

NLA AWARDS 2026



NLA Awards 2026 Submission Guidelines

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Urban Space Management



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Overview

The NLA Awards—supported by the Mayor of London—celebrate the people, places and projects shaping a better London.

Judged by an esteemed international panel of leading figures in architecture, planning and design, the awards honour innovation and excellence that contribute to a city of Equity, Sustainability and Prosperity, as defined by the New London Agenda.



Why enter

Winners will be celebrated at a prestigious lunch in the Great Hall at Guildhall, in the heart of the City of London, with over 650 industry leaders in attendance.

Every shortlisted and winning entry gains unparalleled recognition through publication on NLA's website and promotion to our large social media audience and 26k newsletter subscribers. Winners and finalists can proudly showcase their status with a trophy and digital assets, elevating their projects across emails, websites and social media.

By entering, you become part of a wider movement to create the type of places we need across London, projects that inspire and embody the principles of the New London Agenda.

Other opportunities include:

- Coverage through NLA's media channels and industry press, helping to amplify winning projects to a wider audience across the built environment sector.
- Professional photography from the awards ceremony and access to branded digital assets to support your own marketing and PR.
- Connect with London's leading developers, architects, policymakers and investors at the awards ceremony and across NLA's network.
- Promotion across NLA's digital platforms, reaching over 28,000 LinkedIn followers, 26,000 newsletter subscribers and 10,000+ monthly website visitors.
- Feature in NLA's online project directory, connecting your work to key decision-makers across London's built environment sector.
- An editorial feature on NLA's website, reaching an engaged audience.
- Opportunities to present your project through NLA events such as 'Behind the Winning Projects' talks, webinars and panel discussions.
- Inclusion in NLA's year-round programme of online content, research, events, magazines, tours, interviews and more.
- A chance to be included in the People's Choice Award, where Londoners vote for their favourite projects.
- The opportunity to exhibit in the showcase gallery at The London Centre, further amplifying your project's impact.



Eligibility

Any company involved in the planning, design or construction of a project is eligible to enter the project into the NLA Awards.

The project team are encouraged to consult with other members and their clients to avoid duplicate entries.

The project must be located within one of the 33 London Boroughs.

Submitted projects can be at any stage from completion to on the drawing board. A 'built' project must have achieved practical completion within the last two years (between 21 May 2024 and 21 May 2026). An 'unbuilt' project must have a real site and be at any stage of design or construction at time of entry on 21 May 2026. Any project completed before 21 May 2024 will not be eligible.

Submission costs

- **NLA Members: £295+VAT**
- **Full Price (non-members): £345+VAT**

There is a submission fee for each submission. If you would like to submit to more than one category a separate entry fee applies for per category.

To learn more about NLA Membership, please visit:
nla.london/company-membership

If you have any queries, please get in touch at awards@nla.london

NEX, the New Acres
hub where innovation
ity. This space blurs the
ork, play, and creativity,
uary for locals,
creators.

cept Lounge's future
Acres, immerse in
ant co-working culture,
tive designs at
y, powered by the Royal
and enjoy locally-run
ge in exciting events,
hey, and contribute to
mmunity.

Royal College of Art
Innovation & Enterprise



Submissions

We invite submissions across the following categories, reflecting the diversity and richness of people, places and projects that contribute to London's built environment. Each category celebrates innovation and excellence, aligning with the principles of the New London Agenda.

- Unbuilt schemes should demonstrate vision, strategy, and the potential to positively shape London's future.
- Built schemes should demonstrate impact, show transformation and delivered measurable benefits to London.

Submissions will be judged against the **Six Pillars of Placemaking**, which define the qualities needed to create a city of Equity, Sustainability and Prosperity. These pillars serve as the framework to assess how each project contributes to making London a better place for people to live, work and thrive:

- 1 Focus on Health
- 2 Plan for Future Generations
- 3 Think Beyond Boundaries
- 4 Value Diversity
- 5 Leverage Innovation
- 6 Work in Partnership

Project Categories

CONSERVATION & HERITAGE

Sponsored by Urban Space Management

Eligible projects include listed and historic buildings, restoration, repair, and adaptive reuse.

Unbuilt

Proposals to restore and repair historic buildings, demonstrating a clear conservation approach, technical credibility, innovation, and potential impact while balancing heritage with contemporary use.

Built

Completed projects that restore and repair historic buildings, showing measurable impact, quality of delivery, and how heritage has been preserved while improving performance and securing long-term use.

