



CONFERENCE MARCH 2nd 2024 COIN STREET NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE



JUST SPACE CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 2nd MARCH 2024

LONDON FOR PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES



Tall buildings: the issues



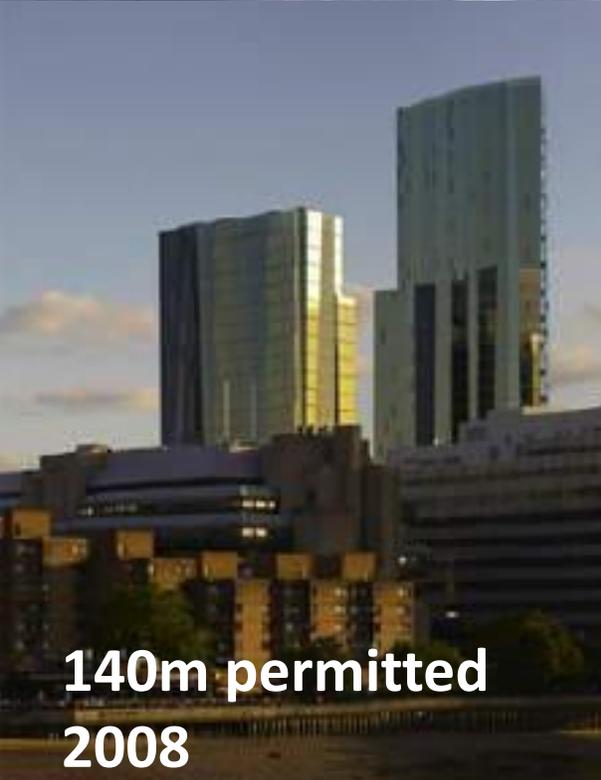
Greater London contains the second most skyscrapers of any city in Europe.

- 587 more are in the pipeline
- Tall buildings encouraged and supported in the London Plan
- London Plan has abandoned strategic role and delegated decisions
- Carbon: tall buildings require proportionately much higher amounts of concrete
- Carbon: tall buildings are substantially more environmentally inefficient; in terms of energy useage (carbon) they are increasingly inefficient for each additional floor
- Speculation/ land values: the designation of sites for tall buildings drives speculation and drives up land costs. Speculation blights sites and is an inefficient use of land.
- Density controls abandoned in London Plan - increases speculation on maximizing development
- Implementation of permissions is far more risky since they cannot be phased
- Social and environmental impact of tall buildings: gated developments + microclimate issues + sterilising neighbouring areas + impact on daylight/sunlight + sense of enclosure



