TALL BUILDINGS
MIDLANDS CONFERENCE 2026

# SPEAKER PROGRAMME

**13 October 2026**
**Royal Birmingham Conservatoire**

**08:30** **Registration & Exhibitor Networking**

**09:30** **Chair Introduction**
**Gavin Hoccom**, Browne Jacobson

## Session One - Shaping the Skyline - Midlands's Future High-Rise Policy

**09:40** **Keynote Speaker:**
**Simon Delahunty-Forrest**, Director of Planning & Development - Birmingham City Council
Simon Delahunty-Forrest will set out where tall buildings belong in Birmingham - and the design quality, public value and placemaking discipline expected in return for greater height. The presentation will explore how planning policy can channel development pressure into a coherent skyline that strengthens streets, neighbourhoods and Birmingham's international identity.

**10:00** **Shauna Bradley**, Howells
Shauna will ask how Birmingham and the wider West Midlands can grow taller without losing the qualities that make cities liveable, resilient and distinctive. Drawing on more than a decade shaping Paradise Birmingham and other city-scale regeneration projects, she will explore how masterplanning, mixed communities, public realm and long-term adaptability can turn individual towers into better pieces of city.

**10:20** **Q&A**

**10:30** **Refreshments & Exhibitor Networking**
A chance to continue conversations sparked during the morning presentations and discussions.

## Session Two - The Retrofit & Regeneration Revolution

**11:10** **Aneel Kilaire**, TyrensAKT
Aneel will explore the engineering required to unlock complex urban sites, demonstrating how structural, façade, and bioclimatic innovation can overcome the infrastructure and density challenges of high-rise development in Birmingham. The presentation will uncover how technical integration restitches the urban fabric, detailing how high-performance envelope design, smart environmental engineering, and structural adaptability resolve tight constraints to deliver ambitious density while maintaining human-scale comfort, sustainability, and urban connectivity.

**11:30** **Moe Ali**, Bruntwood SciTech
Moe will chart the £4.5million transformation of Centre City, a 20-storey Birmingham landmark recast as a flexible hub for science, technology and innovation-led businesses. The presentation will explore how targeted building services upgrades, adaptable workspaces and wellbeing-focused amenities can give a prominent 1960s tower an exciting new commercial life.

Stone Yard
Image courtesy of Whittam Cox Architects

**11:50** **Shaun Boylan**, Caddick Construction & **Nick Fenton**, Whittam Cox Architects
Shaun Boylan and Nick Fenton will take delegates inside the £200million first phase of Stone Yard, transforming a four-acre Digbeth brownfield site with 605 Build to Rent homes as the opening stage of a 995-home neighbourhood. They will reveal how contractor-architect collaboration is reconciling buildability, standardisation and smart-building performance.

**12:15** **Q&A**

## Session Three - Building Safety Act

**12:25** **Sarah Gregory**, Savills

Development Viability and the Building Safety Levy - with the Building Safety Levy taking effect on 1 October 2026, Sarah will test what another layer of cost means for the viability of Midlands residential and PBSA developments. She will examine the cumulative pressure of the levy, Section 106 obligations, affordable housing requirements and rising delivery costs - and ask which tall-building projects can still move confidently from appraisal to construction.

**12:45** **Panel Debate**

This cross-disciplinary debate will examine how the Building Safety Act is reshaping tall-building design and delivery - from competence, design maturity and Gateway 2 approval to change control, the golden thread and Gateway 3 completion. Bringing together building-control, engineering, façade and fire-safety expertise, the panel will expose where projects are losing time and certainty - and explore what genuinely robust, regulator-ready compliance looks like in practice.

**Panel Chair: Prof Saeed Talebi**, Professor of Digital Built Environment
**David Morrissey**, Acivico
**Jonathan Eddery**, AtkinsRéalis
**Sally Friswell**, Arup
**Dan Norman**, Obex
**Daniel Phillips**, AHCI Advantage Structural Warranty

**13:25** **Lunch & Exhibitor Networking**

A dedicated networking session to foster collaboration and deepen engagement between delegates, speakers and exhibitors.

## Session Four - Icons of the Skyline: The Midlands - Premier High-Rise Case Studies

**14:25** **Headline Exhibitor Audience Address: Martin Keogh**, Saint-Gobain

**14:35** **Lisa Deering**, Glancy Nicholls Architects

Lisa will reveal the design story behind One Eastside, a pair of towers delivering 667 homes and a striking 51-storey landmark on Birmingham's evolving skyline. Discover how its fluted façade, landscaped resident spaces and Birmingham's highest bar, sky lounge and terrace are creating a distinctive new gateway beside the future HS2 terminus.

**14:55** **Charlie O'Reilly,** Walsh**, Majid Awan,** Gleeds**, Simon McAllen,** Broadway Malyan **& Matt Butler,** Axiom Bridge

The Project Team will explore the making of 1 Beorma Place - Birmingham's tallest mixed-use tower - bringing 152,000 sq ft of Grade A offices, 125 apartments and a new public square to the threshold of Digbeth. The presentation will uncover how this 29-storey landmark bridges the city's historic grain and future skyline through contemporary façades, private winter gardens and a carefully framed relationship with St Martin's and Selfridges.

**15:20** **Dav Bansal**, Howells

Dav Bansal will explore the next generation of high-rise living at The Octagon, Paradise - challenging conventional design through an innovative approach that balances structural efficiency with a distinctive skyline presence. The presentation will uncover how this landmark tower answers the critical question of modern urban density: how we can build higher-quality, healthier city homes using fewer materials and generating less waste.

**15:40** **Ameet Singh Heir**, Aecom and **James Hind**, SimpsonHaugh

Ameet and James will explore the making of Goods Station - Birmingham's transformative mixed-use masterplan - bringing over 1,000 high-quality homes, vibrant commercial spaces, and expansive public realm to the historic heart of the city's former Central Goods Depot. The presentation will uncover how this landmark regeneration project bridges Birmingham's industrial heritage and contemporary urban skyline through striking architectural forms, sustainable design, and a thoughtfully integrated network of green spaces, pedestrian routes, and restored historic assets.

**16:00** **Q&A**

## Session Five - Regional PBSA Powerhouse Projects

**16:10** **Alexandra Briars**, RG+P

Alexandra will review CODE Fairfax Street, the 23-storey steel-framed development that became Coventry's tallest building while delivering 1,192 self-contained student studios. The presentation will reveal how four interlinked towers, a landscaped podium and an unusually rich mix of study, social, fitness and commercial spaces created vertical student living at city-changing scale.

**16:30** **Nick Rumball**, True Student

Nick will explore how True Leicester transformed a long-vacant 1950s hotel and its existing concrete frame into a 472-bed student destination in the city's Cathedral Quarter. The presentation will examine how adaptive reuse, extensive amenity space and an experience-led operating model can turn an obsolete tall building into a commercially relevant and community-focused student home.

**16:50** **Q&A**

**17:00** **Closing Comments from Conference Chair**

**17:10** **Conference End & Drinks Reception & Awards**

**19:00** **Event End**

True Student, Leicester
Image courtesy of True Student

*Headline Exhibitors:*

NoMorePly BoardingSystems

SAINT-GOBAIN

*Industry Partners:*

aps association for project safety

BESA BUILDING ENGINEERING SERVICES ASSOCIATION

Birmingham Architectural Association

CIOB The Chartered Institute of Building

Constructing Excellence Midlands

LIGHT STEEL FRAME ASSOCIATION