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CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026
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MANCHESTER'S TOP PROJECTS | LOCAL CIOB MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT | HOW THE MBACC WORKS

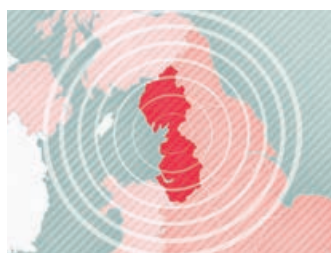

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Contents




39


14


28

News
04 News in pictures
06 News: Public clients tightening criteria; HRB remediation; CIOB Academy marks 10 years
14 Data: Madeline Sillence on the North West's booming growth

Opinion
13 Victoria Hills
The CIOB CEO rounds up the party conference season
16 Feedback: Readers' views

Manchester
18 How Andy Burnham is taking inspiration from Manchester to devolve powers across England
22 The top six projects paving the way for Greater Manchester
28 CIOB movers and shakers predict the city's next phase of growth
32 Examining whether the Greater Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc) will help put the city's construction sector on the map

Global
34 Oisin Farrell MCIOB
Meet the new chair of the CIOB Perth Hub

SSDA 2026
39 Structural Steel Design Awards
The very best in modern steel construction
40 Manchester Airport Terminal 2
41 TBC.London
44 Fortnum & Mason Double Helix, London
46 Gairnshiel Jubilee Bridge
48 Hill Dickinson Stadium, Liverpool
50 38 Berkeley Square, London
52 Commendations and merits

CPD
54 Specifying tiling adhesives

Legal
58 Procurement considerations for football stadium projects

Community
62 Diversity on the agenda, plus more hub news

Diary dates
66 Highlights to round out the year



BALFOUR BEATTY



STEPNELL

Balfour bridges Trent with Mabey help

Balfour Beatty brought in temporary works specialist Mabey Hire to construct a temporary bridge near Weston-on-Trent in Derbyshire to facilitate critical electricity infrastructure repairs, on the back of major flooding. With a total clear span of 39 metres for the main span, the temporary bridge featured 13 bays, in addition to five bays (15 metres) for the adjacent span and down ramp.

Stepnell crosses the canal

Regional contractor Stepnell has completed a £4.2m lace-inspired bridge in Long Eaton, Derbyshire, as part of a wider town regeneration programme. It replaces a 113-year-old crossing that connected Long Eaton's town centre with West Park, the borough's largest park, the bridge will provide a route over the Erewash Canal for walkers and cyclists.



University of Salford's Nicola Harris bangs the drums for Manchester, a city on a mission, p28

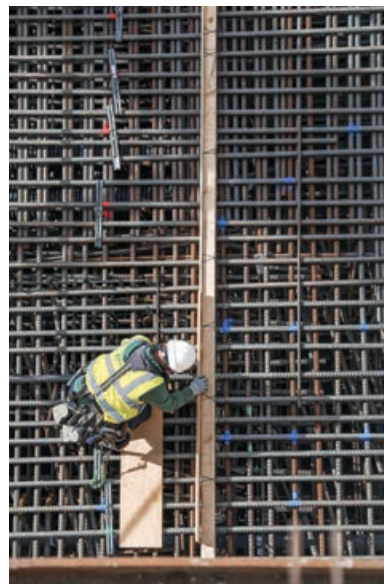


ROB PARRISH

Stirling winner

A council-commissioned housing scheme in South London designed by Mary Duggan Architects with RUFF Architects and built by contractor CField has won the RIBA Stirling Prize 2026.

The Lion Green Road development in Coulsdon comprises five blocks with 157 dwellings combining privately owned and socially rented homes built for Croydon Council.



J COFFEY

Bouygues tops out technology centre

Bouygues UK has completed the super structures of the Advanced Technology Centre scheme for client Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC). The project is part of CAVC's £119m investment in two new campuses in the Vale of Glamorgan located at Cardiff Airport. The new facility will include classrooms and workshops, a business centre, an advanced composites manufacturing hub, robotics and mechatronics labs, and a dedicated "green skills house".

Coffey's South Bank pour

J Coffey Construction has successfully completed the first structural concrete pour at a riverside office on London's South Bank. Completing in 2029 for client Mitsubish Estate London and CO-RE, the scheme will feature a 25-storey south tower, a 13-storey north tower and a six-storey podium. The project is designed by Make Architects. Multiplex is the main contractor.



BOUYGUES UK



CIOB

PPE campaign award

The #PPEthatfits campaign, led by CIOB and supported by *Construction Management*, has won Best Lobbying Campaign at the 2026 MemCom Excellence Awards. The award, presented at the MemCom Awards ceremony in London in September, recognises the campaign's progress from raising awareness of ill-fitting PPE to influencing standards, political debate and industry practice.



Frameworks now demanding professional qualifications

Building safety and competency concerns lead public clients to tighten criteria for contractors and consultants. By **Will Mann**

Public sector construction frameworks are increasingly requiring bidders to demonstrate professional qualifications as evidence of competence, as clients respond to the tougher building safety regime.

CIOB trustee Craig Battye, who spent nearly three decades in main contracting and now advises contractors and consultants on framework bids, said he had seen a marked change in procurement requirements over the past 18 months.

"The general trend I am seeing is a move away from generic 'experience' requirements toward strict compliance with the Building Safety Act," he said. "Framework operators are increasingly asking for CIOB membership as evidence of competence."

Battye said professional membership was appearing as either a gateway requirement for particular roles or a means of securing higher quality scores on major frameworks. The Welsh Government's Construction Consultancy Services framework is one example. Its selection requirements specify membership of CIOB or RICS as mandatory for bidders at employee or corporate level.

Battye said: "In 20 years of pre-construction and bidding, I've never seen CIOB mentioned, but in the past couple of years, I've started seeing CIOB membership referenced in bid documents and it is around competency."

He added that other frameworks run by public organisations including the Government Commercial Agency and NHS are recognising professional accreditation such as CIOB membership at employee and company level through their supplier assessment and quality scoring processes.

Battye said the trend was not confined to large frameworks. "I have encountered specific references to CIOB qualifications and competency schemes when helping smaller contractors bid for relatively modest public sector projects, including a contract worth around £200,000 to repurpose former public toilets as retail units," he explained.

Battye said competency checks had historically been less rigorous, but he had noticed that framework operators were now "starting to drill down" into the evidence provided by bidders.

The increased scrutiny has been noticed by major contractors and consultants, he added, who are putting more staff forward for professional accreditation.

Use of qualified professionals on construction contracts is one of the aims of CIOB's Client Champions programme, which brings together clients and industry leaders to promote best practice in procurement and project delivery.

CIOB has also developed the Principal Contractor Competency Certification Scheme, launched in March 2024, to help individuals demonstrate their competence to fulfil the principal contractor dutyholder role under the Building Safety Act.



> **I have encountered specific references to CIOB qualifications and competency schemes when helping smaller contractors bid for relatively modest public sector projects**
> **Craig Battye, CIOB**

HRB remediation: property owners urged to assess 'full portfolio'

Call for a 'shift in mindset' as more stringent regulation that introduces a legal duty to assess unsafe cladding comes into force. By **Phil Clark**

Contractor McLaren Construction has called for a change in approach to remediation of high-risk residential buildings in the wake of proposed new government legislation.

Managing director for regeneration Paul Woodhams said property owners needed to assess their whole portfolio of buildings rather than "tackling remediation on a project-by-project, transactional basis".

The Remediation of Unsafe Cladding Bill, introduced to Parliament in mid-October, includes measures to identify, assess and fix issues with high-risk buildings over 11 metres high and includes punishments for those who ignore or obstruct work with financial penalties of up to £500,000.

Woodhams said: "What the industry needs now is a shift in mindset. We would strongly encourage property owners to look at the bigger picture to assess their full portfolio of affected assets together, identify interdependencies and plan remediation programmes accordingly. There is a great deal to be learnt from large estates management programmes, which have long demonstrated how complex, large-scale works can be assessed, planned and executed more efficiently when treated as a coordinated programme rather than a series of isolated transactions."

Property industry body Real Estate:UK assistant director of policy Sam Bensted, said the measures in the legislation needed to be "proportionate, workable and recognise the practical barriers that can affect the pace of remediation, including shortages of suitably qualified professionals, regulatory delays and supply-chain constraints".

In the proposed legislation, owners of high-risk tall buildings over 11 metres will have to put a remediation plan in place within 15 months under new proposed government legislation. In its guidance it says "responsible entities will be required to produce a Remediation Compliance Plan by the date 15 months from Royal Assent (of the legislation)."

There is also the requirement for owners to assess the buildings for fire safety risks – a Fire Risk Assessments of External Walls (FRAEWs) – within 12 months.

The guidance states: "We believe there are still buildings with unsafe cladding that remain unidentified, particularly those between 11 and 18 metres. The bill will introduce a legal duty to assess, so that unsafe buildings are identified and the work needed to fix them is clearly established."

The government said it expected every building over 11 metres with unsafe cladding should either have been remediated or have a clear date for completion by the end of 2029. It added a safety net was in place if remediation work did not take place with third parties such as Homes England intervening to take on the work.

Building Safety Minister, Baroness Blake said: "It's unacceptable that so many people have been left living in homes with dangerous cladding, anxiously waiting for those responsible to take action.

"This bill is a milestone in our mission to right these wrongs and ensure everyone feels confident in the safety of their home."

What the industry needs now is a shift in mindset. We would strongly encourage property owners to look at the bigger picture to assess their full portfolio of affected assets together
Paul Woodhams, McLaren Construction



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CIOB Academy at 10: meeting the needs of a fast-changing industry

From digital learning to building safety and new qualifications, the CIOB Academy has evolved with construction's skills requirements. **Will Mann** speaks to director Adrian Montague



The CIOB Academy marks its 10th anniversary this month, having grown from modest beginnings to a global digital learning business offering more than 400 training products to a fast-changing construction industry.

Launched in late 2016, the Academy initially focused on face-to-face training, but the Covid pandemic prompted a shift towards digital delivery, making its courses more accessible to professionals across the UK and internationally.

"We're dealing with professionals who have full-time jobs, so we need to have solutions that match that," says Academy director Adrian Montague, who joined in 2017.

Learning formats have evolved. Alongside qualifications that can take 12-18 months to complete, the Academy has introduced shorter, bite-sized courses that professionals can fit around their working lives.

> **Online delivery offers a practical way of reaching these professionals without the logistical and regulatory difficulties associated with organising face-to-face training overseas**
> **Adrian Montague, CIOB Academy**

"There's a wider desire for shorter micro-style learning on key topics," says Montague.

An example is the Academy's Fire Safety Standards course, an interactive introduction to how buildings function as safety systems during a fire, which takes just 30 minutes.

Supporting career progression towards CIOB membership is a key objective of CIOB Academy. "Courses that provide routes to membership have always been popular," Montague says.

Around 80% of Academy's course delegates are non-members, which demonstrates its reach beyond CIOB's existing membership and the appetite to become chartered, Montague says.

The course programme is also shaped by changing legislation and the industry's increasing emphasis on competence.

The Building Safety Act has driven demand for new training courses, in some cases leading to new qualifications. These range from short-form awareness courses to a full day workshop providing an overview of the Act's key requirements to a 14-month e-learning course leading to the CIOB Academy's Diploma in Building Safety Management.

More than 300 enrolments in building and fire safety

300
enrolments in building and fire safety courses

400
learning products, encompassing online qualifications, webinars, short courses and CPD

£1m
Revenue exceeded £1m for the first time in 2025

CIOB Academy



courses had been booked by the Academy up to the end of 2025, Montague reveals.

Today, the Academy offers more than 400 learning products, encompassing online qualifications, webinars, short courses and CPD resources, covering subjects ranging from contracts and project management to building safety and conservation. Revenue exceeded £1m for the first time in 2025.

Its digital approach is also helping the Academy respond to growing international demand. Montague says CIOB members in the Middle East, China, Hong Kong and Australasia are increasingly requesting learning content.

▲ The Academy offers shorter courses that professionals can fit around their working lives

"Online delivery offers a practical way of reaching these professionals without the logistical and regulatory difficulties associated with organising face-to-face training overseas," he explains.

The Academy is also exploring partnerships with international organisations and technology providers to broaden its offering, Montague adds.

The CIOB Academy's six most popular training topics

The Academy's most commercially successful subjects reflect the construction's industry key priorities, says Adrian Montague

1. Routes to CIOB membership
The Chartered Membership Programme and Site Management Certificate are consistent performers. They provide progression opportunities for experienced construction professionals who entered the industry through trades rather than university. New Level 6 qualifications in specialist subjects such as building safety and roofing can provide alternative pathways.

2. Building and fire safety
Construction tends to respond when it is told it has to change. The Building Safety Act and increasing emphasis on demonstrable competence have driven demand for qualifications in building safety, fire safety and principal designer and principal contractor responsibilities. Employers increasingly need evidence that staff have the knowledge and competence to fulfil their responsibilities.

3. Construction contracts
With contractors operating on tight margins, understanding contractual obligations, managing change and avoiding costly disputes are essential business skills. Courses covering JCT, NEC and FIDIC contracts remain among the Academy's most important offerings.

4. Project management
Construction's fundamental priorities remain the same: What can save me time, what can save me money, what can improve quality? When margins are at 2%, construction business are always looking to make their staff more effective. Training in project management standards and practical delivery are consistently popular, particularly courses linked to CIOB's Code of Practice for Project Management.

5. Health and safety
Employers need to manage operational risks and ensure staff understand their statutory responsibilities. Site health and safety training, including the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations, continues to attract demand.

6. Building pathology
There is increasing interest in subjects such as damp, mould and brickwork defects, so an emerging growth area is building pathology and surveying. It has direct relevance to diagnosing building problems.

CIOB Academy

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Victoria Hills
CIOB

We need solid policy solutions to get further and faster

Devolution skills and driving economic growth dominated discussion and debate at the recent party conference season, says **Victoria Hills**



Once again CIOB's Policy and Public Affairs team made their presence felt during party conference season.

As in previous years, our in-person visits focused on the party of government and the official opposition. I was delighted to lend my support, spending time at the Labour and Conservative Party conferences. Here's my round-up.

I was reflective as I left Liverpool after the Labour Party conference as there were, naturally, a lot of announcements and conversations to process. My key takeaways were that devolution is happening – and quickly. For example, the debate around skills has evolved and it was good to hear the chancellor talk of brokerages at a regional level, something we've been calling for.

But support for employers will be critical to reversing the leakage of talent from the sector. It will be essential that how the levy is spent to support these activities is targeted effectively. We cannot afford to miss the opportunity presented by devolution.

We look forward to working with government and mayoral authorities as proposals are developed further.

Linked to skills is support for education. A number of college principals said they have hundreds of students on their waiting lists. There's demand for construction courses, but a shortage in capacity. This needs fixing quickly.

In terms of delivery, many of the new fiscal announcements were welcomed, but there's an appetite to move fast. There was much more to think about, but those headlines are feeding into our work in the short-term.

The Conservative Party conference was, as you would expect, a little quieter but there seemed to be an upbeat feel among the delegates, possibly reflecting the freedom of being in opposition

▲ Victoria Hills presents briefings to the shadow chancellor Andrew Griffith

▶ At the Labour conference Housing Zone session



I made the case that construction is a key driver of the economy – regionally and nationally – and a significant employer
Victoria Hills, CIOB

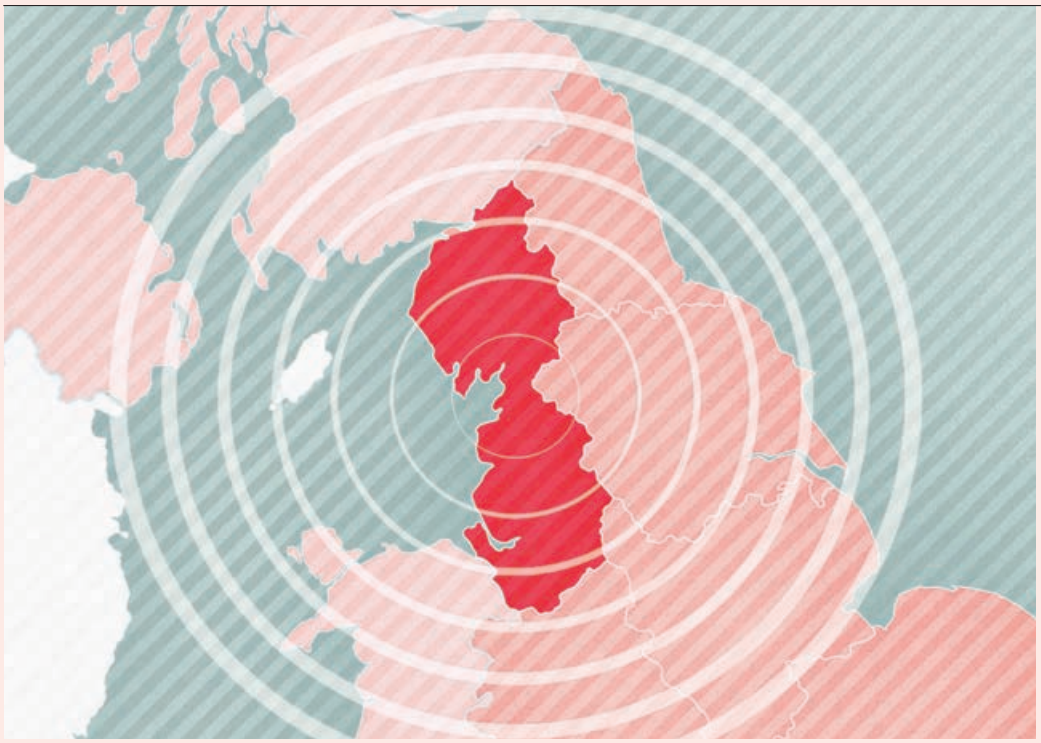
to develop new ideas and policies. A highlight was being invited to deliver the opening remarks at The Enterprise Forum Business Reception, where I presented written briefings from key organisations, including CIOB, to the shadow chancellor Andrew Griffith.

