

# IBP NATIONAL JOURNALISM AWARDS 2009

**THE RESULTS IN FULL** The specialist categories seem to have suffered a little this year from the increase in the News, Features and Business generic category entries, while several of the judging panels expressed the hope that the architecture magazines would give the Awards their support next year – see cover story. The Judges agreed that the overall level of entries was high and the consistent standard of journalism throughout the categories brought back “good old fashioned reporting.” Mira Bar Hillel came in for special praise for her vigilant and valiant goading of the establishment and the secretive, baleful ‘Big Brother’ approach of the Olympic Delivery Authority. The judges also expressed their disappointment at the low intake for the Construction category, bearing in mind the effects of the credit crunch, and encouraged young journalists, who come in for high praise in their category, to look at this sector next year with the likelihood of an untried Conservative government set to cut major construction projects.

## ARCHITECTURE WRITER OF THE YEAR

The judges were impressed with the quality of entries in this category which this year was expanded to take in both the architectural critic and journalist entries. “The architectural writer category showed that a combination of verve, rigour and application still has a place in the sector, and that the reader in search of informed commentary remains well-served,” they commented. Although a good standard of writing and evident knowledge was shown the judges said there was “a paucity of entries,” and also a sense that journalists in this category “may be pressed for time more than ever.”

Shane O’Toole of The Sunday Times offers the reader a mastery of concise presentation of projects and the socio-economic climate in which they sit, often throwing in a polemical point for good measure.” His submissions included a “beautifully written” article on a new Dublin school, the Eurocampus designed by AZ Architects, along with “a tub-thumping plea” for more projects of such calibre, and at such value for money. The judges thought his submissions admirably demonstrated an ability to engage with the newspaper readership in a warm, mature manner.

Also short-listed was Will Hunter of Building Design Magazine who showed an “exuberance and an enthusiasm to grapple with projects and issues through his extensive submissions,” said the judges. His articles which included a critical look at a new social housing project in Canning Town, convinced judges he was a journalist who did his research, and combined it with an engaging, accessible smile.

In nominating Dan Stewart of Building Magazine the judges praised his articles, and said his outstanding article was a piece from Israel about Frank Gehry’s controversial “Museum of Tolerance” scheme in Jerusalem which they said was a “gripping” and “brave piece of reportage.” The judges were impressed with Dan’s ability to “spot a news angle and construct an edgy architectural feature.” His other pieces included a critique on the age of the Icon building and a look at a new residential project in Chelsea, amidst the flack around the Chelsea Barracks proposals

**NOMINATIONS:** Shane O’Toole, The Sunday Times - Winner  
Will Hunter, BD Magazine  
Dan Stewart, Building

## CONSTRUCTION JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

While the number of entries for the Construction Journalist of the Year award fell this year, which disappointed the judges, especially as there were a number of major construction stories over the last twelve months, nevertheless they felt all entries received were of a high standard. The judges also commented that the category is now central to the infra-structure debate that will surely ‘kick-in’ if the Conservatives come to power and that young journalists should consider entering this category next year.

Thomas Lane of Building magazine put forward well written articles and showed a great understanding of the construction industry. “Lane has an ability to convey technical matters in an understandable manner,” the judges said.

Stephen Kennett of Building magazine was short listed by the judges for his ability to write a “new” factual article on concrete piling Stone which showed “real” skill and understanding.

New Civil Engineer’s Jessica Rowson was nominated by the judges who were impressed with her topical submissions. They admired her use of graphics and pictures to support her articles and her ability to dig out a completely technical story.

**NOMINATIONS:** Thomas Lane, Building – Winner  
Stephen Kennett, Building – Highly Commended  
Jessica Rowson, New Civil Engineer

## NEWS REPORTER OF THE YEAR

The judges found all entries this year worthy candidates and were impressed with the very consistent standard. “It was back to good old fashioned reporting on the consequences of the credit crunch this year,” said the judges. A good crop of stories, that some desperately didn’t want published, were discovered as a consequence of this reporting, to which one judge commented, “Long may that continue.”

The joint submissions of Deirdre Hipwell and David Doyle of Property Week provided a great example of good, old fashioned reporting on fraudulent doings, the long arm of the law, and a wealth of fascinating supporting detail “which produced a thriller” the judges remarked.

The Evening Standards’ Mira Bar Hillel’s, major international exposé on the Chelsea Barracks demonstrated that we should remain uncomfortable about the ongoing, undemocratic power of the establishment. “Mira understands the need to be constantly vigilant when it comes to the establishment and that was why the judges also greatly enjoyed her valiant goading of the secretive, baleful ‘Big Brother’ approach of the Olympic Delivery Authority, over the Olympic Village,” one judge concluded.

