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## LSE wins planning approval for 1,945-bed Bankside student housing scheme



**Tuesday, 24 March 2026, London** — The London School of Economics and Political Science, with partners Equitix and Bouygues UK, has secured planning approval for the redevelopment of Bankside House into a 1,945-bed student residence, delivering affordable, high quality accommodation in central London and helping ease pressure on the wider private rental market.

LSE has more than 12,000 full-time students, with around 60% currently living in private accommodation because of a shortage of LSE-managed rooms. Under its 2030 strategy, the School has committed to expanding its accommodation offer to 6,000 bed spaces and guaranteeing a place to every new first-year student.



All rooms proposed at the Bankside redevelopment will be at sub-market rents, with 15% of bed spaces meeting the London Plan definition of Affordable Student Accommodation (capped at 55% of the maximum maintenance loan).

Bankside Residences have also been designed to be a better neighbour. The scheme includes a publicly accessible Community Hub, Community Classroom, event spaces, an LSE-run café and public realm improvements designed to strengthen Bankside's connection with Sumner Street and the Tate Modern.

Designed by competition-winning team Carmody Groarke and Sheppard Robson, the scheme replaces the mid-century office-turned-residence with three stepped towers of 24, 26 and 28 storeys linked by two low-rise pavilions around generous, landscaped courtyards and extensive public realm integration.

The all-electric scheme has been designed with a whole-life carbon approach and is targeting high environmental standards, including BREEAM Excellent and very low operational energy use.

Construction is targeting more than 99% diversion of waste from landfill and at least 20% recycled or reused content by value, supported by circular-economy principles. Landscaped terraces and gardens at podium level provide social and biophilic amenity for residents, while contributing to climate resilience.

"This is the culmination of a ten-year engagement with the borough on the redevelopment of our Bankside residences. Working with the Southwark team we have crafted an affordable, sustainable and high-quality design which will make a significant contribution to the borough. The scheme's civic offer is incredibly strong with genuine public access and community uses integrated within the building and we can't wait to see LSE's world class estate extended south of the river." — Julian Robinson, Director of Estates, London School of Economics and Political Science.

"LSE's aim is to guarantee an offer of accommodation to all new, first year students. Securing planning permission for Bankside House is a major step forward towards our goal. Our team are extremely excited about the new scheme and what it will mean for LSE students. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the officers and Councillors in Southwark who have been so



supportive of our vision for the site." — Ian Spencer, Director of Residential and Catering Services, London School of Economics and Political Science.

"Securing planning permission for Bankside House is a landmark moment for Bouygues Development and Bouygues UK and for the student accommodation sector in London. In partnership with the London School of Economics and Equitix, we've developed a scheme that puts affordability, sustainability, and community at its core. We're proud of the role we have had in bringing this project from concept to consent and we look forward to delivering a building that will stand as a genuine piece of civic architecture for generations to come." — Oliver Campbell, Managing Director of Development at Bouygues UK

"Bankside House represents a new benchmark for socially impactful investment in central London and the London School of Economics' role as an international centre of excellence. Securing planning approval is an important milestone for the project for all partners. Working alongside Bouygues and LSE, we remain committed to creating affordable, high-quality student accommodation that will support the university, its students and the wider community for many years to come." — Hugh Crossley, CEO, Equitix

"We are delighted that Southwark Borough Council has granted planning approval for LSE's Bankside House. Conceived as three distinct yet connected houses, the project will provide an important new home for the LSE student community while contributing a confident addition to London's river skyline. At ground level, a series of pavilions open the site to the city, strengthening the public realm and creating a welcoming threshold between LSE, the Bankside and the wider urban context. On a student scale, we wanted every room - both spatially and climatically - to be a genuinely good room, meeting Passivhaus standards and setting a new benchmark for sustainable design. We look forward to progressing the project in close collaboration with our partners, Bouygues UK, Equitix and LSE." — Rupert Goddard, Partner at Sheppard Robson and Rowan Seaford, Director at Carmody Groarke

Works are expected to begin in 2027, with the new Bankside House scheduled to open before September 2032.

**ENDS**



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## Notes to editors

For the Bankside redevelopment, a mix of room types and price points, supported by 38-week contracts during term-time, widens access while more than tripling capacity on site to relieve pressure on the wider rental market.

Concentrating beds on this freehold site is critical to long-term affordability and to delivering LSE's pastoral model within halls.

The architecture in this redevelopment expresses slender vertical "bars" and refined crowns to articulate the skyline, with materiality calibrated for depth and shadow. Lower storey pavilions bring light, street-level activity and visibility to student life - a step-change from the existing building where most amenities sit in the basement.

At ground level, the development introduces a publicly accessible Community Hub curated by LSE, with a year-round programme that could include legal clinics, skills sessions and opportunities for students to volunteer in the borough.

The all-electric energy strategy follows the London Plan's Be Lean, Be Clean, Be Green, Be Seen hierarchy, with passive design first, high-performance fabric, efficient services and on-site roof-mounted PV.

A whole-life-carbon mindset has informed the structural strategy and façade design, balancing robust, durable components with passive measures to manage daylight, ventilation and overheating risk. The project is targeting BREEAM Excellent with an aspiration to Outstanding



for the student accommodation, alignment with WELL principles for health and wellbeing and Passivhaus for operational performance.

