

BCO celebrates London's best-in-class offices

2 years ago



London's most outstanding workplaces have been announced, with British Council for Offices Awards going to seven office buildings across the capital. Held at the London Hilton on Park Lane, the BCO's annual London Awards Lunch recognised projects that demonstrate best practice in office design, fit-out, operation and sustainability, setting the standard for excellence across the sector.

The winners of this year's competition in London stand out for their user-centred design credentials, as well as their creative implementation of wellbeing and sustainability measures. This year has seen the addition of a new prize - the ESG Award - recognising a workplace that will have a game changing influence on the environment, social value, governance or sustainable outcomes in the commercial building sector.

The BCO Regional Award winners for London are:

- Henrietta House, Henrietta Place (Corporate Workplace)
- The Lantern, 75 Hampstead Road (Commercial Workplace)
- DIAGEO 1 HQ, 16 Great Marlborough St (Fit out Workplace)
- Getty Images London HQ, Duo Building, 280 Bishopsgate (Projects up to 1,500)
- The Kensington Building, 1 Wrights Lane (Refurbished/Recycled)
- Convene at 22 Bishopsgate (Innovation)
- Five Bank Street (ESG)

A collaboration between landlord, long-term occupier and architect, Henrietta House was awarded Best Corporate Workplace. The building has been carefully upgraded, reconfigured, and extended to create an

open and dynamic HQ in line with CBRE's user-centred workplace strategy. The judging panel applauded Henrietta House for the ways it capitalised on a complex site and leasing constraints in order to provide spaces with excellent health and social credentials. The building's refurbishment and new infill include an employee wellbeing suite, outdoor amenity, library, six storey open atria and a generous cafeteria to create a well-connected and bright campus-style workplace, designed to entice employees back into the office.

The Lantern received the award for Best Commercial Workplace. A BREEAM Excellent development with over 10,000 sq ft of new retail space, the development was unanimously acclaimed by the judging panel for its creative integration of mixed-use spaces. The building also carefully reusing elements of the original building, while delivering a light-filled space with five terraces and a double height reception, as well as a gym and health centre to promote wellbeing and productivity.

An all-encompassing space that took home the award for Best Fit out Workplace, DIAGEO 1HQ brings together Diageo's diversity of corporate functions, from workspaces and R&D to hospitality and retail, under one roof. The judges were impressed to see Diageo's brand identity play a defining role throughout the building, which they described as inspiring and uplifting. The variety of spaces on offer and the building's feature staircase make this workplace a welcoming environment for both employees and clients.

Winning the award for Projects up to 1,500, Getting Images at DUO, occupies only 10,000 sq ft. However, the project's success can be measured by its ability to provide staff with spaces for collaboratively working across its small footprint. The judges were struck by the way this office was tailored to suit the culture of the brand, making it a destination of choice for employees since the shift to hybrid working.

Over 60% of the original building was reused through the remodelling of a former 1970s department store, now known as The Kensington Building. Receiving the award for Best Refurbished/Recycled Workplace, this retrofit development far surpassed the LETI and RIBA Whole Life Carbon Metrics. The building has been given an intricately detailed masonry, bronze and glass façade, which combines with generous floor dimensions to allow daylight to flood through the internal spaces. The building provides 12,330 sq ft of landscaped terraces, with bee hives on the uppermost terrace promoting bio-diversity and enhancing work-life wellbeing. The judging panel commended the elegance of the building's design, along with its outstanding sustainability credentials.

The Innovation award went to Convene at 22 Bishopsgate, a workplace that reflects changing work practices, while offering an unprecedented hospitality service, through its merging of meeting and events hosting with co-working spaces. The judges singled out this building for its impressive scale and design quality, as well as the high-tech amenities on offer. The panel also highlighted the way Convene offers businesses in the building and surrounding areas a meaningful space to connect, collaborate and progress, with its structured leasing leaving room to grow.

Last but not least, the ESG award was given to Five Bank Street. The judges were especially impressed by the team's commitment to generating a positive social and environmental impact. Incorporating 16 social value KPIs, collaborating with charities and reducing waste were all central to the fit out of this workplace. The panel also praised the use of materials passports for disassembly, as well as the office's first class BREEAM and WELL ratings, and their ongoing work in evaluating post-occupancy energy use.

Helen Hare, Director of Projects at GPE and Regional Judging Chair for the BCO London Chapter said: “The role of the office has continued to evolve since the pandemic, with the rise of hybrid working transforming how we think about the workplace as a space to come together. This year’s winners for London demonstrate the meaningful role that offices continue to play in society. The exemplary projects that the judging panel had the pleasure of visiting showcase the office’s potential to act as hub of inspiration and creativity, while not only addressing new sustainability targets, but embedding them into the design of the buildings as guiding principles.”

Richard Kauntze, Chief Executive of the BCO said: “The BCO’s regional awards are a wonderful moment for all players in the industry to come together and celebrate the latest innovations in workplace excellence. This year’s winners for London highlight the importance of sustainability and social impact across the office sector. From Five Bank Street to The Kensington Building and Henrietta House, these projects offer impressive examples of how workplaces can create a sustainable work culture, while placing employee wellbeing and community engagement at their heart. Congratulations to all the winners for the region and best of luck for the upcoming National Awards.”

The London winners will compete for the BCO National Awards on Tuesday 3 October 2023.

The lead sponsor for this year’s BCO Awards is ISG. Category and Gold sponsors are AECOM, Glamox Luxonic, Troup Bywaters + Anders and SAS International. The BCO awards are in association with EG.