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## **Architect appointed for Story Museum project**

A West End charity that uses storytelling to inspire and children has appointed architects to take on a £3.5m construction project to create “a magical new world centre of children's literature and storytelling.”

Out of a total of 64 architects that applied, the Story Museum has appointed architects Purcell Miller Tritton to help transform its premises on Pembroke Street into a world-class visitor attraction and learning centre.

The not-for-profit company is currently a virtual museum running outreach programmes in schools, which aim to develop childrens' language skills through storytelling. The company acquired their 2,000 sq metre, West End premises in 2009 through a charitable donation but have yet to open to the public.

They hope that the new site will boost Oxford's chances of becoming a Unesco World Book Capital in 2014, the year the project is expected to be completed.

Story Museum capital project director Tish Francis said: “This is a unique and unusual project. We are very excited about the potential to create an oasis in the heart of town which is open to children, young people and families as well as adults. There will also be a café, a bookshop, galleries and a performance areas, places for people to assemble during the day.”

Purcell Miller Tritton has experience of conservation and museum projects having worked at Cardiff Castle, Sheffield's Weston Park Museum and the award-winning Lower Treginnis Farm for City Children, in Wales.

Tish Francis said: “Purcell Miller Tritton have recently been voted one of the top 50 green companies by The Times. We want to approach this project in terms of sustainable issues and they seem well placed to deal with that.

“We have built up a lot of ideas about the project over the years and they were good listeners who will work well with the designers and artists that we will be bringing on board.”

The Story Museum, along with Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, The Bodleian Libraries, Oxfam, the University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford University Press, Blackwells and the Oxford Literary Festival, put in a bid last September to Unesco for Oxford to become World Book Capital 2014. The Story Museum believes that the multi-million pound project will boost Oxford's chances of gaining the accolade.

Tish Francis said: “There is nothing quite like the Story Museum anywhere else and Oxford is in a unique position in the calibre of its children's literature.”

Niall Phillips, project leader at Purcell Miller Tritton, said: “We are delighted to be part of this unique and prestigious project, particularly as we understand that the other submissions were all of such high quality. The brief captured our imagination and we are incredibly excited to be working closely with The Story Museum.”

## **ENDS**

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