CULTURE

Eligible projects include civic and cultural buildings, museums, galleries, theatres, libraries, leisure facilities, and cultural hubs.

Unbuilt

Proposals demonstrating the strength of concept, innovation, and potential to embed cultural experience in design.

Built

Completed projects that put cultural experience at the heart of placemaking, showing impact on the city's cultural life, design quality, and measurable outcomes.

EDUCATION

Sponsored by Airflow

Eligible projects include educational environments, from nurseries to universities.

Unbuilt

Proposals with the ambition to create learning environments built to last. Submissions should demonstrate inspiring, inclusive and adaptable spaces that support learning and wellbeing, and show how the design will perform over time.

Built

Completed educational projects that deliver high-quality environments for teaching and learning. Submissions should show how design has enhanced the experience of students and staff, and the measurable impact it has had.

HEALTHCARE & LIFE SCIENCES

Eligible projects include hospitals, clinical facilities, laboratories, surgeries, and other healthcare and life sciences buildings.

Unbuilt

Proposals with the ambition to improve health outcomes through design. Submissions should demonstrate patient-centred thinking, technical credibility and innovation, and the potential to support clinical practice, research and the wellbeing of staff and visitors.

Built

Completed healthcare and life sciences projects that show how design is improving outcomes for patients, staff and communities. Submissions should demonstrate operational performance, quality of environment and measurable impact.

Project Categories

HOUSING

Eligible projects include residential developments of any scale and tenure, from social housing and build to rent to student accommodation, prime residential and later living.

Unbuilt

Proposals with the ambition to create good homes and neighbourhoods. Submissions should demonstrate design quality, sustainability and a strong response to context, and show how the scheme will support a diverse range of residents.

Built

Completed residential projects that are delivering better places to live. Submissions should show strong design, environmental performance and positive local impact, with evidence of how the development has contributed to its neighbourhood.

Small-scale (2–49 homes)

Residential developments of two to 49 units.

Medium-scale (50–99 homes)

Multi-unit residential developments of 50 to 99 units, including mixed-tenure, social and private schemes.

Large-scale (100+ homes)

Developments of 100 units or more, delivering significant new neighbourhoods and communities, including high-end residential and large-scale social housing initiatives.

INDUSTRIAL & LOGISTICS

Eligible projects include manufacturing, distribution, data centres, warehousing, and other vital urban infrastructure that enables the flow of goods and services.

Unbuilt

Proposals for vital infrastructure that enables the flow of goods and services, including manufacturing, distribution, data centres and warehousing.

Built

Completed industrial and logistics projects that support world-leading urban logistics and keep the city running.

MIXED USE

Eligible projects include buildings that integrate living, working and leisure uses.

Unbuilt

Proposals with the ambition to create buildings where different uses reinforce each other. Submissions should demonstrate how living, uses have been thoughtfully integrated, and how the scheme will support a variety of people and activities over time.

Built

Completed mixed-use projects that show integration working in practice. Submissions should demonstrate vibrancy, adaptability and quality of delivery, and show how the building is contributing positively to its surrounding area.

Project Categories

RETAIL & HOSPITALITY

Eligible projects include hotels, high street retail, shops, restaurants, bars and markets, including refits and interiors.

Unbuilt

Proposals with the ambition to create something distinctive. Submissions should demonstrate a strong concept and contextual awareness.

Built

Completed retail and hospitality projects that are creating distinctive experiences and strengthening their local context. Submissions should show design quality, commercial and community impact, and how the project has contributed to its high street, neighbourhood or destination.

RETROFIT

Sponsored by REHAU

Eligible projects include the repurposing and revitalisation of all existing buildings that preserve London's building stock and retain embodied carbon.

Unbuilt

Proposals with the ambition to make the most of what already exists. Submissions should demonstrate a retrofit approach, technical innovation and a clear strategy for reducing carbon and extending the life of existing fabric for contemporary use.

Built

Completed retrofit projects that show what's possible when existing buildings are given a new lease of life. Submissions should demonstrate measurable environmental performance, quality of delivery and how the building is serving its users and its context for the long term.

TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Eligible projects include train stations, bridges, transport interchanges, cycling networks, and essential public utilities.

Unbuilt

Proposals with the ambition to shape how London moves, connects and adapts to a changing climate. Submissions should demonstrate technical credibility, design innovation and the potential for long-term positive impact on the city's connectivity and resilience.

