

*Press Release: September 2007*

## **The Sorrell Foundation Young Design Centre opened at Somerset House with the *What's Next For Schools?* exhibition in May 2007**

In May 2007, the Sorrell Foundation launched a new Centre to explore what young people want from design at school and in their daily lives. **The Sorrell Foundation Young Design Centre** is the first of its kind in the UK, and opens with an exhibition called *What's Next For Schools?* Open 7 days a week, the exhibition looks at future schools as well as at historic school design exhibition. It will be free to individuals, families and school parties.

As the government develops its £60bn rebuilding and refurbishment programme for every secondary and 50 per cent of primary schools in England, the opening of **The Sorrell Foundation Young Design Centre** is highly relevant and vitally important. It will draw attention to what young people expect from the designers of their schools and encourage local authorities to use the significant body of practical evidence that The Sorrell Foundation has gathered over 7 years, through its **joinedupdesignforschools** programme.

Over the next three years, the Centre will present exhibitions, run a comprehensive workshop programme in the Somerset House Lecture Theatre and Learning Centre, and create a unique Research Centre with a new archive exploring what young people want from school design.

Created by leading exhibition designers **Casson Mann**, *What's next for schools?* is an innovative, interactive display that includes films, web games, models, audio, and inspiring imagery. It demonstrates how pupils benefit from being engaged in the process of a new design, looks at the role of the design industry in education and allows visitors to respond with their views. Most importantly, the display animates the 12 common design issues identified by pupils during the **joinedupdesignforschools** programme of case studies and workshops – issues that if solved, would dramatically improve quality of life in schools. When pupils are given the responsibility of clients in

the design process, and when acting as the school's representatives and decision-makers, they gain invaluable experience and develop vitally important life skills, such as communication, teamwork, negotiation and problem solving, which lead to improved self-esteem and self-confidence.

The Sorrell Foundation initiated **joinedupdesignforschools** as a pilot with six schools in 2000. Now, after 7 years of development involving over 200 schools, the programme has become a model for allowing young people to fully participate in the way their schools are designed. World-class designers, including **Paul Smith, Will Alsop** and **Thomas Heatherwick** have worked for pupil client teams on design projects and have become enthusiastic advocates for this approach.

Launched in 2005, the **Young Design Programme** evolved from **joinedupdesignforschools**. Once again school pupils are the clients, but this time their consultants are design students at university, who in turn are mentored by professional designers. The programme currently involves University of the Arts London, University College Falmouth and Leeds College of Art and Design with more Universities joining in Autumn 2007. The Young Design Programme develops the creative work and social skills of pupils and students and creates a link through the three education sectors – primary, secondary and tertiary – and the design industry. The results of this year's programme will be on display at the **Sorrell Foundation Young Design Centre**, at Somerset House in June 2007.

Alongside the opening of this exciting new Centre, The Sorrell Foundation is also announcing its sponsorship of **The RIBA Sorrell Foundation Schools Award**, the UK's first prize for excellence in school architecture. The prize aims to further raise the standards of design in all new school building by awarding £5,000 to the architects of the best primary or secondary school. Contenders for the award will be on display at **The Sorrell Foundation Young Design Centre** in Autumn 2007, and the inaugural winners will be announced on 6 October at the RIBA Stirling Prize Dinner.

**For further press information and images please contact: Polly Cassidy on 020 7845 5860 or email [polly@thesorrellfoundation.com](mailto:polly@thesorrellfoundation.com)**

## QUOTES

*The Sorrell Foundation is an exciting new partner in our plans to evolve new opportunities for learning at Somerset House. We are committed to reaching out to a wide range of audiences. Alongside our other education partners, the Courtauld Institute of Art and the Gilbert Collection, we are delighted to welcome the Sorrell Foundation to Somerset House.*

**Gwyn Miles, Director, Somerset House Trust**

*The development of young people's life skills is at the heart of Sorrell Foundation projects. The creative process contains opportunities for pupils to learn and develop highly transferable skills that help them succeed, not just in creative thinking, but also in life in general.*

**Frances Sorrell**

*There's nobody better to work with than young people because young people have less cluttered minds than us grown ups.*

**Paul Smith**

*Most of us went to dodgy, ugly schools, and it fires you up to think: 'What if schools were inspiring? What if schools were what they are not? What if they weren't rubbish?'*

**Thomas Heatherwick**

*To be 16 years old and have a host of interesting, intelligent and creative professionals asking you for your opinions, and actually being genuinely interested in hearing them, is so refreshing. I think this is one of the great (and brave!) ideas behind the initiative. Not to be told when to speak, to be allowed to offer frank, honest criticisms and to feel comfortable to voice ideas, are not privileges usually synonymous with schoolchildren. It gave me confidence to speak up and challenge others. It introduced us to the concept of 'thinking outside the box', which has stuck with me ever since and will no doubt aide me in my career. Now I aim high and strive to achieve high.*

**Former client. 20**

*Government now requires us under the Every Child Matters agenda to involve children, young people and their families in service design and improvement. This project has given us a wonderful experience of doing just that – and given us the confidence to start incorporating such involvement into our day-to-day project development procedures.*

