

Property Awards 2026	
Disruptor of the Year	
ENTRANT`S DETAILS	
Full Name	May Winfield
Job Title	Global Director of Commercial, Legal and Digital Risks
Business Name	Buro Happold
Business Telephone	020 7927 9700
Email	may.winfield@burohappold.com
Web Address	https://www.maywinfield.com/
Twitter handle	
Date of Birth	
PLEASE ANSWER ALL THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS	
Please outline why the nominated individual/organisation should be considered for the award?	<p>With over 19 years of experience, May is a visionary leader at the intersection of law, technology, and construction, reshaping the industry through her pioneering work in digital innovation. She is instrumental in ensuring awareness of legal and contractual issues relating to BIM and construction technology in the UK, and the drafting of key legal guidance and standard form documentation, that supports the industry and avoids disputes. At Buro Happold, May leads the charge in managing legal risks tied to cutting-edge technologies like Building Information Modelling (BIM), digital twins, and blockchain. Her strategic initiatives ensure these innovations align with regulatory frameworks while driving efficiency and collaboration across global projects. Some Key Contributions & Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Digital Transformation: Develops policies and procedures to integrate legal considerations into construction technologies, including drafting the UK Government-approved legal guidance on ISO19650. ? BIM4Legal: Co-founded and chairs this forum, bridging the gap between legal professionals and construction stakeholders to navigate the legal complexities of BIM. ? UK BIM Alliance Ambassador: Advocates for best practices in digital adoption, fostering collaboration between engineers, lawyers, and business leaders. ? Diversity Champion: Promotes inclusive practices and diverse perspectives, ensuring the future of construction law reflects the communities it serves. <p>A Legacy of Innovation: May’s work exemplifies the power of blending legal expertise with technological advancement. Her leadership ensures that digital tools like BIM and blockchain are not only innovative but also legally sound and ethically implemented. May’s mantra, “Don’t be afraid to colour outside the lines,” inspires professionals to embrace creativity and challenge traditional boundaries. Her career is a testament to the impact of bold, forward-thinking leadership in a traditionally male-dominated field.</p>

Provide relevant information on the nominee?	<p>Further detail can be found here: https://www.burohappold.com/articles/construction-law-and-being-female/ https://www.maywinfield.com/articles A snapshot: Throughout my career, I have encountered many misconceptions and attitudes that I have had to challenge and overcome. Being an exotic-ish looking female who was predominantly educated abroad and who looked like she coloured outside the lines, these were often encountered whilst working as a senior lawyer in London. When explaining the importance of networking with female colleagues to increase my client reach, an ex-boss once told me “Be yourself...but not too much of yourself – you don’t want to scare them. Just talk to them about shoes. Girls like talking about shoes, right?”. He said this with good intentions, which gives a sense of the prevailing environment at the time. But what I really wanted to talk about was how gadgets worked, the intricacies of human decision-making, the flavour profiles of complex cocktails, and rock music. Throughout my law studies and career, I subconsciously rallied against the strict expectations and restrictions of the ‘typical’ legal mindset and career path. Over the last 20 years of my career, I have coloured outside the lines and pushed boundaries despite pushbacks. I am now one of the few recognised legal specialists in construction technology.</p>
List, all qualifications and institutions where the nominee studied	<p>University of Sheffield - LLB (Hons) Cardiff University - Bar Vocational Course Kings College - Masters in Construction Law and Dispute Resolution Qualifications: Advocate & Solicitor of England & Wales Advocate & Solicitor of Malaysia Barrister of England & Wales</p>
Provide a brief biography of the nominated individual/organisation	<p>May is a senior construction and insurance lawyer with over 19 years’ experience. She has worked for various international organisations and insurers within the design and construction industry on legal issues as well as advising on risk and implementation of digitisation and technology. May has significant expertise in all areas of construction law, both contentious and non-contentious, as well as construction insurance. She leads the global legal team at Buro Happold, provides legal support on giga projects, as well as leading the risk management of digital and construction technology. May was admitted as a qualified solicitor of England & Wales in February 2004, having been called as a barrister in October 2001. In January 2015, she graduated from King’s College London, gaining a MSc distinction in Construction Law & Dispute Resolution. During her time at King’s College, May was recognised with seven academic awards, including best overall student and best exam script in the arbitration exam. The digital aspect of May’s role includes active involvement in working internally and with clients and collaborators to develop new policies, systems, documents and procedures on construction technology, information management and BIM, as well managing the risk of implementing new digital-related technologies and services. May has a passion for innovation in</p>

the industry and has provided pragmatic advice and thoughts on the legal impact of construction technology to clients and at events worldwide for some years. She is recognised as a leading legal specialist in digital and construction technology, including Building Information Modelling (BIM). May was one of the first UK lawyers to start investigating the legal and contractual implications of BIM, beginning her specialism in 2011. Her 2014 UK Society of Construction Law paper on this issue is still cited worldwide. May also pioneered the drafting of the JCT Practice Note on BIM, the UK legal and contractual guidance relating to the BIM international standard, ISO 19650 and the ISO 19650-compliant BIM Information Protocol. May has authored and co-authored various documents in this field, including legal guidance on the ISO19650 Information Management international standard, an ISO19650-compliant Information Protocol, a JCT Practice Note on BIM and an upcoming book chapter analysing Construction 4.0. She is one of the co-authors of the Centre for Digital Built Britain's Digital Twins Roadmap and their recently released Digital Twins Toolkit Report. She is a UK BIM Alliance Ambassador, co-founder and chair of BIM4Legal (a forum for lawyers and industry to increase knowledge on legal issues of BIM) and a member of various other industry groups seeking to support the industry in progressing and implementing digital technology. In 2020, May was recognised as the 'Best Woman in Construction Law' at the European Women In Construction and Engineering Awards (WICE) in honour of her work in the industry. She was named as one of the Construction Idols by London Build 2022, and won the Compliance Innovator award at the highly regarded Lexology European Counsel Awards 2023.

Photos and Files

Image 1:

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