1890 Sainsbury's HQ & sausage factory... vacant 2003

SPECULATION: Blackfriars' site vacant and blighted since 2003



140m permitted 2008



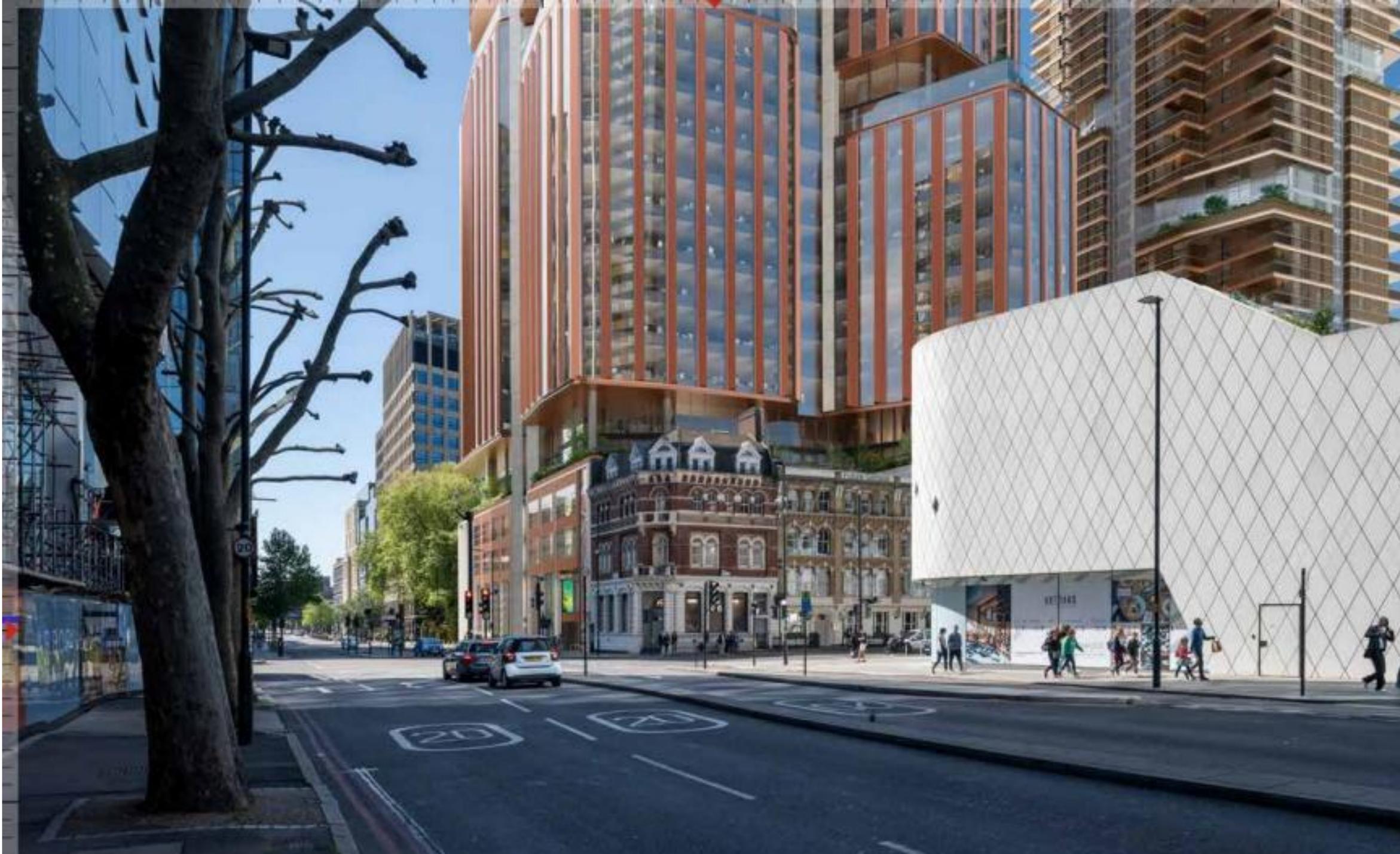
170m permitted 2017



200m proposed 2023:

318,108 tCO2e





NO PUBLIC SPACES?

One Blackfriars, Southwark

Developers: Berkeley Group

Background: 274 luxury homes in a 50-storey glass tower with a 110-space multilevel parking basement

Value of the development: approximately £700m.

Completion: 2019

- The original planning application was granted in 2009 which included the proposal for a public viewing deck on the top floor. Three years later the development swapped hands to Berkley Group. The group stated the deck was no longer financially feasible.
- It may not have been feasible to build a public sky deck, but there was enough money to build an indoor swimming pool, private cinema, luxurious spa and a golf simulator.
- The 'public sky deck' is now being advertised as an 'executive VIP lounge' solely for residents.

**The myth of the public viewing gallery:
how London's skyscrapers bargain
with our space**

**Public viewing gallery axed from One
Blackfriars skyscraper**

**Snow cabins and jungle showers: the
latest perks of a luxury London flat**



NO AFFORDABLE PLACE?

Strata Tower, Southwark

Developers: Brookfield Europe

Background: 147-metre, 43-storey building in Elephant & Castle with 408 flats

Value of the development: approximately £113m.

Completion: 2010

- Even though policy requiring that the 35% is split equally between intermediate and social rented, the developer made a £1.3m payment in-lieu of the shortfall and any social rented provision.
- Despite providing zero social housing, Southwark granted planning permission on the grounds that its wind turbines would "***create a dramatic and highly recognisable building form...***" but today the wind turbines remain permanently shut.
- There was initially an agreement between the council and developers to provide affordable retail space to those displaced by the demolition of the Shopping Centre.