**Trevor Cooper, Cornwall County Council**

## Notes to Editors:

- **The Sorrell Foundation Young Design Centre** will be open 10am – 6pm daily.
- **The Department for Education and Skills (DfES)** is supporting The Sorrell Foundation Young Design Centre at Somerset House.
- The **Sorrell Foundation** was set up by **Frances** and **John Sorrell** with the aim of inspiring creativity in young people and improving the quality of life through good design. The Sorrell Foundation:
  - Creates and prototypes new initiatives to explore their potential before development.
  - Seeks new ways to join up public sectors such as education and health with the UK's world-class design community.
  - Aims to deliver immediate benefits whilst creating models that have long-term implications.
- **John Sorrell** and **Frances Sorrell** (née Newell) were previously co-chairs of Newell and Sorrell for 25 years.
  - **John Sorrell** is co-chair of the Sorrell Foundation. He is chair of CBE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment). He is also the chairman of the London Design Festival, which he originated with the purpose of celebrating and promoting London and the UK's creativity. Previously John chaired the UK Design Council from 1994 to 2000, and co-chaired Newell and Sorrell, one of Europe's biggest and most successful design companies between 1976 and 2000. He has also chaired the Design Business Association and was Vice President of the Chartered Society of Designers. John was appointed CBE in 1996, holds three Honorary Design Doctorates, and is an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy. He was awarded the Royal Society of Arts Bicentenary Medal in 1998 and elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 2002.
  - **Frances Sorrell** is co-chair of The Sorrell Foundation. Frances is a Visiting Professor at University of the Arts London, a Member of the British Council Design Advisory Group and a Member of the DfES School Design Advisory Council. Frances was a Trustee of Mencap 2000 – 2005. Previously, she was co-chair and creative director of Newell and Sorrell from 1976 – 2000. She has been a Member of the NHS London Design Advisory Group; Advisory Board member of the National Photography, Film and Television Museum; Member of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority Arts Advisory Group; Director of the Royal Academy Enterprise Board; Director of the National Institute of Employment Studies; and Member of the Affairs & Awards Committee of City & Guilds and its Future 100 Committee. She was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 2002.
- **Joinedupdesignforschools** explores how good design can improve the quality of life in schools by listening to the voices of the consumers.
  - The Sorrell Foundation has run 62 joinedupdesignforschools projects in 60 state schools and worked with 46 further schools in a workshop programme at the V&A. During the UK tour, the Foundation worked with 80 more schools in 8 regions in the first waves of Building Schools for the Future.
  - The Foundation worked with 57 design practices. 150 designers and support staff have been directly involved, including the Richard Rogers Partnership, Paul Smith, Thomas

Heatherwick, Future Systems, Wolff Olins, Will Alsop, Marks Barfield, Kevin McCloud and Conran & Partners.

- So far, 10,000 pupils have benefited from the projects and 688 pupils have taken part in client teams, with another 1000 involved in the workshop programme at the V&A.
  - More than 260 teachers have worked with the project, including one primary school that involved their entire teaching staff.
  - Twelve common issues that pupils have with their schools have been identified by the project and are: Colour, Communication, Dinner Halls, Learning Spaces, Reception Areas, Reputation & Identity, Sixth-Form Spaces, Social Spaces, Storage, Sustainability, Toilets and Uniform.
  - Ten concepts were delivered during the seven-year programme due to the effort and enthusiasm of the schools and designers involved. A further 16 concepts have been or are in the process of being delivered with the support of match-funding by the DfES.
  - A fully illustrated, 192-page book, *joinedupdesignforschools*, was published by Merrell in 2005.
- **The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)** awards programme recognises and rewards buildings of architectural excellence and that make a substantial contribution to the local environment. The awards are annual, and have been running continuously since 1966.

The RIBA Sorrell Foundation Schools Award is a prize of £5000 to the architects of the best primary or secondary award-winning school with the aim of raising the standards of design in all new school building. A shortlist will be announced on the 6 September and the winner will be announced at the RIBA Stirling Prize Dinner at The Roundhouse, London on Saturday 6 October.

The RIBA National, European and International Awards, the Lubetkin Prize and the award for RIBA Client of the Year, will be presented at a dinner to be held at the Hilton Hotel, London on 22 June 2007. Winners of RIBA National Awards and RIBA European Awards will be eligible for the RIBA Stirling Prize and for the Stephen Lawrence Prize. RIBA National Award winners only will be eligible for a series of special awards, including the RIBA Sorrell Foundation Schools Award, to be presented at the RIBA Stirling Prize Dinner in London on 6 October 2007. The Sorrell Foundation will display the contenders for the award at the new Young Design Centre to discover which project young people would vote the winner. For further information on the RIBA Awards please contact Lorna Gemmell in the RIBA Press Office on [lorna.gemmell@inst.riba.org](mailto:lorna.gemmell@inst.riba.org) or +44 (0) 20 7307 3761.