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Welcome

Our cities are defined by tall buildings – they are beacons of economic growth, ambition and investment. Aside from the stunning vistas they offer, high-rises conveniently place occupants at the epicentre of thriving communities, providing immediate access to the public realm, infrastructure and amenities.

As the industry strives to build bigger and better, the current regulation landscape is putting safety front and centre, with a new gateway regime encouraging developers and architects to demonstrate compliance.

This year's prestigious Tall Buildings Conference & Awards gathers the sector's leading experts to provide crucial insight on building safety, whilst opening the floor to debate. It also celebrates tall building trends, sustainability and innovation, and pays homage to the UK's most revered superstructures.

Within this issue, you'll find contributions from some of our esteemed panellists as well as the highly-anticipated shortlist for the Tall Buildings Awards 2025.

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The timely assembly of industry experts will facilitate much needed debate and discussion concerning some of the sector's most difficult challenges.

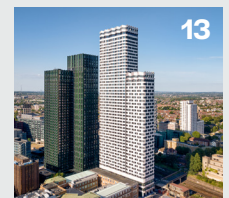


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Delivering next-level sustainable superstructures to a client's brief whilst factoring in critical safety recommendations to pass the regulator's criteria is a tall ask in today's tall buildings landscape. Tall Buildings Editor, Hannah Woodger, explores further.





▲ One
Bishopsgate
Plaza, credit:
Julian Abrams /
Stanhope

Building tall best, building the best tall

Steve Watts, Director at Turner & Townsend alinea and Chair of the upcoming **Tall Buildings Conference**, explains that delivering the best possible tall buildings amid today's political, financial and regulatory challenges requires a balanced scorecard approach.

I have always said that tall buildings are the most political of typologies. They are used in the media as symbols of economic progress as well as financial disaster; their form and aesthetics invoke much debate in town planning circles; they are loved or hated by the public; some parts of the professional community have an inherent dislike of them whilst others spend a career helping to create them; and they tend to be around for a long time, being relatively difficult to demolish.

What's more, the larger and more complex the endeavour, the more susceptible it is to geopolitics.

This can be good when it gives access to finance and funders willing to co-invest in a project of scale and length and opens up the scheme to expert international suppliers and contractors. Yet it can also be problematic, as we have seen in recent years with Brexit, COVID, conflicts, disrupted supply chains and ever-changing regulations.

Now we have the latest version of 'Trumponomics', which is helping to reverse decades of globalisation into protectionism and has pushed uncertainty to new levels. Tall buildings have always had to contend with uncertainty, given that their long gestation periods make them hostages to the fortunes of market conditions on both sides of the development equation. Having spent the majority of my career in tall buildings, witnessing professionals who are masters of their fields, it leaves me forever optimistic about the abilities of teams to push the boundaries of best practice and apply incredible attention to detail to make these schemes work – for politicians, for end users, for the public, and perhaps most difficult of all (at least convincingly) for the environment.

There is no doubt that we are now transacting in the twin currencies of cost and carbon, and in respect of the



latter I am convinced that we can no longer assess tall buildings as standalone objects. It is one of the reasons why the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat will soon be called the Council on Vertical Urbanism. Tall buildings, the infrastructure that feeds them, and the spaces between them are increasingly being assessed on similar metrics – financial and environmental attributes being a common foundation. These components are the glue to creating neighbourhoods and, ultimately, cities that are economically progressive, liveable and sustainable.

Tall buildings make such a wide impact. Having endured a difficult political journey in the UK, particularly London, over the last quarter of a century, they are making their mark in the capital largely in more positive ways than was once foreseen. Of course they are not unqualified successes – most things aren't, and towers' mistakes are there for all to see far and wide – but they have made an indelible imprint on London's skyline, with buildings that are revered across the world for their technical qualities, in economic clusters that make London a truly polycentric city, from the Square Mile to Greenwich Peninsula, Battersea to Bermondsey and other concentrations that are built upon new transport links like HS2 and the Elizabeth Line.

I had the pleasure in March of attending New London Architecture's launch of its latest Tall Buildings Report, at an event that was suffused with positivity, not least from London's planners. We are a long way from the heated debates that took place at the turn of the century, when the fundamental need for tall buildings in the capital was subject to intense questioning.