I made the case that construction is a key driver of the economy – regionally and nationally – and a significant employer, also providing training and apprenticeship opportunities. I added there is a need to find solid policy solutions to the challenges we face in order to get our industry going further and faster.

I was also pleased to catch up with Eddie Hughes MCIOB, a long-standing CIOB member, committee member on our External Affairs Advisory Board and a former Housing Minister. Great to get his insights on the proceedings in Birmingham this year.

Our Policy and Public Affairs team are now digesting all the intelligence, briefings and opportunities to follow up with parliamentarians, councillors and stakeholders that come from these events – and we're already planning 2027.

Victoria Hills is CEO of CIOB.



Wonderwall? The data behind the North West's construction boom

How has the North West economy outperformed the rest of the UK? Turner & Townsend director **Madeline Sillence** explains the four key factors behind the region's 'remarkable resilience'



The past decade has really tested the UK construction market. Brexit, the pandemic, geopolitical instability, inflation, supply chain disruptions, regulatory shifts and political uncertainty have complicated project funding, procurement and delivery.

While the North West has faced the same pressures, it has demonstrated remarkable resilience, with regeneration and infrastructure programmes continuing to progress across the region, alongside emerging opportunities in housing, defence, energy, advanced manufacturing and science.

This strength is not simply because of the volume of secured investment, but the proven ability to convert long-term ambition into reality.

Four factors explain why the region continues to perform through uncertainty:

- **political stability via devolution;**
- **enduring public-private partnerships;**
- **a diverse sector base; and**
- **a mature delivery ecosystem.**

Long-term leadership and devolution

Construction programmes depend fundamentally on continuity, as major regeneration projects can span decades and multiple political cycles. The mayoral city regions of Greater Manchester and Liverpool have provided the stable strategic vision and cross-boundary leadership required to sustain momentum.

Devolved decision-making enables regional leaders to align funding tightly with local delivery needs. Specifically, strategic regeneration frameworks serve as practical tools to coordinate land use, infrastructure and development over extended periods.

While these frameworks do not entirely remove planning, viability or funding risks, they establish a reliable, shared direction for public and private investors. Initiatives like the Greater Manchester Good Growth Fund offer important routes to back strategically vital projects, reducing the risk that long-term plans stall when market conditions fluctuate.

Partnerships that survive economic cycles

The region's regeneration model thrives on sustained collaboration between local authorities, developers, investors, transport bodies, housing providers and communities. Rather than relying on collaboration, the region excels at maintaining these delivery partnerships over time.

Experienced organisations frequently utilise long-term frameworks, development agreements and repeat relationships. This approach retains knowledge, improves consistency and avoids having to build a new team for each project.

Large programmes such as Liverpool Waters, Paddington Village & Knowledge Quarter, Baltic Triangle, Victoria North, Mayfield, Trafford Wharfside, Salford Crescent, Stockport Town Centre West and Atom Valley require multiple landowners, funders, public bodies and delivery partners to work towards a common outcome. Their progress depends as much on governance, procurement and stakeholder management as it does on investment.

Diverse investment supports a broader pipeline

The North West is not dependent on a single city or market sector. The regeneration pipeline is complemented by investment across Manchester, Liverpool, Cheshire, Lancashire and Cumbria.

Housing, transport, defence, nuclear energy, advanced manufacturing, logistics, life sciences and renewable energy create different sources of construction demand. This breadth helps reduce reliance on the performance of any one asset class.

Sector diversity, however, does

The total number of managers and supervisors needed in the North West by 2030

4.5k

Viability, productivity and capacity constraints will require the same sustained collaboration that created the region's current pipeline

not automatically guarantee delivery. Defence, energy and science programmes often require security-cleared suppliers, specialist technical skills and more complex assurance processes.

The region's advantage is that its delivery market has experience across these environments. This allows consultants, contractors and supply chains to transfer knowledge between sectors while responding to changing patterns of demand.

A mature delivery ecosystem

Over many years, the region has built strong connections between clients, developers, contractors, consultants, universities and housing providers.

This mature ecosystem offers immediate access to teams well-versed in project management, cost control, procurement, planning and stakeholder engagement.

Local knowledge allows teams to identify constraints early, while fostering reliable decision-making. Furthermore, regional universities and further education institutions actively feed the talent pipeline with skilled professionals in engineering, construction, technology and science.

The ecosystem's ultimate resilience relies on its capacity to retain this specialised talent, boost productivity and scale up supply chains to keep pace with demand.

Housing resilience depends on place, not volume

While housing remains important for economic growth, long-term resilience depends on more than just building new homes.

The region's most successful models integrate housing with transport, employment opportunities, education, healthcare and high-quality public realms. This approach creates self-sustaining places that drive economic activity long after construction concludes.

Resilience is being tested

Despite its structural strengths, the regional market is not protected from national economic headwinds. Sustained build cost inflation, elevated financing costs, regulatory changes and tight public finances heavily strain the financial viability of affordable housing and regeneration schemes. Overcoming these barriers will require greater public intervention, adjusted tenure configurations or extended project phasing.

Industry productivity also faces challenges from fragmented delivery models, inconsistent digital adoption, and limited standardisation. These issues are heightened by acute skill shortages. The primary regional hurdle has shifted from merely securing investment to unlocking enough contractor and supply chain capacity to deliver the pipeline.

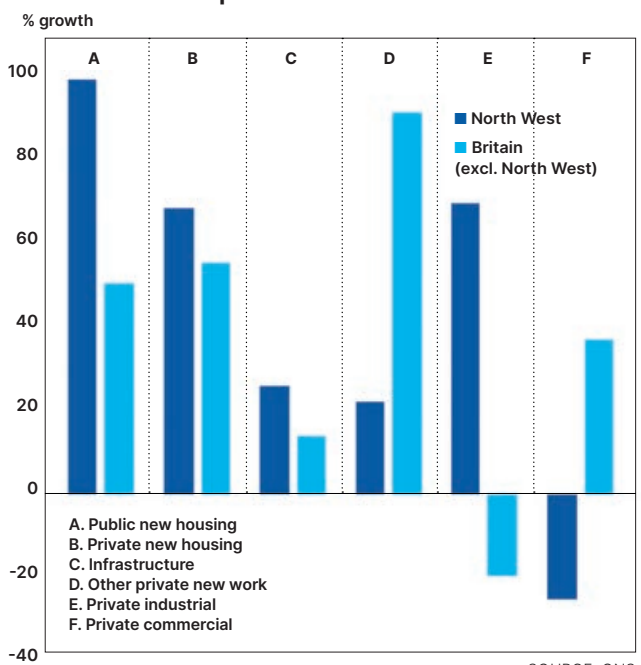
Looking ahead

The North West's success is not the product of favourable market conditions. It has experienced the same pressures as every other UK region. What distinguishes it is the combination of ambitious leadership, long-term collaboration, sector diversity and a delivery ecosystem capable of turning strategy into outcomes. Its resilience should not be taken for granted. Viability, productivity and capacity constraints will require the same sustained collaboration that created the region's current pipeline.

In an era when many places can articulate a vision, the North West continues to demonstrate something rarer: the ability to deliver it.

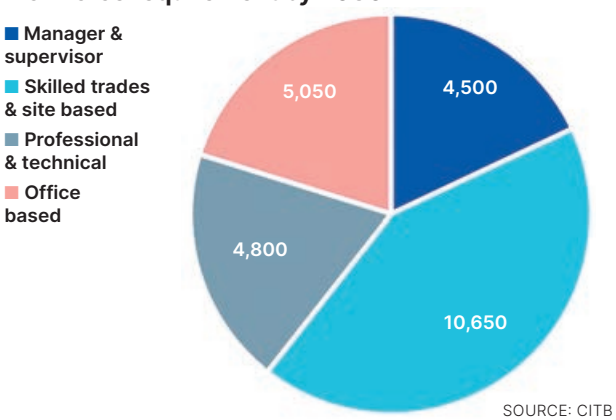
Madeline Sillence is a senior economic analyst at Turner & Townsend.

1. New works output North West v Britain 2016-2026



SOURCE: ONS

2. North West's additional construction workforce requirement by 2030



SOURCE: CITB

Feedback

A selection of readers' comments about news and issues in the industry from across the CIOB community and social media



CM

In response to Nicky Roger's article: Construction professionals urged to train next generation

Gerry O'Rourke via LinkedIn

Having worked in both industry and education, I've always found the greatest obstacle to attracting experienced construction professionals into teaching is the gap between industry salaries and education pay. Until that gap narrows, recruitment will remain a challenge.

Peter Stoneman

Most construction professionals recognise the gap in skills in today's market and those of recent generations. What is the route in? I was told I needed teaching experience – this is a very big obstacle if you have been a construction professional all of your working life.

Mike Townsend

How do experienced professionals and trades move from being "encouraged" to having a managed pathway into the right programme, with appropriate development activity and support to make this idea a success? Is there a designated organisation or initiative that could set up a "match-making" programme to link skilled candidates with teaching organisations and make this idea work? If it's just a case of "urging" experienced people to try teaching, will it really happen? I was very fortunate to have had such an opportunity in Scandinavia, 10 years ago. It feels like we need to develop something substantial here in the UK.

CM

In response to Rod Sweet's article: CIOB calls for commitment to new construction vocational GCSE

Krystina Hartry via LinkedIn

We need to do a much better job of showing young people just how broad the built environment actually is. Construction isn't one career path, it's a huge range of opportunities across trades, commercial, design, project management, sustainability, tech and so much more. A vocational GCSE would be a really positive step, especially if it's shaped properly with input that is actually listened to and actioned from industry and professional bodies like CIOB.

The greatest obstacle to attracting experienced construction professionals into teaching is the gap between industry salaries and education pay
Gerry O'Rourke

CM

In response to Justin Stanton's article: It's time to digitalise your PMO function

Dr Terence Price

The article is right to argue that digital PMO should move beyond dashboards, software licences and reporting automation. Where I would disagree is with the suggestion that information management should simply "sit in the PMO".

The PMO has an essential role in programme governance, assurance, reporting, controls and decision coordination, but project management and information management are not the same discipline. A PMO asks whether the project is progressing, costs are controlled, risks are managed and decisions are recorded. Information management asks different questions: what information is required, who is responsible for it, whether it has been checked, what its status is, who may rely on it, what superseded it and what evidence supports its authority.

The better model is not "PMO owns information", but an enterprise information-governance framework within which the PMO is a key participant. Information must be required, classified… and reused across the asset lifecycle. That governance cannot be reduced to project controls, nor to a document repository.

So yes: digitalise the PMO. But do not confuse digital PMO maturity with enterprise information authority. The PMO should help orchestrate decisions; the information-management function must govern the information on which those decisions depend.

Share your views on the latest industry issues by posting comments online at www.constructionmanagement.co.uk or by emailing the editor at construction-management@atompublishing.co.uk

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Devolution here we come

Andy Burnham fired the starting gun on accelerating devolution across England just weeks after becoming prime minister. **Phil Clark** examines its inspiration in the North West and what the Manchester model for regeneration could look like for the rest of the country

Andy Burnham promised "good growth in every postcode" standing on the steps of Downing Street on his first day as the new prime minister in July. He was clearly drawing inspiration from the economic success he oversaw during his near-decade tenure as Manchester mayor.

Just weeks later, Burnham announced measures to shift power out of Whitehall that could have big ramifications for the construction supply chain. If enacted, an accelerated reorganisation of local and regional authorities with beefed-up powers and more funding will impact on volume and pipeline of work for the sector. Firms will also face changes in areas such as procurement and training and skills across English regions as well.

So, what does this "good growth" that Burnham articulated look like and what can Manchester teach other regions about successful regional and local regeneration?

▲ Andy Burnham is taking inspiration from Manchester to devolve powers across England

While there are questions about some of Burnham's achievements as mayor and more recently controversy over his previous relationship with the owners of Manchester City Football Club – a significant investor in the city's regeneration and economy but found guilty in September of breaching Premier League financial regulations between 2009 and

89.5bn
Greater Manchester Gross Value Added (GVA); West Midlands has a GVA of £76.3bn

3.1%
GVA growth in Greater Manchester averaging 3.1% compared with 1.5% overall for the UK

4,766
housing completions in Manchester in 2025; 4,261 for Greater London

12%
Affordable housing starts have increased 12% since 2022/23

2018 – the overall economic picture for the region in the past decade is unquestionable.

The wider greater Manchester region saw its Gross Value Added (GVA) grow faster than any other English city region, including London, between 2015 and 2023, averaging 3.1% compared with 1.5% overall for the UK. Greater Manchester's GVA is currently £89.5bn, significantly surpassing other mayoral regions. Its closest equivalent West Midlands has a GVA of £76.3bn with a similar population. Its recent record on housing is also very strong, in particular compared with London (see box, page 21).

Success in Manchester has been far from overnight, according to leading players in the region. Tom Bloxham, founder of pioneering regeneration developer Urban Splash, first moved to the city in the early 1980s, but witnessed early green shoots during that decade. He points to the city's bid for the Olympics in 1985 (eventually won by Barcelona) as one sign where Manchester "put its head above the parapet, had some confidence and realised that it wasn't competing with Birmingham or Bradford, but... with the great second cities of the world, which was Sydney, Los Angeles and Barcelona".

Bloxham also witnessed the start of a growth agenda from "quite a progressive Labour administration" which "realised the way to grow the city was to grow jobs, to grow wealth, to bring more economically active people in [to the city centre], to bring businesses in", as well as supporting the city's university and the local arts scene.

Bloxham puts some of the ongoing success from those beginnings to the city's openness to outside influence and individuals. Many recent local politicians were outsiders, including Burnham himself (from Everton), which Bloxham sees as a positive. "Manchester's always been open to anybody who has [the city's] good at heart. [Howard] Bernstein [chief executive of Manchester City Council from 1998 to 2017] always summed it up when he said, 'What are you going to do for the city, son?'"



Every place has something of interest such as a building or its topography and the trick is celebrating the strengths of places rather than worrying about the weaknesses
Tom Bloxham, Urban Splash



▼ Urban Splash's Mansion House scheme in New Islington

URBAN SPLASH

Bernstein, who died in 2024, is considered by many as the main architect of regeneration in the city. Later in his tenure, he put in place key bodies that established successful future development. These include the Housing Investment Loans Fund (GMHILF) and the statutory foundation for the Mayoral Combined Authority (GMCA), which Burnham inherited.

CIOB chief executive Victoria Hills puts the success down to political leadership and a consistent vision for the region, with those in charge not "overcomplicating things" and getting too "tied up in overbearing policy". This preceded Burnham's tenure, where there was "the courage to ask for more powers and do things slightly differently here and push the boundaries".

She adds this included making "difficult choices" and that "at times where perhaps they didn't get ▶

everything they wanted, but they got most of it. But at least in doing so they were able to get building".

Simon Rawlinson, head of research and insight at consultant Arcadis, sees Manchester as the peak of devolution in England to date and that this is underpinned by what he describes as a "triple helix" effect. This is a combination of some government investment and seed capital with the local academic base and the private sector with the idea "that the three are reinforcing".

Enacting the vision

Local firms who have operated in this environment have seen this in effect, with James Ryan, associate partner at Drees & Sommer, saying foreign investment allied to council regeneration has created an environment where "two plus two equals five". He adds that the real estate market in the city "has moved away from being just locally driven or local capital... to [driven by] national capital. It's put it on the proper institutional radar." This is borne out by national names in the professional services sector establishing themselves in the city in recent years as well as the emergence of new start-up companies in the region such as challenger banks. The construction boom has introduced local challenges, Ryan says, such as increased costs for employing local tradespeople. "Manchester is an increasingly expensive place to live and it's an increasingly expensive place to do business."





URBAN SPLASH

▲ The Grade II-listed Beehive Mill before Urban Splash redeveloped the complex

So what can other regions learn from Manchester's recent growth trajectory? Both Rawlinson and Hills point to the idea of place-based regeneration and planning policy as key. This is where development is matched with need of the area and ensuring there is coordination across building uses and with local infrastructure. Or as Hills who, prior to joining CIOB worked at the Greater London Authority, puts it:

In its simple sense, it's about joining the dots across different parts of the built environment
Victoria Hills, CIOB

"In its simple sense, it's about joining the dots across different parts of the built environment."

Rawlinson points to joined-up thinking in the wider Manchester region, where flats were developed close to transport hubs in nearby towns such as Bolton and Rochdale, which enabled the population to commute to Manchester.

And Bloxham, whose firm's work now stretches far beyond the North West, sees a focus on establishing a strong brand and identity in a place as key to successful regeneration. "Every place has something of interest such as a building or its topography," he says, and the trick is "celebrating the strengths of places rather than worrying about the weaknesses".

Burnham's vision is to roll out strategic authorities similar to Manchester across England by the end of 2028. These will have direct powers over spatial planning, housing allocations and regional transport infrastructure (more on policy in box, left). In addition, technical education will be devolved aimed at boosting apprenticeships, and firms will need to adhere to new social value rules for procuring work worth more than £2m from January 2027. Arcadis's Rawlinson thinks that in the longer term there may be even more powers handed over to regional bodies such as for housing delivery and transport.

