



Picture: Daniel Grote

Excited - The Revd James Bloice-Smith inside Headington Baptist Church which was recently short-listed for the Art and Christian Enquiry architecture award

Headington proud of architectural gem

By TOM RICHES

A NEWLY-rebuilt Oxford church narrowly missed winning a prestigious architectural award last week.

Headington Baptist Church, which reopened earlier this year having been rebuilt from scratch, was nominated for the Art and Christian Enquiry's (ACE) award for religious architecture, eventually won by St Bede Roman Catholic Church in Basingstoke.

Headington minister the Revd James Bloice-Smith said

the congregation was excited by the nomination.

The move was prompted after growth in the church's numbers put a squeeze on space in the previous building, said Mr Bloice-Smith.

'We have seen some growth.

'But more significantly we have seen more use throughout the week,' he added.

The church has restarted a lunch club and a children's club, as well as beginning a coffee lounge for children

and parents to drop in to the church after school, since moving into the new building.

Mr Bloice-Smith, who described the church as 'modern, light and beautiful', said one passer-by was so interested in the new building, he went inside and started the Alpha course held there on that day.

The building, designed by David Grindley architects, will cost the church in excess of £1.4 million but Mr Bloice-Smith was pleased with the work.

'It makes good use of the site - we haven't got a big site,' he said.

'The initial drive was space, but we also quickly realised the old building wasn't ideal,' he added.

'I was a bit nervous because we are in a conservation area, but the council supported us fully.'

ACE presents three awards every other year for religious architecture, books, and art with a £3,000 prize for the winning candidate in each category.



Picture: ACE Awards