



IMPRESSIVE: The new-look Leicester Mercury building, the city's Leicester Square apartments and the Olive Branch and Beech House project in Rutland

Buildings in line for award

Three innovative building projects have been short-listed for a prestigious international award.

The Leicester Mercury's refurbished headquarters, in St George Street, in the city centre, is in the running for the prestigious Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Awards 2007.

The newspaper's £12 million, new-look home, which was unveiled last August, is joined by the Beech House and Olive

by **DAVID OWEN**

Branch project in Rutland, and the city's Leicester Square apartments.

The projects have all reached the East Midlands heats of the national competition.

The annual awards are split into four categories – building conservation, sponsored by Jhal Ltd, and regeneration, sustainability and community benefit, sponsored by the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA).

The Mercury building and Leicester Square project, in

Sanvey Gate, have been short-listed for the regeneration award.

The Mercury building has been re-clad and given a new reception and staff restaurant. There is also a new storage space for newsprint and additional parking.

The Leicester Square development is a mixture of 350 new-build and refurbished contemporary luxury apartments, close to the city centre.

The Beech House Inn and Olive Branch restaurant project, in Clipsham, is shortlisted for the regeneration award and

building conservation award. Ben Jones, co-owner of the Olive Branch and Beech House, said: "The Olive Branch was a derelict, empty pub when we took over in 1999. We renovated the building and converted a barn at the rear into a dining room.

"Beech House was a rundown row of 150-year-old cottages, which we reopened, last year, as a hotel.

"It was a tricky process re-developing both buildings in terms of preserving their heritage. We are really pleased such a small project as ours is being considered on its merits along-

side some extremely prestigious multi-million pound international developments."

The three will be up against some of the world's most innovative buildings projects, including globally-recognised developments in Hong Kong, the Netherlands, South Africa and Yemen.

The winners will be announced on May 11, at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham.

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