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**EMBARGOED UNTIL 9AM MONDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER**

**LSA forges new collaboration with Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation funded by  
Elsie Owusu and RIBA**



*Left to Right: Dr Neal Shasore, Head of School and CEO at the London School of Architecture; Simon Allford, Architect and RIBA President; Baroness Doreen Lawrence; Elsie Owusu OBE, Architect and former RIBA Council Member. Photography credit: Morley von Sternberg*

Today, 13 September 2021, on what would have been Stephen Lawrence's 47th birthday, the LSA is privileged to announce a new collaboration with the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation (SLDF). At the instigation of founding LSA Vice-Chair Elsie Owusu OBE and the RIBA, a sum of £30,000 has been donated to SLDF which in turn has selected the LSA as beneficiary.

This generous award is in recognition of Stephen Lawrence's talent and aspiration to become an architect, before he was killed in an unprovoked racist attack in 1993. By the date of Stephen's 50th birthday on 13 September 2024, we hope that architectural education and professional practice will be truly accessible and diverse to all. The LSA and its Practice Network will be at the forefront of change over the next three years and looks forward to announcing a comprehensive programme to tackle the structural barriers which currently hold back the profession.

We share Elsie Owusu OBE and the RIBA's commitment to the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion in the profession of architecture. In recognition of those

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commitments, the RIBA has made funding available for programmes of activity that are exclusively committed to the development of equality, diversity and inclusion in the profession of architecture.

The commitment to fund a programme of work, with the LSA, will address the historic and current underrepresentation of black and other racialised groups in the architecture profession. Further information on the LSA's intended programme of work and activity will be announced over the coming weeks.

With support from Elsie Owusu and the RIBA, the LSA will also be launching a major fundraising campaign to extend the new bursary programme and provide further funding for initiatives to promote equality in architectural education.

Architect and RIBA Council Member, **Elsie Owusu OBE** said:

"I am delighted to have chosen the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation as the recipient of this donation. The architectural aspirations of a talented young man, whose life cruelly ended, should act as a positive force in tackling the systemic racial and gender discrimination in the architecture and the construction industries. I look forward to working with RIBA and SLDF to support these talented young people from LSA, as they become successful architects, inspired by Stephen's example."

**Baroness Doreen Lawrence** said:

"I'm delighted to receive this donation to the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation. I am keen that we support young Black architects to realise Stephen's dream. This donation will definitely have an impact in creating the legacy of change the new Foundation has been set up to deliver."

London School of Architecture Head of School and CEO, **Dr Neal Shasore**, said:

"It is a privilege and an honour to work with Baroness Lawrence and the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation on their work in this area. With this generous preliminary funding from the RIBA, the LSA is designing an ambitious programme that creates opportunity, enables dialogue and serves as a call to action. With Elsie Owusu's support, we want to use this donation as a springboard for an ambitious programme to tackle enduring systemic barriers to diversity in architecture. We welcome the support of the architectural profession at large in achieving this."

RIBA President, and London School of Architecture Trustee, **Simon Allford** said:

"I am very pleased that the RIBA is supporting this targeted new programme of work to broaden access to the profession. It's through projects like this, working in collaboration with individuals and organisations with experience and expertise, that we can, as a profession, break down the discriminatory barriers that continue to prevent talented people from studying and practising architecture."

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**Notes to editor**

Press images available [here](#).

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**About the London School of Architecture**

The London School of Architecture (LSA) is an independent higher education provider based in London. It is England's first independent school of architecture since 1847 and was conceived in 2011 as a school for the 21st-century, where students combine practice-based work experience with academic study. In academic year 2021-22 the LSA welcomed its largest ever cohort of 73 students into its new premises on 6 Orsman Road.

One of the School's foundational purposes is to broaden access to architectural education by removing barriers as well as support wider diversity and access for students from under-represented backgrounds. In our ambitious Access and Participation Plan 2021/21-2024/25 agreed with the Office for Students, one of our two prime targets is to increase the proportion of BAME students to form a baseline of 20% to 30% by the academic year 2024-25. Moreover, we acknowledge the significant structural barriers to attainment and progression within architectural education and practice. As a school that prides itself on its close alignment with practice, we look forward to working with our Practice Network to facilitate progression by BAME architects in their professional contexts.

[the-lsa.org](http://the-lsa.org)

**About Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation**

The Foundation, established amid unprecedented growing global awareness of racial inequality, and exists to inspire a more equal, inclusive society, and to foster opportunities for marginalised young people in the UK. The Foundation is the home of Stephen Lawrence's legacy and has education at its core, focusing on three areas: Classrooms, Community and Careers.

The Foundation is developing programmes and activities that run 365 days a year, with the 22nd April as a focal point to recognise and celebrate the progress made.

**Stephen's Story**

Stephen's story is both challenging and inspirational. He was a normal young person who made the most of everyday opportunities. Although his life was short, Stephen provides a positive role model of a life well lived. Stephen Lawrence was born and grew up in south-east London, where he lived with his parents Neville and Doreen, his brother Stuart and sister Georgina.

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Like most young people, he juggled an active social life, school work, family commitments, and part-time employment. But he also had ambitions to use his talent for maths, art, and design to become an architect, and wanted to have a positive impact on his community. Tragically, his dream of becoming an architect was never realised. On 22 April 1993, at the age of just 18, Stephen was murdered in an unprovoked racist attack. He didn't know his killers and his killers didn't know him.

After the initial police investigation, five suspects were arrested but not convicted. A public inquiry into the handling of Stephen's case was held in 1998, leading to the publication of the Macpherson Report, which has been called 'one of the most important moments in the modern history of criminal justice in Britain'.

It led to profound cultural changes in attitudes to racism, to the law and to police practice.

It also paved the way for a greater understanding of discrimination of all forms and new equalities legislation.

[stephenlawrenceday.org](http://stephenlawrenceday.org)

**About the Royal Institute of British Architects**

The [Royal Institute of British Architects \(RIBA\)](http://www.riba.org.uk) is a global professional membership body that serves its members and society in order to deliver better buildings and places, stronger communities and a sustainable environment.

The RIBA is working to ensure that the architecture sector and the wider construction industry is representative of the communities and societies its members serve.

Currently, there are barriers to entry and progression in the profession, and this particularly impacts individuals from underrepresented groups.

Led by Director of Inclusion and Diversity, Marsha Ramroop, and guided by our Expert Advisory Group, [Architects for Change](#), the RIBA is committed to creating a more diverse and inclusive profession. The RIBA's work to do this will be underpinned by the [Cultural Intelligence \(CQ\)](#) framework of inclusive behaviours.

[Find out more about RIBA's initiatives to drive forward inclusion and diversity in architecture.](#)