

The Alton Society

Rules for

The John Ambrose Award

Purpose and Criteria

1 This Award, named in honour of the first Chairman of the Society, will be offered on an annual basis, with a view to acknowledging excellence in one or more projects relating to building, conservation, landscaping, or other environmental improvement that have enhanced the visual quality and/or the amenities of the Alton area.

2 The range of qualifying projects will cover broadly:

- (a) New Building or Development;
- (b) Conversion or Conservation of an Existing Building;
- (c) Landscaping or other Environmental Improvement (not necessarily involving building).

3 The main criteria normally applicable to each of these categories will be:

- (a) Consistency and quality of design
Quality of materials and detailing
Quality of execution
Contribution to surroundings
Contribution to life in the Alton area;
- (b) Rescue of a building under threat
Consistency and quality of design
Quality of materials and detailing
Quality of execution
Contribution to life in the Alton area;
- (c) Quality of design in both hard and soft elements
Materials and detailing
Contribution to surroundings
Potential for sustained upkeep
Public visibility/accessibility.

4 Consideration will be limited to projects effectively completed at some point within the period of 24 months ending on 30 September of the award-year.

Panel and Procedures

5 At its June or July meeting each year the Committee of the Society will make a *prima facie* assessment of the overall field of relevant projects potentially worthy of more detailed

consideration. It will then decide on whether to form an Award Panel for that year. If it agrees so to proceed, it will appoint one of its number as Convener and will also designate the category or categories (as listed in Rule 2 above) which the Panel should be asked to consider in the current round.

6 The Awarding Panel will comprise:

(a) all members of the Committee who are free and willing to participate fully in the assessment process (of whom any four shall form the essential quorum for the operation of the Panel);

(b) one or more other members of the Society (invited at the discretion of the Committee);

(c) the Mayor of Alton, or another representative of the Town Council nominated by him/her.

7 Following the June or July meeting of the Committee, the Convener will consult with at least one other member of the Panel so as to determine a manageable short-list of projects for inspection within the category or categories now designated for that year.

8 The Convener will also arrange a precise schedule for judging, on the basis that, normally, all short-listed projects will be inspected by the Panel on a single day before the end of October and that all assessments will be finalized upon this same occasion.

9 Where relevant and feasible, inspection of publicly accessible interiors may be included within the judging process.

10 Panellists will on each annual occasion complete their assessment within the framework of a Marking Scheme common to them all (see Annex).

11 The Panel will normally aim to make a single Award. However, it will also be free to use its discretion so as to make more than one Award, or no Award at all.

12 The Panel will also be free to make such Commendations, short of an Award, as it might agree.

13 Any decision upon which the Panel might require a formal vote will be settled on the basis of a simple majority, with any abstentions left aside and with the Convener having an additional casting vote in the case of a tie.

14 All decisions of the Panel will be final.

15 On any other points not covered by the preceding Rules, the Panel will have discretion to determine how best to conduct its business.

Presentation

16 The Award, together with any notice of Commendation, will take the form of a framed certificate, which will normally be presented at the November AGM of the Society or at another appropriate public occasion. This document will also cite the principal category under which the project was assessed.

ANNEX

The John Ambrose Award

Marking Scheme

1 Rule 10 makes clear that on each annual occasion Panellists must complete their assessment within the framework of a Marking Scheme common to them all.

2 The basic Scheme involves confirming the principal category into which a project falls (as listed under Rule 2), before the individual Panellists go on to allocate points in the range from 1 to 5 under each of the five criteria specified in Rule 3 as being relevant to that specific category. In addition, Panellists will then proceed to allocate further points, in a range from 1 to 10, reflecting their overall impression of the project's quality. This arrangement means that every project will have a potential maximum of 35 points available to it from each Panellist.

3 Provided that Rule 13 on voting procedure is heeded and that the potential maximum for each project is preserved at 35 points per assessor, the Panellists may decide to adjust the definition and/or the weighting of criteria for any case where they might believe that a strict application of the basic Scheme would be inappropriate to the particular circumstances at issue. Any such variation of definition and/or of weighting will then be adopted uniformly by all members of the current Panel.

4 The Panel will not be required to apply any pre-specified threshold to the number of points needed by a project to qualify either for an Award or for a Commendation. However, the Convener will ensure that the Panel can be given, if it so requests, some numerical information from previous awarding sessions such as might help to maintain a broad consistency of standards and judgment from year to year. Thus the Convener will also be required to finish the Panel's work by lodging with the Committee's Minute Book a note recording the average points-total per assessor that each inspected project achieved [i.e. if a Panel of 11 were to produce an overall tally of 265 points (out of $35 \times 11 = 385$), this would be recorded simply as a score of 24.1 (rounded up from 265 divided by 11)].