

Modular Tower, London, United Kingdom

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Europe's tallest modular tower slots into place



The last module on Europe's tallest modular tower in Wembley, London has been positioned at a height of 90m

Europe's tallest modular tower has seen its final module lowered into place in north London. The 29-storey structure is a student accommodation scheme developed by Tide Construction and Vision Modular Systems.

The development is being funded by GCP Student Living plc, a closed ended fund, which is listed on the London Stock Exchange and already owns a number of other completed developments primarily in and around London.

Apex House in Wembley is made up of 679 modules and delivering over 580 rooms that will be ready for students to move into in September. The development will also include communal facilities, such as a cinema, and an outdoor courtyard.

The total build time was 12 months, with the modules being stacked up in just 13 weeks to the height of 90m. Apex House will be managed by Scape, a student housing operator, and was designed by architects HTA Design LLP. The building has a BREAAAM rating of Excellent.

Prior to this project, Tide Construction and Vision Modular Systems also held the title for the tallest modular tower in Europe with a 25-storey student accommodation scheme in Wolverhampton that was completed in 2009.

Apex House will be the fourth modular scheme that Tide Construction and Vision Modular Systems have completed in Wembley with HTA Design LLP. There is Grand Felda House, another student accommodation scheme providing 802 beds, an onsite gym and swimming pool. Also, there is Olympic Way, a residential development providing 158 homes, Felda House providing over 450 student rooms, and the 237 room Novotel hotel.

Christy Hayes, chief executive officer at Tide Construction, said: "We are delighted that both the housing minister Gavin Barwell and London mayor Sadiq Khan have made off-site construction a priority in the capital to help ease the strain on London's housing supply. Modular construction provides a much faster alternative to traditional construction without compromising on the quality of the building, or the versatility

HTA Design LLP



of the design. Modular produces 80% less waste, requires fewer onsite workers and provides certainty of cost and time.

Apex House is a shining example of what modular construction can bring to UK property, whether its hotels, residential apartments, build to rent or student accommodation.”

Each module is manufactured at Vision’s factory in Bedford where the furniture, windows, electrical wiring and plumbing are all installed before the modules are transported 60 miles to the site in Wembley.

The Farmer Review, published last year, cited offsite construction techniques as a crucial way to build more with less due to the current labour shortages in the construction industry. Mark Farmer also stated in his review that modular construction can help support SME builders and developers by creating a steady pipeline of work and providing cost certainty for developers.

The government has already pledged that 100,000 of the 1m homes built by the end of parliament will be delivered by modular methods. What’s more, in last year’s autumn statement the government pledged a further £285m for accelerated construction techniques through the National Productivity Investment Fund.

Rory Bergin, partner at HTA Design LLP, said: “Modular volumetric construction presents a new design challenge for architects. We believe that architects need to be involved from the very beginning of a modular project to get the best result, working closely with all parties to get the design finalised early, and understand the manufacturing and delivery process. Our work with Tide Construction and Vision Modular Systems demonstrates how this approach produces innovative and exciting buildings which are delivered in half the time it would take traditional construction.”

Nick Barker, co-lead manager of GCP Student Living plc, said: “GCP Student Living, the first student accommodation REIT in the UK, is delighted to be providing the capital to fund this new addition to our portfolio. Having been involved from a very early stage we are greatly encouraged that such rapid progress has been made as this latest development will be ready for occupation in good time before the start of the next academic year this September.”

Tom Devaney, managing director of Scape Student Living, said: “Scape, a global provider of student accommodation, worked closely with Tide, Vision and GCP Student Living on Apex House, Wembley. It is the first Scape tower scheme using Tide and Vision’s original and innovative modular format. We are incredibly excited that from the start of this coming academic year students in Wembley will have access to a scheme of such high quality providing a superior design led student experience. Marketing commenced this week and we have received strong encouragement that this is a truly outstanding project from the very positive reactions”.
