



**SOCIETY OF
GARDEN +
LANDSCAPE
DESIGNERS**

**AWARDS
2027**

**Student Design Awards
Entry Information**



STUDENT DESIGN AWARDS ENTRY INFORMATION

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Grace Hugh-Jones, Damson Cottage

Winner Student Design - Large Domestic Garden 2026



Robbie Avey, Wolves Lane

Winner Student - Design for the Environment 2026

AWARD CATEGORIES, ENTRY DEADLINES AND FEES

No	Award Category	Description	Eligibility	Entry Form & Fees
18	Student Design Public Realm	For a constructed or not constructed design completed by a Student Member while a student	Student members, qualifying Pre-Registered members, & qualifying Friends of SGLD	'Early Bird' fee £67 by Wednesday 30th September 2026. Standard Fee £80 by Wednesday 28th October 2026. All prices inclusive of VAT.
19	Student Design Small Domestic Gem	Project up to 350m ² for a constructed or not constructed design completed by a Student Member while a student		
20	Student Design Large Domestic	Project above 350m ² for a constructed or not constructed design completed by a Student Member while a student		
21	Open Choice	If you choose to enter this option the judges will decide which category your project best fits. The project must have been completed by a Student Member while a student		

KEY DEADLINE DATES

- Early Bird Entry form & fee - Wednesday 30th September 2026
- Entry form & standard Fee - Wednesday 28th October 2026
- Electronic submission to Dropbox - 5pm Thursday 5th November 2026

Finalists will be announced in December 2026

Winners will be announced at the SGLD Award Ceremony on Friday 5th February 2027.

Note: projects are judged anonymously

ENTRY PROCESS

- Complete a student entry form for each project/category you are entering ON THE AWARDS PAGE OF THE SGLD WEBSITE and pay the entry fee. Receipt of payment will be sent automatically.
- You will receive confirmation of registration when both payment and entry form have been received and checked. The unique entry ID for the submission and link to a dedicated dropbox will be provided in this email. Each project submission will be given its own unique ID and link.
- Add your pdf submission to the SGLD Dropbox folder no later than 5pm Thursday 5th November 2026. Please note all electronic submissions must be made anonymously. Don't worry if Dropbox adds your name automatically we will remove this.
- Alert SGLD by email to awards@sgld.org.uk when you have added your entry to the SGLD Dropbox and your successful submission will be acknowledged.

RULES OF ENTRY

1. Completion and submission of the entry form will be taken as confirmation that you have read, understood, and will abide by the 'Rules of Entry' and the 'Presentation Advice'.
2. Entries for the Student Design Awards must have been completed whilst a student and a Student Member.
3. The entrant must:
 - be a Student who graduated in 2025 or are graduating in 2026 or 2027 and
 - currently be a Student Member, or if already graduated a Pre-registered member (including Graduates), or a Friend of the Society.
4. If a Pre-Registered member enters the Main Awards, they may not enter the Student Awards.
5. The work submitted must be the sole work of the student entering.
6. No evidence of the name of the student designer or their college should appear in the pdf project submission. Note the judges will not see the entry form, they will only see the pdf Submission you add to Dropbox.
7. Entrants may submit as many individual entries as they wish.
8. Design for Student Members' own gardens cannot be entered.
9. All requirements must be met, or your submission may be excluded.
10. Your submission pdf file title must only be the 'unique entry ID' provided by the SGLD Awards office.
11. Fees are non-refundable even if an entry is withdrawn or excluded.
12. Any submissions received after the deadline will not be considered for an Award.
13. The SGLD reserves the right to reject any materials submitted as unsuitable in specification or quality and to request replacement.
14. The organisers reserve the right to amend entry criteria.
15. The organisers reserve the right to amend or merge or withdraw Award categories without notice or explanation.
16. No correspondence will be entered into, and no individual feedback will be provided.

JUDGES' DECISIONS ARE FINAL



PROJECT SUBMISSION

Important advice on your submission can be found on page 5.

Your presentation must be submitted as a single pdf (max. 12MB) titled only with its unique entry ID. Nothing in your submission should identify you or your college. Provide a maximum of 14 landscape pages in your .pdf in the following order:

1. Cover Sheet to include

- Your unique entry code (supplied by SGLD Awards office when acknowledging receipt of your entry form and fee)
- Your project's title. Maximum of 5 words.
- Category entered

2. Client Brief, Project Statement and Environmental Contribution

- Maximum of two pages
- 20pt text must be used
- Presented in a maximum of 5 bullet points per page
- Maximum word count - 175 words per page

3. Site Context/Site Analysis

- One page only
- 20pt text must be used
- Must show context of the submitted project, including if designing as part of a larger space
- Must show the property/buildings in relation to the space designed
- Graphics are welcome

4. Masterplan/Presentation Plan (the plan that you would present to a client)

- One page only

5. Planting Plan & Plant Schedule

- Two pages maximum

6. Supporting drawings - up to seven and these may include:

- Sections, especially if a sloping site
- Perspectives
- Isometrics or other 3D visuals
- Design detailing
- Anything that will convey further understanding of your project including images of physical models.

For promotional purposes we would also like you to submit photographs as .jpg at a minimum of 300dpi of:

- The presentation plan.
- Other material that would promote your entry to best effect.
- All these .jpg images must be titled with the entries "unique ID" supplied by SGLD followed by sequential numbering.

