



Alison Brooks

BES, BArch, Doc.Eng (Hon. Causa), RIBA, FRSA, RDI
Founder & Creative Director

Alison Brooks is one of the UK's most highly awarded and internationally acclaimed architects. A native of Guelph, Ontario, she studied architecture at the University of Waterloo before moving to the UK in 1988. Since founding her practice in 1996 she has produced a remarkable portfolio of built works ranging urban design and housing, higher education buildings, private houses and public buildings for the arts. She is the only UK architect to have received all three of the profession's most prestigious architectural awards: the RIBA Stirling Prize, the Manser Medal and the Stephen Lawrence Prize.

Alison Brooks' unique architectural approach springs from invested research into specific geographies, climate and cultures of each project so that her design solutions to emerge as both unique and relevant to the constituencies they serve. This is beautifully exemplified by her recently completed Cohen Quadrangle at Exeter College, Oxford. The first Oxford College to be designed by a female architect, this building demonstrates the conceptual rigour, sculptural quality and ingenious detailing that is her practice trademark.

Alison has dedicated much of her professional career to housing design, that she considers the social project of architecture and its most important form of civic building. She has completed over 1000 dwellings across the UK, including the Stirling Prize-winning Accordia, Cambridge; Stirling Prize-shortlisted Newhall Be; and multi-award winning Ely Court. Recent high-profile commissions include mixed-use projects in London, Vancouver and Moscow.

In the arts sector, she is currently designing an art museum and study centre for one of Cambridge's largest Colleges. Her cultural projects include the Folkestone Performing Arts Centre, a memorable beacon for Folkestone's arts communities, and the Smile, a now world-famous timber pavilion for the 2016 London Design Festival. In 2020 Alison Brooks Architects was one of eight international practices longlisted for the new Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Alison has become a public voice for the profession advocating the role of women in architecture, the resurgence of building craft and the value of timber as an expressive, low carbon building technology. Named in 2012 by Debrett's as one of 'Britain's 500 Most Influential', she was awarded BD Housing Architect of the Year and Architect of the Year. She was subsequently awarded 2013 AJ Woman Architect of the Year in recognition of her work in housing, regeneration and education. In 2017 Alison was appointed Royal Designer for Industry by the Royal Society of Arts and selected as London Mayor's Design Advocate. Alison was also honoured with the 2017 AJ 100 Contribution to the Profession Award, giving the keynote speech to the UK's 100 largest practices. In 2020 her practice was awarded Dezeen Architect of the Year and Housing Architect of the Year.

Alison has served CABE / Design Council as National Design Review Panel Chair for over ten years, and is Trustee of Open City. She was member of the 2009 Government advisory body The Farrell Review of Architecture and the Built Environment, juror for the RIBA Awards group from 2010-15, the 2011 Stirling Prize and 2010 Lubetkin Prize. She serves on numerous international design competition juries, most recently for the Camden Highline Competition.

Alison Brooks has contributed to architectural education for over fifteen years as External Examiner for University of Central London, University of Bath, University of Lincoln and the Architectural Association. She taught a Diploma School Unit at the Architectural Association Diploma School from 2008-2010 and served as External Examiner from 2016-2019. In 2018 Alison was appointed as the John T. Dunlop Design Critic in Architecture at Harvard GSD. Since 2018 she has been Visiting Professor for the Masters in Collective Housing at ETSAM, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. Alison lectures internationally on architecture and urban design.

In 2014 Alison was awarded an Alumni Achievement Award from the University of Waterloo, followed by a 2016 Doctorate of Engineering (Hon Causa).