Rawlinson sees three key challenges for the government in

Andy Burnham's key devolution policies

- **Fiscal devolution: Mayoral Strategic Authorities can retain a share of locally generated income tax alongside an greater share of business rates.**
- **National roll-out of the Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) model: These bodie, based on a successful one established in Stockport, will receive strengthened Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and land pooling powers to tackle stalled urban brownfield sites.**
- **Strategic Authorities across England: Strategic Authorities to be operational across 100% of England by late 2028. They will be granted direct powers over strategic spatial planning, housing allocations, and regional transport infrastructure.**

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rolling out regeneration: speed of delivery given the time for the Manchester model of regeneration to mature; getting the right skills in place to oversee regional growth; and putting effort and investment into less wealthy places that may not help national economic growth "even though it delivers an improved local and regional impact".

And one cannot ignore the current environment for property development as not being conducive for rapid delivery on Burnham's big plan. Bloxham describes it as "probably the hardest time, viability wise" he has experienced in his 40 years in the sector. He says that there is a recognition from the public sector that pump priming for scheme is one necessary element to address this which is "very important".

In spite of this, Bloxham is positive about Burnham's start after a "very disappointing" first two years of the Labour administration. "I think the devolution ideas are positive and so I absolutely wish him well. This country needs some optimism and we need some growth."



▼ Around 15,000 new homes will be built in Victoria North over the next 15 years

Housing that 'repairs history'

Manchester's affordable housing revolution is reaching new heights as it ploughs ahead with redeveloping a former industrial area into new homes, says **Rod Sweet**

Manchester has some reason to boast about its record on getting homes built. In 2025, the city saw more completed than in all 32 Greater London boroughs combined: the score was 4,766 for Manchester and 4,261 for Greater London.

The city says it is building the most affordable homes since the late 1990s. Affordable housing starts have increased 12% since 2022/23.

It also set up an Empty Homes Team two years ago which, so far, has brought 600 homes back into use. In cases where it's not clear who owns an empty home, genealogists are brought in to help. They take a percentage of the sale proceeds for payment.

Older people living in bigger social homes are offered £2,500 to downsize, which has freed up around 200 homes for families.

This little-bit-of-everything approach is producing results. For the first time since the pandemic, the number of households on the housing register is coming down – by 2,000 households in the six months to July 2026.

The flagship of the city's housing efforts is Victoria North, billed as the biggest regeneration scheme since preparations for the Commonwealth Games in 2002.

In the running to be one of the government's New Towns, and with a gross development value of some £4bn, Victoria North will transform Manchester's original industrial area to the north east of the city centre once blanketed by factories and slum housing.

Over the next 15 years, 15,000 new homes will go up in the area, now largely vacant, along with schools, healthcare facilities, riverside parks and public transport links.

"It's sort of an area that feels in limbo a little bit," said Cllr Gavin White, Manchester City Council's executive member for housing and regeneration.

"I think it's trying to achieve something that is repairing history, but also looking to the future because 150 years ago, thousands of people lived in this area, but in very poor, squalid conditions and they were working in the factories, with life expectancy of 28 or 30 years."

> **We're trying to repair history, but also looking to the future**
> Cllr Gavin White, Manchester City Council



Step on: Six innovative Manchester construction projects

From the UK's largest sports stadium to a world record Passivhaus, the scale and range of construction projects planned and under way in Greater Manchester is testimony to the city's boom. **Kristina Smith** reports

Manchester Town Hall refurbishment: a unique heritage tale

Artisan skills are restoring this gem of high Victoriana, despite budget and programme challenges

Manchester Town Hall was designed in neo-Gothic style by architect Alfred Waterhouse and completed in 1877, but its refurbishment has seen successive budget hikes and pushed-back completion dates. Originally costed at £324m in 2017 with a completion date in 2024, the latest council update puts the budget for the works on the Grade I-listed building at £525m, with completion expected in spring 2027.

However, behind the headlines are countless stories of specialist heritage restoration and artisanship: extensive stonework repairs, including the repair and reinstallation of the building's distinctive spire; restoration of multiple mosaic floors; restoration of over 4,000 stained-glass windows; heritage painting work including murals in the Great Hall; repair of the roof, with the replacement of more than 160,000 slate tiles.

Meanwhile, a new core for passenger lifts and steel staircases had to be cut through the building. And the town hall's mechanical, electrical and plumbing services have been stripped out to be replaced by modern services over eight levels.

Bovis is the management contractor on the project, overseeing the subcontracts on behalf of Manchester City Council. A 2024 report by the council, outlining reasons for the increases in cost and time, provides some insight into the difficulties of estimating the cost of this type of work. For instance, the stone repair work was split into several lots due to the limited capacity in the market, but that still meant that the largest lot had to go to the contractor "who had priced the work least competitively, and by some margin," according to the council's report.

By September 2026, the external works on the building were more visible, as some of the scaffolding and its white wrap were removed. Albert Square, which is also included in the works, and the restored Albert Memorial, have been opened up to the public again. ▶

The latest council update puts the budget for the works on the Grade I-listed building at £525m, with completion expected in spring 2027



CONNECT

◀ Left and right: The epic refurbishment of Manchester Town Hall continues, with hopes it will be ready for its 150th anniversary in September 2027



CONNECT

The stadium build cost is estimated at around £2bn, with construction mooted to start in 2031

2bn



GARETH ATKINSON

▲ The Republic is rising from the ground at Mayfield Park, with Bowmer + Kirkland aiming to complete in 2028

Mayfield Regeneration: PPP turns brownfield green

A private finance model for a sustainability-led regen scheme

While children play in Manchester's first city centre park to be created in 100 years, Bowmer + Kirkland is busy constructing The Republic, a 21,370 sq m office building by the River Medlock.

The speculative Republic development is part of a 10-hectare regeneration of former industrial land into a new green city district, including two office developments, 1,500 homes and a transport hub, alongside the 2.6-hectare Mayfield Park.

Driving the regeneration is The Mayfield Partnership, which includes LandsecU+I and Manchester City Council. The developer reworked the original design to improve the green credentials of The Republic, with targets of 600kg CO_2 per m^2 for embodied carbon (40% lower than typical new-build offices) and a five-star NABERS rating for operational carbon.

Bowmer + Kirkland began construction of The Republic in July 2025, with completion of the 13-storey building due in 2028. The building has a reinforced concrete frame and cores with post-tensioned slabs for its upper floors to reduce the concrete volumes required.

Landsec received planning permission for the first 879 homes, arranged in four buildings, in August 2025.

New Trafford: UK's largest sports stadium

The goalposts recently moved in Manchester United's quest for a new home

Plans for a new home for Manchester United moved a step further forward in June 2026 when the club purchased a 10-hectare plot of land from logistics company Indurent.

Located 350m from the existing Old Trafford Stadium, the site sits between John Gilbert Way, Wharfside Way and Europa Way.

If the project goes ahead, the 100,000-seat stadium will be the UK's biggest. And it will sit at the heart of a proposed 150-hectare Trafford Wharfside district with plans to develop 15,000 homes in high-density blocks.

The distinctive concept design for the new stadium by Foster + Partners, with its three 200m-high masts and canopy roof, was unveiled in March 2025. The architect is now working on detailed designs.

It is likely this will be based around extensive use of offsite construction. Foster + Partners has stated that its design will enable prefabricated elements to be transported to site via the Manchester Ship Canal, to reduce congestion on roads and demand for labour on site.

The stadium build cost is estimated at around £2bn, with construction mooted to start in 2031 and finish in time for the 2035 Women's World Cup.

▶ CGI of the new stadium, which has been designed by Foster + Partners

▼ The new site is located 350m from the existing Old Trafford Stadium



FOSTER + PARTNERS



The distinctive concept design for the new stadium by Foster + Partners, with its three 200m-high masts and canopy roof, was unveiled in March 2025

FOSTER + PARTNERS

Fallowfield Campus: a new Passivhaus record

Famous Owen's Park tower makes way for more sustainable student living

The redevelopment of the University of Manchester's Fallowfield Campus will provide accommodation for 3,300 students where three former halls of residence once stood, including the famous Owen's Park tower. Spread over 29 blocks, seven of which are classed as high-risk buildings (HRB), the scheme will create five residential neighbourhoods.

This is a design build finance operate (DBFO) project with a 50-year timeline. The Viridis consortium, which includes University of Manchester and contractor Graham, is delivering the £530m scheme.

Billed as "the world's largest single-phase Passivhaus-certified purpose-built student accommodation scheme", the Fallowfield Campus will use around half the operational energy that conventional student accommodation does, according to Graham.

Deploying a design-for-manufacturing-and-assembly (DfMA) approach, the project will involve the assembly of over 23,000 offsite components. Among these are over 4,000 precast low-carbon concrete facade panels with reconstituted stone and brick finishes, manufactured by Techcrete.

Graham started on site in late 2025, with Gateway 2 approval for the first two HRBs granted in January 2026 and for the remaining five in September 2026.

▼ Offsite is at the heart of Graham's project



▼ Reedham House is one of five projects that Relentless Developments is leading in the regeneration of St Mary's Parsonage in the city centre



REEDHAM HOUSE/VIRTUALPLANIT

Reedham House: Gary Neville kicks on

The former Manchester United footballer's latest development is a mix of new build and refurb

Gary Neville's Relentless Developments is living up to its name in St Mary's Parsonage in the Northeast of the city. In late 2025, it added Reedham House to the portfolio of sites it is developing in the area which lies between Bridge Street, Deansgate, The River Irwell and Blackfriars Road.

The Reedham House project will be a mixture of old and new. Planning approval gained by Property Alliance Group (PAG), from whom Relentless acquired the site, sees the construction of a 13-storey, 4,830 sq m office building alongside the renovation of a four-storey, 19th-century former carriage works building on the plot.

Manchester City Council published a strategic regeneration framework for St Mary's Parsonage in 2020, outlining plans to bring new life to the area through the creation of energy efficient Grade A office space, while reviving historic buildings and pedestrianising some of the streets.

Retrofit Innovation Centre pushes the envelope

Salford University facility's research programme is helping push local housing towards carbon neutrality

At Energy House Labs, part of Salford University, whole houses are built within buildings – in which the full gamut of the UK's weather conditions can be replicated – as part of its energy efficiency research programme. Prime minister Andy Burnham visited several times as Mayor of Manchester.

Later this year, the Retrofit Innovation Centre will launch a £8.5m programme of research, running until March 2031. Retrofit is an important theme for the region, as Greater Manchester Combined Authority reckons over 880,000 homes will need some form of upgrade by 2038 to hit the authority's carbon neutral goal by the same date.

In 2027, Energy House Labs will build two houses at a cost of £1.3m as part of its research: a copy of a 1980s Barratt home, to be built by Barrett Redrow; and a classic 1930s semi, which Bree Construction will build. The facility has other homes on its site including a pre-1919 Victorian House, which it constructed in 2011 and a futuristic house Barratt built four years ago.

The research will look at how the retrofitted houses perform under different environmental conditions, while putting innovations such as smart energy systems through their paces.

▼ Energy House Lab's latest project will see two more houses built inside its facilities to investigate retrofit processes and innovation



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Feeling supersonic: a city on a mission

Nicky Roger asked five CIOB members working across the region what they see as Manchester's strengths – and what is needed to support the city's next phase of growth



Manchester has major-city ambition

Leigh Renshaw FCIOB, CIOB Client Champion and associate director – construction, AstraZeneca

Manchester is an incredible place from a built environment perspective. What really stands out is the people. There is a strong sense of shared purpose, an incredible work ethic and a willingness to get things done – with plenty of northern grit and humour.

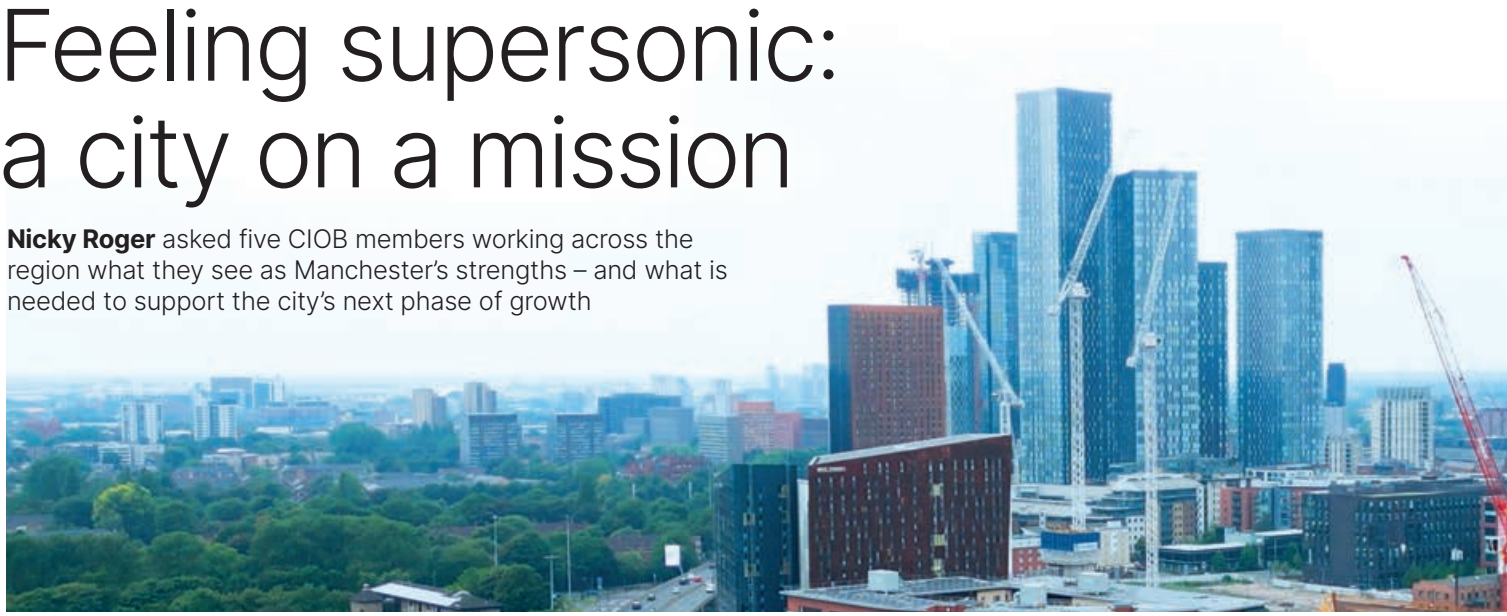
I am proud that Manchester has held on to its strong city-region identity and industrial roots. As its history shows, the scale of the city's ambition and innovation is significant. Manchester has major-city ambition, but its city-region identity encourages people to think beyond individual projects and consider regional value and long-term growth.

That ambition can only be delivered if the region has enough competent people with the right technical, digital and sustainability skills. For me, that is probably the biggest challenge facing construction in Manchester.

It is not simply about having enough people. We need competence in building safety, quality management, digital delivery, low-carbon construction and retrofit. Skills, therefore, need to be treated as a strategic delivery issue, rather than simply a recruitment problem.

That is particularly important as the industry responds to the changing regulatory and professional environment. We need people with the right skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours, alongside the right leaders, policies and investment.

I would identify four connected areas of capability that Greater Manchester needs: core construction competence; quality and building-safety management,



including modern methods of construction; low-carbon and retrofit skills; and digital and data capability, including AI.

There is credible innovation happening in Manchester around retrofit, modular and prefabrication, but innovation should ultimately be judged by the outcomes it produces rather than whether a new technology has been used. We should build more efficiently, safely and to excellent standards, while reducing environmental impact.

We started the Industrial Revolution, so there is no reason why we cannot take a similarly pioneering approach to the digital and AI revolution and become leaders in applying those technologies across the built environment.

The other major issue for Manchester is infrastructure. If I had to identify one priority to unlock the next phase of growth, it would be integrated infrastructure planning, with transport capacity, investment and connectivity at the centre of development. That needs to be non-negotiable.

The development around the Etihad Campus over the past decade has been incredible, but access routes, pedestrianisation and tram infrastructure are essential to deal with travel and transport bottlenecks.

The same applies to development around Deansgate and the proposed New Trafford development. Transport improvements need to be considered from the outset if future development is to add genuine value to Manchester and the wider Greater Manchester region.

Ultimately, successful growth has to be sustainable, professionally delivered and leave a positive legacy for future generations. All the diverse elements of the built environment are joined together by the transport routes that allow people to move around the region.

“I am proud that Manchester has held on to its strong city-region identity and industrial roots. As its history shows, the scale of its ambition is significant
Leigh Renshaw FCIOB, CIOB Client Champion



“This city is not scared to try new things

Jason McKnight MCIOB, founder and co-director of Recom Solutions, a CBC



I have worked in Manchester since 2003 and the skyline has changed dramatically. You can see the growth of Tier 1 contractors, developers and major regeneration schemes across the city.

What stands out most is Manchester’s willingness to embrace innovation. Manchester is exciting and it is not scared to try new things. You can see that in the regeneration plans across different parts of the city, from Co-op Live and the development around the Etihad Campus to Piccadilly Gardens and the plans for Piccadilly Station.

The city centre is increasingly acting as a nucleus from which investment and development are spreading into surrounding areas. ▶

What makes it particularly exciting is the combination of construction and regeneration with the growth of the digital economy
Jason McKnight MCIOB, Recom Solutions

But public infrastructure needs to keep pace with that growth.

The boroughs in and around the city centre are growing, but healthcare facilities, schools and civic buildings do not necessarily evolve as quickly. They need to develop alongside the population and economic growth.

What makes Manchester particularly exciting is the combination of construction and regeneration with the growth of the digital economy. The expansion of technology and digital start-ups is generating demand for new offices and developments, while also influencing how those buildings are designed.

There is a real focus on what the next generation of workers will be like and who is going to be attracted to Manchester. The city is competing for businesses and inward investment from across the UK and overseas.

Exactly what the next phase of Manchester's development will look like is difficult to predict, but that uncertainty is part of the appeal. We do not know what it will look like, but it is very exciting to be part of that evolution.



