



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD LIBRARY PROJECT SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED**

**COMPETITIVE PROCESS FOCUSES ON ENGAGEMENT AND CLIENT INTERACTION**

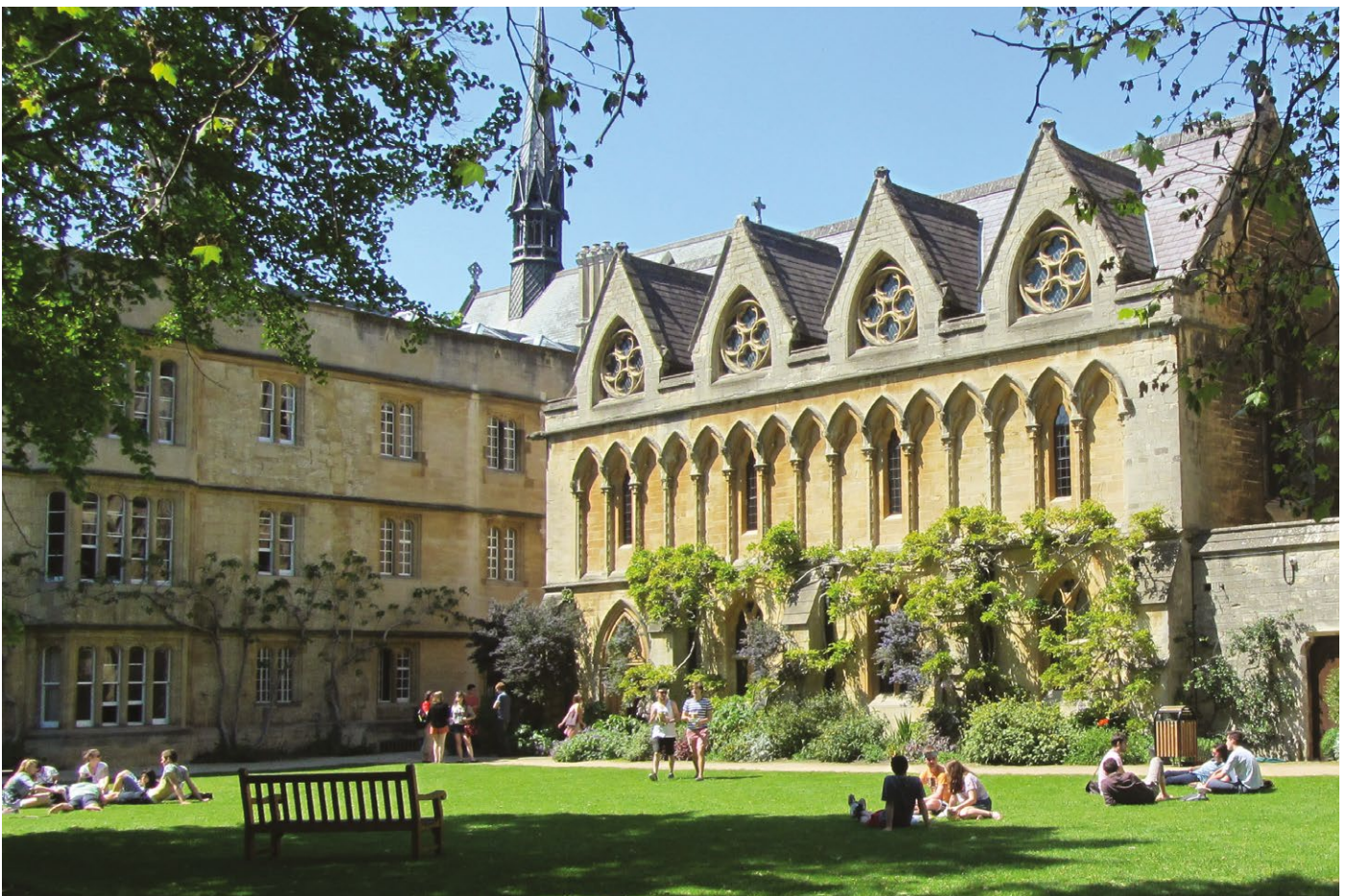


Image courtesy of Exeter College, Oxford

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) and Exeter College, Oxford today [13.03.19] announced the six finalists chosen from the first stage of the College's invited competitive process to select an architectural team to renew the College's Grade II listed Library.



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The finalists (in alphabetical order) are:

- **Carmody Groarke**
- **Coffey Architects**
- **Gort Scott**
- **Jonathan Tuckey Design**
- **Lee/Fitzgerald**
- **Nex**

Designed by the celebrated Victorian architect Sir George Gilbert Scott in the 1850s, the Neo-Gothic Library is still beloved today for its architectural quality, historic significance, scholarly atmosphere and idiosyncratic charm. During the early twentieth century, it supplied J.R.R. Tolkien, Exeter College's most famous alumnus, with Finnish grammars and other reference works.

