



Embracing Verticality for London and Beyond

[BLOG]

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From our Ideas + Buildings blog

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As designers, we have to respond appropriately to cultural impact and sensitivities, and to do this we need to look and learn from other metropolitan cities such as New York and Chicago where vertical structures benefit people. These cities have set a benchmark for designing tall buildings, where there is sensitivity towards height on the ground plane, how wide the building is, or how slender it needs to be. We need to keep London's buildings elegant through proportion to allow for light and avoid casting a shadow over neighbouring communities, an issue that has come up fairly frequently in recent planning negotiations.

What we must remember is that people come and go, but our architecture will remain for a long period of time and has to respond to the changing market demands and needs of future generations. We're responsible for the future change of our urban environment and can design our buildings to accommodate a multitude of uses. This is not only very important for the longevity of a building, but it also makes them more vibrant and ensures integration within the city. Tall buildings are perfect for this owing to their increased density, but they have a lot of stigma attached to them. Vertical structures have a reputation for being 'money-making schemes' but if anchored by the right infrastructure, they can create real communities or add to existing ones in a truly meaningful way.

From an urban standpoint, tall buildings also have the potential to 'shrink' a city. In the upper levels of a building you're so much more in tune with the surrounding environment. You have personal contact with your locality which you don't experience in a low-rise building – tall buildings have the ability to form strong communities. It's different and it's new, but the city is

organic and growing – it has to – and we need to design for it. Over the next 20 years there’s expected to be an extra 1.6 million people in Greater London alone.

How we navigate this housing crisis will define London’s identity and future. We have a rare opportunity to be at the forefront of design excellence and develop a new way of life. There’s no reason we can’t do this, but first we need to embrace vertical living. It’s not a question of if, but when.

[See this post in its original context on our blog.](#)