Manchester has to determine whether its ambition can be matched by its ability to deliver

Rob Gutteridge MCIOB, CIOB Manchester Hub chair and senior project assurance specialist with URENCO Ltd

I came to Manchester 30 years ago, having previously worked around the UK and abroad, and have seen the ups and downs of the construction industry here. I have never felt at home anywhere else in the way I do here.

My children are growing up in the city and are rightly proud to be part of a forward-looking place. Manchester has its problems, like anywhere else, but it seems able to deal with them proactively and progressively.

Manchester has its problems, but it seems able to deal with them proactively
Rob Gutteridge MCIOB, URENCO Ltd

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority shows how collaboration can work when boundaries are set and managed across a city-region. That is important because the challenges facing construction and development do not stop at local authority boundaries.

Manchester now has to determine whether its ambition can be matched by its ability to deliver. There are shortages across most, if not all, trades. Part of the problem is the chicken-and-egg situation of getting young people interested in construction and providing opportunities, while businesses are trying to create value over relatively short projects.

Larger companies with longer order books are often better placed to invest in apprenticeships, but SMEs need help to kick-start the skills resource at trade level. Greater engagement with schools and colleges, backed by a strategic plan involving GMCA and professional bodies including CIOB, could make a difference.

There is also an interesting balance to strike in how Manchester develops. How do we meet the needs of existing communities while attracting growth and new business?

That means allowing innovation and modern development alongside regeneration. Greater Manchester's skyline shows differences between the south-west, with its high-rise development, and areas such as the Northern Quarter and Ancoats, where regeneration has taken a different form.

That seems part of a deliberate approach to maintaining the "Manc" culture while modernising and regenerating the city.





“Manchester has an opportunity to shape the industry’s future

Martin Horne, regional managing director – building north, Tilbury Douglas

Greater Manchester has significant opportunities for construction, but also a significant challenge in making sure we have the people and skills needed to deliver them.

For me, the skills issue is one of the biggest facing the industry.

We need to look beyond simply recruiting people and think about how we create the right pathways into construction.

That means much closer collaboration between construction employers, education providers and the wider industry. What people are learning needs to reflect the skills employers actually need, while young people also need real-world experience of the opportunities available to them.

The Greater Manchester Institute of Technology in Salford is a good example of what that can look like. It brings education and industry together and gives students access to technologies and working environments that reflect the changing nature of construction. That kind of industry-led approach can help create the talent pipelines Greater Manchester needs.

But skills are only part of the picture. Construction also has an important role to play in the wider economic and social development of the region. When we deliver projects, we should be thinking about how we create opportunities for local people and businesses, develop apprentices and leave a lasting benefit in the communities where we work.

We also need to make sure the buildings and infrastructure we deliver are fit for the future. Sustainability and technology are changing the way we work, so the next generation needs to understand those changes and be able to work with new technologies.

Greater Manchester has a strong construction and engineering heritage, but it also has an opportunity to shape what the industry looks like in the future.

Ultimately, our role is about more than delivering buildings. It is about helping to create the workforce, opportunities and communities that will support growth for years to come.

> **We need to look beyond simply recruiting people and think about how we create the right pathways into construction**
> Martin Horne, Tilbury Douglas



“We try to make education as close to real construction as possible

Nicola Harris, DSBNE quality lead placements and employability tutor for UG & PG built environment and senior lecturer in construction management, University of Salford

This is a huge time of change for Manchester. One of the biggest challenges is making sure we have the people with the skills to support growth. We need a joined-up approach between universities, colleges, employers and professional bodies, giving young people – or anybody interested in the built environment – a pathway into the industry.

At Salford, we work closely with contractors, colleges and organisations including CIOB. Our industry advisory panel gives employers an opportunity to highlight emerging skills requirements.

It is increasingly not just about technical knowledge. We need to give students communication and transferable skills for the workplace.

We try to make education as close to real construction practice as possible. Students work on projects, using briefs, programmes and risk assessments. Employers come into presentations and site visits, helping students understand why their learning matters.

Students have opportunities to present, run meetings and communicate with different stakeholders – essential construction skills. Our classrooms bring together students, apprentices and part-time learners of different ages, reflecting the workforce they will join.

I do not think you can separate education and industry. Whether someone is on any programme, there needs to be a pathway into it.

> **One of the biggest challenges is making sure we have the people with the skills to support growth**
> Nicola Harris University of Salford

What's the story, MBacc glory?

Greater Manchester is attempting to build a more joined-up technical education system connecting schools, colleges, employers and young people to the skills and jobs needed in the region. **Nicky Roger** reports on how construction is already providing a practical test of the approach



With Andy Burnham setting out his plans for technical education for the UK, the nation is watching with interest to see the outcomes of the Greater Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc), which Burnham launched when he was mayor of Greater Manchester.

The Greater Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc) is an employer-connected programme linking what young people learn and the skills they develop to jobs in the local economy.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) wants an integrated technical education system connecting educators and employers. Its 2030 vision is for every young person to have a clear pathway to good jobs and training.

▲ The MBacc aims to show young people the range of routes and occupations available in the built environment

Construction and the Green Economy is one of seven MBacc gateways. Its pathway maps routes from school subjects through technical qualifications, T Levels, apprenticeships and higher technical education into occupations from skilled trades to quantity surveying, civil engineering and sustainability.

From careers advice to a pathway

Careers engagement can be episodic: a school talk, fair or site visit that gives information without showing what to do next.

The MBacc aims to connect those encounters to a wider pathway. GMCA's Employer Integration Board brings businesses into programme development, aligning education and training more closely with employers' skills needs.

For construction, that means helping young people understand not simply that they could "work in construction", but the range of routes and occupations available.

Live projects introduce students to the range of professionals working together and show how different career routes contribute to one project.

GMI: putting the model into practice

GMI Construction Group provides an example of how the MBacc's employer element is working on the ground.

Already running a schools and community engagement programme, GMI agreed after GMCA's April 2026

150

GMI agreed after GMCA's April 2026 approach to provide workplace experiences for 150 students between April and July

approach to provide workplace experiences for 150 students between April and July.

Around 10 to 12 school visits followed, combining site tours with sessions on construction careers.

The programme helped GMI reach schools it might otherwise have struggled to engage, including all-girls and special educational needs schools. At its Fountain Street project in Manchester, 12 pupils from Fairfield High School for Girls visited a live site and explored roles from project management and quantity surveying to skilled trades and apprenticeships.

GMI regional director for the North West Phillip Johnson says the value is letting young people experience construction first-hand.

"The most effective way to change perceptions of construction is to let young people experience it for themselves. A live project reveals the breadth of people, skills and careers behind what we build."

Some schools have returned for advice, creating opportunities to promote apprenticeships.

GMI is not claiming the visits have yet translated directly into apprentices or employees. The longer-term question is whether those relationships lead to qualifications, apprenticeships and jobs.

James Bruce, GMI's senior responsible business partner, who was closely involved in the school engagements, says: "It's a structured programme that makes companies more responsible for what they're actually doing. It's too early to say it's going to solve skills shortages, but it is opening young people's minds to different careers. The more employers that get involved, the more chance we have of building that talent pipeline."



▲ Pupils from Fairfield High School for Girls visit a live site at Fountain Street

The most effective way to change perceptions of construction is to let young people experience it for themselves
Phillip Johnson, GMI Construction Group

Building the pipeline

The wider ambition is to develop the workforce Greater Manchester needs for its housing and sustainability goals.

Mayor of Greater Manchester Bev Craig says: "I want us to lead the way with building new, green homes and retrofitting older properties to improve energy efficiency and help bring down bills. To do that, we need a skilled workforce, equipped for the future.

"Construction and the green economy have a huge role to play in Greater Manchester, helping us build the homes people need, providing good jobs and making our city region greener.

"Our Construction and the Green Economy MBacc gateway is about building the talent pipeline for that future. We want young people to see the opportunities on their doorstep and have a clear route into them. By bringing schools, colleges and employers together, we can give young people the skills they need to get on, while helping industry find the talent they need to grow."

T Levels combine classroom learning with industry placements. Employers have pledged more than 1,000 additional placements across Greater Manchester.

GMCA's Year 2 report says 1,405 young people have accessed workplace experiences, while more than 3,500 experiences have been developed through its Modern Work Experience programme. The authority says the MBacc is becoming more connected, with employers represented on its Employer Integration Board.

For construction, that means moving beyond getting young people onto sites towards creating visible routes through the sector.

GMI's experience suggests employers are willing to play their part. The challenge is turning individual encounters into a joined-up pipeline.

If the MBacc makes the route from classroom to construction career clearer, it could offer a model for regional technical education shaped around young people's aspirations and employers' workforce needs.



Meet Laing O'Rourke's CIOB champion in Perth

When he's not delivering major underground metro stations, the new chair of the CIOB Perth Hub **Oisin Farrell** is busy raising the institute's profile in Western Australia's construction sector

Tell us about your career with Laing O'Rourke.
I've spent 18 years with Laing O'Rourke, which has given me the opportunity to work across Australia and the UK on some incredibly diverse and complex projects.

My career started as a graduate in Scotland before progressing through engineering, construction management and leadership roles in sectors including defence, justice, health, rail and major infrastructure.

What has kept me with the company for so long is the opportunity to continuously grow through a diverse range of projects, roles and, most importantly, the people I've worked alongside.

I've had the privilege of contributing to projects ranging from nuclear facilities in the UK and defence infrastructure in New South Wales to city-shaping major rail projects in Sydney and Perth.

Each project, role and collaboration has shaped the project leader I am today: open, inclusive and focused on bringing people together to achieve shared outcomes.

Along the way, I've learnt that successful delivery is built on strong planning and technical excellence, but also on building trust and clear communication and encouraging collaboration and supporting people to perform at their best.

▲ Perth's construction sector is enjoying a boom

What are you working on now?
I'm currently working on the delivery of a major underground metro station in a constrained urban environment.

It involves constructing a large in-situ reinforced concrete structure, while integrating complex building services, rail systems and station operational requirements.

With a limited site footprint, detailed planning and logistics management are essential while maintaining safety and productivity. It's in a predominantly residential area so we have to minimise the impacts on the community through stakeholder engagement, traffic and access management, noise and vibration mitigation, and clear communication.

What's happening in the Australian construction market?
The industry here is in a strong position, in my view, with a substantial pipeline of work across infrastructure, energy, housing, defence and social infrastructure.

One of the biggest challenges remains productivity. For many years the conversation was about labour shortages and cost escalation and now the focus is shifting towards implementing new ways of working that reduce inefficiencies and support more consistent delivery.

We're seeing greater interest in modern methods of construction, digital engineering and data-driven project delivery. At Laing O'Rourke, however, these aren't new concepts. We've been implementing modern methods of construction, design for manufacture and assembly (DfMA) and digital engineering for many years.

Client priorities are continuing to broaden. Successful project delivery remains fundamental, but there is also increasing emphasis on confidence and certainty around cost and programme, strong risk management, collaborative and inclusive behaviours, sustainability and the use of technology and innovation to improve outcomes.

There is also a greater focus on the legacy projects leave behind, not only through the infrastructure itself but through the social, economic and community benefits they create. In my experience, this shift has been supported by more collaborative contracting models, including alliance arrangements, which bring clients, contractors and delivery partners together to achieve better outcomes and share responsibility for success.

The outlook is particularly positive in Western Australia, where there is strong population growth and investment in resources and infrastructure. Beyond traditional mining and resources projects, we're seeing increasing opportunities in defence, renewable energy, transmission infrastructure, ports, water and social infrastructure.

The organisations that will succeed are those that invest in their people, embrace innovation, improve productivity and continue to build strong collaborative relationships with clients and industry partners. The work is there; the challenge now is delivering it smarter, safer and more sustainably than ever before – and in a way that creates lasting value for the communities we serve.

What has CIOB Perth Hub been up to and what are your plans for it in the next couple of years?
The Perth Hub has built strong momentum over recent years under the leadership of our outgoing chair, Martin Wisker FCIOB, and one of our key priorities is to build on the foundations laid.



LAING O'ROURKE/OISIN FARRELL

▼ A veteran project leader with Laing O'Rourke, Oisin Farrell MCIOB is the new chair of the CIOB Perth Hub

The organisations that will succeed are those that invest in their people, embrace innovation, improve productivity and continue to build strong collaborative relationships with clients and industry partners
Oisin Farrell MCIOB, Laing O'Rourke

Looking ahead, we'll keep growing membership, increasing engagement in Western Australia's construction sector and continuing to raise the profile of CIOB.

We have also strengthened the committee with the appointment of our new Perth Hub sustainability ambassador, ensuring sustainability underpins our events and industry engagement.

For the current governance year, we've put together a strong calendar of activities including CPD events, site visits, networking functions and a student challenge in partnership with a local university. These initiatives are designed to provide value to existing members, attract new members and strengthen connections between industry professionals, students and future leaders.

We're also looking to further develop mentorship opportunities and strengthen relationships with contractors, consultants, clients and educational institutions.

Ultimately, our goal is to make the CIOB Perth Hub the leading professional network for construction professionals in the state, promoting professionalism, leadership, sustainability and knowledge sharing in the industry.

In association with UL Solutions

Why third-party certification matters in refurb

UL Solutions explains how third-party certification can support traceable fire safety documentation as UK buildings are refurbished and retrofitted

Many buildings that will shape our future are already standing. Construction work is not always to build new, but to adapt, upgrade and repurpose what we already have.

Refurbishment can reduce embodied carbon, make better use of existing assets and respond more quickly to changing patterns of use.

But it also changes the fire risk profile. The question is not simply whether a design looks compliant. It is whether the work that follows preserves or improves the fire safety performance of the building.

This is where third-party certification comes in.

When buildings change, risk changes

Refurbishment of existing buildings brings unknowns: incomplete records, legacy construction, previous alterations and systems that were never designed to work together. Once layouts, services, facades or occupancy patterns change, fire performance can change too.

New openings and service penetrations may affect compartmentation. Substituted materials may not reflect the tested system. Interfaces between old and new installations may introduce conditions that were never assessed as a whole. The link between design intent and delivery can weaken as the project moves through procurement, construction and handover.



Refurbishment changes the risk profile of a building

A fire strategy may assume a particular tested system. A specification may allow alternatives. A site condition may require an adaptation. A contractor may install a product correctly in general terms, but not in the configuration that was originally tested or certified.

What third-party certification adds

Third-party certification helps reduce risk by turning claims about performance into evidence that can be checked, recorded and relied on.

It provides an independent evidence base that safety-critical work depends on. Products and systems can be linked back to recognised testing and certification.

Common refurbishment scenarios

1. **Office-to-residential conversion: the use of the building changes, so the assumptions around occupation, evacuation and compartmentation change with it.**
2. **Firestopping and service upgrades: new penetrations can weaken compartment lines if the selected system, site condition and installation method are not aligned.**
3. **Facade remediation: external wall works depend on the performance of an assembled system, not a collection of individual components.**
4. **Active and passive system integration: detection, alarms, suppression, smoke control and passive protection all need to support the same building strategy.**

Manufacturing controls and surveillance can help maintain consistency over time. Installer competence schemes can support confidence that systems are installed as intended.

Certification listings and searchable product databases make the supporting evidence more accessible. They help designers, contractors, inspectors, regulators and building owners check what a certification actually covers rather than relying on broad statements.

However, if certification is treated as a handover exercise, many important decisions have already been made.

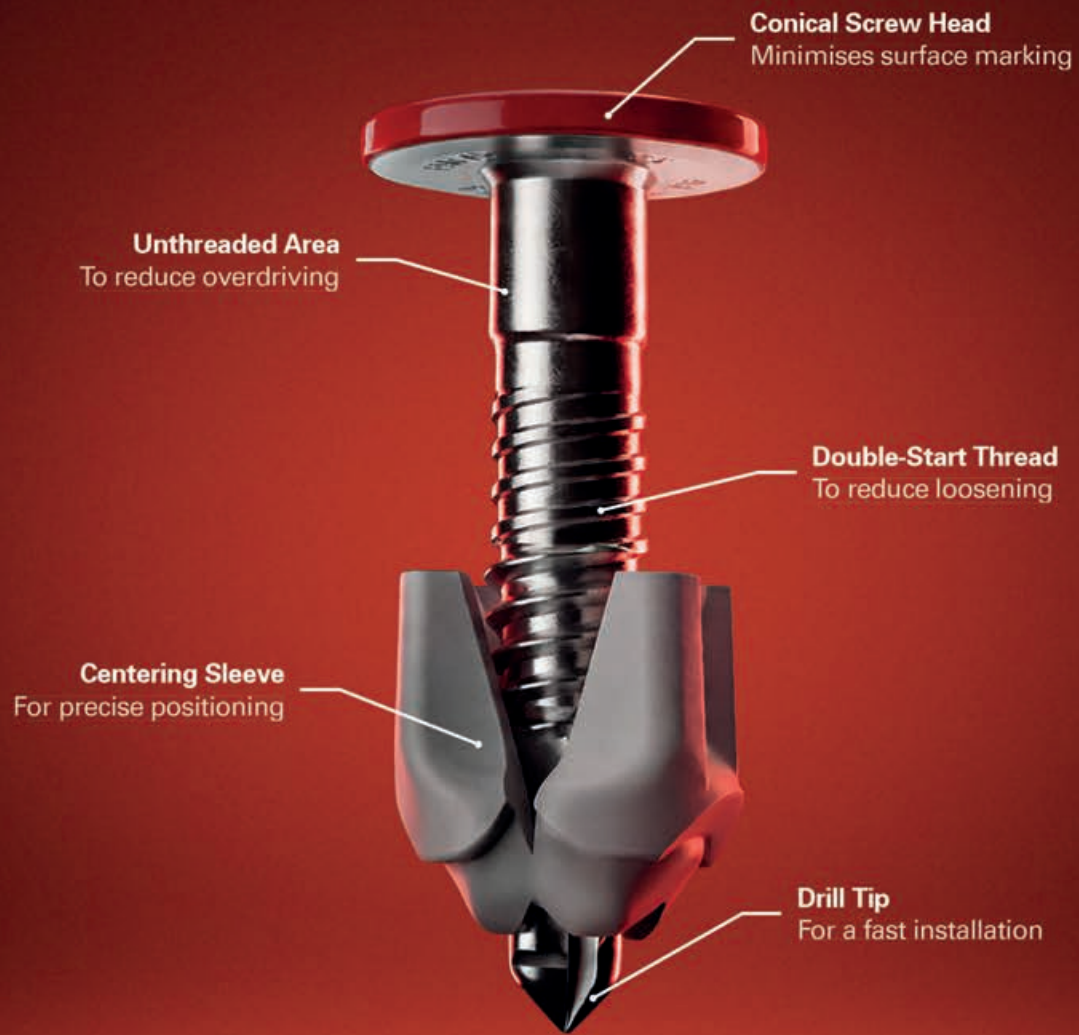
A better approach is to use certification information earlier, when it can still influence design, procurement and delivery. That means using it to specify systems with proven and relevant performance, check the scope and limits of certification before installation, using competent installers, and recording the evidence to create a clear audit trail.