Directly adjacent to the Bodleian, the Library is distinctive for the bold and inventive blind arcade of its main wing, timber-vaulted ceiling at the upper level and oak bookcases with decorative mouldings of fruit and foliage to Scott's original designs. These have been little altered since the nineteenth century.

MRC prepared a feasibility study on the Library for the College during 2017-18. This identified essential repairs to the building's fabric and upgrades to its services, as well as the need for a sensitive and holistic re-think to increase the number and quality of reader spaces and improve user comfort, accessibility, connectivity and sustainability, whilst respecting the building's significance and preserving its architectural identity and integrity.

**Professor Sir Rick Trainor, Rector of Exeter College,** said:

**“The Library is integral to the life of the College and its collections and reader spaces are extensively used. We know that renewing it and equipping it for 21st-century users will bring immense joy to the College community.**

**“We are grateful to all the competitors for the effort and imagination they put into their stage one submissions. We hugely look forward to our meetings and interactions with the finalists, and discovering the team that deeply connects with the project.”**



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**Malcolm Reading, Chairman of MRC, said:**

“This is a complex architectural challenge, which drew a very strong response. In making their submissions, the finalists excelled in their understanding of the project: the need to restore the fabric and maintain the individual charm of Scott’s superb gem, whilst creating a new place of study and learning fit for new generations.

“This competitive process involves direct engagement between the client and each firm at their respective offices, exploring their working culture and overall approach to projects as part of the decision to select a winner.”

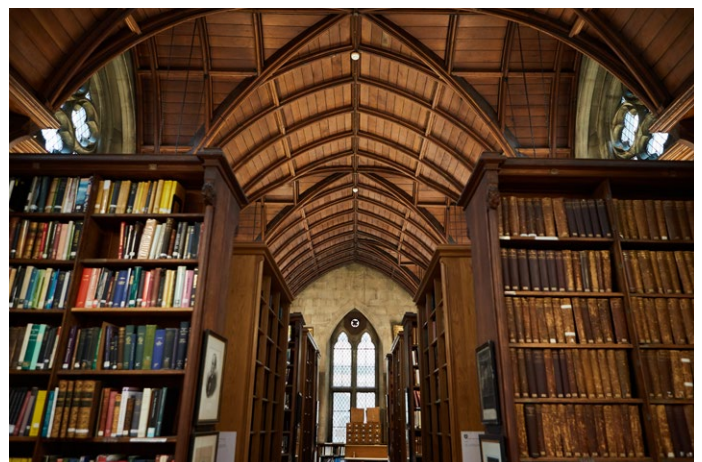
At stage one, teams were asked to introduce their practice, highlight relevant experience and provide initial thoughts on the project. At the second stage, finalists will take part in events designed to encourage dialogue and exchange with the College, before preparing a final submission.

MRC previously ran the invited design competition for Exeter’s new Cohen Quad, won by Alison Brooks Architects; the finished building won the World Architecture Festival – Higher Education & Research Completed Building of the Year 2018.

The winner of the Library commission is expected to be announced in late Spring 2019.

## IMAGES

Images (courtesy of Exeter College, Oxford) can be downloaded here:  
[dropbox.com/sh/aelo6h0ei9bggg7/AAB-sKMiiS\\_X9w2UoRKIzula?dl=0](https://dropbox.com/sh/aelo6h0ei9bggg7/AAB-sKMiiS_X9w2UoRKIzula?dl=0)





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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### Links to shortlisted practices

[carmodygroarke.com](http://carmodygroarke.com)

[coffeyarchitects.com](http://coffeyarchitects.com)

[gortscott.com](http://gortscott.com)

[jonathantuckey.com](http://jonathantuckey.com)

[leefitzgerald.co.uk](http://leefitzgerald.co.uk)

[nex-architecture.com](http://nex-architecture.com)

### About MRC

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) is a strategic architectural consultancy that helps clients to imagine and define contemporary environments; MRC is the leading global specialist in devising and managing international design competitions.

Since 1996, we have developed an extensive global network of contacts, an outstanding portfolio of completed projects, and an international reputation for fairness and transparency. MRC believes in the power of design to act as an inspiration.

We are currently running international design competitions for a new museum of applied arts and sciences in Sydney, Australia, and a new university in Milton Keynes, United Kingdom.

The consultancy advises the Royal Household of the United Kingdom, the British Library, the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Exeter College, Oxford, and Transport for London.

[malcolmreading.com](http://malcolmreading.com)