



We are pleased to announce that Steve Watts, one of alineas founding partners, will become the next Chairman of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH). Steve will assume the additional role at the CTBUH 2017 Australia Conference in October. We spoke to Steve and Antony Wood (Executive Director of the CTBUH) about



Introduce us to the CTBUH and its mission

Antony: The CTBUH is a global not-for-profit that serves all the disciplines that make skyscrapers a reality, through disseminating information, providing networking opportunities, and steering research. The Council is also the official arbiter on tall building height, responsible for bestowing such designations as “The World’s Tallest Building.”

Steve: Essentially, the Council promotes research, debate and best practice, and actively encourages its members to further their knowledge in any aspect of tall building development and use. It is a terrific platform to meet an incredible network of experts, to exchange ideas and further learning.

Elaborate on your role within CTBUH

Antony: I am the Executive Director, responsible for the day-to-day running of the Council and steering in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, of which I am an ex-officio member. I provide strategic input on all of our initiatives, and offer leadership to the management teams in our three global offices.

Steve: I have been involved in the CTBUH for well over a decade, presenting at its conferences and contributing to working groups and advisory panels. I have been its UK leader since 2009, and helped to set up the formal UK chapter in 2015, of which I am Chair. I have been a Trustee of the CTBUH for six years and its Treasurer for most of that period.

Steve, what are your targets / aims with the additional role?

The Council has been incredibly successful over the last decade, in many respects enjoying unprecedented and exponential success across a series of metrics. My key aims are not to ‘fix what ain’t broken’ but rather my desire is to see real further progress over my two-year term, to continue the CTBUH’s ‘upward trajectory’, strengthening its brand, but safeguarding the Council.

This can be distilled as follows:

- Progress the trajectory – ensure that membership, income and geographical spread continue their rise.

- Strengthen the brand – increase the profile of the CTBUH so that it becomes the voice in all high-rise matters (not least the debates around the appropriateness of tall buildings).
- Futureproof the organisation – make the organisation run like the significant business it has become, with an efficient structure, and the more meaningful input of a wider network.

The CTBUH is the predominant organisation in tall buildings, and to become its Chairman is an honour. I am genuinely excited by the prospect of helping to steer it through the next part of its journey (which will include its 50th Anniversary in 2019).

What is the project you enjoyed working on the most?

Antony: My favourite project at the Council is our annual conference, which attracts over 1,200 delegates per year from 50 countries. The five-day event requires nearly 18 months of planning, and achieves all aspects of our mission: dissemination, networking, fundraising, etc. This year, the conference will take place in Australia with the theme of Connecting the City: People, Density & Infrastructure: www.ctbuh2017.com.

Steve: Every tall building project leaves something in your heart, because they tend to be long and involved endeavours. As a piece of the skyline, they act as an enduring reminder of all the effort it took to get them there. The HSBC HQ in Canary Wharf was my first full high-rise project and I worked on it from start to finish, with people who started as adversaries and finished as friends. And then of course there was The Shard, a roller-coaster ride that took over my life for the best part of a decade (though ‘enjoy’ cannot be applied to every part of that journey!). Its success, and its prominence across the globe, make me very proud to have played even a small part in its delivery.

What is your favorite building and why?

Antony: This is impossible for me to answer with one building, so I offer several: Commerzbank Tower (Frankfurt), for its communal skygardens; Marina Bay Sands (Singapore), for its rooftop urban habitat; One Central Park (Sydney), for its solar-manipulating chandelier; Parkroyal on Pickering (Singapore), for its lush vertical greenery...I have another 100 or so if you’re interested!

Steve: That’s a really difficult one. Like most Londoners I have affection for 30 St. Mary Axe, and like most I still call it The Gherkin. It’s incredible that a building that courted some much controversy at its inception is now almost universally loved, and my only lament is that it perhaps should have been bigger and bolder. The Burj Kalifa manages to fill 828m of sky with elegance, supported by a structural approach that is ingenious in its simplicity. And who doesn’t think that the Chrysler Building is beautiful? And to prove that my vision is not always upward, I do



like the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, its quirky splendour having transformed its home city.

Give us an interesting tall building fact

Antony: Despite there currently being over 1,200 buildings in existence over 200 meters and the world’s next tallest building anticipated at over 1,000 meters, the tallest building ever demolished was only 187 meters tall: The Singer Building in New York, demolished in 1968.

Steve: The tallest building in London from 1710 was the current St. Pauls Cathedral (standing at 111m), until the BT tower opened in 1965 (190m). The old St Pauls Cathedral was 150m high, until destroyed by the Great Fire of London in 1666.

Give us an interesting AW / SW fact

Antony: I’ve travelled across 70 countries and all seven continents!

Steve: I’m not keen on heights!!

Quick Fire

	Antony	Steve
Activity:	Travelling	Cricket
Teams:	Manchester United	Liverpool
Holiday:	Antartica	Cappadocia
Album:	Bat Out of Hell by Meatloaf	The Queen is Dead by The Smiths
Restaurant:	Cabbages and Condoms, Bangkok	Alinea, Chicago - saving up to go!