Refurbishment is rarely neat. Existing buildings bring unknowns and projects often have to adapt as they go. The challenge is to make sure those adaptations do not weaken the fire safety strategy. Third-party certification makes key decisions visible and verifiable after handover.

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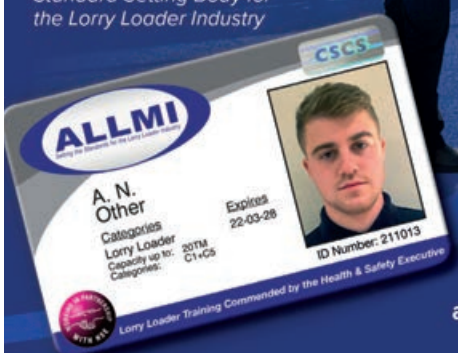
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MATTHEW NICHOL

Structural Steel Design Awards 2026

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Produced by the BCSA and Steel for Life in association with *Construction Management*

Introduction

The Structural Steel Design Awards showcase excellence in modern steel construction, with a history dating back to 1969. Learn all about this year's shortlist here

Jointly sponsored by the British Constructional Steelwork Association (BCSA) and Steel for Life and celebrating their 58th year, the 2026 Structural Steel Design Awards (SSDA) have, once again, highlighted and rewarded many of the best examples of excellence, ambition and innovation in our built environment.

The entries this year reflect the wide geographical spread of steel's appeal for a variety of projects, which include prestigious office schemes, sports stadia, transport infrastructure, footbridges, industrial buildings and complex sculptures.

The judges assessed each project for excellence in architecture, engineering, fabrication and sustainability, as well as the value each scheme added to its local community.

Twenty-one projects made the shortlist, from which judges presented six awards, six commendations and five merits.

The SSDA's cross-industry judging panel includes chairman Professor Roger Plank alongside Sarah Pellereau representing the Institution of Structural Engineers; Ewan Jones, Bill Taylor and Oliver Tyler representing the Royal Institute of British Architects; Richard Barrett, Tim Burton and David Chapman representing the steelwork contracting industry; Brogan MacDonald and Emily McDonald representing the Institution of Civil Engineers.



PASCALL + WATSON

Future-ready terminal takes off

A major boost for regional connectivity, Manchester Airport Terminal 2 Reconfiguration has reshaped a 1990s asset into a modern passenger gateway for the North of England

Upgrading the departures, security and arrivals areas within Manchester Airport's existing four-storey Terminal 2 building, a reconfiguration scheme has created a single and seamless hub that extends into a recently built extension.

Covering 71,000m², Terminal 2 comprises four structures (including the extension) separated by movement joints, with an existing space-frame roof spanning the central atrium and check-in hall.

The project required major alterations to this complex building, including 3,800m² of internal floor infills, modifications to primary structural elements and the lateral stability system, as well as new external structures and bridges.

Structural steelwork provided the flexibility needed to undertake these interventions, while retaining the existing façades and roof. The new structure maintained the established column spacing and service strategies, created

▲ Utilising steelwork complemented the terminal's original construction

Find out more about the SSDAs and be the first to know when entries open for 2027

This project is an exemplar for the flexibility of structural steelwork as a framing material. The designers and sub-contractor teams had to be creative and agile, carrying out hugely complex alterations while working in a fully operational international airport. The result is the transformation of a tired airport terminal into a truly superb world-class facility
SSDA judges

additional passenger capacity and avoided the need to strengthen the existing foundations. This allowed substantial changes to be made without imposing unnecessary additional loads or disrupting more of the terminal than required.

This selective approach not only reduced construction time and cost, but also delivered substantial embodied carbon savings.

Using steelwork also complemented the terminal's original construction, allowing new members to be connected precisely to the retained frame. Components were fabricated to suit the surveyed conditions, transported in manageable sections and assembled within confined work areas.

Understanding the existing structure was a significant challenge. The terminal had been modified throughout its life, but limited records were available to document every change. Structural analysis models were developed from archived information and supplemented by detailed surveys, creating a reliable picture of the building before the proposed interventions were assessed.

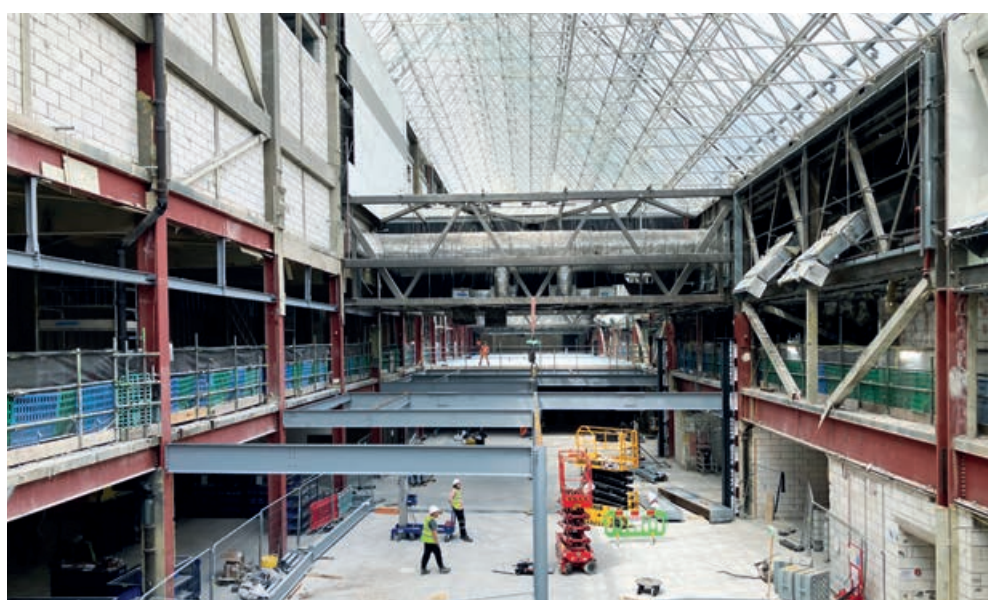
One of the most complex interventions was the creation of the "sky bar" beneath the glazed space-frame roof. A carefully sequenced arrangement of temporary and permanent steelwork allowed existing members to be removed and the new floorplate installed without compromising the structure above. The work demanded close control of temporary conditions as the load paths changed throughout construction.

Access to the site, due to its live environment, could have been problematic. However, to negate any issues, every item of internal steelwork was brought into the terminal without a single crane lift. Members were transported through the front doors on wheeled equipment, before being moved and lifted into position using rigging and winching. This unusual installation strategy responded to the restricted internal environment and enabled extensive steel alterations to proceed without interrupting the terminal's operations.

The project also created new structures beyond the existing terminal. An external transfer facility on the airfield was connected to the main building via a double-storey steel bridge, alongside a new back-of-house vertical circulation core. These additions improve movement through the airport, while integrating with the reconfigured internal spaces and established terminal structure.

Reuse was an important part of the structural strategy. More than 75t of steelwork removed from the existing building was incorporated into the permanent structure, while other recovered members were repurposed as temporary works. The embodied carbon associated with modules A1-A5 was calculated at 137kgCO_2e/m².

Project of the Year and Award: Manchester Airport Terminal 2 Reconfiguration
Architect: Pascall + Watson
Structural engineer: Buro Happold
Steelwork contractor: Leach Structural Steelwork Ltd
Main superstructure contractor: McCrory Holdings
Client: Manchester Airport Group



▼ Terminal 2 comprises four structures that cover 71,000m²

Produced by the BCSA and Steel for Life in association with *Construction Management*

Embracing the circular economy

Helping to transform a dated office block into a modern workspace, TBC.London is the UK's first major commercial project to incorporate and reuse steelwork from the 1930s



JACK HOBHOUSE

Described as urban mining, approximately 40t of steelwork removed from a 1930s-built department store on Oxford Street has been incorporated into the TBC.London project, establishing a significant precedent for the UK's fast-growing circular economy.

Working within the Tower Bridge Conservation Area, the TBC.London project has transformed a dated commercial building into a modern mixed-use, workspace-led development.

"The design sought to balance substantial new accommodation with the careful stewardship of the surrounding heritage context, enhancing the existing building while complementing nearby assets, including Tower Bridge," says Stiff + Trevillion associate Dimitar Dobrev.

Overall, the scheme retained and selectively adapted the existing concrete frame, using structural steelwork to create new floorplates, reconfigure the cores and form additional upper levels. This approach allowed the building to be extended and modernised, while responding carefully to its constrained historic setting.

▲ Around 40t of steelwork removed from a 1930s property was incorporated into the TBC.London project

Steelwork was selected for its ability to work with the retained structure, provide long spans and support future adaptation. The resulting floorplates can accommodate multiple occupiers and future reconfiguration, extending the building's useful life.

Find out more about the SSDAs and be the first to know when entries open for 2027

Special Judges' Award and Commendation: TBC.London
Architect: Stiff + Trevillion and ECE Architecture
Structural engineer: Webb Yates
Structural engineer (donor site): Civic
Main contractor: Willmott Dixon
M&E engineer: Atelier Ten
Client: FORE Partnership

The UK's first major commercial building to incorporate large-scale reuse of pre-war steel, TBC.London has redefined what is possible in circular construction, challenging industry norms and proving that ambitious carbon reduction can be achieved at commercial scale. It championed reuse across the built environment, creating a legacy of collaboration, innovation and industry-wide change
SSDA judges

"Not long after the project started on site, the opportunity emerged to incorporate 100-year-old steel from the former House of Fraser building on Oxford Street. We had to adapt the design and prove the material could meet modern performance requirements, with no direct precedents to draw from," says Webb Yates senior engineer Rosie Hudson.

Rather than treating this as a barrier, the design was reassessed so that reclaimed sections could be accepted without changing the building's structural, spatial or performance requirements. The inherent adaptability of steel allowed load paths, connections and tolerances to be adjusted while maintaining the intended programme and architectural design.

Reclaimed members were used alongside new steelwork within a coherent structural frame. Variable historic section sizes and details required bespoke connection strategies and careful allocation of members.

Making sure that 1930s-produced steel could satisfy modern requirements was crucial. As the members did not have contemporary certification, they underwent destructive and non-destructive assessment, including tensile, chemical, metallographic and carbon-equivalent-value testing.

Newly issued guidance for the reuse of pre-1970 steel was applied in practice, informing material verification, connection design, load paths and performance checks.

Before fabrication, the recovered steel arrived with redundant plates and evidence of its previous use. Each member had to be identified, cleaned, tested, prepared and reworked to contemporary tolerances and connection details.

TBC.London achieved whole-building embodied carbon below 300kgCO_2e/m² for modules A1-A5. Alongside the 40t of reclaimed steel, the remaining 600t of new steelwork was specified with a minimum recycled content of 56%. The fully electric development achieved BREEAM Outstanding at 95.6%, WELL Platinum and NABERS 5-star ratings, and aligns with operational net-zero carbon targets.

The project's influence extends beyond the completed building. Challenges encountered while recovering, verifying and integrating historic steel contributed to the creation of the Engineers Reuse Collective.

Launched in 2024, the not-for-profit group provides a forum for engineers to implement, demonstrate and champion reuse, turning project-specific experience into shared industry knowledge.

All change at Oxford Street

An innovative retrofit programme has transformed a former flagship department store into a modern mixed-use development



Commendation:
334 Oxford Street, London
Architect: Allford Hall Monaghan Morris
Structural engineer: AKT II
Steelwork contractor: Severfield
Main contractor: Bovis
Client: Capital Real Estate Partners

Once a highlight of Europe's busiest shopping thoroughfare, Oxford Street's former Debenhams department store has been extensively remodelled.

With sustainability taking centre stage, a substantial portion of the existing six-storey building has been retained and incorporated into a new nine-storey steel-framed structure.

Combining retained and new steelwork enabled the building to be extended, while creating open office spans, perimeter terraces and a more flexible structural grid.

A lightweight steel extension limited strengthening requirements and helped accommodate differential settlement between the existing structure and new-build element.

Bespoke new-to-existing connections were designed to work with the riveted historic steelwork, while achieving the required structural performance and a refined finish. Standardised and extended fin plates were cut to suit the verified site positions, providing flexibility where the existing geometry varied.

Produced by the BCSA and Steel for Life in association with *Construction Management*



TIMOTHY SOAR

Climbing the stairs

One of only a handful to exist worldwide and officially unveiled by His Majesty King Charles III, the Double Helix Staircase at Fortnum & Mason's West End premises is a sweeping structure that takes customers from lower ground to second floor

Inspired by a Leonardo da Vinci design, the Double Helix Staircase at Fortnum & Mason comprises two flights of stairs that appear as one single structure, wrapping around the centre of the building's atrium like twisting strands of DNA, creating a centrepiece for the recently completed refurbishment.

Tom Athron, CEO of Fortnum & Mason, says: "It is the first time in over two decades that Fortnum's has unveiled a project of this scale and ambition at Piccadilly, and we are immensely proud of the result.

"The staircase, designed by Ben Pentreath, is more than a feat of engineering; it is a work of art and a restoration of architectural integrity."

▲ The two flights of stairs wrap around the centre, appearing as one single structure

The project required advanced structural engineering and digital modelling with traditional materials, bespoke detailing and a considerable amount of refined craftsmanship to produce the stunning staircase.

Translating this ambitious concept into a structurally workable solution required its geometry, proportions and visual symmetry to be maintained, while creating a structure capable of spanning considerable distances within the new atrium.

"Using structural steelwork was the only practical solution due to both the complexity of the Double Helix structure and the client's requirement for an exceptionally shallow, slender stringer profile," says Patrick Murray, Quantity Surveyor at Portview Fit-Out.

"Steelwork's strength and adaptability allowed the stair elements to remain visually light, while providing the required structural performance."

Curved steel stringers form the primary structure and establish the continuous double-helix geometry, while the completed staircase brings together timber treads, GRG soffits, hand-forged balustrade panels and bespoke brass fittings inspired by Fortnum & Mason's tea leaves.

Guaranteeing the required strength and stiffness of the staircase, the long spans and

Award: Fortnum & Mason Double Helix, London
Architect: Ben Pentreath Ltd
Structural engineers: Format Engineers Ltd and Ramboll
Main contractor: Portview Fit-Out Ltd
Client: Fortnum & Mason

This three-storey double-helix staircase is a joy! Combining modern analysis and fabrication techniques for the hidden steel and immaculate craftsmanship for the finishes. The construction challenge was significant, working in a live shop but minimising any impact on customers. The delighted client confirmed the intervention's commercial success, increasing footfall to upper levels while creating a beautiful and memorable architectural feature
SSDA judges

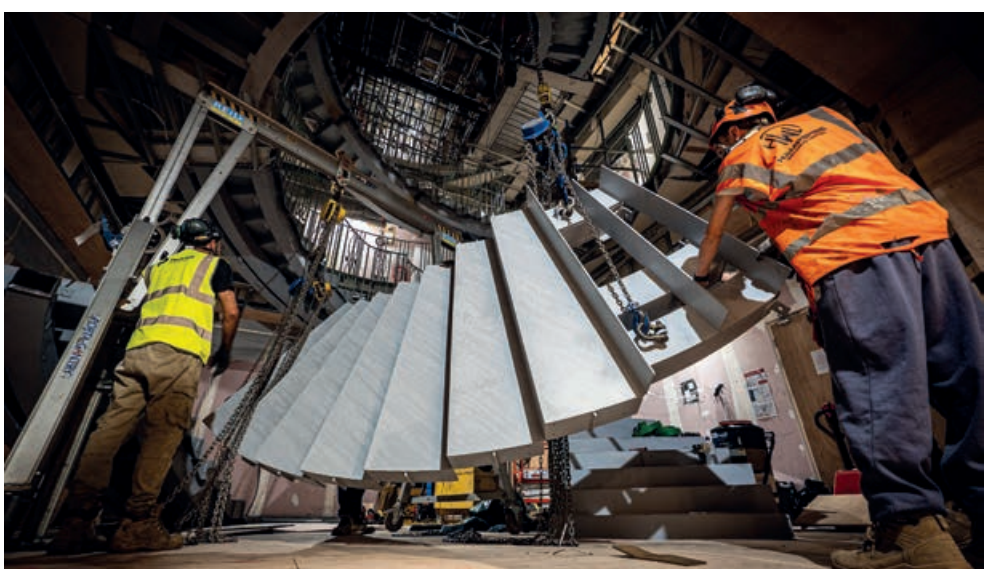
slender elements required advanced digital analysis and optimisation.

