

2.6 R. Seifert & Partners

Reuben (Richard) Seifert was born in Switzerland later moving to London as a child. He won a scholarship to the Bartlett School of Architecture in London and after graduating in 1933 undertook modest commissions before the outbreak of World War Two. Seifert served with the Royal Engineers as a Colonel during the war, returning to design a large factory building and then in 1956 completing a neo-classically styled Woolworths on Marylebone Road, London.

In 1957 Horace (George) Marsh joined Seifert in practice becoming a Founding Partner of R. Seifert & Partners in 1958. Marsh remained as R. Seifert & Partners principal design architect during the 1960s and 70s, defining the visual aesthetic for the practice, which borrowed heavily from eminent Brazilian architects Oscar Niemeyer and Lúcio Costa.

This highly sculptural aesthetic, for which the practice became known, debuted with the completion of Tolworth House, a 22-storey reinforced concrete office building in 1960 followed by Space House in 1962. Seifert & Partner's most famous building was completed a year later in 1963, for developer Harry Hyams at St Giles Circus, known as Centre Point. Centre Point is a 36 storey tower which is comprised of large areas of glass cladding at the lower levels with pre-cast, concrete-framed, fin-shaped panels above.

Seifert & Partner's last tower completed in 1981 for Natwest in the city of London, the tallest at the time of completion at 183m. Seifert was highly commercially successful, thought to be the UK's first architect millionaire who travelled in a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce.

In addition to his commercial success it is the prolificness of his practice for which he is known having essentially introduced the commercial tower block into Britain during the 1960s and 70s working in virtually all the UK's major city centres.

Seifert & Partner's work was celebrated by the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1984 with an exhibition that recorded that they had built more buildings in London than Sir Christopher Wren with an overall tally across the UK and Europe of more than 500 office blocks from a practice that at its peak in the 1970s employed more than 300 people.



Richard Seifert



Seifert outside of Natwest Tower/ Tower 42



Tolworth House



Space House



Sketch Perspective of Centre Point



Space House during construction



VISUAL CONDITION STUDY



3.0