

Speech: Winner of the 2017 Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I am very pleased to be here with you this evening to present the Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award at the 2017 British Construction Industry Awards.

An awards ceremony which recognises and rewards excellence in construction and how projects can transform society. I am also informed that this awards ceremony is in its thirtieth year, so congratulations to you all!

Thanks to your hard work, the construction industry in the UK has a world-class reputation and underpins our country's continuing economic growth – creating much needed infrastructure and jobs, and helping export UK construction expertise around the world.

The government has a strong role to play in shaping this industry, with over a quarter of construction output from the public sector and central government being the biggest single construction client.

That is why these awards are supported through the Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award, sponsored by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority in the Cabinet Office and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

What makes a 'better' public building

Tonight we are all here to celebrate some of the very best examples of construction – from grand projects that are reshaping our cities, to smaller, more local, efforts that are serving our communities.

But these awards are not just about the technical merit of a building or the precise functional feat of engineering, important as they are. They are also about recognising how better building and construction can transform lives, communities and the UK as a whole.

A better public building achieves excellence in design quality, innovation and procurement practices.

A better public building is first class financial management – delivered on budget and providing value for money for taxpayers.

A better public building is constructed on time and has real social and environmental value for its local community.

These are the principles this government is committed to and that we are recognising tonight.

Government Construction Strategy

And these are the principles that are embodied in our Government Construction Strategy.

Our strategy sets out how we want to make the government a better client, improve construction productivity and deliver £1.7 billion efficiencies and 20,000 apprenticeships in construction by 2020.

We know that innovation inside the public sector can be used to support growth in the private sector. So we want to work with industry to ensure effective procurement, efficient delivery, competitive pricing, and design excellence all become the norm.

Tonight's winner embodies all of these principles – it is a building that is well designed, innovative and enables a smarter public service.

It acts as a central hub, supported by nine local offices, putting this service more in touch with local communities.

It was delivered on time and on budget – in fact funded from the sale of its former building – so at no extra cost to the taxpayer! As Minister for Government Efficiency, you can see why I am particularly excited about the winner this year!

This approach has enabled more investment to be put into the public services the building is there to support. And despite its high security, the design of the building makes it feel open, welcoming and more transparent to the public it serves.

As the judges said, it is 'fit for function' in the best sense of the phrase.

Announcement

I want to congratulate everyone involved in the projects shortlisted for the award this evening.

We continue to see increasing numbers of excellent projects all over the country. They are an inspiration to all public sector clients, and I'd like to see every new public building project meet the same high standards.

But there can only be one winner. So I am delighted to announce that the winner of the 2017 Prime Minister's Better Building Award is...

... the New Scotland Yard building on Thames Embankment!

Please join the stage to collect your award. Thank you.