

Tall Buildings in the London Landscape

A Historical and Contemporary Symposium

Friday 12 October 2007

This symposium will bring together new research on towers of every type, their promoters and uses, the symbolism and associations of high-rise architecture, its cumulative presence in the metropolitan landscape, and the issues posed by new tall building for historic skylines and landmarks. As London's skyline soars to ever new heights this is a matter of great contemporary interest and importance. At the same time, as a number of speakers will demonstrate, there is nothing new about tall buildings in the capital and since early in its history London has seen the creation of landmark architecture by ambitious builders of all types. The day offers papers from scholars from a range of disciplines – including architectural history, history, geography and planning – and it is intended that this will create a number of contexts in which we can explore illuminating new perspectives on the topic. From medieval tower houses to Edwardian 'babylonian' blocks of flats and from the perennial issue of St Paul's to current plans for the Thames Gateway this symposium will offer a broad-ranging view of tall building past, present and future.

The day's proceedings will form the basis of a special issue of *The London Journal*, now published by Maney, which has a unique reputation for scholarly coverage of London past and present. The conference convenors are town planner Michael Hebbert (University of Manchester) and architectural historian Elizabeth McKellar (Open University), both members of the London Journal editorial board, and the Centre for Metropolitan History (CMH), Institute of Historical Research. The meeting forms part of the 2007 programme of the CMH and will be held in the Wolfson/Pollard Rooms at the Institute of Historical Research. Papers will be presubmitted and presentations limited strictly to 15 minutes to allow good time for discussion.

www.history.ac.uk/cmh/tallbuildings.html

Programme

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**Institute of Historical Research,
Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU**

9:30 *Registration and Coffee*

10:00 Welcome and Introduction

Morning Session: Building Tall before the Twentieth Century

(Chair Elizabeth McKellar)

10:15 Derek Keene, Centre for Metropolitan History: *Building tall in London, 1066–1666*

10:35 Christine Stevenson, Courtauld Institute: *Vantage-points in the seventeenth-century City*

10:55 Discussion

11:15 *Coffee*

11:30 Senaka Weeraman and Ken Kiss: *Reviving Brunel's lost water tower*

11:50 Richard Dennis, University College London: *'Babylonian Flats' in Victorian and Edwardian London*

12:10 Discussion

12:30 *Lunch*

Afternoon Session: Building Tall in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

(Chair: Michael Hebbert)

13:20 Jane Boyd, Leverhulme Research Fellow: *Senate House Tower – the Capital's First Skyscraper*

13:40 Leslie Budd, Open University: *Between the Earth and the Sky? The discourses of architects and engineers in 1970s*

14:00 Discussion

14:20 Lucy Markham: *The threat to views of St Paul's Cathedral and the transformation of the London skyline*

14:40 Michael Short, University of the West of England: *Tall building management in London: success or failure in enhancing the character of London?*

15:00 Discussion

15:20 *Tea*

15:40 Andrew Harris, University College London: *Livingstone versus Serota: the high-rise battle of Bankside*

16:00 Maria Kaika, Oxford University: *Reinventing the icon: the political economy of reimagi(n)ing the City*

16:20 Discussion

16:40 Concluding remarks