



The Davidson Prize – 2025 Brief, Process and Judging

THE 2025 THEME

Streets Ahead: The race to build 1.5m homes

THE 2025 BRIEF

'The people – where will they go?' asked Ebenezer Howard's Three Magnets diagram in 1898. Since then, from Lewis Mumford's organicism to Jane Jacobs' grassroots activism and from the Smithsonian's Streets in the Sky to Colin Ward's child-centred planning, theories of placemaking and urbanism have proliferated – but in essence the same question is being asked today.

In 2024 the UK government set the ambitious goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next five years. Through a combination of planning reform, mandatory targets and prioritising homes for social rent, the aim is to get Britain building again in a way it hasn't done since the interwar and post-WW2 years. But where? And how can we ensure that quality as well as quantity is the outcome?

This year The Davidson Prize is asking multidisciplinary creative teams to explore the macro of placemaking alongside the micro of homemaking. Architects, planners, designers and thinkers have been expounding on new or better ways of living since Vitruvius's *De Architectura* in around 20–30 BCE. But what do you think?

Addressing housing shortage is a complex challenge involving multiple players. In 2025 we're asking cross-disciplinary teams to present a compelling visual argument for a minimum of 300 new homes on a site of their choice anywhere in the UK or Ireland.

With the cornerstone of promoting individual and collective wellbeing, this year's brief is open to grey, brown or greenfield sites, in inner city, suburban, small town or rural contexts. We want to know what particular perspective your team brings to the current housing challenge; who will benefit the most from your proposals; and in what ways. You might focus on density, construction, maintenance or community stewardship. You might choose to explore how the proposed community integrates with the natural world and existing built environments, local economies and social and transport networks. Or you might investigate ways of establishing balanced and sustainable demographics into the future. Regardless of your angle, we want to know about the human impact as well as the nuts and bolts.

Alongside inventive strategies for cohesive and integrated communities, The 2025 Davidson Prize is asking teams to zoom-in on the experiential aspects of a typical living space. At a time of increasing financialisation of the built environment, how can the design and construction of ordinary, affordable homes promote quality of life – providing the security, comfort and joy essential for human wellbeing?

Just what is it that will make tomorrow's homes so different, so appealing?

Teams are asked to combine their macro and micro ideas into a single billboard image, selling exciting and innovative placemaking and homemaking concepts to a wide range of audiences.



Design proposals should:

- Make a compelling case for new-build housing on your chosen site
- Communicate typologies for settlement and living that promote collective and individual wellbeing
- Convey a sense of the experiential qualities of the community
- Convey a sense of the experiential qualities of a typical home interior

Entries should:

- Engage lay audiences with exciting ideas about delivering new homes
- Demonstrate the added value of multi-disciplinary collaboration
- Show awareness of how the project might engage with neighbours, local economies and authorities, housebuilders and/or developers.

USEFUL REFERENCES

- **Centre for Cities** The Housebuilding Crisis: The UK's 4 Million Missing Homes centreforcities.org/reader/the-housebuilding-crisis/introduction
- **TCPA Campaign for Healthy Homes** tcpa.org.uk/collection/campaign-for-healthy-homes
- **Child In The City on Colin Ward** childinthecity.org/2021/09/09/the-child-in-the-city-1978-an-extensive-summary
- **Municipal Dreams** municipaldreams.wordpress.com

See 'Key Dates', 'Entry Requirements' and 'Judging' below for further information.

**KEY DATES & PROCESS**

The deadline for registration for the 2025 Davidson Prize is 18:00 GMT on Thursday 31 January 2025.

STEP ONE: REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

The Davidson Prize is open to multi-disciplinary creative teams. Each team must include an architect registered with ARB (UK) or RIAI (Ireland). To register your interest please complete [the registration form](#) by 18:00 GMT on Friday 31 January 2025.

Teams are asked to provide the following details:

1. Your team's nominated main contact (name / email / contact no.)
2. Name of your team's architect (if different to main contact)
3. ARB or RIAI registration no. of your team's architect
4. Names of additional team members (if known – NB if you have not created a team when registering your interest you can provide these details at the Stage 1 submission).

If you have not received a confirmation of registration by Friday 02 February please contact us at hello@thedavidsonprize.com. We recommend registering as early as possible, so you have longer to work on your Stage 1 submission with your team.