Built

Completed transport and infrastructure projects that are improving how London functions. Submissions should show how the project has enhanced connectivity, public experience and climate resilience, and how it is serving the city's long-term needs.

WORKPLACES

Sponsored by Maylim

Eligible projects include office buildings, co-working hubs and affordable workspaces.

Unbuilt

Proposals with the ambition to respond to how work is changing. Submissions should demonstrate how design can support productivity, wellbeing and collaboration.

Built

Completed workplace projects that are delivering high-quality environments for work. Submissions should show design quality, occupant wellbeing and long-term performance.

Place Categories

NEIGHBOURHOODS & MASTERPLANS

Sponsored by Maylim

Eligible projects include placemaking strategies, masterplans, housing-led developments, business improvement districts, and other large-scale area transformations.

Unbuilt

Placemaking strategies and masterplans that propose vibrant, mixed-use destinations across London. Submissions should demonstrate a clear vision for sustainable growth, supporting communities, businesses and visitors, and setting out a strong framework for long-term place transformation.

Built

Realised neighbourhoods, estates and areas, from housing-led developments to business improvement districts, that have been revitalised through a cohesive placemaking strategy. Submissions should show how local people, businesses and spaces are at the heart of the transformation, responding to community needs and delivering measurable impact.

MEANWHILE ACTIVATION

Eligible projects include temporary activations that enliven emerging places and high streets over a short-term period while supporting long-term ambitions.

Unbuilt

Proposals that embrace the city as a work in progress. Submissions should demonstrate a clear connection between the short-term intervention and longer-term ambitions for the place.

Built

Completed meanwhile projects that have brought energy and purpose to an emerging place or high street. Submissions should show community

PUBLIC SPACES

Eligible projects include new or revitalised spaces in the public realm, from streets and squares to playgrounds and parks.

Unbuilt

Proposals with the ambition to create spaces that belong to everyone. Submissions should demonstrate how the design will serve diverse communities, prioritise nature and biodiversity.

Built

Completed public spaces that are making a real difference to the people who use them. Submissions should show measurable improvements to public life, biodiversity and environmental performance.



People Categories

We are looking for best practice approaches across the industry that demonstrate our commitment to taking responsibility, providing clarity and building trust, supporting London as a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous city.

Teams can submit examples of business and placemaking strategies, research and policy papers or in-house programmes that demonstrate best practice in their approach.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

The organisation or team, public or private, that demonstrate approaches aligned with the values of the New London Agenda contributing positively to London's development and creating a city of equity, sustainability and prosperity.

BOROUGH OF THE YEAR

Celebrating the borough or borough team that placed the New London Agenda at the heart of their approach to placemaking, whether on a specific project or across the whole borough.

PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by Muse

A cross-sector partnership, public-private partnership or joint venture that has embraced collective and coordinated action in delivering development.

HIDDEN HERO

Honouring the 'Hidden Heroes' who work tirelessly behind the scenes to shape London's places. From individuals on the project team to local community groups, their unseen skills and dedication bring projects to life, contributing to the vibrancy of London today.



Special Prizes

MAYOR'S PRIZE

Supported by the Mayor of London

The Mayor is committed to ensuring London grows sustainably by making the very best use of existing buildings and materials, while also supporting new development that is designed for long term resilience, adaptability and high quality places for future generations.

This year the Mayor's Award will recognise schemes that demonstrate design excellence in adaptation, retention and long-life new construction, celebrating projects that extend the life of existing buildings, embed long term flexibility, and create new spaces built to endure and evolve. The Award particularly welcomes entries that illustrate innovative climate neutral strategies, whether through inventive retrofit, thoughtful integration of new and old, or new-build schemes designed for future adaptability. Submissions may include a range of typologies across both new build and retained fabric and should clearly demonstrate how policy and design work together to deliver a more sustainable, adaptable London.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Voted for by the public, this prize celebrates the projects most loved by Londoners, showcasing what truly resonates with the city's people. Londoners are invited to vote for their favourite project from the 2026 shortlist. The project with the most votes will receive the People's Choice Award.

DIGITAL INNOVATION PRIZE

Awarded to a shortlisted project that demonstrates outstanding use of digital tools, data, or artificial intelligence to enhance the planning, design, delivery, or management of London's built environment.

This prize recognises how digital innovation can enable a stronger overall outcome. Submissions should clearly demonstrate how the application of technology contributed meaningfully to the project's success, and how that use enabled measurable or tangible improvements, whether through greater efficiency, time or cost savings, enhanced engagement, improved quality, sustainability gains, or other defined benefits.