Upgrades to the landscape will include surfaces, planting and seating, and improved east–west permeability across the block. The intent is a car-free student residence with enhanced pedestrian priority, subject to the London Borough of Southwark’s highways requirements and Section 278 agreements; proposals respond to feedback from pre-application engagement with LBS Highways and TfL. Cycle parking provision is calibrated to evidence demand from LSE’s student surveys, with secure stores at podium level to keep active travel convenient and visible.

The team targets very low operational energy (c. 45–55 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/yr), alongside up-front carbon reductions through structural optimisation and careful façade specification.

Montagu Evans is acting as both the planning advisor and the heritage and townscape consultant, aligning the project with community aspirations and bringing focus to enhancing the area's historical and visual character.

## **The London School of Economics and Political Science**

The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) is a world-renowned university and a thought leader in the social sciences. Over the last fifteen years, LSE has also sought to curate a collection of world class architecture on its Aldwych academic estate, employing the very best architects in the world (via international competition) to design its new buildings. All new buildings have been critically acclaimed and have won multiple awards. Their track record and commitment to achieving the very best design quality speaks for itself.

## **Bouygues UK**

Bouygues UK is one of the leading construction companies in the United Kingdom with a property development arm, BY Development Limited. It focuses on sectors where it can add value through the technical knowledge, skills and experience of its people and the wider global Bouygues group which operates in over 80 countries.

These include:

- Residential - affordable and social housing, private for sale homes, mixed-use, and student accommodation, with a key focus on property development and regeneration



- Education - schools, colleges, academies and universities
- Healthcare - strategic estate planning, reconfiguration and upgrades, and state-of-the-art, multidisciplinary hospitals
- Science and research - technically complex projects where the company's specialist skillset can be maximised
- Data centres and distribution.

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Building for life and leaving a positive legacy for the next generation is a top priority at Bouygues UK. By incorporating clear carbon guidelines in all its projects, the company works closely with clients, supply chain partners and employees to help reduce its impact on the environment and enable communities to thrive for decades to come. It provides intelligent management throughout the entire life-cycle of each project, delivering efficiently to an excellent standard and combining a local focus with international strength and expertise. Bouygues UK is wholly owned by Bouygues Construction, a global player in construction and services.

## **Equitix**

Equitix is one of the UK and Europe's leading investors, developers and long-term fund managers of core infrastructure, with a market-defining presence in the small to mid-market and a proven track record in student accommodation. Our portfolio now includes more than 22,000 student beds in operation or development, and we partner with 12 universities across the UK and Europe to deliver high-quality, award-winning schemes that strengthen campuses and communities.

In partnership with Bouygues Development, Equitix has been selected by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) as the Student Accommodation Development Partner for Bankside House. Together, we will deliver a landmark scheme that supports LSE's global academic community, widens access to higher education, and creates long-term benefits for students and the surrounding neighbourhood, creating a lasting legacy for generations.

**Carmody Groarke** and **Sheppard Robson** bring substantial experience in student-living projects, delivered with world-renowned operators and delivery partners, as well as delivering award winning large-scale schemes in London. This team brings together a history of successful



collaborations with elite further education institutions, internationally recognised design pedigree, and a shared commitment to staying at the forefront of sustainable innovation.

## **Sheppard Robson**

Sheppard Robson is an ever-evolving collective of architects, interior designers and masterplanners. Together their team of 360 people design buildings, spaces and places that are people-centred and precision-made. Shaped by the legacy of founders, Sir Richard Sheppard and Jean Shufflebottom, who established the practice in 1938 and were joined by Geoffrey Robson as a partner in the 1950s, their experience spans a wide range of typologies, from masterplanning entire new city blocks and residential neighbourhoods to designing innovative new small projects which push new boundaries for sustainable design

## **Carmody Groarke**

Carmody Groarke is an architecture studio of over 40 people based in London. Their design approach is led by research and innovative thinking to deliver transformative projects in cultural, historic and urban settings. The studio has a reputation for designing and delivering award winning, distinctive and well-made buildings within the UK and Europe for a wide range of public, residential, institutional and commercial clients. These include Via Giovenale, which provides high-quality student accommodation as a new city block in central Milan

## **Design team**

- Structural / Civil Engineers - AKTII
- MEP Engineers - Atelier Ten
- Fire Engineer - Socotec
- Public Realm and Landscape - Publica
- Sustainability & Passivhaus - Max Fordham
- Transport and Waste - Arup
- Planning and Townscape & Heritage Consultant - Montagu Evans
- Catering Consultant - Russell Partnership
- Daylight/Sunlight Consultant - EB7
- Acoustic Consultant - Pace
- Access Consultant - David Bonnett Associates
- Façade Consultant - Arup



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- Engagement consultant - Kanda
- Utilities Consultant - Hilson Moran
- Wind Consultant - RWDI Security
- BREEAM Assessor - Bouygues UK
- Developments Ecologist - Tyler Grange
- Archaeology - RPS Consulting Services
- BSA Principal Designer - Green Hat
- CDM Principal Designer Advisor - Bureau Veritas