

## Fitzwilliam College Architecture Design Competition 2025

Fitzwilliam is one of the University of Cambridge's most architecturally diverse and interesting colleges. It is famous for the contrast between the old and the new, and draws architecture students from around the world to study its buildings.

We are pleased to invite you to participate in Fitzwilliam College's Architectural Design Competition. This is an exciting opportunity for Year 12 (or equivalent) students to analytically approach a design problem and creatively develop architectural design solutions. Students will design and communicate their design solutions through drawings and a design narrative.

Entries must be received by **6pm on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

### Design Challenge Brief

You are challenged to design a new building somewhere on the Fitzwilliam College site. This building will serve as a hub for interaction between teaching staff and students, where they can share and explore ideas.

During the design process, you will need to think about what programmes or activities need to be accommodated in the new building. For instance, you can consider including spaces for social interaction such as a new cafe, as well as spaces to have quieter conversations in groups of different sizes. You must also consider possible locations for the new building within the College site, taking into consideration the other College buildings in your design, as well as the landscaped areas preserving mature trees as much as possible. This should be seen as an opportunity to create an interesting relationship between the interior and exterior spaces.

### You are required to submit:

- Project Title that best describes your design intention and final design solution
- Design Narrative of **500 words** that concisely explains your design inspiration, design objective, and final design strategy developed to meet your design objective
- Drawings that show the following:
  - 1) floor plan(s) of your building at 1:200 scale
  - 2) one elevation and one section of the building that best describes main features of the design solution
  - 3) one site plan that indicates the location of the building in relation to existing buildings in the college site. A detailed site plan showing the

ground floor plans of the individual buildings is available on the essay competition website for reference, but you should produce a new drawing for the competition submission.

- 4) one perspective drawing of your building that highlights your design intention and shows the placement of a new building in relation to existing college buildings nearby

## **A chance to view Fitzwilliam College**

On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February, **Mr Eric Martin**, Director of Studies in Architecture, will give an architectural tour of the College to competition entrants and other attendees interested in architecture. If you would like to take part in this opportunity, please email [essaycompetitions@fitz.cam.ac.uk](mailto:essaycompetitions@fitz.cam.ac.uk) by the 1<sup>st</sup> of February to register your interest and receive further details. If you would like to visit but cannot attend on the Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February, please email and we can arrange a self-guided tour.

## **Fitzwilliam College Site Information**

Fitzwilliam College is structured around four courts, each of which is bordered by buildings containing student accommodation. Key buildings within the College include The Grove, Hall Building, Auditorium and Chapel. You may find other images on the college website and the Instagram accounts @[fitzwilliamcoll](#) and @[sara\\_s\\_owen](#).

On the essay competition website you will find links to some images of different areas of the College, and a map showing its layout. Fellows' Court, Tree Court, and the Hall Building were completed between 1961 and 1966 according to the initial Masterplan by architect Denys Lasdun. The choice of a dark-brown brick and the exposed horizontal bands of the concrete floors which delineate the three storeys of the elevations imparts a more austere appearance to the perimeter ranges than the warm red brick façades of older colleges.

In both scale and detail the **Hall Building** makes a much stronger statement. The highly individualistic tall clerestory windows framed by hooded parabolic pods, lighting the dining hall, tower over and dominate the College.

**New Court** was completed between 1983 and 1986 to expand south of Fellows' Court for student accommodation. New Court's design took its cue from Lasdun's perimeter ranges in its three-storey elevation, use of dark brick with horizontal concrete string-courses and the mix of narrow and wide windows, with many differences in detail.

**Wilson Court** was completed between 1991-94 for a new study and accommodation block. This was to be erected east of Lime Tree Avenue, which leads from Storey's Way towards the Grove. The building is on the same axis as the south wing of New Court and respects its scale and use of dark brick while offering a variation on the stepped-bay elevation.

**Gatehouse Court** was added to the site in 2003 for additional office and residential accommodation. The L-shaped range abuts New Court, and the imposing entrance is signalled by the top-lit glass lantern, a contemporary interpretation of the traditional college gatehouse which provides a welcoming ambience. Continuity with the earlier buildings is maintained by the use of dark brick and pale horizontal banding, but a distinctive feature is the zinc and Douglas fir cladding to the window bays.

**The Auditorium** opened in 2004 and is a building of very different character from Gatehouse Court. The identity of the Auditorium is defined on the one hand by the Grove, with its buff Cambridge vernacular brickwork, and on the other by the eye-catching stainless- steel cladding at the west end.

**The Olisa Library** is the latest addition to the College's stock of buildings. The round tower (part of the library) emulates the existing chapel and functions as a monumental endpoint to Lasdun's building. Between this tower and a smaller turret is the stepped main façade, with its distinctive white-oak cladding blending with the brickwork of the Grove.

**The Grove** is a Grade II listed house which lies at the centre of the College and dates from the Napoleonic Wars. It is built from gault brick, with a slate roof.

Please refer to the supplementary document: Building Fitzwilliam College 1963 – 2013 – An Architectural Journey, for further information about the history of the masterplan and individual buildings. You may also find it useful to use Google Maps to obtain aerial views of the college and gain a better understanding of other elements, such as significant trees.

## Competition Rules

This essay competition is for students in their penultimate year of education - Year 12 (Eng + Wales), S5 (Scotland), Y13 (NI) or equivalent overseas. International applicants are welcomed but the submission must be written in English. Applicants will be required to enter their details online and to either upload one PDF copy of their design electronically **or** post a hard copy to:

Schools Liaison Officer  
Fitzwilliam College  
Cambridge  
CB3 0DG

by **6pm on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025**. If the PDF file is too large to submit to the online form, please email your submission to [essaycompetitions@fitz.cam.ac.uk](mailto:essaycompetitions@fitz.cam.ac.uk). Further submission information can be found on the competition website: <https://www.fitz.cam.ac.uk/event/fitzwilliam-college-competitions>

Your submission must be entirely your own work. When submitting your design you will need to provide contact information for one of your teachers and if necessary we may contact them to verify that your submission is entirely your own work. Students are only permitted to enter one competition and may only submit one entry to their chosen competition. There is a strict limit of five submissions per school for each competition. If more than five students from the same school enter the same competition, a teacher from that school will be contacted and asked to select the five entries; failure to do so will result in all submissions from the school to that competition being disqualified.

**Prizes:**

The prize fund (per competition) is £300 with a first prize of £200 and highly commended applicants being awarded a £25 book voucher. A prizegiving ceremony will be held in April 2025.

**For further information about the competition please contact:**

[essaycompetitions@fitz.cam.ac.uk](mailto:essaycompetitions@fitz.cam.ac.uk).

**For questions about the Architecture course, please contact:**

[admissions@fitz.cam.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@fitz.cam.ac.uk).