

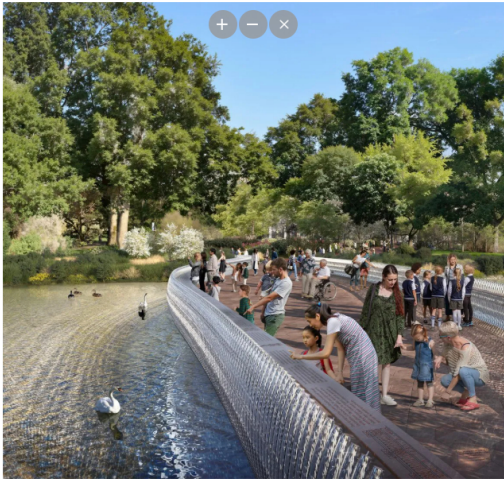


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EXCLUSIVE

Foster + Partners wins Queen Elizabeth II memorial competition

23 JUNE 2025 • BY GINO SPOCCHIA



1/27 [WINNER] Foster + Partners' designs for the QEII memorial

Foster + Partners has won the competition to design the new Queen Elizabeth II memorial, beating a shortlist which included Heatherwick Studio



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The Queen Elizabeth II Memorial contest fails to reflect a meritocratic Britain

The AJ understands that the Foster + Partners team, which includes heritage specialists Purcell, French landscape architect Michel Desvigne and artist Yinka Shonibare, has been selected to design the national memorial on the site next to Buckingham Palace in London's St James's Park.

Norman Foster's architecture practice, which the AJ understands was informed over a week ago of the win, saw off four other bids, following the high-profile competition organised by [Malcolm Reading Consultants](#).

The AJ had approached the Cabinet Office for comment about Fosters' victory on Thursday (19 June). An official announcement including new imagery was released today (24 June).

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Other contenders for the national memorial included Thomas Heatherwick's firm, which headed up a team including British sculptor Halima Cassell, landscape architect MRG Studio, and multidisciplinary practices Webb Yates and Arup.

The three other shortlisted teams were led by architecture practice WilkinsonEyre; landscape architect J&L Gibbons with William Matthews Associates; and landscape architect and garden designer Tom Stuart-Smith with Jamie Fobert Architects.

The five teams had been briefed to 'create a memorial masterplan that celebrates Queen Elizabeth II's extraordinary life of service and provides a space for pause and reflection'.

The competition was criticised by [AJ columnist Ike Ijeh](#) as a flawed and closed process only open to established designers, thereby failing to reflect a meritocratic Britain. In a second column on the subject, Ijeh predicted that the Foster design would be the most popular with the public as it 'comes closest to the public idea of what a memorial should look like'.

Winner + shortlist of design teams for Queen Elizabeth II memorial (full teams below)

> Foster + Partners with Yinka Shonibare and Michel Desvigne Paysagiste [WINNER]

- > **Heatherwick Studio** with Halima Cassell, MRG Studio, Webb Yates and Arup
- > **J&L Gibbons** with Michael Levine RDI, William Matthews Associates, Structure Workshop and Arup
- > **Tom Stuart-Smith** with Jamie Fobert Architects, Adam Lowe (Factum Arte) and Structure Workshop
- > **WilkinsonEyre** with Lisa Vandy and Fiona Clark, Andy Sturgeon Design, Atelier One and Hilson Moran

The memorial masterplan site incorporates a section of St James's Park next to the Mall and land surrounding a pathway down to the park's lake, including its Blue Bridge. As well as design, assessment criteria for the competition include value for money, placemaking experience and visitor experience.

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The memorial has a provisional construction budget in the range of £23-46 million, excluding VAT.

The contest is backed by the Queen Elizabeth Memorial Committee, an advisory body jointly established by the UK government and Royal Household in 2023. Chaired by the late Queen's former private secretary, Robin Janvrin, it comprises eight senior figures from across British public life.

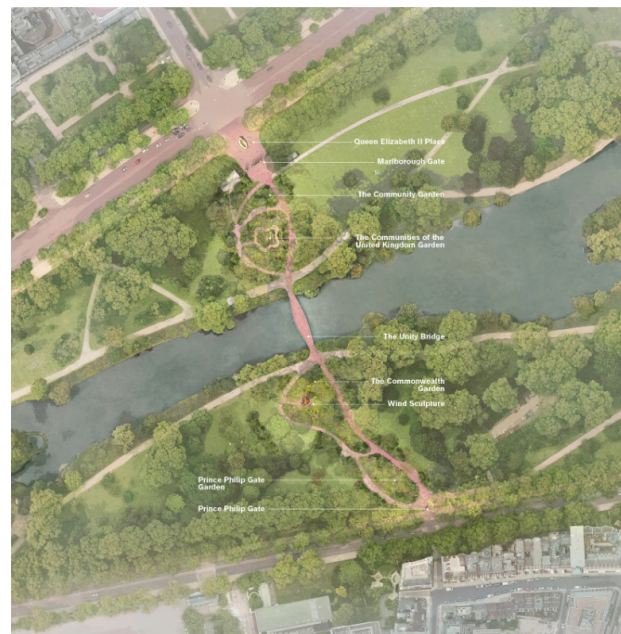
Foster's final design is expected to be unveiled in 2026, in what would have been Queen Elizabeth's centenary year. All five teams received a £50,000 honorarium for their stage two designs.

Chair of the Queen Elizabeth Memorial Committee, Janvrin, said at the launch of the contest: 'We are delighted to be working with some of the best architects, artists and designers in the world to produce a landmark memorial of outstanding beauty that celebrates and honours the life of Queen Elizabeth II.'

Following publication of the shortlist, the AJ ran a reader poll. The winner, with nearly a quarter of the votes (24 per cent), was Heatherwick Studio. Foster + Partners' team only came third, receiving just 18 per cent of votes cast by AJ readers, behind Tom Stuart-Smith with Jamie Fobert Architects who received 21 per cent.

Interestingly the choice of 'none of the above' made up nine per cent of all votes.

Foster + Partners was approached for comment.



[WINNER] Foster + Partners' designs for the QEII memorial. Site plan.

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One comment



Chris Rogers

23 June 2025 at 1:34 pm Edit

Whilst it's a relief that the crassest ideas have apparently been binned, the Foster scheme is far from perfect – its bridge actually narrows at the landing points, creating bottlenecks, whilst the hideous gold flower thing and overlarge statue need work. But it's still the wrong park (Green Park fulfils every objective in the brief in addition to being more suitable), wrong location within the park and wrong idea for a memorial – statue, new bridge AND swathe of landscaping? Why? #SaveStJamesPark

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