Why Elephant and Castle's iconic Strata tower wind turbines barely move

The totally pointless, rarely-spinning turbines of the Strata Tower in south London

It is the world's first skyscraper with built-in wind turbines. But is London's Strata a green gimmick - or the future? Jonathan Glancey





FEWER JOBS, FEWER AFFORDABLE HOMES?

One Nine Elms, Wandsworth

Developers: Wanda One - a UK subsidiary of Dalian Wanda

Background: The development consists of two towers: the 57-storey City Tower contains 334 homes, while the 42-storey River Tower contains a 203-room Park Hyatt luxury hotel and 103 luxury apartments.

Value of the development: approximately £1 billion.

Completion: 2024

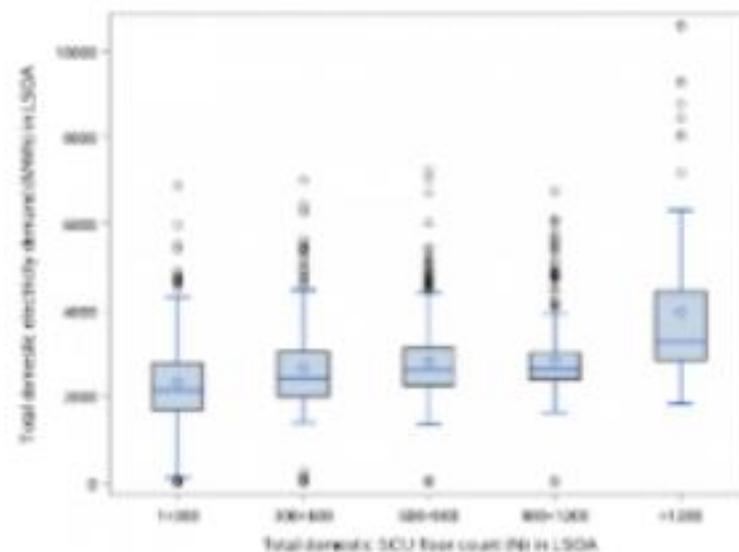
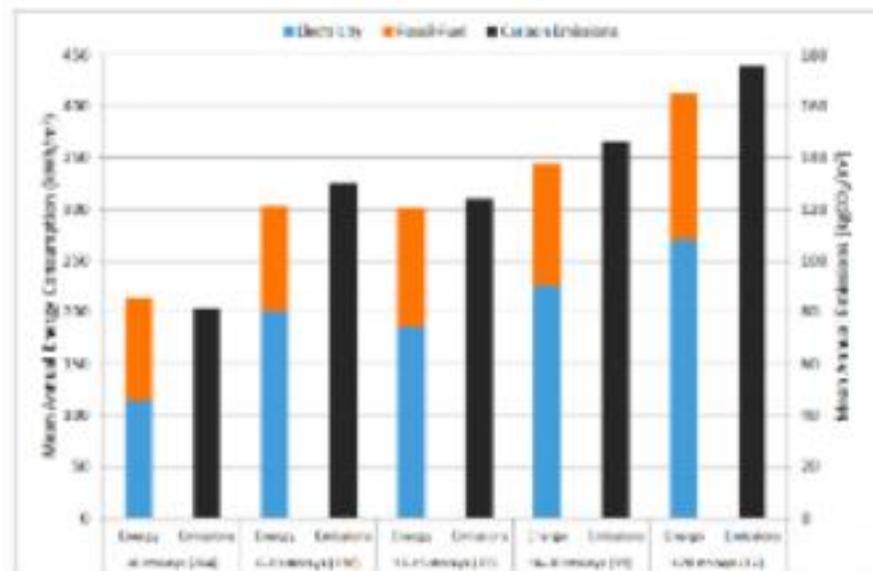
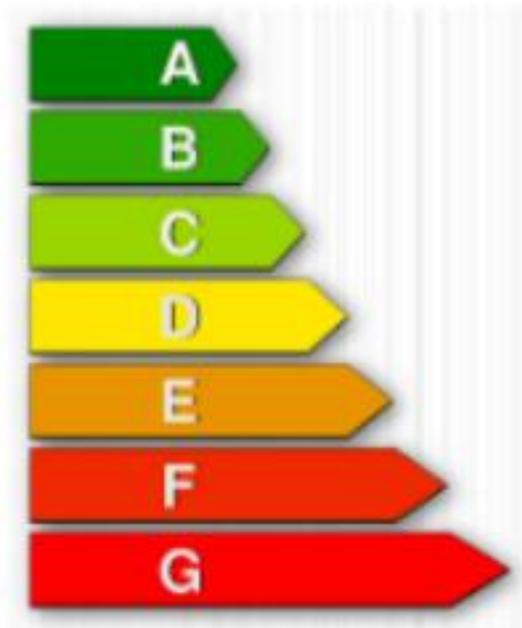
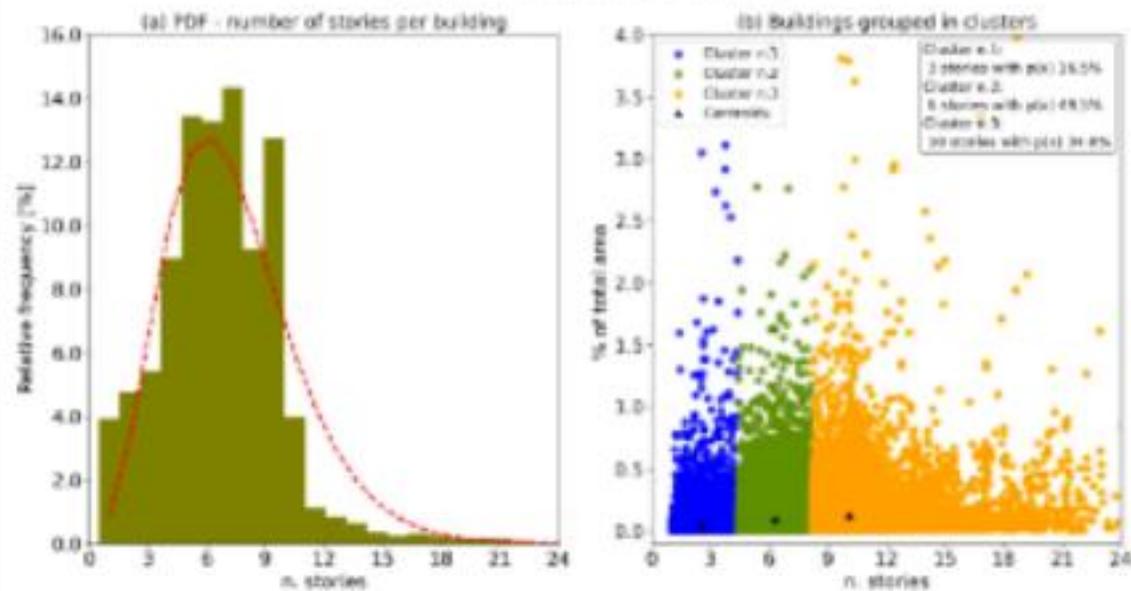
- Developer Dalian Wanda dropped all 10,000 sq. m of office space from One Nine Elms it will mean at least 400 fewer jobs - nearly half those originally intended, covering seven floors of one of the towers, but maintain the level of housing, which will provide a far more profitable return.
- Of the 490 flats in the development, 52 are defined as affordable (10.5%). None of the affordable homes are family-sized, nor for subsidised rent. The developer is instead paying £6.8 million for affordable homes to be built elsewhere.