If this makes me sound irrationally optimistic in a challenging world, that is not my intention; but in writing this scene-setter, I reminded myself of how tough it is to make tall, large, complex – sometimes iconic – projects work, but how teams imaginatively and expertly do so, giving them skills that can be applied to other types of project. They will continue to do so in addressing today's particular hurdles – the Building Safety Act, a constrained and cautious supply chain, geopolitical turmoil – because the buildings they are creating need to endure and must play their part in improving our cities.



◀ **55 Old Broad Street, credit: Fletcher Priest Architects**

▲ **8 Bishopsgate, credit: Dirk Lindner**

Tall buildings are not always the right solution – necessary densification can take many forms – but where significant height is appropriate then we need the best possible tall buildings. “Best” these days means a balanced scorecard that encompasses many more attributes than have been traditionally applied: Designs that are amenity-rich but carbon-poor; buildings that maximise area and value but minimise cost and time; schemes that incorporate community uses and connect with the public realm, that are welcoming but safe and secure; creations that ooze quality in form and materials but are deliverable; massing that is pumped to improve viability but attractively fits into town planning constraints. This is a scorecard that is clearly full of tensions and obstacles, but one that encourages the best. You might say: Building tall best, building the best tall. 



Hear more from Steve Watts, Director at Turner & Townsend alinea, at the Tall Buildings Conference taking place on Tuesday 17th June 2025.

A transformative year for building safety

“Regulations are the starting point, but real change comes when we take shared accountability for raising standards and driving safer outcomes.”

2024 was a transformative year for building safety in England. It marked the shift from groundwork to meaningful action. It demonstrated just what's possible when we unite behind a shared goal. But this is just the beginning – this is the start of a long-term journey to build and manage a safer, more accountable built environment for everyone. **Philip White, HSE** Director of building safety, takes a closer look at what made last year so defining for building safety.



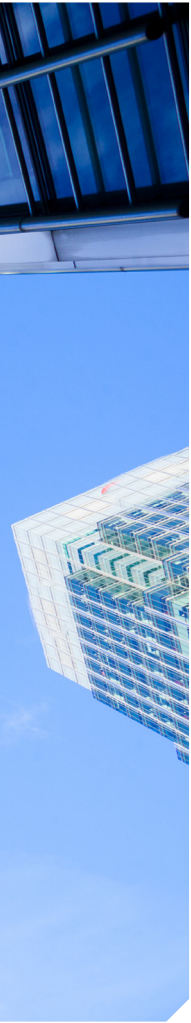
For BSR, the Building Safety Act (BSA2022) has been about turning plans into action. Think of it like moving into a new home – exploring the space, tackling immediate priorities and laying the groundwork for improvements. The Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry's Phase 2 report remains a stark reminder of why our work matters. It challenges the industry to learn from past mistakes and ensure residents' safety and wellbeing are at the heart of every decision.

► **Philip White,**
Director of
building safety,
HSE

BSR in action

Since our May conference, which marked a new era for building safety, BSR has become fully operational. This isn't business as usual – it's a generational shift in how the construction industry operates. BSA2022 introduced new frameworks and principles that require fresh thinking and collaboration.

The post-conference survey reinforced this commitment: 71% of the 1300 delegates reported a good or full understanding of their responsibilities, and nearly



half (47%) said they intended to make significant changes to their practices.

Throughout 2024, we worked to embed these principles. By setting consistent building control standards and holding those managing higher-risk buildings accountable, we've laid strong foundations for lasting change.

Facing challenges head on

July brought one of our biggest challenges when an unexpected surge in applications, driven by external industry issues, caused delays in processing building control applications. We acted quickly to keep things on track, putting contingency measures in place, such as recruiting additional staff and securing industry support. These steps are already having a positive impact, helping us manage the increased demand.

Supporting industry through change

We're committed to overseeing the safety and compliance of higher-risk buildings, while supporting industry to deliver safe and successful projects. The new gateway processes, introduced in response to the Grenfell tragedy, are central to raising safety standards.

We know that adapting to a new system takes time. That's why we're working closely with industry leaders – listening to feedback, strengthening our advice, and providing clearer guidance to help applicants navigate this process with confidence.