Following registration (deadline 18:00 GMT on Thursday 31 January 2025), the competition is organised in TWO STAGES leading to the announcement of a winner.

You have until Thursday 27 February 2025 to work on your Stage 1 submission. Please send your submission folder via downloadable link (WeTransfer / Dropbox etc.) to hello@thedavidsonprize.com.

STAGE 1:

- The deadline for Stage 1 submissions is 18:00 GMT on Thursday 27 February 2025
- All submissions will be reviewed by the 2025 Davidson Prize jury leading to the selection of a longlist.

STAGE 2

- A Stage 2 shortlist of three finalist teams will be selected by the 2025 Davidson Prize jury panel in April 2025
- The jury panel will provide guidance on how they would like finalist teams to progress their concept
- Each finalist team will be awarded an honorarium of £5,000 and a one-hour consultancy workshop with leading visualisation studio Hayes Davidson to develop their ideas
- The Stage 2 submission deadline is 18:00 BST on Thursday 15 May 2025
- After submitting their developed concepts, the teams will pitch to the jury
- Stage 2 pitches will take place towards the end of May 2025.

The winner of the £10,000 Davidson Prize will be announced in June 2025.

The Davidson Prize will also be running a People's Choice Prize. The public will be invited to vote for its favourite project from the 2025 longlist. Details on how to vote will be announced once the longlist is published.



ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

STAGE 1

Stage 1 submissions must include:

- A landscape ‘marketing billboard’ poster selling your design concept (3600x1800 pixels | PNG format)
- A social media advert (choose one):
 - 15–30 second video in 9:16 format suitable for Instagram or TikTok
 - Or a carousel of 3–5 square-format images (1080x1080)
- A completed submission form (sent to you upon registration) providing:
 - Full details of your multi-disciplinary team including the ARB or RIAI number of one registered architect
 - A 250-word statement explaining how your concept addresses the 2025 theme
 - A 100-word statement on how you envisage developing your proposal at Stage 2

The above will be used for shortlisting and may be used for exhibition and publicity purposes, including social media.

STAGE 2

At Stage 2, the three finalist teams will each receive an honorarium of £5,000 and a one-hour consultancy and ideation workshop with Hayes Davidson to support teams in developing their concepts in line with the jury’s feedback.

Finalist teams are required to prepare a 10-minute presentation to pitch these developed concepts to the jury panel. Your Stage 2 pitch must include:

- 3 x high-quality hero images demonstrating your developed concept (3600x1800 pixels | PNG format)
- 3 x 30-45 second films in 9:16 format selling three different elements of your developed concept – content might include drawings, models, animation, talking heads, VR, or other media to communicate your design ideas (provide a version with and without subtitles)

You must nominate two team members to pitch. The pitch will be followed by a Q&A.

You will be asked to submit your pitch material by 18:00 BST on Thursday 15 May 2025. Please also supply hero shots and film as separate files. The above will be used for judging, exhibition and publicity purposes, including social media.

The winner of the £10,000 prize will be announced in June 2025 during a celebratory event.

Please note that visual material that has previously been paid for by any party may not form part of your submission.



JUDGING & JUDGES

The 2025 Davidson Prize jury panel comprises:

- Pooja Agrawal, CEO of Public Practice (Chair)
- Jonny Buckland, Creative Director of Studio Saar (winner of the 2024 Davidson Prize)
- Jonathan Falkingham, Founder & Creative Director of Urban Splash
- Lucy Watson, Commissioning Editor, House & Home at the Financial Times
- Akil Scafe-Smith, Co-founder of RESOLVE Collective

All judging sessions will be attended by representative(s) of the Alan Davidson Foundation.

Stage 1 submissions will be reviewed by the 2025 Davidson Prize jury panel, leading to a longlist.

Stage 2 submissions will be reviewed by the 2025 Davidson Prize jury panel, leading to a winner.

Please note that the committee and jury panel's decisions are final.

OUR CREATIVE PARTNER

For 2025, The Davidson Prize is partnering with leading visualisation studio Hayes Davidson who will provide creative consultation.

OUR PEOPLE'S CHOICE SPONSOR

The 2025 People's Choice Prize is sponsored by Humanise.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Please contact hello@thedavidsonprize.com