Penthouses and poor doors: how Europe's 'biggest regeneration project' fell flat

Mayor criticised over Vauxhall hotel plan 'jobs loss'

Data-driven approach

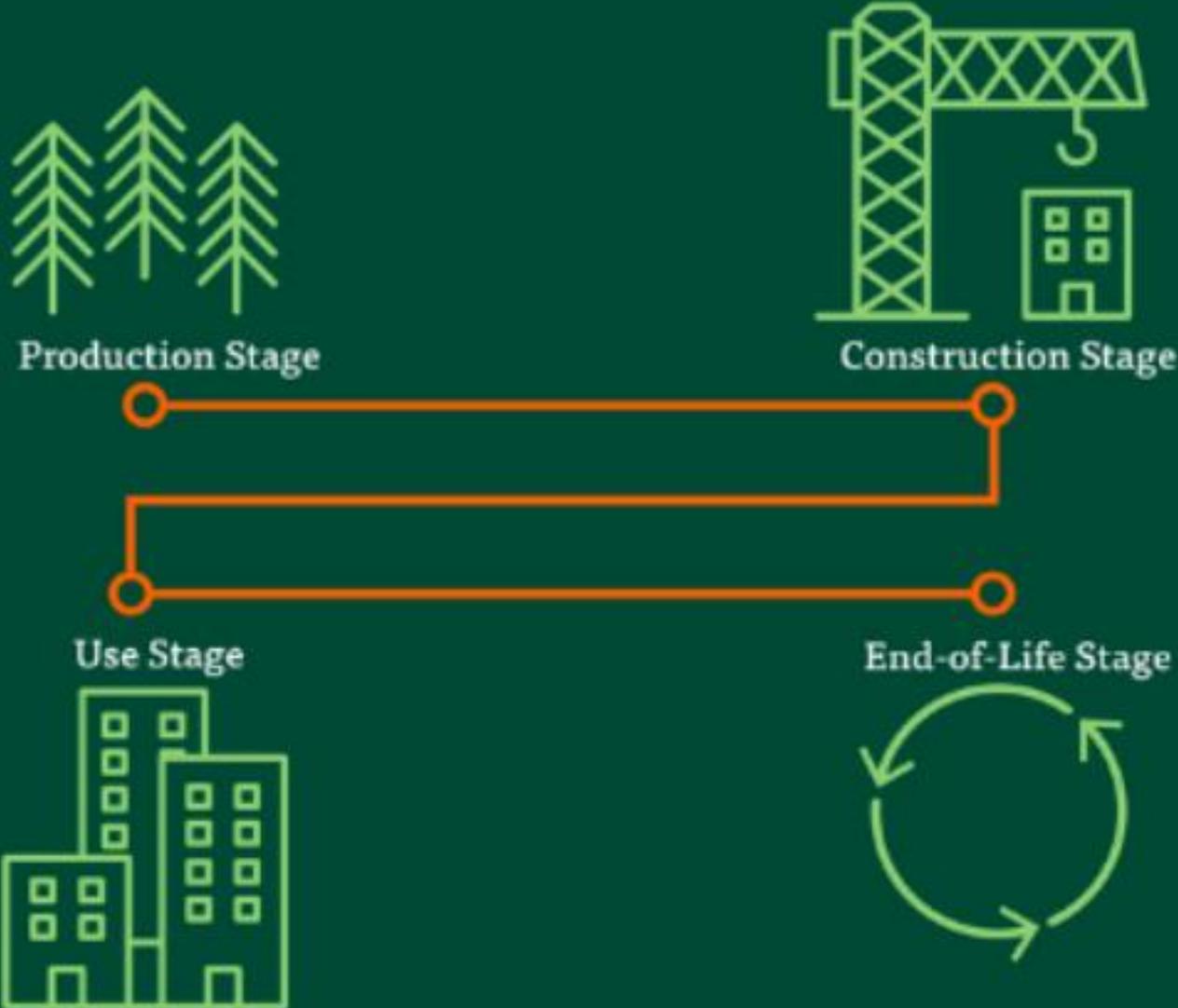
Residential, Commercial, and Retail



Interview with Prof Steadman (energy efficiency)



Further research: Entire Life Cycle





Tall Buildings and Land Value in London

An analysis of tall buildings and their impact on land values in London.