Shifting the culture of safety

Building safety is more than meeting regulations – it's about transforming how we work and think. At the heart of this shift is competence. It's not a box to tick but an ongoing responsibility. Professionals must ask themselves:

- Do my teams have the skills and attitudes needed to deliver safe outcomes?
- Am I staying within my expertise and improving my knowledge?
- What more can I do to embed safety into everything we do?

Empowering residents

Building safety isn't just about technical standards – it's about people and their homes. At BSR, we're committed to putting residents' safety at the heart of everything we do. It's not enough for people to be safe; they also need to feel safe. That means knowing their homes are secure, their concerns are heard, and their voices matter.

Our 'Your Home, Your Safety' campaign helped high-rise residents in England understand their new rights under the BSA2022. We focused on ensuring they know:

- How safety risks in their building are being managed
- Where to find clear, accessible safety information
- How to raise concerns and access straightforward guidance.



Lessons learned

Change isn't easy, but it's essential. 2024's challenges have only strengthened our resolve. One clear message has emerged: Those who create risks must be held accountable for managing them.


As Gateway 3 progresses, we're focusing on verifying compliance during the final stages of construction. Managing design changes to maintain safety standards will be a critical priority.

Looking ahead

This year, we're continuing to strengthen the regulatory framework, improving competence across the sector and amplifying residents' voices. Our mission goes beyond compliance – it's about rebuilding trust and creating a safer future.

Throughout this year, we'll be working with the Government, industry regulators, fire authorities, Mayors and local leaders to accelerate remediation for higher-risk buildings still affected by unsafe cladding. Collaboration will be key to driving this critical work forward.

Building momentum together

The progress already made proves what can be achieved when we work together. But there's still more to do. Professionals, policymakers and residents all have a role to play in shaping a safer built environment. 



To learn more about the work of the BSR, Tim Galloway, Deputy Director, Building Safety Division for the Heath Safety Executive, will be speaking live in session two – Impact of the Building Safety Act.



Building safety around people

Richard Clark, Senior Fire Engineer at the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), discusses why fire safety reform must go beyond cladding and include fundamental design change.

Eight years after the Grenfell Tower tragedy exposed deep flaws in the UK's building safety framework, much has been done to address combustible materials. However, as recent fires and expert commentary show, fundamental problems still persist – notably in building design, regulation and the culture of the construction industry. A key issue is the fundamental need for buildings to be designed and built to be suitable for the people who live in them, rather than people having to be 'suitable' for buildings.

Across England, thousands of residents live in existing high-rise buildings with just one staircase. In the event of a fire, this single route becomes the only means of escape for residents and the only access point for emergency services. As the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) have pointed out, this setup leaves no room for error. In real-world scenarios, people do not always follow "stay put" guidance. Everyone has the right to

▲ In ADB, there is a lack of guidance relating to mandatory evacuation lifts for people with limited mobility

evacuate if they chose, whether they need to or not, the choice to evacuate is their choice. Everyone should be enabled to do this easily and safely. A second exit route provides vital redundancy – ensuring a safe exit if one path is blocked by fire or smoke and easing access for firefighters assisting vulnerable residents. While Government has made changes for the provision of secondary stairs within new buildings, there is still more that can be done for existing buildings.

The need for reform extends beyond design. NFCC have argued that safety must be embedded into every stage of construction – from planning and design through to ongoing management. Post-Grenfell reviews, including the Hackitt Review and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report, have repeatedly emphasised the need for ethical responsibility and systemic change. Yet key updates to guidance documents, such as Approved Document B (ADB), remain incomplete or insufficient.



▲ Across England, thousands of residents live in existing high-rise buildings with just one staircase
 ◀ Safety must be embedded into every stage of construction

The introduction of new staircases and evacuation systems should not be viewed as an expensive burden but as a life-saving necessity. The Government's recent steps – such as requiring sprinklers at 11 meters and promising updates to ADB – are welcome but insufficient on their own. Without clear, enforceable standards and a cultural shift in how buildings are conceived and managed, the next Grenfell may not be a question of “if” but “when”.

Safety should never be optional. As we plan for the future, our homes must be built on lessons from the past – with redundancy, accessibility and humanity at the heart of design. ◻



Senior Fire Engineer at the NFCC, Richard Clark is among the panel of speakers in session one, discussing the impact of the Building Safety Act.

