

# UK Design Council

# Helping businesses become more successful, public services more efficient and designers more effective

It’s a big year for the Prince Philip Designers Prize – the UK’s longest running design award is celebrating its 50th anniversary. In its half-century, the award has rewarded the best in design from products and graphics to buildings and feats of engineering, and put the spotlight on designers for influencing and shaping daily life.

**In the beginning**

The prize started out as the Prince Philip Prize for Elegant Design and recognised products that stood out from the largely functional designs of the late 1950s. The aim was both to stimulate more stylish design from an economy still emerging from post-war austerity and reward elegant solutions to design problems. Early winners included the minimalist Prestcold Packaway refrigerator by Charles Longman (1959), the graceful Spode Apollo tableware by Neal French and David White (1960) and the sleek Milward Courier cordless shaver by Kenneth Grange (1963). Later, winning products ranged from the Austin Metro by Raymond Bates, Mark Snowdon and David Bache (1981) to the ‘85-86’ Patchwork Sampler Collection by Patricia Roberts (1986).

**A changing prize**

These days, now that design has been driving corporate success for several decades, the emphasis of the prize is on the enduring contributions of designers themselves to the profile of design among businesses and the public. Since 1990 the prize in its current form has honoured some of the grandees of British design including James Dyson (1997), Terence Conran (2003), Norman Foster (2004) and, in 2001, Kenneth Grange, the prize’s only double winner.

**How it works**

The prize goes to an individual designer or a leader of a design team, selected from nominations by these professional bodies and educational institutions:

Arts Council England, the Chartered Society of Designers, D&AD, the Design Museum, the Design Business Association, the Institution of Engineering Designers, the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Royal College of Art. These same organisations put forward the judges, who are chaired by Prince Philip himself. They choose a winner based on the quality and originality of their work and its commercial success, and and the designer’s overall contribution to the standing of design, and to design education.

**The 2009 prize**

Among the contenders for the accolade this year are the architects David Adjaye and Eric Parry, the fashion designers Jeff Banks and Hussein Chalayan, and graphics specialists Peter Saville, Michael Peters, Jay Smith and Howard Milton. The nominees also include Andrew Ritchie, designer of the Brompton folding bicycle, and Wayne Hemingway, known for his work in fashion, product and now building design.