The design also had to account for forces transferred into the existing building and the interaction between movement in the staircase and the surrounding structure. Resolving these considerations without introducing visually intrusive supports was central to the design.

The store remained operational throughout the installation works, which required the construction activity to be managed in order to minimise disruption. Much of the installation was undertaken outside trading hours, with strict controls on noise and other activities while the store was open.

Piccadilly's Central London location created further logistical constraints. Deliveries were made during limited road-closure windows, after which every component was distributed internally through the historic building. Access was restricted to an opening approximately 1,500mm wide and 2m high, limiting the size of individual elements and influencing how the staircase was divided for transportation and assembly.

A series of bespoke lifting frames and internal gantries were designed to move and install the steelwork safely within the building. The installation sequence was coordinated with the timber, balustrades, soffits and decorative finishes to maintain progress and avoid damage to completed work. These arrangements had to operate without large-scale lifting equipment normally available on a new-build project.



▼ The works had to be undertaken outside trading hours to minimise disruption



MATTHEW NICHOL

Ship-shape on the Clyde

Big enough for two frigates to be constructed side-by-side, shipbuilding on the River Clyde has been safeguarded since the completion of BAE Govan's fully enclosed workshop

Commendation:
BAE Govan, Glasgow
Architect: Corstorphine & Wright Architects
Structural engineer: Robert Bird Group
Steelwork contractor: Severfield
Main contractor: McLaughlin & Harvey
Client: BAE Systems

Designed to enhance construction of the Royal Navy's Type 26 frigate, BAE Govan's new workshop has been constructed within the footprint of an existing dock.

The steel frame comprises 35m-high lattice columns supported on 10m-high concrete walls. Eighteen roof trusses span the hall, while full-length crane beams support two 100t and two 20t gantry cranes.

Ship and material movements shaped both ends of the building. At the southern elevation, a 16m-high access door accommodates material deliveries, while a much larger vertically opening door at the northern end allows completed vessels to move from the workshop to the river.

Ensuring the steel deliveries were undertaken efficiently, the largest assemblies had to be designed around road transport limits. Once on site, mechanical and electrical services were installed on roof truss sections at ground level, before they were lifted into place, thereby limiting the amount of working at height.

Produced by the BCSA and Steel for Life in association with *Construction Management*

Highland crossing

Carrying the A939, a weathering steel bridge provides a new crossing of the River Gairn on the important north-south route between Deeside and Speyside



SIMON KENNEDY

Replacing an overused Category A-listed structure built in 1749, the Gairnshiel Jubilee Bridge is named to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 – the year in which construction began.

Accommodating two traffic lanes and able to carry heavy goods vehicles, the new bridge protects the nearby historic crossing from further vehicle strikes and allows it to be retained for future use.

The project called for a modern, resilient replacement bridge that would improve access without overwhelming its sensitive Highland setting. Six possible alignments were explored, balancing road length, land boundaries, topography, flood risk and the relationship with the existing bridge.

The selected route runs parallel to its historic neighbour and connects with the road network at a low point in the landscape. River flood levels required a single clear span, while the low highway alignment demanded a shallow structural depth.

Structural steelwork provided the strength and efficiency needed to span 35m, while maintaining a slender profile and carrying full highway loading. Working compositely with the concrete deck, the steel structure delivers the required capacity without creating an unduly deep or visually dominant crossing.

▲ The main structure comprises bespoke fabricated weathering steel box girders

The primary structure comprises bespoke fabricated weathering steel box girders that evolved from an earlier plate-girder proposal. Although unconventional for a bridge of this span, the closed-box solution brought significant benefits for erection, durability and maintenance.

Find out more about the SSDAs and be the first to know when entries open for 2027

This new bridge is located close by to the 18th-century listed stone structure it replaces, and the design thoughtfully responds to its context. The slender, 35m-long weathering steel structure with its 'recycled' stone parapets integrates effortlessly into the Highland landscape. Carefully detailed, this bespoke structure is elegant, efficient and designed for minimal ongoing maintenance
SSDA judges

Award: Gairnshiel Jubilee Bridge
Architect: Moxon Architects Ltd
Structural engineer: Arcadis
Steelwork contractor: J&D Pierce Contracts Ltd
Main contractor: Wills Bros Civil Engineering Ltd
Client: Aberdeenshire Council

The girders supported the permanent formwork soffit panels and the wet concrete loads during construction, while their enclosed form removed external ledges and reduced areas where water and debris could collect.

"Weathering grade steel was used as it requires little or no maintenance and over time develops a muted russet tone, complementing the colours of the glen and contrasting with the lighter granite above," says Dan Banks, J&D Pierce Contracts' business development manager – bridges.

The slender steelwork is paired with precast concrete parapets faced in locally reclaimed granite and coping stones sourced from Aberdeen Harbour.

The granite-faced parapets and wing walls taper into the landscape, echoing the form of the historic crossing without attempting to imitate it.

The use of reclaimed granite alongside a durable, fully recyclable steel structure also supports the project's material-efficiency objectives, combining long-term performance with reduced demand for newly quarried stone for the parapets.

"This was a major infrastructure development that required a partnership between our working services, design teams and the contractors, in order to overcome the challenges of building such a structure at this location," comments Councillor Alan Turner, chair of the Aberdeenshire Council Infrastructure Services Committee.

The remote site, reached by single-track roads, imposed strict limits on deliveries, storage and onsite fabrication.

Too large to be transported as one piece, the bridge was delivered in two sections and then precisely aligned and welded together to create the finished span. The work required careful control of geometry and workmanship to maintain the structural integrity and clean appearance of the bespoke box girders.

▼ The bridge was delivered in two sections then aligned and welded together



BEN ADDY

The right ingredient

Originally built in 1946, a former factory in central Dublin has undergone its second redevelopment and is now a 21st-century low-carbon commercial workspace



Commendation: The Bakery Building, Dublin
Architect: AHMM
Structural engineer: CORA
Steelwork contractors: Steel & Roofing Systems and ASD Westok
Main contractor: PJ Hegarty & Sons
Client: Google Ireland Ltd

Originally the main factory for Boland's Bakery and then more recently an office block, the latest reinvention of this Dublin structure has seen main contractor PJ Hegarty & Sons add two new office floors, construct mezzanine levels within the ground and first floor levels, and create an additional bay around the atrium.

All in all, the redevelopment provides the Bakery Building with more than 7,500m² of additional office floor space, within a new eight-storey building.

"We had the original drawings from the 1940s and so were able to ascertain where and if there was any capacity for additional loads," says CORA director John Casey.

"As well as reusing the existing foundations we additionally transferred the new loads from existing columns to a series of new mini piles via a welded corbel, flat jacks and steel transfer beams."

Produced by the BCSA and Steel for Life in association with *Construction Management*



MATTHEW NICHOL

New home for the Toffees

Replacing its historic Goodison Park, Everton FC's 52,769-seat Hill Dickinson Stadium is the newest ground in the English Premier League

Sat on Liverpool's River Mersey waterfront, Everton's new stadium has reinvigorated a semi-derelict site less than two miles north of the famous Royal Liver Building, while also acting as a catalyst for further regeneration of the area.

The fully accessible ground has been designed with a "Football First" approach that includes having the seats as close to the pitch as current regulations permit, in order to enhance the fan experience.

To this end, the stadium's design incorporates four interlinked rectangular stands (the ground's four corners are infilled with further seats), which are topped by a continuous cantilevering roof.

The sweeping, low-profile barrel roof, which responds to the industrial character of the surrounding maritime buildings, is said to define the stadium.

Structural steelwork made this geometry possible, creating long, column-free spans over the seating, while maintaining a slender roof profile. Glazed openings at the north and south ends reinforce the roof's strong east-west orientation and provide views towards the city and river.

▲ Structural steelwork made the geometry of the barrel roof possible

Award: Hill Dickinson Stadium, Liverpool
Architect: BDP Pattern
Structural engineer: Buro Happold
Steelwork contractor: Severfield
Main contractor: Laing O'Rourke
Client: Everton FC 'The People's Project'

Built over an historic dock, which was infilled with sand from the adjacent River Mersey, the striking low-profile, barrel form of the roof encloses a stadium with unusually high sustainability credentials. The steel has been very carefully designed and detailed, and its installation painstakingly planned to maximise efficient use of temporary works. A truly first-class stadium
SSDA judges

A series of steel trusses, which cantilever by up to 50m, form the roof above the east and west stands. The roofs above the north and south stands are formed by parallel east-west trusses spanning up to 175m.

Together, these truss elements create a coherent structural response to the barrel-shaped enclosure, providing the strength and flexibility required to realise its complex geometry.

The efficient truss depths and high-strength S460 steel reduced the roof's dead load, while maintaining the required structural performance. Detailed analysis of loading, pre-camber and deflection allowed the steelwork to remain slender despite the substantial spans.

Efficiency was refined through design development, contractor engagement and detailed assessment of loading requirements. The completed roof structure weighs 130kg/m², including purlins and cladding rails measured across its plan area. Between RIBA Stages 3 and 4, optimisation removed 900t of steel from the roof design, representing an embodied carbon reduction of 2,200tCO_2e.

The scale and movement of the roof required the fabrication model to account for both its design geometry and its pre-set position during construction. As each grid line had a different predicted deflection, the steel model was effectively developed twice: first at the final design level and again at the pre-set level required for fabrication and erection. This ensured the roof achieved the intended geometry after deflecting under its own weight.

The north and south roof trusses were pre-assembled and erected in sections up to 60m long, with some weighing more than 90t. Complex temporary works and jacking arrangements held each section at its calculated pre-set height before controlled de-jacking allowed the steelwork to move into its permanent position.

The east and west roof structures presented a different erection challenge. Twelve trusses on each side cantilever from the stands, with the barrel form wrapping around the rear of the roof towards the terraces. The cantilevered portions were divided into three pre-assembled lifts, while the curved barrel was erected in smaller sections. Movement was monitored throughout construction, allowing adjustments to maintain the required accuracy.



▼ The north and south roof trusses were pre-assembled and erected in sections up to 60m long

Lightweight solution

The Ribbon commercial scheme has replaced a 1960s building with a modern office block, providing 40% more floor space



Commendation:
The Ribbon, London
Architect: Orms Architects
Structural engineer: Heyne Tillett Steel
Steelwork contractor: Billington Structures Limited
Main contractor: Wates Construction
Client: CBRE

Commenting on The Ribbon development, Oli Cowan, Orms Architects' project associate, says: "Given the prominent London location on Oxford Street, a steel frame was selected for this project to maximise construction efficiency. As a lighter weight structural option, it required fewer foundations and piling."

Above ground, the Ribbon's steel frame creates open-plan offices with 12m-long internal spans. This is said to minimise internal obstructions and provide flexible floorplates capable of accommodating different tenants and future changes.

For most of the building, the steel frame has a regimented design, with the exception of the four uppermost floors where set-backs form terraces along the Oxford Street and Wells Street elevations.

Throughout the building, the structural steelwork is exposed, creating a modern industrial-looking interior. Cellular beams accommodate building services within the structural depth, while selected pipework is embedded within internal columns to maintain uncluttered surfaces.

Produced by the BCSA and Steel for Life in association with *Construction Management*



TIMOTHY SOAR

Commercial success in Mayfair

A hybrid solution, incorporating a steel frame supporting cross-laminated timber flooring, has been successfully used for a prestigious office scheme

Located in the heart of London's Mayfair, 38 Berkeley Square is an 11-storey steel-framed commercial development providing more than 7,890m² of office accommodation and approximately 650m² of communal terraces.

The steel superstructure supports an innovative flooring solution of exposed cross-laminated timber (CLT) floor panels, a lightweight hybrid solution that offered up a number of benefits, particularly below ground.

By limiting the loads transferred to the supporting foundations, a raft solution was installed instead of traditional deep piles. This method halved the volume of concrete required below ground, reduced the construction programme and minimised the potential effect of the works on neighbouring heritage assets.

The main steel frame of the project provides the strength, spanning capability and adaptability required to create generous floorplates, while responding to the restricted planning envelope and the demands of the architectural and servicing strategies.

Steel's high strength-to-weight ratio made it possible to achieve the required spans within the restricted structural zone. Its adaptability also allowed service openings,

▲ The steel-framed commercial development spans 11 storeys

connections, façade supports and interfaces with the floor panels to be accurately coordinated before being manufactured.

Bespoke connections were developed between the steel beams and CLT panels to provide the required structural performance, while accommodating the different characteristics of the two materials. At critical interfaces, the steelwork was over-boarded to limit heat transfer into the timber and maintain the required compartmentation between floors.

"As the CLT panels remain exposed within the completed scheme, fire performance was a major consideration," says

Find out more about the SSDAs and be the first to know when entries open for 2027

Elliott Wood director James Souter. "Demonstrating fire compliance for an exposed CLT and steel structure, at a time when regulations had become much more stringent and industry confidence around tall mass timber buildings was low was a challenge."

Detailed analytical work demonstrated the performance of the structure, including the behaviour of the steel–timber interfaces and the ability of the exposed timber to self-extinguish. This provided a route to regulatory approval without costly full-scale physical testing and allowed the original construction programme to be maintained.

As well as supporting the CLT floor panels, the steel frame performs other demanding structural roles. At the upper levels, the building steps back to create terraces, supported by a number of transfer structures.

The erection of the steel frame was carefully phased as the site had very little ground-level storage space for materials.

Completed areas of each floor provided temporary lay-down areas as construction progressed, while just-in-time deliveries limited the amount of material held on site. Early coordination ensured the steel components arrived ready for installation, which was particularly important within the constrained central London site.

Highlighting the development's sustainability credentials, it has achieved BREEAM Outstanding and LEED Gold, together with a NABERS UK Design for Performance target rating of 4.5 stars. Approximately 99% of the structural steel was sourced from mills certified to BES 6001, while 68% was manufactured in the UK and a further 30% in mainland Europe.

Work undertaken to establish the compliant hybrid structural solution has also contributed to the *Commercial Timber Guidebook*. Funded by Built by Nature, the initiative supports wider understanding of hybrid commercial construction and engagement with the insurance industry.

This was an exemplary project using a hybrid steel and CLT frame, setting a benchmark for future low-carbon construction. The judges praised the team's collaboration and industry leadership, engaging Building Control, the London Fire Brigade and insurers, helping to shape the Commercial Timber Guidebook. Its success was driven by both a forward-thinking client and a highly-committed design team
SSDA judges



▼Approximately 99% of the structural steel was sourced from mills certified to BES 6001

Award: 38 Berkeley Square, London
Architect: Piercy & Co
Structural engineer: Elliott Wood
Main contractor: Mace Group Limited
Client: Berkeley Estate Asset Management

The road to Kyiv

The restored Vyshhorod Bridge re-establishes a vital route into the Ukrainian capital, replacing a temporary crossing that could not carry heavy goods vehicles



Commendation: Vyshhorod Bridge, Kyiv, Ukraine
Structural engineer: Ukrainian State Road Research Institute
Steelwork contractor: Cairnhill Structures Limited
Main contractor: Dogus Insaat UK Limited
Client: Ministry of Regional Development and Construction of Ukraine

The Vyshhorod Bridge is a concrete-framed structure, which was partially demolished in 2022 to obstruct the advance of Russian troops.

For speed of construction, three steel spans have been installed to replace the two original damaged spans.

The steelwork consists of 1.5m-deep plate girders, fabricated in 15.6m sections and joined using bolted splices. The material had to replicate the structural depth of the original concrete deck, while providing an efficient, rapidly erectable replacement.

Helping to get the project off the ground, the UK allocated a £26.3 million loan guarantee via UKEF, enabling the Ukrainian government to secure financing for the project privately from Citibank. The initiative also enabled UK manufacturers to contribute essential materials and expertise, including the steelwork for the core structure, which was fabricated in Scotland by Cairnhill Structures.

Produced by the BCSA and Steel for Life in association with *Construction Management*

Coming up for air

A whale sculpture fabricated from reclaimed steelwork and clad in plastic recovered from the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans has surfaced in London

Merit: The Whale on the Wharf (Skyscraper), London
Artist: StudioKCA
Structural engineer: Thornton Tomasetti
Geotechnical engineer: A-squared Studio
Main contractor: DiveCo Marine Ltd
Client: CWG

Permanently installed within Wood Wharf in London's Docklands, the Whale on the Wharf (Skyscraper) is a 12m-tall public artwork depicting a whale breaching from the water.

The illusion of the marine mammal emerging from the dock is made possible by a submerged structural steel frame.

The sculpture stands in approximately 5m of water, directly above underground railway tunnels and close to Grade I-listed dock walls.

With limited visibility beneath the surface, construction required carefully coordinated marine operations and a detailed sequence for divers, lifting equipment and the installation team.

The underwater foundations were formed using precast manhole rings as cofferdams. Steel plunge columns had to be positioned accurately within them before concrete was poured underwater.

The 4t supporting frame was fabricated almost entirely from reclaimed steel sections, recovered from decommissioned pipelines, cancelled projects, surplus stock and demolished buildings.





Rebuild and retain

The PUMA Flagship Store is the company's largest-ever European shop and demonstrates how careful analysis and onsite steelwork alterations can transform an existing building

Merit: PUMA Flagship Store, London
Architect: Johnson Pinney Architects
Structural engineer: Eckersley O'Callaghan
Main contractor: Goodman Hichens PLC
Steelwork contractor: Malci Construction
Project management: Mett Build
Client: PUMA UK Ltd

Occupying the basement, ground and first floors of a commercial building, the new PUMA store has been inserted into a structure that has four storeys of occupied offices above.

The transformative refurbishment programme included the upgrading of the store's retail frontage with a new 10m-high glazed façade.

