

[50p a week](#)

IT IS Queen Elizabeth II's favourite soap opera, so someone had better sort this out. Whenever outdoor shots in the world-famous TV show *Coronation Street* are filmed on a blustery day, its sound engineers have to inject extra background noise into each scene. Why? Because half a mile away, a building is whistling in the wind.

Beetham Tower, the 171-metre centrepiece of Manchester's new city centre, is not due to open until October, but local residents have been complaining about the noise pollution since April, when the distinctive 14-metre-high glass and steel "blade" on the tower's roof was completed. On windy days, the air around the blade vibrates at a frequency of 250 to 260 hertz – close to middle C on a piano. People have variously described the sound as being like a flute or a UFO landing. "In 20 years of investigating complaints about noise, I have never come across anything like it," says Rachel Christie, head of the local council's environmental health department.

The Beetham Tower is not the first building to make a disquieting noise, however, and nor will it be the last. Normally building noise is trivial and drowned out by the hustle and bustle of a busy city, but each year around the world one or two new buildings make loud and irritating noises. The problem is only likely to get worse, too. Not only are buildings rising higher – and so becoming exposed to constant strong winds – many are also sprouting eco-friendly features such as sun-shade louvres designed to reduce the need for air conditioning. These are perfect for generating wind whistle. So...



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