IMPORTANT ADVICE ON YOUR PRESENTATION

- Keep in mind that you are selling your design idea to a panel of expert judges.
- Adhere to the presentation requirements; submit material accurately; the order is important.
- Remember the judges have limited time so need to understand and get the best possible impression of your project quickly.
- Plans should be populated to help understanding of usage (e.g. house, parking, garage, entrance).
- If your project is very large your planting plan can cover representative sections.
- Sustainability and environmental considerations are important for all projects irrespective of the category.
- The 'project statement' will mention any special considerations you are taking into account for your design, e.g. sloping site, fantastic views of the larger landscape etc.
- The 'environmental sustainability statement' will say how you have thought about this and how it has affected your design.
- Ensure your project shows technical competency and the presentation is eye catching.
- Keep text to an absolute minimum and ensure all text used can be easily read either at normal viewing or if zoomed in.
- All pages must be the same size and landscape before making them into a pdf; e.g. size all to A4 landscape before adding to pdf
- You could use for example either "Microsoft Word" or "Microsoft Publisher" to create your submission before converting it to a .pdf
- The pdf must be a maximum of 12MB.
- If using 'Word' save each page with compressed image as landscape at A4 size before adding any text and then add to your pdf submission.
- Use vectorised text to ensure judges can zoom in to read detail (not available if using 'Word'); examples of software for this are Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, CAD.
- If you need assistance with creating your pdf there are options, just google; one example is <https://smallpdf.com>

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GENERAL FEEDBACK GIVEN TO SGLD STUDENT AWARDS CANDIDATES 2026

The overall standard of the 54 entries to the 2026 Student Awards has been high and are a credit to the colleges, tutors, and students. It was encouraging to see successful shortlisting this year from colleges representing all corners of the UK. All submissions are given conscientious scrutiny by the Awards Panel and student work marked anonymously without knowledge of which college they are attending. The panel is selected for their collective experience in design and assessing student work. The following general feedback hopes to communicate to the student candidates and tutors some of the frequently discussed aspects of the project entries between the panel members and to encourage self-assessment for future development and improvement to their practice.

DESIGN

- This is a priority when judging. Good design decisions are paramount to a garden designer's raison d'être with the documentation, rationale, and graphics as a supporting role
- Practical and aesthetic considerations should match the brief given to the designer
- Relationship with architecture and buildings – Ensure that any buildings or existing features are clearly outlined with door and window openings drawn in so that the proportionate design around these features can be interpreted easily
- Circulation and access - primary, secondary, and tertiary routes should be considered carefully to acknowledge desire lines, accessible routes for disabled users, safe and comfortable vehicle manoeuvres.
- Keep the balance between hard and soft landscape proportionate to the function and minimise hard footprint where possible
- Consider and resolve any maintenance issues such as cutting hedges, large border maintenance, window cleaning, lawn mowing etc, with considerate layout
- Consider paving choice and layout carefully, reducing unnecessary cutting
- Ensure levels are dealt with sensitively to reduce soil disturbance, removal, and importation to and from site. Ensure steps and drops are dealt with safely
- Consider plant requirements carefully and try not to mix plants which require different moisture, light, pH levels in same border.

COMMUNICATION

- Try to keep the orientation of the plans and garden consistent throughout the submission as this helps to identify and interpret the features in the garden easier
- The 3D visuals are there to support the 2D outline plan and should therefore reflect the masterplan /outline plan in terms of accuracy of intent, so client has realistic expectations
- Scale of design and font size should be such that the design detail and annotation are easy to read and understand
- Where existing planting and particularly trees are to be retained, mark them clearly on proposed design to avoid misunderstandings on site

SUSTAINABILITY

- Consider environmental impact on all design decisions from layout, material choices, soil protection, plant retention and selection to the long-term management and lifespan of the scheme.
- Try to incorporate features that reduce waste and lower carbon emissions such as compost areas, washing lines solar lighting /panels
- Maximise permeability to surfaces and consider rainwater capture and recycling.
- Consider fire risk of burning wood in open fire pits both in urban and country areas
- The SGLD encourages creativity and innovation in design. There may be reasons to deviate from a standard process of design and this should be explained in the design brief or design summary.

In addition, it is recommended that the graduate familiarise themselves with the Registration Starts Here and Accreditation Process documents available via the Pathway area of the website and which explain in more detail some helpful points to consider when preparing designs and plans



Michael Kieck - The Indalo Project
Winner Student Design - Public Realm 2026

SOME OF OUR 2026 STUDENT WINNERS



Laura Bushnell - The Lost River Garden
Winner Student Design - Small Domestic Gem 2026



Robbie Avey - Wolves Lane
Winner Student Design - Design for the Environment 2026



Michael Kieck - The Indalo Project
Winner Student Design - Public Realm 2026



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JUDGING

- The judging panel is comprised of experts in the industry and selected by the SGLD.
- The Judges' comments for the winning entries may be used at the Awards Ceremony and on the winners' page of the SGLD Awards website.
- Should the judging panel consider that none of the projects in a category meets the required standard then an Award will not be made.
- Should the judging panel consider that a project is better suited to a different category they have the right to move the project without reference to the entrant.
- The organisers reserve the right to add or remove judges.
- It is closed judging; entrants cannot present work to the Panel.



PUBLICITY

- The publicity for the awards will be handled solely by the SGLD in line with prior agreement made with its media partner
- Applicants cannot issue information to the UK press without the express permission from the SGLD.
- There is no guarantee of publicity for all award categories in Gardens Illustrated magazine and the media partner reserves the right to make the final decision on editorial content.



TROPHIES, CERTIFICATES, & LOGOS

- Finalists will receive a finalist logo when the shortlist is announced.
- Finalists will receive a certificate.
- Winners will receive a trophy and winner logo.