The principal structural challenge was replacing the entrance's heavy, fragmented appearance with a slender exposed steel frame, while continuing to support the occupied building. Rather than removing the existing three-storey columns, the design retained, reshaped and strengthened them, reducing waste, temporary works and disruption.

Internally, a large exposed steel staircase and cantilevered mezzanine extension contribute to the flagship store's architectural identity. Steel provided the slender sections, precise finishes and installation flexibility required within the constrained programme and occupied building.

The five SSDA 2026 National Finalists
- 81 Newgate Street, London
- The Bolt of Lightning, Warrington
- First Street, Manchester
- Greycoat Stores, London
- The Jellicoe, London

Accommodating steel

A redundant 1970s office building at a prominent gateway into Newcastle city centre has been converted into a residential development with a distinctive steel-framed identity

Merit: Sandyford House, Newcastle upon Tyne
Architect: GT3 Architects
Structural engineer: JC Consulting and WB Engineers
Main contractor and client: Jomast



The Sandyford House project has extended a retained structure both vertically and in plan, with a new braced steel frame that accommodates a 14-storey residential block with more than 90 apartments.

Changing the design from office to residential loading required a detailed feasibility study, which assessed the capacity of the existing reinforced concrete frame after removal of its heavy cladding.

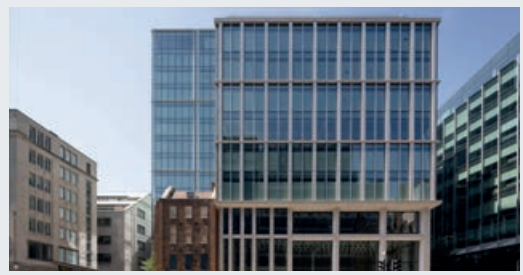
Surveys and structural analysis also established whether the cores could resist the additional lateral forces created by the proposed extensions.

These investigations defined the parameters for a new braced steel frame. The material's relatively low weight allowed additional floors and a plan extension to be introduced without significantly overloading the retained structure.

Retaining and repurposing the existing structure saved more than 1,375tCO_2e compared with a new-build alternative.

In the City

Stonecutter is a London 13-storey steel-framed commercial development that has delivered substantial embodied carbon reductions via careful material specification and procurement.



Merit: Stonecutter, London
Architect: TP Bennett
Structural engineer: Thornton Tomasetti
Steelwork contractor: William Hare Limited
Main contractor: Mace Group Limited
Client: Ivanhoé Cambridge & Pimco Real Estate and CO-RE

Work on the Stonecutter project began with the demolition of the site's previous eight-storey concrete-framed office block.

Having removed what was above ground, much of the substructure was retained in order to drive the sustainability credentials of the scheme.

"We reused most of the existing piled foundations to support a new steel-framed structure," explains Thornton Tomasetti director Eddie Jump. "Steelwork also allowed the design to minimise the number of internal columns, with only three in this building, compared to seven in the previous scheme."

Enhancing the sustainability of the project, much of the steelwork was sourced from Electric Arc Furnace (EAF) production facilities.

Over rail

Repurposed steelwork has helped create the distinctive architectural form of a 53m-long, triple-span railway bridge in Wokingham

Merit: Tan House Footbridge, Berkshire
Designer: Format Engineers Ltd
Structural engineer: Format Engineers Ltd and WSP
Main contractor: Balfour Beatty
Client: Network Rail

Completed in November 2024, the Tan House Footbridge replaces two obsolete pedestrian bridges and connects parkland with a new residential development in Wokingham, Berkshire. The structure comprises a stiffened U-frame deck suspended from fan-shaped columns, with 14m-long stair structures at each end. The arrangement creates a slender and visually porous crossing, allowing users to see the trains below, while maintaining a strong sense of enclosure and safety.

The design uses a high proportion of recovered steel that might otherwise have been treated as waste, reducing demand for newly manufactured material while demonstrating how reclaimed sections can be incorporated into permanent railway infrastructure.

"By using and adapting to available stock of repurposed steel tubes, the scheme significantly reduced upfront embodied carbon," says Format Engineers associate Camille Chevrier.



What you will learn in this CPD

- Why selecting the right adhesive for different tiles, substrates and environments matters
- How adhesive classifications relate to movement, moisture, temperature and installation demands
- How to specify adhesives for large-format tiles, natural stone, wet areas and challenging substrates



CPD: Specifying tiling adhesives

How do you ensure tile installations will be durable and problem-free, across different substrates, tile types and environments? **Tim Boarer** explains

There is a vast choice in terms of size and type of tile available on the market today. Large formats have become increasingly popular with panels over 3m available. In addition, the choice of substrate for tiled installation has grown and a number of proprietary materials and systems exist, complicating the choice of adhesive to enable it to bond correctly with both substrate and tile.

This CPD aims to provide guidance to the main contractor on how to choose and apply tile adhesive to ensure that your sub-contractors' tile installations will be durable and problem-free. We concentrate on how to deal with large sizes, different substrates, tile types and environments, explaining which adhesives to specify to avoid issues.

BS 5385 is the British Standard covering the design and installation of ceramic, mosaic, natural stone and terrazzo tiles. It previously had 5 parts, but Part 5 was amalgamated into Part 3 in 2024, leaving four parts covering internal, external and specific conditions for both floor and wall applications.

▲ Correct adhesive selection depends on the tile, substrate and conditions it will face

Types of adhesives

Understanding the main types and sub-classifications of tile adhesive will enable you to specify the right one for the tile, substrate and service conditions. This is especially important for areas exposed to movement, temperature change or moisture.

Cementitious, 'C', are the most commonly used tile adhesives,

Understanding the main types and sub-classifications of tile adhesive will enable you to specify the right one for the tile, substrate and service conditions



suitable for most substrates and tile types. They are available in grey and white (preferred for light-coloured or translucent tiles).

They subdivide into two main classes: C1 adhesives have a tensile adhesion strength ≤ 0.5 N/mm² and ≤ 1 N/mm²; C2 adhesives perform better with a tensile strength of >1 N/mm².

Where present, additional performance characteristics are indicated by letter codes:

- F for fast setting;
- T for reduced slip;
- E for extended open time;
- S1 for deformable adhesives, suitable for minor movement;
- S2 for highly deformable adhesives, ideal for more flexible substrates.

To give some real-world examples from Kerakoll's range, H40 Gel is classified as C2 TE S1. This means that it is an advanced cementitious adhesive with reduced slip ('T'), an extended open time ('E'), and deformable ('S1'). If we look at actual performance levels, its tensile adhesion after 28 days is ≥ 2.5 N/mm² compared to the minimum demands for C2 adhesive of > 1 N/mm². It has vertical slip of ≤ 0.5 mm, an open time of around 16 hours at 23°C and transverse deformation of ≥ 2.5 mm < 5mm.

Kerakoll's H40 Ultimate is classified C2F S2. This means that it is an advanced cementitious adhesive with a fast setting time and is highly deformable. The tensile adhesion is ≥ 2.5 N/mm²; it is ready for foot traffic and grouting after 3 hours at 23°C, and has transverse deformation of ≥ 5 mm.

Shortcomings of cementitious adhesives

Traditional cement-based adhesives have several technical shortfalls making life difficult for tilers and even leading to system failure in extreme cases. Their tendency to shrink means that tilers frequently mix them more stiffly than intended.

▲ Flexible substrates require an S1 adhesive

▼ A large format tile back-buttered to ensure full bedding



As a consequence, the mix thickens quickly in the bucket and a film frequently forms preventing it from thoroughly wetting the tile.

To complicate matters further, the wide choice of different formulations for different applications, and varying performance between adhesives make it hard to specify the correct adhesive.

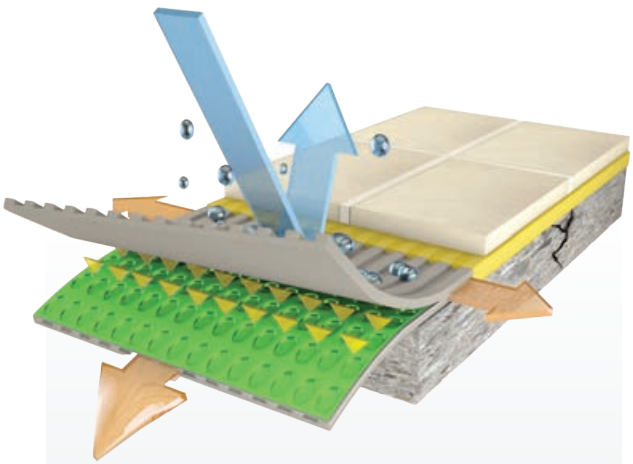
Cementitious adhesives struggle to perform on more challenging substrates where a reactive resin adhesive ('R') should be used.

Reactive resin adhesives

Typically epoxy, polyurethane, or hybrid formulations, these are used in more demanding environments. They are particularly suitable for difficult or non-porous substrates, such as GRP, metal or PVC, where cement-based adhesives may fail to bond effectively.

Reactive resins offer exceptionally high chemical resistance and are ideal for heavy-duty applications, including commercial kitchens, industrial settings, or areas exposed to moisture and aggressive cleaning agents.

There are two classifications: R1 adhesives have a minimum ▶



▲ Aquastop Green waterproof decoupling membrane absorbs movement and stops moisture ingress while allowing water vapour to escape

Testing adhesives

Research among tiling professionals has identified six key parameters for an adhesive, which the formula for the new adhesives was developed to maximise, with extensive testing both in the laboratory and on building sites.

- **Weight support with no shrinkage. Supporting the weight of the tile with a mix that both holds its shape and is fluid, adapting to any thickness.**
- **Full wettability. Guaranteeing full bedding, allowing it to form a monolithic bonded system which is stable over time.**
- **Resistance to thermal stress. Withstanding constant exposure to heat and/or freezing conditions and sudden changes in temperature.**
- **Shear strength. Resisting longitudinal deformation caused by stresses in the substrate.**
- **Resistance in water. Ensuring that the installation will withstand complete submersion in water over time.**
- **Extreme fluidity. Fluid consistency ensuring ease of application for the tile fixer.**

Kerakoll's R&D team's own stringent Shock Absorbing System tests surpass the European and British Standards, simulating real world and not just laboratory conditions. Samples of a floor bonded with adhesive are subjected to 20 mechanical, 50 thermal and 50 freeze-thaw stress cycles, before the tensile and shear strength of the bond are tested.

Overall, there are three things to consider when selecting tile adhesives: the substrate, the type of tile and the environment in which it will be placed

2 N/mm² shear strength after dry curing and immersion in water; R2 adhesives maintain that same strength even after thermal cycling, making them more durable under fluctuating temperatures, and hence used for specialist applications where performance is critical.

Some reactive adhesives, including Kerakoll's H40 Extreme, also include the 'T' designation, indicating reduced slip.

H40 Extreme is a hybrid reactive resin rated R2 T with a shear adhesion of ≥ 7.5 N/mm². This remains at ≥ 5.5 N/mm² after thermal shock, and ≥ 3 N/mm² after immersion in chlorinated water. It has transverse deformation of ≥ 50 mm and can be used in temperatures ranging from -40°C to +90°C.

Gel adhesives

In 2017, the Kerakoll R&D team went back to the drawing board to reinvent their adhesive formulations, researching innovative materials and techniques. The end result was a range of Gel-Adhesives that perform above the parameters of the standard, with very low VOC emissions, a high level of recycled raw material, and non-toxic and non-hazardous ingredients.

The most obvious change from conventional cement- and epoxy resin-based adhesive ranges for the specifier is the fact that there are only four products to cover all possible standard- and rapid-set substrate and material combinations, whether flexible or not. H40 Gel (standard set C2 TE S1), H40 Advanced (rapid set C2 FTE S1), and H40 Ultimate (C2 F S2) all come in powder form and H40 Extreme (R 2T) is a two-part hybrid gel.

Use case considerations

Below we look at where you would specify which type of adhesive.

Stone: the natural properties of stone vary greatly making adhesive selection critical. Choose a white adhesive for use with light coloured marble, natural stone, and grouts. This prevents the adhesive showing through translucent stones. The colour of the white versions of both H40 Gel and H40 Advanced comes from pure white cements, which also provide improved workability and increased coverage. For sensitive stones use a rapid-set ('F') adhesive as this locks in the moisture more quickly, preventing staining and curling. Always specify a reactive resin for extremely sensitive stone.

Large format tiles: the use of extra-large slabs makes it imperative to fully bed the tile, supporting its weight, and to use an 'S1' adhesive offering high resistance to shear stresses. An extended open time ('E') allows the tiler the time to place heavy tiles correctly.

Areas subject to movement: choose an 'S1' adhesive in areas where limited movement is

expected. This includes timber floors, underfloor heating, and areas exposed to vibration from machinery. An 'S2' adhesive should be selected where the movement is greater such as very flexible or compressible substrates. The use of a decoupling membrane is strongly recommended where movement is expected. Decoupling membranes should also be used for cracked and green screeds. Kerakoll's Aquastop Green membrane has been tested for use with H40 Gel-Adhesives. Together they give a resistance to strain parallel to the laying surface of 1.8 N/mm², and a shear adhesion of ≥ 0.8 N/mm².

Wet rooms and swimming pools: it is very important that there is a solid bed of adhesive with no voids in wet areas to ensure that there is no water ingress below the tile. Select an adhesive with good wettability, such as the H40 Gel-Adhesives. You should also choose an appropriate waterproofing membrane for the amount of water exposure. This can be a tanking system, such as Kerakoll's Nanodefense Eco, or a waterproofing membrane, such as the Aquastop Green decoupling membrane mentioned above.

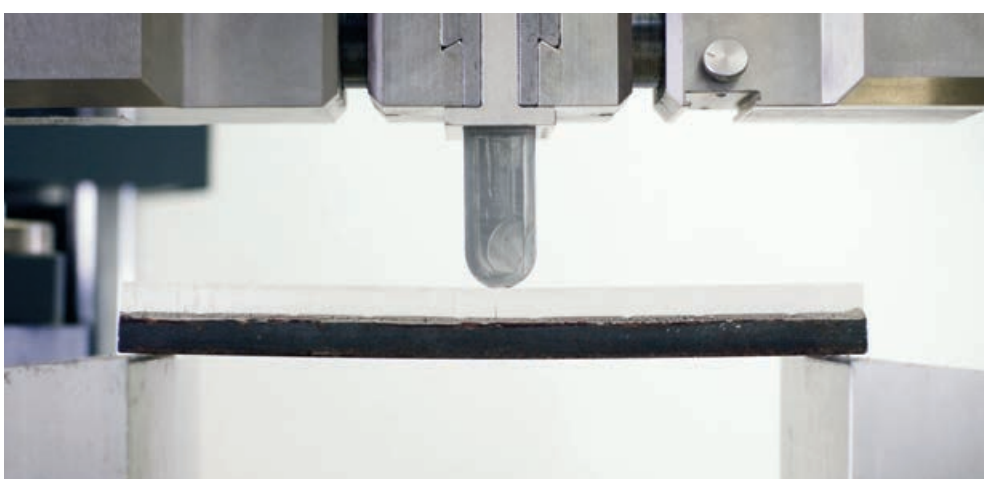
Demanding substrates: particularly demanding substrates such as metal, GRP, and PVC dictate the use of a reactive resin adhesive, often used for raised access floors, or in metal- and PVC-lined pools. This is where Kerakoll Extreme comes into its own with its extreme flexibility of ≥ 50 mm and high shear adhesion of ≥ 7.5 N/mm².

Conclusion

As shown above, there are three things to consider when selecting tile adhesives: the substrate, the type of tile and the environment in which it will be placed. Once these are taken into account, the choice of adhesive becomes much simpler.

If you would like to learn more about the other aspects of the installation including substrate selection and preparation, and common causes of failure, Kerakoll offers a RIBA-approved CPD seminar on tile installation. The Specification team is also available to support you with your project requirements.

Tim Boarer CSSW is head of specification at Kerakoll UK.



▼ Testing the bond to a metal substrate with an R2 adhesive

CPD Questions

1) When selecting a tile adhesive, which three factors should be considered first?
a) The substrate, the type of tile and the environment
b) The colour of the tile, the grout colour and the tile manufacturer
c) The size of the room, the installation cost and the drying time

2) A project requires extra-large porcelain slabs to be installed. Which adhesive characteristic is particularly important to help accommodate the stresses associated with the installation?
a) An S1 deformable adhesive with good bedding and an extended open time
b) A C1 adhesive with a short open time
c) An R1 adhesive specifically designed for chemical resistance

3) A tiled floor is being installed over a demanding, non-porous substrate such as metal, GRP or PVC. Which type of adhesive should generally be specified?
a) A standard C1 cementitious adhesive
b) A reactive resin adhesive (R)
c) An S1 cementitious adhesive only

4) Where greater movement is expected, such as over a very flexible or compressible substrate, which adhesive classification should be considered?
a) C1 b) S1 c) S2

5) Why is achieving a solid, void-free bed of adhesive particularly important in wet rooms and swimming pools?
a) To reduce the amount of grout required
b) To help prevent water ingress beneath the tile
c) To allow the adhesive to dry more quickly

To test yourself on the questions above, go to www.construction management.co.uk/cpd-modules



Paul Gibbons
Decipher

‘Should football clubs use fixed price or construction management for stadium projects?’

This issue’s contract clinic addresses procurement considerations for football stadium developments. **Paul Gibbons** considers whether construction management offers more value than a lump-sum contract

THE QUESTION

We are a consultant working with a football club who is looking to redevelop their stadium. We are concerned that we’ll struggle to get contractors to bid under a fixed-price procurement model, so we are considering construction management instead. However, we’ve heard this approach has caused delays and cost overruns on other stadium projects that have been built this way. How do we make sure that doesn’t happen to us?