Aligned with NLA's Digital London Insight Study, launching in 2027, this prize recognises how technological advancements can support a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous city.

NLA LONDONER OF THE YEAR

Each year, the NLA Londoner of the Year Award honours individuals who have made significant contributions to London, whether through exceptional work this year or sustained impact over time. This individual embodies the values of the New London Agenda and is recognised across sectors for their achievements in the built environment community.

How to enter

Awards entries must be submitted through zealous.co before the deadline at 12:00 on Thursday 21 May 2026. You can save a draft on Zealous at any time before completing your submission.

Stage 1

Submit for Judging (*deadline: 12:00, Thursday 21 May 2026*)

Your submission on Zealous consists of three components:

- 1 Your submission document (PDF)
- 2 Your completed application form (see Appendix for questions)
- 3 Payment via Stripe

Stage 2

NLA Project Directory (*deadline: 12:00, Thursday 23 July 2026*)

To unlock the full promotional benefits of entering - including featuring on NLA's website and in our year-round programme, your project must also be listed on the NLA Project Directory by this date.

You will have the opportunity to share higher-resolution images for press and communications purposes following the judging process.



How to enter – Project and Place categories

Your **submission document** (PDF max 12 pages) should include:

- Written overview of the scheme you are submitting (Max 300 words)
- An outline how the project meets the judging criteria (Max 200 words)
- Outline of the project's environmental, social and economic sustainability performance, including key metrics (Max 150 words)

In addition to your main submission document please upload the following **supporting documentation** as an appendix in your PDF (no page limit):

- Drawings: site map, ground floor plan in context, all plans, sections and elevations

If submitting for the following categories, you must also include the following information in your main submission:

CONSERVATION & HERITAGE

- A diagram showing the old and new parts of the building

RETROFIT

- a diagram showing the old and new parts of the building

HOUSING

- Please specify scale (Small, Medium or Large)
- Number of units
- Please specify the tenure type and relevant percentages: i.e. % affordable, % social rent, % private (where appropriate)
- Costs (for internal use only)

MEANWHILE ACTIVATION

- Please specify the active period of the meanwhile project

MIXED USE

- Please note that to classify in this category any use shouldn't be more than 90% of the total. Please specify the type of uses and relevant percentage: i.e. % retail, % residential, % office

MASTERPLANS & NEIGHBOURHOODS

Unbuilt

- Please submit key diagrams of the masterplan i.e. uses, density, connections, public realm

How to enter – People categories

Your **submission document** (PDF max 12 pages) should include:

- Written overview of the team, borough or partnership you are submitting (Max 600 words)
- Written overview of the best practice example you are submitting (Max 400 words)
- An outline how the example meets the judging criteria (Max 300 words)

In addition to your main submission document you may upload the following supporting documentation as an appendix in your PDF (no page limit):

- Optional: Your best practice example



Judging criteria—Project and Place categories

The judging criteria for the NLA Awards align with the New London Agenda, NLA's framework for best practice in city-making derived from over 20 years of experience, with over 400 contributions from London's built environment community.

The assessment of the project and place categories will be guided by the 'Six Pillars of Placemaking', ensuring that initiatives of all scales contribute meaningfully to London's evolution.

- **Focus on Health:** Projects must prioritise the wellbeing and needs of people, with a focus on enhancing both human and planetary health. Designs should promote a positive human experience while minimising environmental impact, aligning with the imperative for sustainable and equitable urban development.
- **Plan for Future Generations:** Projects should demonstrate exceptional design quality that endures over time, creating lasting value for London. This includes thoughtful craftsmanship, material integrity and adaptability, ensuring buildings and places remain relevant, resilient and inspiring for future generations. Proposals should anticipate evolving social, environmental and economic needs, embedding flexibility and long-term stewardship.
- **Think Beyond Boundaries:** Thinking beyond conventional constraints is encouraged, challenging the limitations imposed by development boundaries, administrative borders, and industry silos. Projects should demonstrate a holistic perspective that considers the interconnectedness of urban systems and promotes integration across sectors and disciplines.
- **Value Diversity:** Celebrating London's diverse communities is essential, with projects expected to reflect and accommodate a wide range of cultural, social, and economic needs. Diversity should be embraced as a fundamental strength, shaping inclusive spaces and fostering a sense of belonging for all.
- **Leverage Innovation:** Leveraging cutting-edge technologies and innovative approaches is essential for shaping the future of London. Projects should harness advancements in design, construction, and urban planning to create dynamic, forward-looking spaces that empower residents and stimulate creativity and entrepreneurship.
- **Work in Partnership:** Recognising the power of collective action, projects should demonstrate effective collaboration and coordination among stakeholders. Embracing partnerships across sectors and disciplines is crucial for realising the shared vision of a sustainable, equitable, and prosperous city.