Will Hurst, Building Design provided a refreshing mix of articles about personalities, business issues and architectural news, at the highest level. The judges said Hurst provided very entertaining reads “in the best traditions of Building Design’s lively style.”

**NOMINATIONS:** Hipwell/Doyle, Property Week – Winners  
Mira Bar Hillel, Evening Standard – Highly Commended  
Will Hurst, Building Design – Commended

## FEATURE WRITER OF THE YEAR

The Feature Writer of the Year category saw its number of entries increase in 2009 which pleased the judges. They said, “the final decision was made more difficult this year as the quality of entries was exceptionally good.” They thought that over all, entries “demonstrated extremely intelligent coverage of some shocking subjects,” which should have seen a lot more coverage in the national press.

Claer Barrett of Investors Chronicle produced an array of highly topical subjects, and her style demonstrated a passion for the subject - she “gets quickly to the point and fully covers all angles,” the judges enthused. Also nominated by the judges was Elaine Knutt of Construction Manager. She impressed the judges with her writing style, but also with her ability to take what at first appears to be a mundane subject and turn it into a piece that is very interesting, with a lot of information. Sarah Richardson of Building submitted consistently well written articles and her coverage of topics was astounding,” with “first class content and style.”

**NOMINATIONS:** Claer Barrett, Investors Chronicle – Winner  
Sarah Richardson, Building – Highly Commended  
Elaine Knutt, Construction Manager

## BUSINESS/FINANCIAL WRITER OF THE YEAR

A strong feed of entries from a wide variety of publications including nationals and wire services for the Business and Financial Writer of the Year Award pleased the judges. There was a broad range of subjects covered and very lively treatment was given to issues that could have appeared dull. The judges were delighted that the overall standard was so high but said they were hard pressed to place the submissions in winning order. “Even among those not chosen, to be in the top three, there were some excellent and readable individual

articles,” one judge stressed. But the Property Week team produced the final nominations in this category and were all very close to the winner.

Property Week Global’s Lucy Scott impressed the judges. Scott’s readable style and her “ability to understand large international problems and explain them to her readers.” She writes for a global publication and her entries included a range of articles that covered the US, Europe and the Middle East. “Her analysis of the US sub-prime and banking crisis provided an overview of a story that was unfolding daily while her description of the bursting property bubble in Dubai was illustrated with human tales of how it is affecting real people,” the judges said.

Laura Chesters, who the judges praised for her “colourful and well illustrated writing,” included in her entries an analysis of the Westfield shopping centre and whether it passed the “Chesters test” and a colourful piece on the problems facing high street coffee shops. Chesters brightened up what could have been an extremely torpid feature on how tenants can change the terms of leases through parodying the Paul Simon song and presenting the article as “10 ways to leave your landlord,” which allowed it to become readable and well illustrated with examples.

While Deirdre Hipwell submitted three very well researched articles including a highly readable analysis of the Irish banking problem and its inter-relationship with the property market, her piece on the problems facing Song Bird, Canary Wharf’s parent, was well ahead of events and proved highly accurate, spelling out the financial situation in great detail.

**NOMINATIONS:** Lucy Scott, Property Week Global – Winner  
Laura Chesters, Property Week  
Deirdre Hipwell, Property Week

## COMMERCIAL PROPERTY WRITER OF THE YEAR

The number of entries was disappointingly low - and should act as encouragement to other journalists in this sector to enter in the future. However the entries that were received comprised a broad range of media from the trade press to wire agencies and national newspapers. The content submitted included scoops, in-depth interviews and detailed analysis over a wide range of interesting subjects.

Mark Shepherd of Property Week provided a colourful article on the closure of local newspaper offices throughout Britain which included a recollection of his own days at the Gloucester Citizen as well as a story on the US bank rescue programme. The judges were particularly enthused with his piece on the problems facing the valuation profession caused by the financial crisis.

Sinead Cruise of Thomson Reuters was short-listed by the judges who said “they were encouraged to read an entry from a wire journalist. Sinead’s pieces consistently identified the big issues facing the sector and analysed them clearly and in detail,” they commented.

In short listing Property Week’s Richard Heap for his range of articles on an employment dispute, the growing of cannabis in rented properties, and the troubles that rate bills are causing for the UK’s port companies, the judges thought his articles had both story content and made an impact on readers.

**NOMINATIONS:** Mark Shepherd, Property Week – Winner  
Sinead Cruise, Thomson Reuters  
Richard Heap, Property Week

## YOUNG JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

With such a considerable number of young journalists in the industry the judges were disappointed that several publications were not represented, but said the standard of entries was comprehensively high.

