

RIBA Client of the Year 2023

Onion Collective named RIBA Client of the Year 2023 for East Quay community-led regeneration project.



Photos
Jim Stephenson

- The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has named Onion Collective as Client of the Year 2023 for its [East Quay](#) project in Somerset. Presented since 1998, the annual RIBA Client of the Year award honours the key role clients play in the creation of great architecture.

Comprising a gallery, artists' studios and education spaces, East Quay is the vision of the social enterprise, Onion Collective. Designed by Invisible Studio and Ellis Williams Architects, the community-funded project lies on a previously abandoned boatyard in the coastal town of Watchet in North Somerset and has been commended as an uplifting model for community-led regeneration.

Judges noted that the completion of East Quay, over an eight-year period, was testament to the concerted efforts of Onion Collective and local people – schools, social clubs, community groups and businesses – who were engaged in its development. The project has also initiated wider regeneration of the harbour town.

Praised for skilfully drawing inspiration from the natural landscape and connecting and enhancing the community, East Quay also received the RIBA South West Building of the Year Award 2023.



Chair of the RIBA Client of the Year 2023 jury, Denise Bennetts, said:

“Great clients are vital to creating buildings and places that make a difference to peoples’ lives. Congratulations to Onion Collective for their success and passion for enterprise and creativity. Their vision, and dedication to creating meaningful change, enabled Invisible Studio and Ellis Williams to deliver a model for exceptional community-led economic regeneration. East Quay is a fantastic example of how great architecture, collaboration and co-creation can empower communities and deliver incredible, transformative benefits.”

The RIBA Client of the Year 2023 jury comprised: Denise Bennetts (Chair), Founder of Bennetts Associates, Mitchell Brand, Director (Land & Marketing) at Thornsett Group and Ben Wildsmith, Area Sales Manager at Ibstock.



The winner of the RIBA Reinvention Award was announced at a ceremony at Victoria Warehouse, Manchester, on 19 October 2023, where the winners for the [Stephen Lawrence Prize](#), the [Neave Brown Award for Housing](#), the [RIBA Reinvention Award](#), the and the Stirling Prize winners were also unveiled.

