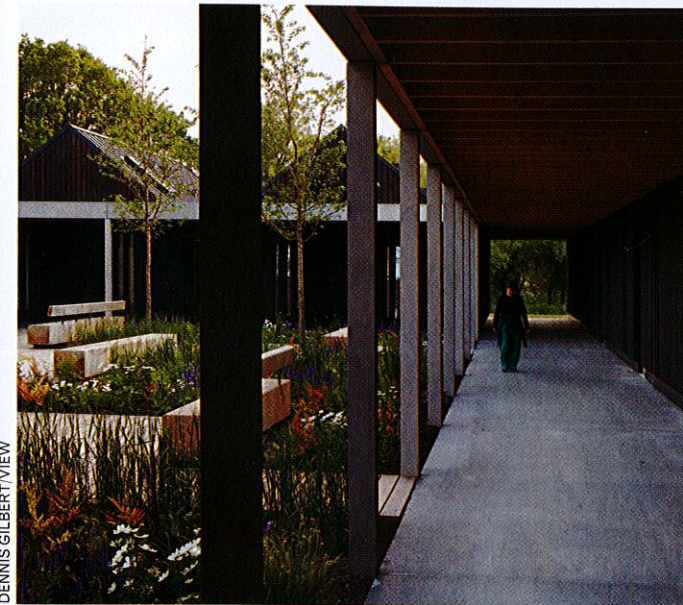
WILL SCOTT

This extension and refurbishment of a Suffolk rural retreat, arranged around a series of courtyards and spaces including a large new prayer hall, was praised for being an ensemble of 'thoughtful, quiet buildings' perfectly suited to their function and site.

Attached to a converted farmhouse, the new buildings are organised both functionally and as a spiritual journey through the site. Beginning with community facilities, including a dining hall and bedrooms leading off the first courtyard, the focus shifts to Dharma or teaching in two more formal courtyard spaces, and then to meditation and contemplation of the Buddha in the prayer hall, in a 'beautifully handled' sequence of spaces. There was no model for a purpose-built retreat in the UK, and the client praised the architect for its understanding of the community's requirements.

The judges were impressed by the excellent build quality, to Passivhaus standards, complemented by the robust but rich material simplicity. This ranged from more contextual choices such as the charred timber, recalling the colour of Suffolk barns, to the counterintuitive: dark purple-red industrial brick, which creates a rich sheen to the interior of the prayer hall.

What the judges found particularly noteworthy was how the architecture balanced a contained sense of place while providing views and release out to the surrounding countryside – a perfect blend of centredness and engagement with the world around. *RGW*



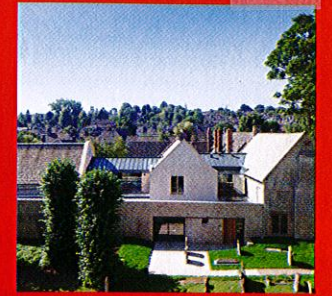
DENNIS GILBERT/VIEW

CLOCKWISE: LEWIS KHAN, ANDY MARSHALL, LUKE HAYES, JILL TATE, HUFTON-CROW, JOAKIM BOREN

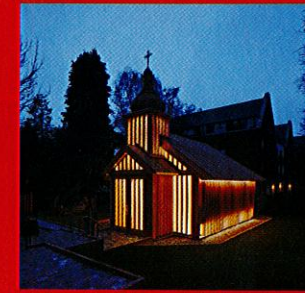
### Shortlist



Bushey Cemetery by Waugh Thistleton Architects



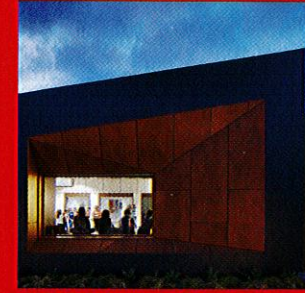
Warwick Hall Community Centre by Acanthus Clews Architects



Belarusian Memorial Chapel by Spheron Architects



St Peter's Stonegrove by Sprunt Architects



The Point by Ayre Chamberlain Gaunt



Live Works by Flanagan Lawrence



WILL SCOTT

Sponsored by