One key example is the lack of mandatory evacuation lifts for people with limited mobility. The Building Regulations technically require that all individuals must be able to escape without external assistance, but the guidance in ADB fails to translate this into practical, enforceable measures. As NFCC have noted, this regulatory gap creates a dangerous “safety lottery” where residents in some parts of the country benefit from better local policies, like the London Plan 2021, while others remain unprotected.

Conference Programme



08:30 Registration & Exhibitor Networking

09:30 Chair Introduction

Steve Watts, Turner & Townsend alinea

09:50 Keynote Speaker

Dan Scanlon, Brookfield Properties **INVITED**

SESSION 1: TALL BUILDINGS TRENDS

10:00 Federico Ortiz, New London Architecture

10:20 Will Dyson, Eastern City BID Primera

10:40 Q&A



TALL BUILDINGS AWARDS

10:50 Best Tall Building Architect

10:55 Best Tall Building Client

11:00 Best Tall Building Contractor

11:05 Best Tall Building Structural Engineer



11:10 Refreshments & Exhibitor Networking

SESSION 2: IMPACT OF BUILDING SAFETY ACT

12:00 Tim Galloway - Health and Safety Executive

12:20 Panel Debate

CHAIR Cecily Davis, Fieldfisher

Saeed Talebi PhD, MCIOB, FHEA,

University of BCU

Joe Campion, SOCOTEC

Iain Liversage, Hill Group **INVITED**

Ian Crickmore, Polypipe

Richard Clark, National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)

George Edwardes, Fire Protection Assoc. (FPA)

13:00 Headline Exhibitor - Obex

Presented by **Dan Norman**



TALL BUILDINGS AWARDS

13:10 Best Tall Building Façade Engineering Project

13:15 Best Tall Building MEP Services Project

13:20 Best Tall Building Technology Innovation Award



13:25 Lunch & Exhibitor Networking

14:25 Headline Exhibitor - AkzoNobel

Presented by **Duncan Lochhead**

SESSION 3: SHOWCASING THE UK'S BEST DESIGNS & MOST SUSTAINABLE TALL BUILDINGS

14:35 Dan Moore, PLP Architecture & **Midori Ainoura**, PLP Architecture
A Case Study on: [Bankside Yards, London](#)

15:00 Ian Emmerson, Carey Jones Chapman Tolcher & **Andrew Cusack**, HUB
The Monk Bridge Quarter, Leeds -
A Case Study on Brownfield Regeneration

15:25 Simon Smith, AKT II & **Simone Miriana**, AKT II
[NXQ Manchester - A Bold & Refined Version](#)

15:50 Dav Bansal, Howells
A Case Study on The Octagon - 'Less is More'

16:10 Luke Askwith, Gensler
Can Tall Buildings be Sustainable?
What's on the Horizon for Tall Building Design

16:30 Q&A

16:40 Headline Awards Sponsor - Ambar Kelly
Presented by **Nick Atkinson**



TALL BUILDINGS AWARDS

16:50 Best Mixed-use or Commercial Tall Building Project

16:55 Best Residential Tall Building Project

17:00 Best Tall Building Retrofit or Refurbished Project

17:05 Winner of Winners

17:10 Closing Comments from Conference Chair

17:20 Conference End

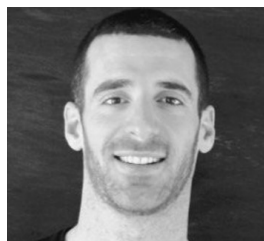
Industry Partner:



Speakers



Steve Watts
Turner & Townsend alinea



Federico Ortiz
New London Architecture



Will Dyson
Eastern City BID Primera



Tim Galloway
HSE



Cecily Davis
Fieldfisher LLP



Saeed Talebi
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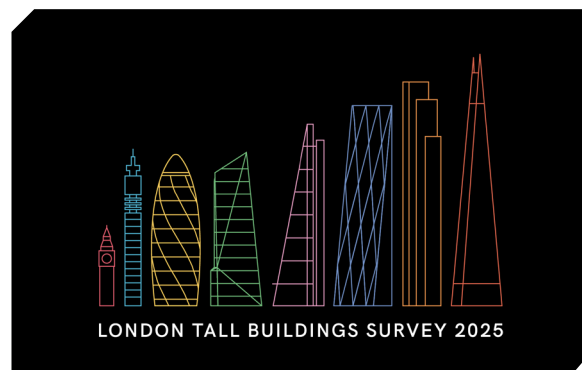


Luke Askwith
Gensler

Tall building survey shows growth for London skyline

Head of Programme at NLA, Federico Ortiz

reflects on the findings from the organisation's annual London Tall Buildings Survey, which presents essential statistics from the previous year's tall building applications.



