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COUNTRY HOUSE AT GRAFTON NEW HALL 2001

SECOND PLACE

'.....the assessment procedure was not set up to define "First, Second, Third and Commended" classifications. However it should be said that although this entry did not win it delighted the assessors at many levels and ran the eventual winner to a close call.

'In his presentation the architect started by describing how difficult he found the site in terms of "edges to which you could relate a building..." and then proceeded to illustrate a building which showed a masterly ability to understand the spatial geometry of the landscape and create an ingenious set of devices to interpret and manage its insidiously watery characteristics. (The countryside is relatively flat with clay subsoil and the highest number of field ponds of any county in the country).

'The scheme derives its underlying order by the uncompromising division of the large triangular site into two smaller ones through the formation of two parallel canals or moats running north south at right angles to the slight fall. The building then stands within the canals; picks up and develops this confident geometry and reinterprets the canal theme at roof level with water bearing channels aligned ingeniously to create dappled reflections deep within the house. The panel admired the well-resolved, rather oriental feel to the architecture and the calm hierarchy of spaces.'

Spencer de Grey CBE:
Partner, FOSTER AND PARTNERS
RIBA Assessor