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**Sir Bob Kerslake applauds WiP National Student Awards**

Sir Bob Kerslake, Head of the Civil Service and Permanent Secretary to DCLG, praised the Women in Property (WiP) National Student Awards, saying “…this competition is what the industry needs, helping to raise the bar among both academia and industry”. He was speaking at the ‘Best of Best’ Awards dinner, held at Claridge’s on 17th September when the national winner of the UK-wide competition was announced.

Sir Bob Kerslake continued, “I know that many of the contenders in these Awards, past and present, have secured work placements and gone on to work in their chosen careers, considerably strengthened by the challenges WiP puts before them. This has got to be good news for the industry as these exceptional young women forge their careers.”

The 2013 winner is Charlotte Collins, studying Landscape Architecture at the University of Gloucestershire. Charlotte was one of ten finalists from across the UK, who together represented disciplines including Building and Quantity Surveying, Architecture, Planning, Civil Engineering and Real Estate Management.

Michelle Hicks, studying Civil Engineering at the University of Surrey was Highly Commended.

The Awards process spans nearly twelve months, starting with invitations to Universities to nominate students, a regional judging panel and awards and finally, the national panel, which takes place on the morning of the Awards dinner. In the afternoon, the finalists are invited to attend a Mentoring training session.

As part of their entry, students are required to present a degree project to judges, when they are questioned on their thinking, motivation and aspirations. They are also quizzed on topical or industry issues and judges assess them on ‘first impressions’, confidence and potential as a role model for other young women entering the industry and as a future leader.

Feedback from the nominated students has been consistently positive over the past seven years, welcoming the invaluable experience gained from presenting to senior industry professionals and the requirement to focus on what they are aiming to achieve in their future careers. They are unanimous in their view that taking part in the Awards helps in securing work placements and, ultimately, full time employment.

Julie Fawcett of MITIE and National Chairman of WiP, said, “This is a terrific achievement for Charlie. The Awards process is challenging and the competition very strong.

“As Sir Bob Kerslake acknowledged at the Awards Dinner, these inspirational young women gain so much from the Awards process, helping them to really consider what they need to do to become a ‘must have’ for a potential employer.”

Andrew Duncan Property Managing Director of programme management consultancy Turner & Townsend and sponsor of the National Student Awards said, “We are very proud of our involvement in this competition which, in our experience, highlights some of the most talented young women coming into the industry.

“We were delighted when the 2011 winner, Elsie North, joined Turner & Townsend as a mechanical engineer and strongly recommend other employers to keep their eye out for these girls when they graduate in a year’s time.”

The national judging panel described Charlotte as “…having loads of enthusiasm and a great sense of humour which complemented her holistic, almost visionary approach, showing tremendous responsibility.”

When asked what question she would put to a student if she were on the panel, her response was ‘What effect will you personally have on whatever you do? Will you be the next Isambard Kingdom Brunel?’

Charlotte said, “When you’re confined to University it’s easy to underestimate the extra work and personal development that should be put in towards forging a career. As students we can get very caught up in our studies. This Awards process has really helped me think more broadly and see things from an employer’s perspective. It’s been invaluable and I’m thrilled to have got the top prize!”

ENDS

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**Notes to editors:**

Women in Property is a national organisation which was founded in 1987. With over 1,000 members and 12 regional branches it represents all disciplines within the property and construction industry and provides a forum for business opportunities, the exchanging of views, networking and personal development.