With the launch of the London Growth Plan setting a bold new direction for the capital, our report landed at just the right moment to reflect the city's shifting priorities around densification supporting good growth. In March 2025, we released our highly-anticipated London Tall Buildings Survey 2025, which draws on data from the Greater London Authority's Planning DataHub. The report offers a concise analytical overview of the city's planning activities, featuring insights from writer and policy advisor

Denise Chevin MBE, projections for the City Cluster, key takeaways and commentary from industry experts. Denise Chevin notably describes London's tall buildings landscape as a tale of two cities: "Demand for Grade A office properties in the City of London continues to drive the capital skyward, while the sluggish housing market, high interest rates, and greater scrutiny of schemes by the new Building Safety Regulator have conspired to put the brakes on high-rise residential construction." First launched in 2014, our London Tall Buildings Survey defines "tall buildings" as those with 20 or more storeys. Comparing data to 2023, the number of planning applications containing tall buildings in 2024 increased from 47 to 58.


However, the approval rate dropped significantly – while 21 applications were approved in 2023, only six received permission in 2024. Interestingly, the east of London continues to see the highest volume of applications, with inner boroughs surpassing outer boroughs in overall numbers. In 2024, 64 planning applications for tall buildings were submitted, 39% of which were from East London, followed by 34% from central London. Breaking it down by borough, 78% (50 applications) came from inner London, while 22% (14 applications) were from outer boroughs.

Mixed-use developments dominated the landscape, making up 76% of the applications. Residential projects accounted for 15%, and office schemes represented 9%. The average height of the developments in the pipeline was 29 storeys, with the City of London leading in average storey counts across all local authorities.

Several of our NLA partners weighed in on the findings, offering support for London's continued growth through tall buildings.

Callum Tuckett, Managing Director UK, Multiplex, commented: "As a global construction company that specialises in building complex, high-rise buildings, the latest GLA data and upward trends in terms of planning applications make for very positive reading."

Elizabeth Oliveira, Senior Development Manager, Muse, said: "The need for development, which is sympathetic to local areas and their communities, is acute throughout London. This will entail height, density and scale, where appropriate. The latest tall buildings study nods to this with planning applications increasing."

Rory O'Hagan, Principal, Living, Arcadis, commented: "Across London, a new generation of blended tall buildings is emerging, featuring a hybrid mix of residential, commercial and community. By incorporating shared living or student accommodation, flexible workspaces, cultural venues, and public realm improvements, these developments create vibrant, round-the-clock neighbourhoods." 

To download the report [CLICK HERE](#)

▲ The latest GLA data and upward trends in terms of planning applications make for very positive reading



To learn more about the NLA's work and tall building trends, Federico Ortiz will be presenting at the Tall Buildings Conference in session one.



‘Winner of Winners’ Tide and Vision look back on College Road

As anticipation builds around this year’s prestigious **Tall Buildings Awards**, we take a look at **Tide and Vision’s** pioneering development, which secured the ‘**Best Residential Tall Building Project**’ award at last year’s event.

College Road is an award-winning 937-home residential development in Croydon, South London. It is home to the tallest volumetric building in Europe and the second tallest in the world, standing 163 metres tall and comprising 50 storeys.

Completed in 2023, College Road was delivered by developer and contractor Tide Construction in partnership with its sister company and offsite manufacturer, Vision Volumetric. The development has been instrumental in providing much-needed homes for the area. It comprises two buildings, with the 50-storey building providing 817 co-living homes now owned and operated by Outpost Management as Enclave: Croydon, and the neighbouring 35-storey building providing 120 affordable homes.

By utilising Tide and Vision’s world-leading volumetric construction approach and technology, the scheme was delivered 40% faster than it would have been using traditional methods of construction. It also allowed Tide to unlock the significantly constrained 2000m² brownfield site, which is neighboured by major arterial roads and a railway station, to deliver housing at pace and scale as part of the wider regeneration of East Croydon.


