



Air Traffic Control Tower, Heathrow

London, UK



Location
London, UK

Date
1987-2000

Client
BAA plc

Total Project Cost
£50 million

Total Area
4,050m²

Structural Engineer
Arup

Services Engineer
DSSR/AMEC

Cost Consultant
Turner & Townsend/E.C.
Harris

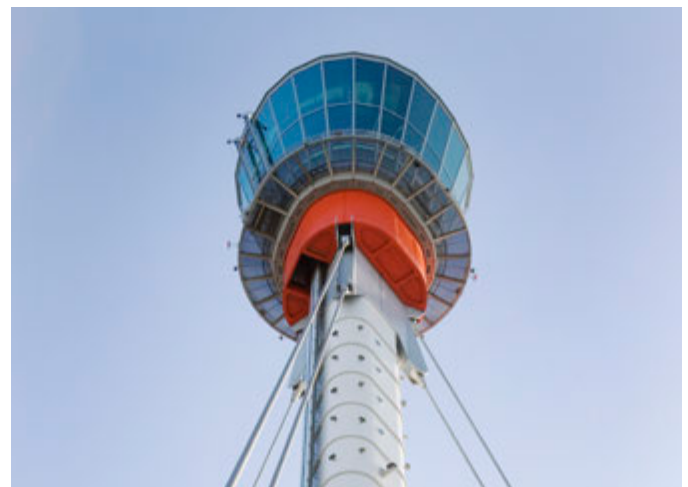
Façade Engineer
Arup

Lighting Consultant
Speirs Major

Fire Consultant
Warrington Fire Research

Construction Management
MACE

Principal Contractors
Mace/Watsons Steel/
AMEC/Schmidlin



...It [the tower] deserves to be recognized as one of the more awe-inspiring of contemporary achievements, in its own way a work of culture as complete as any artistic creation

Alain de Botton
Philosopher and writer

The commission for a new control tower (or visual control room) at London Heathrow Airport followed on from the practice's appointment to design the new Terminal 5 at Heathrow, and reflects the growth in traffic at Europe's busiest airport. The 87m tall tower incorporates the results of intensive research into the technical requirements of the brief and into the potential for a structure that could be pre-assembled and erected on site in a short time, without disrupting the operations of the airport. The aim was equally to create an elegant and memorable building that would be a symbol of the ongoing development of Heathrow without dominating the skyline, as air traffic control demands unobstructed views of the airport and its approaches. The tower provides a clear 360 degree cone of vision using

Key Awards

2007
RIBA London Award
RIBA London Special Award

tapered glass panels engineered to counter condensation and glare, and to ensure comfortable working conditions for controllers. A mass of technical equipment is accommodated at the base of the tower in a ring of space around a central daylit atrium. Located close to Terminal 3, the tower is constructed from 12m lengths of mast, triangular in section, which provide the necessary aerodynamic profile for the shaft, which houses lifts, stairs and services risers. The whole assembly was 'jacked up' from the base, with the operations room (or 'cab') entirely pre-assembled on landside areas of the airport, and then transported at night across the runways to its final location on top of the tower.