Jennifer Rigby, Property Week, was praised for her great scoops and comprehensive coverage, the judges said, “the impact of her articles in a competitive sector is beating more established journalists.” Hardeep Sandher also of Property Week showed a great writing style, evidence of interesting journalism and was seen as a most serious contender for the winner of this category,” they commented. Building magazines’ Olivia Boyd was nominated for her piece on China which the judges thought was “an excellent, thoroughly researched and well written article.”

The judges said that Aditi Shah of Property Week “tackled challenging subjects on the effects of the recession and presented them well.”

**NOMINATIONS:** Jennifer Rigby, Property Week – Winner  
Hardeep Sander, Property Week – Highly Commended  
Olivia Boyd, Building - Commended  
Aditi Shah, Property Week - Commended

## WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

A lack of entries in the Weekly Magazine of the Year category left the judges feeling slightly disillusioned. They felt no entries from the architectural press was a great shame saying, “It forms an essential component of the industry, providing important cultural links between people and buildings, and this noticeable absence narrowed the editorial range of the entries.” Although the judges’ hope there will be a return of architectural entries next year they were more than satisfied with the entries that were received and commented, “It is clear dedication and creativity are still producing great publications.”

The judges were extremely impressed with the Construction News makeover which included a change of size, paper stock and a much lighter, clearer design that radically improved user-friendliness. One judge commented on the revamp, saying, “core content has been preserved and re-empowered while presumably delivering some economic benefit. A great improvement in an industry stalwart,” he added. “There will be much interest in how Construction News progresses over the coming year.”

“The editions submitted by Building consistently demonstrated the qualities it is rightly prized for; great news, quirky features, and increased international coverage,” the judges stressed. Building magazines revamped design continues to make it one of the most attractive publications in the sector.

**NOMINATIONS:** Construction News - Winner  
Building – Highly Commended

## NON WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

The judges were pleased with the standard of the entries in this category, but as with the Weekly Magazine of the Year Award were a little disappointed that some of the major architectural publications were missing.

That said RIBA Journal is in the final line-up for this category for its continued impressive design and content, despite a new publisher, editorial team and a recession. “It is difficult enough to deal with any one of these changes on their own, but to do it in the midst of a recession is quite something,” said the judges. They acknowledged the “difficulties” of editing an institute magazine and felt RIBA Journal was very personal with a highly interesting content and an impressive layout. Property Week Global covered the international market very well, with a wide variety of articles presented in a critical way. One judge stated, “The content reflected that of larger magazines, during a period of economic boom, not an industry where budgets are tight and journalists are not encouraged to pursue a story at any cost.”

Planning in London magazine was nominated into the top three, for the fourth successive year, outright winner in 2007, because the judges believe it provides terrifically good coverage of the market. Although the publication showed a good all round standard there was a feeling it could be further improved by better use of visuals.

**NOMINATIONS:** RIBA Journal – Winner  
Property Week Global – Highly Commended  
Planning in London

## WEBSITE OF THE YEAR AWARD

As continued advances in technology make on-line information sources a valuable partner to the more traditional newspapers and business magazines, the judges of the Website category found all the entries this year had made significant improvements in the delivery of their news content. Over all use of colour, formatting and effective navigation impressed the judges. The nominations in the category were shortlisted, in the final session, on the basis of the delivery of the news content and writing for the web, within the parameters of this new and fast developing media.

Inside Housing combines good writing for the web with a page format making maximum use of screen width. The multi-column layout is compact and site navigation is straightforward, clear and logical. The site appropriately prioritises user involvement by featuring the forum and blogs prominently on the home page. Solid web writing throughout and clear headings and sub-heads enable the user to skim or to discover a wealth of relevant content.

Property Week provides a bright and colourful website that is content and feature-rich. News stories provide good examples of writing for the web with short paragraphs written in a clear, uncluttered style. The use of colour accents and images add interest to the pages. This is an interesting and visually appealing website with many positive features.

World Architecture News is a boldly designed and visually strong website which makes powerful use of colour combinations to attract and create impact. Clean and uncluttered content pages add a sense of calm and the page structure is rational and elegant. Extensive font replacement gives the site a strong visual identity appropriate to its readership.

**NOMINATIONS:** Inside Housing – Winner  
Property Week  
World Architecture News

# THE AWARDS SPONSORS AND JUDGES

## Architecture Writer of the Year

Sponsor: SidellGibsonArchitects

## Clive Branson

Editor, Commercial Property Register

## Michael Day

Partner, Integra Property Services

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