



## WHITE RED ARCHITECTS

Press Release  
24 May 2021

# UK ARCHITECTURE FIRM SELECTED IN EXCLUSIVE SHORTLIST FOR GLOBAL RIBA COMPETITION

London based architecture firm, [White Red Architects](#), are the only UK practice to have been shortlisted for the RIBA's 'Ancient Tree Civilization and Residence Future International Architectural Design Competition'.

The practice has made the 'top 6' shortlist, fighting off competition from over 500 entrants across the globe. The much-anticipated shortlist, which was announced on Friday (21<sup>st</sup> May), will go forward to the final judging stage with the champion being announced on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The judging panel consists of an esteemed group of architects and academicians, including Azlina Bulmer, Director of RIBA International, Nishizawa Ryue, 2010 Pritzker Prize winner and Co-founder of SANAA, and Thomas Heatherwick, Founder of Heatherwick Studio.

The competition invites entrants to design a unique visitor experience – an eco-hotel and guest houses - forming part of the Guangdong Xiangtoushan National Nature Reserve, located at Kaisen Thousand Year Ancient Trees Garden in Pingan Village, Baitang Town, Boluo County, Huizhou City, Guangdong Province, China. The project focusses on the Thousand Year Ancient Trees Garden, and the surrounding land of 1333.33 hectares, including three villages – Gudong Village, Pingnan Village and Jiaomu Village, all with good transport links.

The entrants' (individuals or groups) design proposals are expected to fully consider the relationship of the buildings within the site and numerous ancient trees, to protect and enhance the site while providing services for visitors, and to clearly express the competition's themes of protection, return and inheritance. Designers also need to focus on the design principles, design methods, and technical routes of sustainable and ecological architecture, and fully consider the specific ecological and cultural environment of this ancient tree garden. White Red Architect's concept, 'Discovery', which caught the judge's eyes, is designed to elevate and inspire visitors to discover. It allows them to engage with nature through exploring the many layers of a forest, escaping the traditional perspective of the forest floor. Discovery enables stronger connections and forms memories.

The resort will be composed of buildings and elements which will be situated within all the layers of the forest: The Undergrowth, The Understorey, The Canopy and The Emergent Layer. The proposed construction will have minimal intrusion on the existing nature and will coexist in harmony. The foundation structure will be driven timber piles, ensuring that the buildings can float about the forest floor, the soil is not interrupted or contaminated with harmful non-organic materials. The building materials will be sustainable, have a minimal carbon footprint and be durable to ensure longevity and maximise the lifespan.

The masterplan will be composed of various typologies of buildings. The essence of the design is to connect with the nostalgia associated with the timeless ancient forest. The designs of these structures will relate to three main concepts which are the stages in the growth cycle of a tree: Ancient Tree, Young Tree, Saplings/Sprouts.



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The design of the buildings, the Walkways, The Hotel, Villas and Treehouses can co-exist with the forest and not intrude on the delicate biodiversity which provides health to nature.

### **Competition Timeline**

11 January 2021: Call for entries  
11 April 2021: Registration and submission deadline  
20 April 2021: Release of top 100 shortlist  
20 April 2021: Release of top 30 shortlist  
21 May 2021: Release of top six shortlist  
11 June 2021: Release of top three shortlist and competition winner

### **Jury Panel**

- Azlina Bulmer - Director of International, RIBA
- Jianmin Meng - Academician of Chinese Academy of Engineering
- Benedetta Tagliabue - Jury member for the Pritzker Prize, Co-founder of EMBT and 2013 RIBA Jencks Award recipient
- Nishizawa Ryue - 2010 Pritzker Prize winner and Co-founder of SANAA
- Chien Chung Pei - Founding Partner, PEI Architects
- Thomas Heatherwick - Founder, Heatherwick Studio
- Roberto Bannura - Partner, Steven Holl Architects
- Steven Smit - Director, MVRDV Asia
- Yibin Yang - Design Director, Kaisen Holding Group

**ENDS\_**



## Notes to editors:

### **About White Red Architects**

We produce good quality, fun, understandable architecture.

We are not afraid to be disruptive, push boundaries and expectations. Underlying this is always a clear, process-driven approach to problem-solving.

Every project is a unique problem to be solved, a journey to explore and a story to be told. That is why we embark on each one with an explorative mind, investigating context, needs, value.

[www.white-red.co.uk](http://www.white-red.co.uk)  
@whiteredarchitects

### **Competition information**

The Kaisan Ancient Tree Wellness centre and retreat international design competition is supported by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), organised by Kaisen Holding Group, executed by RIBA WFOE and delivered by designverse and Young Bird Plan. The competition is open to all designers and architects both in the UK and international to deliver a new model of eco-hotel and guest houses while retaining the natural forest and protecting the ancient native trees of this popular attraction.

<https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/knowledge-landing-page/ancient-tree-civilization-and-residence-future-international-architectural-design-competition>