A testament to the efficiency and time savings delivered with volumetric technology, the project completed two months ahead of schedule. Further to this, the dual workstreams enabled by Tide and Vision’s approach saw the installation of the entire floorplate in less than a third of the 28-month programme.

Crucially, offsite manufacturing significantly reduced the project’s embodied carbon compared to if traditional methods of construction had been used. As 90% of the building was made in Vision’s factory, fewer construction

vehicles and trips were required, and 60% fewer personnel were required on site, which also helped to create safer working conditions. Precision manufacturing also means materials are used more efficiently, with 80% less waste created on site and up to 99% of the waste produced in the factory recycled or used for energy recovery.

The homes at College Road were engineered to meet high thermal and energy efficiency standards. They utilise quality, long-lasting materials like steel and reinforced concrete and are 70% more airtight than current requirements, delivering operational efficiency to reduce energy use.

College Road was designed by Tide and Vision’s in-house design teams in collaboration with architect HTA Design, which drew inspiration from Richard Seifert’s neighbouring mid-century NLA building. The 50-storey building is made up of a mix of studios and one-bed apartments and was the largest co-living scheme approved by the Greater London Authority at the time of its completion. Its extensive amenities offering includes dedicated entertainment and wellbeing spaces, a podcast studio, multifaith space, spa with steam room and sauna, high-end gym, kitchens, co-working spaces and a sky garden on the 50th floor.

Tide won three awards at the Tall Buildings Awards in 2024, including the Tall Building Technology Innovation Award for Vision’s offsite technology and Best Residential Tall Building Project for College Road, before being crowned the Winner of Winners. 

▲ College Road is an award-winning 937-home residential development in Croydon, South London

 www.tideconstruction.co.uk | www.visionvolumetric.co.uk

Tall Buildings Awards 2025

shortlist unveiled

Taking place in **London** on the evening of **Tuesday 17th June 2025**, following the **Tall Buildings Conference**, the **Tall Buildings Awards** recognise and celebrate the latest accomplishments in the tall buildings arena, from the projects and systems right through to the individual teams. Take a closer look at the contenders in the running for these highly-coveted awards.

BEST MIXED-USE OR COMMERCIAL TALL BUILDING PROJECT

Ambar Kelly

One Exchange Square

Permaent

The Social Hub, Candleriggs Square, Glasgow

Squire & Partners & EPR Architects

Prince of Wales Drive Phase 3

TODD Architects

City Square House, Leeds

BEST RESIDENTIAL TALL BUILDING PROJECT

AKT II & Walsh Associates

Chapter London Bridge

Assael Architecture, Tide Construction & Vision Volumetric

The Eades, Walthamstow

Carey Jones Chapman Tolcher

Leeds II

Excel Winner UK

Thames City

Falconer Chester Hall

Limelight, Liverpool



▲ Best Tall Building Architect
2024 Winner:
Hawkins\Brown
- Portlands Place

▼ Best Residential Tall Building Project
2024 Winner:
Tide & Vision -
College Road

BEST TALL BUILDING ARCHITECT

Assael Architecture

The Eades, Walthamstow

Carey Jones Chapman Tolcher

Leeds II

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)

Thames City

Squire & Partners & EPR Architects

Prince of Wales Drive Phase 3

TODD Architects

City Square House, Leeds

BEST TALL BUILDING CLIENT

Bristol City Council

Corbett House

Greystar

Chapter London Bridge

Knight Dragon

Plot M0121 Lower Riverside, Greenwich Peninsula

Study Inn

Study Inn Brotherton House, Leeds

University of the Arts London (UAL)

London College of Communication, University of the Arts London (UAL)



BEST TALL BUILDING FAÇADE ENGINEERING PROJECT

Permasteelisa Group

London College of Communication, University of the Arts London (UAL)

Permavent

The Social Hub, Candleriggs Square, Glasgow

BEST TALL BUILDING MEP SERVICES PROJECT

AtkinsRéalis, Brookfield Properties, HDR & T Clarke

30 Fenchurch Street Decarbonisation MEP Retrofit

Polypipe Building Services

Trinity Island

BEST TALL BUILDING RETROFIT OR REFURBISHED PROJECT

Ambar Kelly

One Exchange Square

Atkins Réalis, Brookfield Properties, HDR & T Clarke

30 Fenchurch Street Decarbonisation MEP Retrofit

K Systems

Corbett House



▲ Best Tall Building Structural Engineer 2024
Winner: Ove Arup & Partners
- 8 Bishopsgate