THE ANSWER

In the UK over the past 20 years or so, there have been some memorable stadium projects.

Wembley (built 2000-2007) was procured under a design-and-build arrangement, with the contractor (Multiplex) being appointed to build under a fixed-price agreement. Issues with the project, and in particular with their steelwork contractor and other design changes, meant the final bill nearly doubled. The resulting legal bill included an eye-watering £1m for photocopying alone. The lesson learnt from this project was that on a fixed-price contract, the risk is only transferred when the risks have been properly considered and priced at tender stage.

Arsenal’s Emirates Stadium (built 2002-2006) was procured as a traditional design-and-build, fixed-price contract. The project was delivered by Sir Robert McAlpine two weeks ahead of schedule and was pretty much on budget. This project was delivered with clear main contractor accountability, early design and package procurement and with a client that had a very strict budget.

Tottenham Hotspur’s new stadium (built 2015-2019), was originally procured under a fixed-price contract. However, due to economic constraints of the scheme and complexity, it was decided between contractor Mace and the employer (Spurs) that the fixed priced would be converted to a construction management contract. The employer negotiated up to 100 contracts itself rather than allowing the contractor to choose. In addition, once the employer had chosen the direct appointment, it turned the delivery model into construction management. The project eventually overran by 12 months, with the outturn cost being more than double of the original scheme.

> **Construction management doesn’t fail because packages are hard to manage; it fails when the packages are not managed correctly**
> **Paul Gibbons, Decipher**

How to pick a winning contract?

Achieving successful completion of a football stadium is not simple. Historically, when a stadium project has gone wrong, it is rarely because of the model itself. It is often the case that the client took on the delivery risk without taking on delivery capability. The construction manager effectively becomes the developer. If nobody in that position is experienced enough to hold the programme together, then gaps will show, and it is inevitable that delays and additional costs will be experienced.

Construction management may be a suitable procurement model, so long as some key principles are considered. Construction management doesn’t fail because packages are hard to manage; it fails when the packages are not managed correctly. To ensure good construction management, the following controls should be built in.

Appoint a contractor with genuine construction management experience. Obtain references of similar projects completed, don’t just obtain general commercial information.

The client should build a team that consists of an experienced employer’s agent or in-house project director. These appointments should be done

CONTRACT CLINIC

Question for contract clinic? Email construction-management@atompublishing.co.uk



MANCHESTER UNITED FC, FOSTER + PARTNERS

▲ What procurement route will the planned Manchester United stadium opt for?

before the construction manager provides oversight of cost reporting, package strategy and programme. The point here being not to take the construction manager's word on how the job is going.

Ensure one person is in charge of decision-making. This helps to define a single approval chain for contract documents, design sign-off and instructions to trade contractors. In turn, this will ensure that questions are being asked where the employer and design team haven't agreed between themselves.

Sequence packages to the design not programme pressures. It is good practice to resist letting a trade package early just to show progress. A trade package let against an unresolved design is the single most common source of variations and disputes.

Ensure monthly cost reporting with a "live" contingency position, rather than having a single project-wide number that hides where the pressures are occurring. It is good practice to see committed costs, anticipated final cost, remaining contingency, as-built progress and planned works to complete for each trade package.

Write a formal change control process into the construction management agreement. Every variation should be priced and approved before work proceeds.

Construction management is well suited to a stadium development as it enables specialist packages to be tendered competitively. It keeps design flexible with the programme and it avoids paying a main contractor's premium for risk which it would otherwise pass straight back to the employer.

The projects that struggle, are the ones where the employer adopts a model without adopting any governance that has to come with it. Get the team, authority, structure and reporting right, before the appointment of trade contractors and construction management becomes a route to a better value stadium.

Maybe the team looking to build the next new stadium in Manchester will consider using construction management – though they've already hit sticking points just finding land on which to place it.

Paul Gibbons is founder and CEO of Decipher.

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A Day of EDI conference set to spark meaningful change

Virtual event will take place on 18 November

CIOB is to host a day-long online conference exploring how the built environment can become more inclusive, accessible and welcoming.

A Day of EDI with CIOB, taking place on 18 November, will bring together industry leaders, strategists, authors and practitioners to examine how organisations can move beyond EDI policies and embed meaningful change in their workplaces.

CIOB chief executive Victoria Hills will open the event, which will include sessions on the business case for EDI, tackling skills shortages and under-representation and improving employee retention.

The programme will also feature a debate asking whether it is responsible to encourage more women into the built environment, an update on the B.E. Inclusive memorandum of understanding and a panel examining how inclusion differs across cultural and working environments.

The final session, Built for Everyone, will focus on practical actions employers can take to embed EDI across different working environments, including site-based roles, offices and hybrid teams.

The event is free to CIOB members, non-members and students and will run from 8.30am to 4.45pm.

The event will feature sessions on the business case for EDI, tackling skills shortages and improving employee retention

Awards celebrate Scotland's construction talent

Individuals, teams and projects were recognised

The outstanding achievements of Scotland's construction professionals have been celebrated at the annual CIOB Scotland Awards.

Held at the DoubleTree by Hilton in central Glasgow on 9 October, the awards brought together construction professionals from across Scotland to recognise individuals, teams and projects making a significant contribution to the industry.

David McMillan of Allied Surveyors was named Graduate of the Year, while Kevin Urquhart of Barratt/SAMH took home the Extra Mile Award. Urquhart used his extensive experience in the construction sector to represent the industry in the development and delivery of an important suicide prevention training initiative.

Alison Hill of SP Energy Networks was recognised as Rising Star, after progressing from trainee site manager to site manager in just six months.

The Team of the Year award went to the Ardgowan Distillery team from Muir Group.

Meanwhile, Andy Chan received the Sustainability Award for his University of St Andrews Project.

Winners were selected in recognition of their contribution to the industry, with each category highlighting a different aspect of excellence within the sector. The awards also provided an opportunity to recognise the highly commended entrants.

▼ All the winners on the night at the CIOB Scotland Awards 2026



CIOB Maidstone Hub recognises outstanding construction students

Students 'honoured and grateful' following recognition by lecturers and CIOB

Three construction students have been recognised for their achievements at the CIOB Maidstone Hub Outstanding Student Awards.

The awards celebrate students demonstrating commitment and potential as they begin their careers in the built environment.

Nassim Rakik, from London and South East Colleges, received an award after completing his HND in Quantity Surveying. Rakik is now looking to build practical experience in the sector while completing a top-up year to further his studies.

"I feel very honoured and grateful to have received the CIOB Maidstone Hub Outstanding Student Award," he said. "It means a lot to be recognised by both my lecturers and the CIOB, and it has definitely given me extra motivation to continue developing my knowledge and career in the construction industry."

Two students from MidKent College were also recognised.

Sam Hearn, an apprentice Quantity Surveying Technician with VVB Engineering, said: "I am incredibly grateful to earn this award and am honoured my hard work is recognised by CIOB and my peers."

Riley Evans, an apprentice Quantity Surveyor with Morgan Sindall Construction, said the award provided meaningful recognition of his commitment to the industry.

"Receiving the CIOB Outstanding Student Award is a meaningful recognition of my hard work and commitment to the industry," he said. "It strengthens the foundations for my career and reflects my ambition within the built environment."



▲ Students Riley Evans, Sam Hearn and Nassim Rakik

The awards highlight the contribution of colleges, employers and professional bodies in supporting the next generation of construction professionals as they move from education into the industry.

Welcome new CBCs

Congratulations to these companies

- **Roof Construction**
- **Thames and Newcastle (Consultancy)**
- **2035 Assessments**
- **H Mealign & Sons**
- **Pro-Serve Consulting**
- **Operational Construction Management**

Non-traditional opportunities in the spotlight

CIOB Tomorrow's Leaders to host careers event

A CIOB Tomorrow's Leaders event in Suffolk will highlight the breadth of careers available across construction and the built environment, with a particular focus on non-traditional roles and career pathways.

Building Futures: Careers in Construction takes place at West Suffolk College's Extended Reality Lab in Bury St Edmunds on 3 November. The free event, sponsored by Pentaco and Bowmer and Kirkland, will feature talks from industry professionals, employer networking and careers advice.

Speakers include John McLellan, offshore construction manager at renewable energy specialist Cadeler; Conor Nolan, director of digital surveying company Spacion; and Siu Mun Li, director of Constructing Siu-lutions and a former Most Influential Woman in Construction.

McLellan began his career as an apprentice and has worked on projects across the UK and internationally. Nolan's career demonstrates the growing role of digital technology in construction, with Spacion specialising in scan-to-BIM surveys, point-cloud data and digital twins.

Li has more than two decades' experience in construction engineering and has worked on major projects including HS1, the Stratford Olympic Park bridges and Crossrail. She now runs a consultancy specialising in temporary works, preconstruction and buildability.

Representatives from Pentaco's Young Persons Board will also share their experiences, while employers including Pentaco, Vertas Group, Bowmer and Kirkland, Morgan Sindall Infrastructure, Lovell Partnerships and Barnes Construction will be available to discuss career opportunities.

The event is being organised by the CIOB Cambridge, Chelmsford, Ipswich and Norwich Hubs and takes place from 5pm to 7.30pm.

Construction manager wins £10,000 CIOB award for fire safety simulation

Laurent Bolah MCIOB spotted a gap between theory and real-world situations

A construction manager who left school without GCSEs has won the CIOB Paul Dockerill Award and will use the £10,000 prize to develop an interactive 3D simulation aimed at improving understanding of fire and building safety.

Freelance chartered construction manager Laurent Bolah MCIOB will create a 3D/360° scenario-based learning tool based on a residential environment. Users will explore homes and communal areas, identify potential risks and decide what action should be taken.

The simulation will examine how issues including fire doors, escape routes, electrical risks, maintenance and building management interact, rather than simply asking users to identify individual hazards.

"I want somebody to finish the experience and look at their own home and residential buildings differently," said Bolah. "For residents, the aim is to make potentially complex fire and building safety information understandable and relevant to the places they actually live."

The project will also allow construction students and other learners to apply theoretical knowledge to realistic situations.

Bolah said the idea stemmed from seeing a gap between learning about safety in theory and applying that knowledge in real-world situations. The project will involve residents and specialists in fire and building safety, health and safety, education, psychology, technology and simulation design.

The prototype is due to be completed by August 2027, with Bolah intending to make the simulation available online.

Bolah, who became a chartered CIOB member in March, followed a similar educational path to the late Paul Dockerill, leaving school without GCSEs before building his career.

CIOB chief executive Victoria Hills said the project demonstrated the "innovative thinking" the award was established to support, adding that it could make complex building safety issues more accessible to residents.

The Paul Dockerill Award is open to applicants across the UK and provides grants of up to £10,000 for projects focused on innovation, resident engagement and fire safety.

The project demonstrated the 'innovative thinking' the award was established to support



▼ Laurent Bolah MCIOB became a chartered CIOB member in March



CIOB NI vice-chair develops quality software

Duane McCreadie FCIOB partnered with Myth Digital to create the platform

CIOB Northern Ireland Hub vice-chair Duane McCreadie FCIOB has developed an AI-powered platform designed to help construction teams improve quality and reduce defects.

McCreadie, construction director at Sacyr UK & Ireland, has spent 18 months developing QualiT with technology partner Myth Digital. The platform is designed to combine AI with human expertise to help teams prevent errors, reduce rework and capture lessons learned throughout the construction lifecycle.

The software has been tested on two major construction projects, with data indicating positive results.

McCreadie, who has worked on major Belfast projects including Grand Central Station and Ulster University's Belfast campus, said the platform was developed to give construction teams easy access to the information they need to deliver projects to a consistently high standard.

QualiT also enables contractors to document project decisions and retain information required to maintain the "golden thread" under the Building Safety Act.

The platform includes step-by-step best-practice guides developed with industry experts, alongside AI functionality intended to help teams plan, build and deliver projects while avoiding repeat errors.

McCreadie will continue in his role at Sacyr alongside developing the technology.

In association with HAZARDCO HEALTH & SAFETY MADE SIMPLE

Safety nailed down

HazardCo offers a guide to setting up H&S on your building site



▲ Keep on top of health and safety through the HazardCo App

Setting up health and safety on a construction site can feel like a massive job, but it doesn't need to be a headache. Whether you're running the project or working as a subby, here's your straightforward guide to keeping the crew safe and your back covered.

Managing your contractors

If you're the main contractor, you need to know your subbies have the skills to work safely before they step foot on site. Talk to them upfront to make sure their H&S covers:

- Hazards, risk controls and emergency plans. Ask: "Can I see your RAMS?" A good subbie has a written risk assessment ready on day one, not a promise to email one over later.
- Worker training and competency. Ask: "Can I see your team's tickets?" That's CSCS cards, plus CPCS or NPORS for anyone on plant.
- Machinery, plant, and hazardous substances. Ask: "What's coming on site and where's the paperwork?" Think LOLER certificates, COSHH sheets and proof the plant's been serviced. No paperwork, no kit on site.

Chasing paperwork for dozens of subbies gets messy fast. Use HazardCo's automated Pre-Qualification tools to sort your contractors before work starts and ditch the paper chase for good.

Setting up your site

Before the first shovel hits the dirt, sort your site fencing, toilets, handwashing facilities and emergency equipment. Then jump into the HazardCo Hub, plug in your project details, set your site hazards and assign your contractors. Your CPP will automatically send out to everyone involved.

Last step: pop your HazardCo Hazard Board (with its site-specific QR code) right at the entrance.

Running the build

Once work is under way, keep safety rolling through the HazardCo App.

- Scan in and out: Get everyone to scan the QR code on the Hazard Board for a quick digital induction and daily check-in.
- Site Reviews: Encourage subbies and operatives to complete site reviews via the HazardCo app
- Plant and Machinery Pre-Start: Operators can use this to complete pre-use safety checks on all plant
- Incident register: Encourage the reporting of all accidents, incidents and near misses through the HazardCo app.

Good health and safety is about keeping your people safe, not drowning in paperwork

You can also log your Toolbox Meetings and quickly put together RAMS and CoSHH assessments if anything unexpected comes up.

Subbies: working on someone else's site

If you're a subby moving between jobs, you're still responsible for your own work area. Create a set of RAMS on the app and report any near-misses on the spot.

We've got your back

Good health and safety is about keeping your people safe, not drowning in paperwork. Your HazardCo membership comes with unlimited support from people who know their stuff.

Start a free trial of HazardCo by scanning this QR code.



Diary dates

Highlights of the CIOB Calendar for the coming months

The URS building at the University of Reading site visit
▶ **3 November, 2.30-4pm**
CIOB Reading Hub, the APM Built Environment Interest Network and Francis Construction are hosting a site tour of the Grade II-listed URS building. Designed by Howell, Killick, Partridge and Amis in the 1970s, the building is due to undergo refurbishment and upgrading, with completion scheduled for 2028. The visit will explore the challenges of retrofit, refurbishment, heritage and sustainability.

Tomorrow's Leaders: Building Futures – Careers in Construction
▶ **3 November, 5pm-7.30pm, XR Extended Reality Lab, West Suffolk College, Bury St Edmunds**
CIOB Cambridge's Eastern Region Tomorrow's Leaders event will explore career routes across the built environment. The industry's young talent will share their career experiences, followed by an interactive Q&A.

Brabazon CPD and site visit
▶ **4 November, 8.30pm-11.30am**
CIOB Bristol is offering a visit to Brabazon, one of the UK's largest mixed-use regeneration projects. The 182-hectare development is bringing forward new residential and office accommodation, retail, amenities, transport connections and the 20,000-capacity Aviva Arena. YTL Developments' planning and development director Seb Loyn and YTL Construction divisional director Ben Yates will discuss the project and its delivery.

Welborne Garden Village site visit
▶ **10 November, 2.30pm-4.30pm**
CIOB members can visit Welborne Garden Village, a major new community being developed north of Fareham, Hampshire. The visit, led by build director Stewart Jones and commercial director Paul Self, will cover the masterplan, planning and delivery challenges and future development phases. The development will ultimately provide homes, employment space, schools, community facilities and green infrastructure.

The Docking Station, Chatham site visit
▶ **10 November, 4pm-5.30pm**
This site visit, offered by Baxall, will explore the Docking Station, a new creative industries facility being developed in Chatham. The project includes restoration of the historic Section House, construction of a new Digital Studio and works to listed historic overhead-gantry piers at Chatham Historic Dockyard. The visit is the second of two, with attendees able to see how the project is being delivered across its historic and new-build elements.

A Guide to Carbon Reporting: Data Requests to Credible Disclosure, HighPoint Venue, Thornhill
▶ **16 November, 6pm-8.30pm**
CIOB and IOSH are joining forces for a practical session on carbon reporting and net zero planning. The event will look at why construction businesses are increasingly being asked for emissions data, key reporting frameworks and standards, common mistakes, and how to turn carbon data into meaningful reduction plans. A construction case study will demonstrate how Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions can be measured and used to develop a net zero roadmap.

Laing O'Rourke Centre of Excellence for Modern Construction site visit
▶ **2 December, 9am-12pm, Explore Industrial Park, Worksop**
CIOB's West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire Hub Committees are organising a visit to Laing O'Rourke's Centre of Excellence for Modern Construction. The visit will provide an insight into offsite manufacturing, modern methods of construction, digital engineering and design for manufacture and assembly, and their role in changing how construction projects are designed and delivered.

Amberley & Harrogate Street site visit, Sunderland
▶ **2 December, 2pm-3.30pm**
CIOB North East, in partnership with Northumbria University, is continuing its 'Constructing the North East' programme with a visit to Esh's £23m Amberley & Harrogate development. The scheme comprises 96 affordable homes, and visitors will see different stages of construction. The visit is aimed at students and anyone interested in learning more about construction careers.

For a full list of events and to register visit www.ciob.org/events.



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