Key Findings

The correlation between tall building and land value

- **Positive correlation**

Research suggests land values increase with building heights in London, aligning with neoclassical theory

- **Higher value locations**

Tall buildings cluster in prime areas, raising average prices

- **Density and affordability**

Increased density and towers can reduce affordability

Factors Influencing Urban Land Values

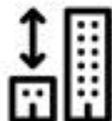


- **Residential land values are 3.2x higher than industrial on average**

This shows that residential land is in high demand compared to industrial in London.

- **Residential land values**

Residential land values in central London boroughs like Kensington and Chelsea can exceed £90 million per hectare.



- **Height limits increase office space prices**

Restrictions on building heights limit supply of office space, driving up prices

- **Tall buildings**

Tall buildings contribute to higher density residential developments which maximise land values.

Conclusion

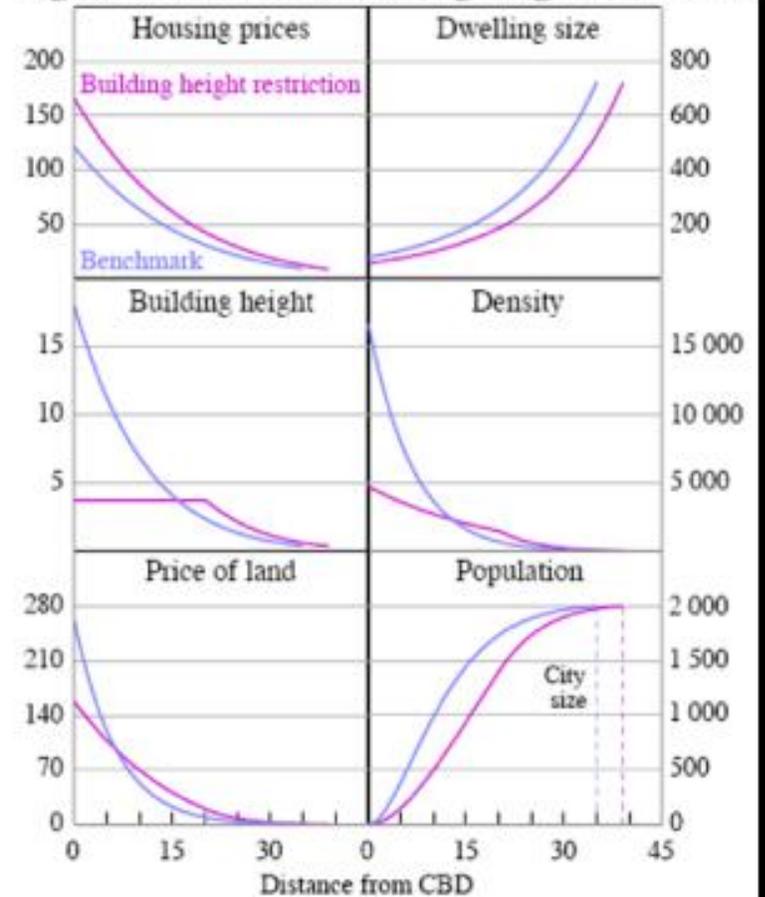
- Evidence indicates a positive link between tall buildings and land value in London
- Residential land and office space command premium prices in London due to high demand and restrictions on supply

Research Findings

Our research found that apartments at the top of tall buildings command a significant price premium compared to lower floors.

However, building height has little impact on overall property values except in supertall towers over 300 meters. This indicates factors like views and prestige drive top-floor premiums more than height itself.

Figure 4: Effects of a Building Height Restriction



Note: Units are as outlined in footnote 4

Factors Influencing Value



Population density

Areas with higher population density have higher land values due to demand for housing.



Access to transportation

Proximity to public transportation like tube stations increases land values.



Proximity to amenities

Being located near shops, restaurants, parks etc. makes an area more desirable and increases land values.



Scarcity of land

Limited availability of land in central London leads to higher prices.

Many interrelated factors drive up land values in central London, especially proximity to amenities and transportation along with high demand for limited land.



Case Study: 22 Bishopsgate

The 60-storey 22 Bishopsgate tower is being built in the City of London. It is a office use building

Milestones in Development of 22 Bishopsgate



Conclusion

In summary, high demand for housing and economic activity in central London contribute to high residential and commercial land values. Tall buildings reflect and reinforce these high land values by concentrating density and economic activity in valuable areas.