▼ Tall Building Technology Innovation Award 2024
Winner: Tide & Vision - The Vision Volumetric System

BEST TALL BUILDING STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

AKT II & Walsh Associates

Chapter London Bridge

Apex Consulting Engineers

Limelight, Liverpool

Whitby Wood

Plot M0121 Lower Riverside, Greenwich Peninsula

WSP

Prince of Wales Drive Phase 3

TALL BUILDING TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AWARD

AKT II & Walsh Associates

Chapter London Bridge

Ambar Kelly

Ambar Kelly 3D Modelling

StubGuard®

West Way Place, Botley

Tenmat

Cavity Fire Barrier System for Brickslip Façades

BEST TALL BUILDING CONTRACTOR

Gilbert Ash NI

West Way Place, Botley

Multiplex

London College of Communication, University of the Arts London (UAL)

T Clarke

30 Fenchurch Street Decarbonisation MEP Retrofit

Tide Construction

The Eades, Walthamstow

Walsin

The Social Hub, Candleriggs Square, Glasgow



To book your tickets for the Tall Buildings Awards - [CLICK HERE](#)

A united approach



◀ Hannah Woodger, Editor for Tall Buildings Media

The Government has set itself a huge challenge to tackle the nation's housing crisis – 1.5 million new homes by 2029. There isn't always a need to build tall, but when there is it's more important than ever that the brief and intent, materials and workforce are capable and competent to deliver a safe, structurally sound and sustainable structure. It's a balancing act, and one that **Steve Watts – the Chair of the upcoming Tall Buildings Conference** – quite rightly addresses in this edition's introductory article.


Tall buildings have always received intense scrutiny – critical eyes have historically nicknamed towers based on their flaws. In the capital, 20 Fenchurch Street, or Walkie-Scorchie, is just one example that quickly made a name for itself due to the unfortunate effects of its concave glass facade leading to a “death ray” that concentrated sunlight and caused damage on the street below. However, in this current climate, the level of scrutiny goes far deeper, as anything deemed higher risk carries greater significance in the wake of the Grenfell tragedy.

It's been a long road, and a long-time coming, but Dame Judith Hackitt's pursuit to leave no stone unturned has resulted in the HSE's Building Safety Regulator to continually test and challenge a project's understanding of compliance from its concept right through to delivery.

Much to no one's surprise, the regime has experienced – and still is experiencing – hurdles and challenges. The backlog in planning applications of high-rise residential buildings means gaining approval is supposedly taking five times longer than the BSR initially quoted, causing significant impact to project timescales and, ultimately, budget. Some developers are even actively scaling back plans by reducing height or omitting HRBs completely to avoid having to pass through Gateway 2. Transparency should be the main goal of the BSR if it is to be seen as an accessible and approachable system, and that's why the Tall Buildings Conference warmly welcomes **Tim Galloway, Deputy Director of Building Safety Regime Development and Regulatory Support at the HSE**, to the

programme, to shed essential light on how to successfully approach the new planning process, whilst industry experts in the building safety arena are also poised to address the **impact of the Building Safety Act in session two**.

There's no denying it. It is a tall ask in the current climate to build spectacular architectural marvels that not only meet sustainability targets but comply with safety standards too, yet we shouldn't shy away from the concept of vertical urbanism and all the opportunities it holds. Environmentally-conscious, well-engineered tall buildings can be achieved successfully when all project members take a holistic approach and share responsibility to meet a common goal. To celebrate and demonstrate excellence in practice, session three of the Tall Buildings Conference will showcase the **UK's best designs and most sustainable tall buildings**.

It's a critical time for the tall buildings arena. The evolution of technology, systems and materials are promising excellent opportunities for the market, yet the unknown entity to get these developments off the ground is stifling momentum. It's through platforms, such as the Tall Buildings Conference, that offer the industry a much-needed chance to convene and collaborate, to celebrate what's been done and what can be done. Tickets can still be purchased via the link below. Join the discussion, we hope to see you there! 

 www.tallbuildingsconference.co.uk

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