

London's best workplaces crowned at BCO Regional Awards

1 year ago



London's award-winning offices provide inspiring environments for workers and surrounding communities with sustainability and occupier needs at their core

London's most outstanding workplaces have been announced, with [British Council for Offices](#) Awards going to seven office buildings across the city. Held at the Park Plaza hotel, 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-centric design credentials, as well as their creative implementation of wellbeing and sustainability measures. Heritage restoration and reuse were also recurring themes across the winning projects. In its second year, the ESG Award continues to celebrate the achievements of offices which excel in responding to the sector's changing Environmental, Social and Governance needs.

The BCO Regional Award winners for London are:

- Grainhouse (Corporate Workplace)
- 8 Bishopsgate (Commercial Workplace)
- BP London (Fit out Workplace)
- All Saints (Projects up to 2,500m2)
- Tower Hamlets Town Hall (Refurbished/Recycled)
- The Forge (Innovation)
- Sky Innovation Centre (ESG)

Grainhouse was crowned Best Corporate Workplace. The judges praised the project team's ability to overcome a series of logistical challenges, not least a complex layout which stitched together five buildings overlapping different boroughs and levels. With a café, terrace and library on the top floor, the building makes the most efficient use of space, while ensuring good levels of natural lights on all floors. The office delivers an inspirational working environment, drawing on the history of the existing classical heritage building. The new high-quality feature staircase at its centre sets the tone for the rest of the project. Testament to its belief in having provided a high-quality occupier experience, the developer, Hines, took over a third of the building as its new European Headquarters.

This year Best Commercial Workplace was awarded to 8 Bishopsgate. With a clear aim of adding to the quality, not just quantity, of offices in the City, the building provides a generous 75,000sqft of amenity space comprised of cafes, lounges and an auditorium with an impressive capacity of 200. A viewing gallery also sits at level 50, adding to the project's civic offering. Providing unrivalled views of the City, it is open to the public free of charge. With a high level of build quality on display throughout, the facilities management suite has been designed to be visible as the beating heart of the operation, and was also commended for its accessibility.

BP London takes home the award for Best Fit out Workplace. The 20,000sqm of workspace creates a dynamic and energetic environment promoting collaboration and sparking innovative thinking. With sustainability as an imperative, the new office design offers an inclusive and nurturing ecosystem that celebrates diversity. The building not only successfully promotes the health and wellbeing of its staff, but also creates an uplifting experience for visitors, collaborators and communities.

Winning the award for Projects up to 2,500sqm, All Saints is an exemplar of how an owner-occupier can reuse existing building assets. Originally an orphanage which was later transformed into a hospital and then an archive, this is the fourth iteration of a building that has seen a lifetime of different uses.

Successfully navigating the constraints posed by the 19th-century building, the project celebrates its character while establishing a creative and inspiring workspace. The layout offers spaces for both smaller team-working structures as well as practice-wide interaction. The judges commended the achieved EPC B rating, admirable in a building built primarily of wood and brick.

Receiving the award for Best Refurbished/Recycled Workplace, Tower Hamlets Town Hall brings together a number of the council offices providing an accessible and inclusive gateway to council services in the borough. The building is a new focal point of Whitechapel's regeneration and consists of a restoration of a Grade II listed former Royal London Hospital building. With a nod towards the key eras of the existing building's past redevelopments between 1757 and 1906, the design draws on the architectural character inherent in each to enrich the new internal environment. The new Town Hall brings a London landmark back to life and reinvigorates it with a new purpose.

The Innovation award went to The Forge, which followed a unique procurement route in championing design for Manufacture (P-DfMA). Digital tools were used to conduct research around performance and productivity. This not only informed the design itself but gathered data which will guide future projects beyond the site boundaries, helping inspire the wider industry. Sustainability is a key focus of the project, which was the first UK commercial development designed and built to meet the UK Green Building Council's Net Zero Carbon standard. The final design consists of two buildings offering a generous and welcoming reception, courtyard space and quality amenity areas.

Last but not least, the ESG award was given to Sky Innovation Centre which has been tailored to the needs of a creative end-user. The judges were especially taken by the project's ability to hold all components of ESG at the core of its design, from the feasibility stages all the way through to operation. The building achieved BREEAM Outstanding together with WELL Platinum, all while creating an inspiring workplace. Designed to accommodate hybrid working, the building promotes collaboration and dynamic interaction across its impressive range of sustainable spaces.

Angela Joseph, Development Director at Brookfield Properties and BCO London Judging Chair said: "Over the past year we've seen a surge of demand for high-quality offices. The 2024 London winners are leading examples of how offices continue to play a vital role for UK businesses and cities. It was a joy to have the opportunity to visit this year's entries, each of which take a unique approach to creating stimulating spaces both for occupiers and surrounding communities. I was particularly impressed by the way multiple winners successfully weaved new technologies and building practices into pre-existing heritage buildings, demonstrating a new standard of reuse and restoration while raising the overall standard of sustainable office design."

Richard Kauntze, Chief Executive of the BCO said: "The BCO's regional awards are the perfect moment for the industry to reflect on the achievements of the past year, as well as to recognise the progress being made in driving forward higher industry standards for the years to come. From sensitively restoring buildings to providing state-of-the-art wellbeing spaces, this year's London winners exemplify the strides being made in design and occupier experience. Well done to all the 2024 London winners and best of luck for the National Awards this October."

The London winners will compete for the BCO National Awards on 8th October 2024.

The lead sponsor for this year's BCO Awards is ISG. Category and Gold sponsors are AECOM and Troup Bywaters + Anders. The BCO awards are in association with EG.