More comprehensive examination and gathering of transaction data are required to enhance our understanding of how tall buildings influence land value.



Density Guidance

- Concern: Tall buildings are only one way to build dense housing and there are better alternatives
- Maida Vale, which has many Mansion Blocks, is the densest square kilometer of London (20,000 ppl/sq km)
- London less dense than other capital cities in peer countries ([Center for Cities](#))
- London Plan Density Matrix policy repealed 2021
 - Set minimum and maximum dwellings/ha based on transit access
- Investigating recent developments and their dwelling density to understand if newest proposals are above or below previous policy

Rising Vacancy Rates

- Number of vacant properties have been increasing across London since 2016 ([Open UK dataset](#))
 - Example: Lambeth council **doubled** from 1700 in 2017 to 3400 in 2022
- Estimated £20B of property empty in London and Mayor Khan suggested devolution of power so councils can set their own empty homes council tax ([2023](#))



Possible Policy changes:

- Increase the Council Tax rate as suggested by Mayor Khan.
- Restructure Council Tax to default to empty homes rate unless proven that the property is occupied (Suggested at the Just Space meeting in November)
- Require that newly purchased properties must have owner occupation or lease contract for x years



Tall buildings: our proposals



Evidence-based approach: tall buildings are not the most efficient way of using land to achieve higher densities - mid-height (6-12 storey) blocks achieve similar density with more communal form and amenity space

Mayoral investigation into the impact of tall buildings on carbon emissions, land values, amenity

London Plan moratorium on permission for further tall buildings except for plan-led locations City and Canary Wharf?

Density matrix reintroduced to the London Plan to establish the development envelope: dampen down land value increases and speculation; reduce carbon emissions



£5 at Queen's Market, Newham

9 oranges, 3 lemons, 9 bananas, 6 onions, 9 tomatoes, 1 large ginger root, 4 garlic, 11 red chillies



£5 same items at nearby Tesco

6 oranges, 1 lemon, 5 bananas, 6 onions, 6 tomatoes, small piece ginger root, 1 clove garlic, 3 red chillies



High Streets, markets, industrial land: issues



- **Markets, high streets and businesses struggling, lack of government support**
- **Failure to plan: an absence of belief in planning for economic activity.**
- **Liberalisation: Leaving it to the market - but this is not a C19th free-for-all**
- **Markets being privatised or gentrified or pushed out with consequences for the poorest**
- **Retail assessments and industrial land assessments not fit for purpose**
- **Opportunity Areas: a property-driven form of planning, negative impacts.**
- **Office speculation Investors not building it and sitting on it**
- **PDR (Permitted Development Rights)**



Speculative office - 4 permissions in Waterloo alone...



One Waterloo



72 Upper Ground



Royal Street



18 Blackfriars

scale...

- To help understand scale, the combined floor area of the four largest developments planned for the area is...
- equivalent to a greater floor area than 6 shards combined...







High Streets, markets, industrial land



- **Demand that the GLA/Mayor believes in planning**
- **London Plan** = geographical growth of the economy. Stop Central London focus.
- **600 High Streets & town centres** most should have **markets** and making spaces.
- **Prioritise all kinds of town centres** for that purpose. Housing's not the priority.
- **Integration** between light industrial uses and town centre uses
- **Provide a wide range of unit sizes** as well as street frontage.
- **Remove policies** that mean the loss of industrial land.
- **Community-led Audits** of town centres
- **Enforce businesses' Right to Return** to new developments
- **Control speculative office development.**







Health, social infrastructure, caring city



- **A standard percentage of community-use space** allocated across new-builds.
- **Enforce high percentage of social housing** in new-builds
- **Consult local people on allocation of Section 106 money**
- **Local community hubs** for unpaid care workers and other groups
- **Use Community Wealth Building principles** with local focus
- **Neighbourhood focus in Plans** (Lifetime Neighbourhood principles)
- **Community-Led Audits** to measure things of value locally to people, assess the needs, within and around an area that is potentially going to be developed.
- **Policy 1 Care economy**, circular economy and Green New Deal brought together
- **Policy 2 Widen social care movement** bringing in community wealth building
- **Policy 3 Care Hubs**, local, a place for support and resources
- **Policy 4 Social licensing**: regulation for care providers, raise the job standard