Submissions may excel in some of the six pillars more than others, we do not expect every point to be addressed directly but submitters should seek to present their project through the lens of the New London Agenda as much as possible.

Judging criteria—People categories

The People Categories are assessed against the following values, which sit at the heart of the New London Agenda:

- **Take Responsibility:** Demonstrates proactive accountability in their actions towards places across London.
- **Provide Clarity:** Offers transparent communication and clear objectives in their strategies and initiatives.
- **Build Trust:** Establishes credibility and fosters confidence through reliable practices and collaborative efforts.

Awards process

From submission onwards, the projects undergo the following selection process:

- **Longlisting** - NLA assesses entries for both quality and compliance with essential submission criteria.
- **Shortlisting** - A team of London-based cross-sector Expert Assessors review the entries and define the shortlist of projects for each of the categories. Every year we bring a different group of experts together who contribute with first-hand knowledge and impartial judgment to select a broad representation of relevant projects contributing to London's built environment.
- **Site visits** - Expert Assessors conduct site visits to gather first-hand knowledge and offer informed, objective deliberation as an integral part of the selection process.
- **Winner selections** - Expert Assessors present shortlisted projects to the International Jury, giving careful consideration as to the reasons for selecting each project and communicating their motivations to the International Jury. Each Expert Assessor presents the selected projects to be considered for an award, introducing the scheme in the most objective way possible, highlighting its relevance to London.
- **The International Jury** - bring their global experience in order to select outstanding contributions to the city. The International Jury select the final winners, commendations and special prizes.
- **Awards Lunch** - Thursday 19 November 2026 - Join over 650 of the capital's leading decision-makers and professionals across development, design, planning and construction come together to hear the announcement of the winners of the prestigious NLA Awards and Special Prize winner announcements, including the NLA Londoner of the Year and Mayor's Prize presentation.

Appendix—Application form

Application form questions (as seen on zealous.co)

- Company name (in the format it should appear on promotional material)*
- Project value GBP (£)*
(This won't be published but will be relevant to the assessment)
- Full Project Address*
- As part of the selection process, Expert Assessors will be conducting site visits during the summer to built schemes. Please give the contact information of the person who we can contact directly to arrange the site visits* (name/email/phone)
- Would you like to nominate a Hidden Hero – someone whose contribution to this project often goes unrecognised? * (YES/NO)
- If yes, please provide their name, profession, role and reason for nomination.
- Does your project respond to the theme of this year's Mayor's Prize?* (YES/NO)
- If yes, please provide a summary explaining how your submission relates to the theme.
- Did digital tools or technology contribute meaningfully to your project's success?* (YES/NO)
- If yes, please provide a brief summary outlining the digital tools or approaches used and their impact on the project.
- Please provide credits for the team* (We recommend you credit the following as a minimum: Client, Architect, Structural Engineer, M&E / Sustainability Engineer, Planning Consultant, Project Manager / Cost Consultant, Contractor.)
- Please provide any relevant social media handles*
- Is your project is already on the NLA Project Directory, if so, please link it here:

Useful information

- The submitting company must list all consultants and principal contractors and have obtained written permission from the land/building owner or project client.
- There is no limit to the number of entries from any one organisation. Projects submitted in previous years may be resubmitted a maximum of twice, provided they can show development (e.g. progression from planning to construction).
- Projects can be entered into more than one category where appropriate, with a separate submission and entry fee per category. There are no fees for Special Prizes.
- All entries must be submitted via [Zealous.co](https://www.zealous.co)
- Images submitted as part of the PDF are final for the judging process. Updated images and photographs can only be amended on your project directory listing on the NLA website.
- The judges reserve the right not to award a winner in any category if no entries meet a sufficient standard. Categories may be merged, removed or go unawarded if entries are insufficient or below the quality threshold.
- We don't expect every borough to enter for Borough of the Year each year. Boroughs typically put themselves forward when they've had an exceptional period of delivery and collaboration, aligned with the values of the New London Agenda.