Inclusion, participation, fairness: the issues



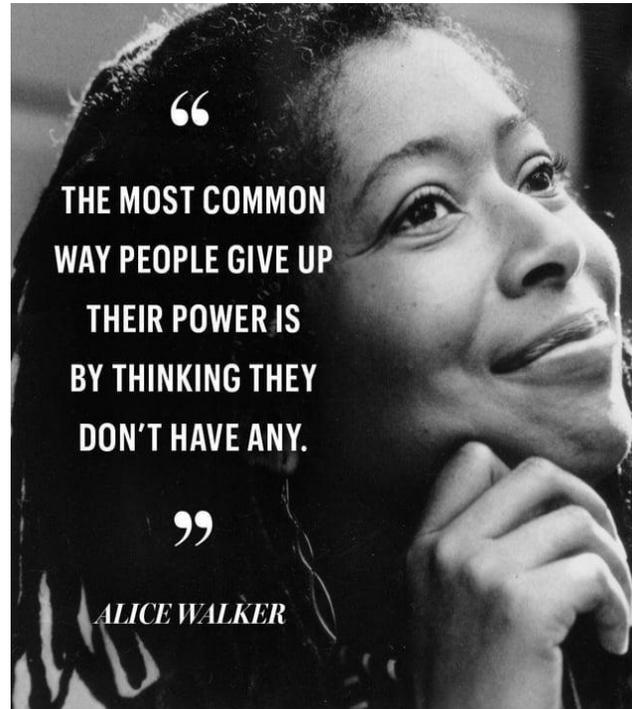
Most people don't know about planning, about the way our city develops: it's an invisible system.

- 'Planning speak' is a disguise
- An urgent need to build a critical mass of community activity
- Planning 'consultation' always far too late - notification in the guise of consultation; side-lines community inputs. Developer and planning officers have agreed main issues.
- Equalities are an afterthought, e.g. Equalities Impact Assessments done later in the process, not at outset
- Developers have co-opted the democratic process and language
- Conflicts of interest and revolving doors e.g. councillors and officers moving to the planning sector

Inclusion, Participation, Fairness



Planning decisions affect everyone so everyone should have a say



Invisibility of planning means most people don't even know it exists

Find ways to get people engaged by showing how planning affects their lives

People need to feel that they have permission to participate and that their voice is valued

Building community power comes when more people have agency

Campaigning



- Strong narratives
 - contest / demands / targets
 - whose interests are served?
 - what are the community benefits?
- Who is making decisions & how do you contact & move them
- Building on past & present organising – sharing strategies
- Making a noise / alternative paths / disruption / disobedience
- Celebrate culture, community, heritage – social value

<https://www.35percent.org/revolving-doors>

35% CAMPAIGN SE
LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

[About us](#)

[Campaign issues](#)

[Our Blog](#)

Southwark Council's Revolving Doors



In 2013, a report found that "20 per cent of Southwark's 63 councillors work as lobbyists" for developers in the planning industry and that a significant number of Councillors and Council officers are making use of a 'well-oiled revolving door' to the industry. This is twice the already alarming average number of



Three elements for meaningful community engagement

- 1. Active and accessible community groups**
- 2. Robust legal systems and policy**
- 3. Political willpower**

Each element is necessary for the planning system to work effectively

Today we are focusing on point 2



Robust law and policy

- **Processes**
 - **Statements of Community Involvement**
 - **Equalities Impact Assessments (required under the public sector equality duty)**
- **The developer should have to consult**
 - **Early**
 - **Proactively**
 - **Honestly**
 - **Meaningfully**

www.newlocal.org.uk/research/community-power



INTRODUCING
**THE
COMMUNITY
POWER
ACT**

