

# Jordan Marshall, Building 'New' Journalist of the Year

## Personal biography

Australian-born Jordan Marshall, who had been working on a daily newspaper in Melbourne, moved to the United Kingdom less than 12 months ago and has been reporting on construction since November 2017. Being new to not only the sector but the country, she has got to grips with reporting on the sector at a time of great uncertainty, with the industry dealing with the fallout from the Grenfell Tower tragedy, Carillion's collapse, the ongoing skills crisis and uncertainty around Brexit.

## Team builder: Flan McNamara talks to Building

<https://www.building.co.uk/interviews/team-builder-flan-mcnamara-talks-to-building/5093318.article>

Having made the move from big-name developer Sellar to start-up company Vanguard Real Estate, Flan McNamara, the man responsible for building the Shard, spoke exclusively to Marshall in his first interview since making the move. Having built up a rapport with McNamara in a brief meeting for another piece, Marshall was able to get previously unknown details about his new venture, career to date and life outside of construction through a more informal approach to the interview. The extensive feature interview also led to a news story which unveiled details of McNamara's new firm's work in both Belfast and Glasgow. The interview and the news write-off combined drove traffic to our website that week and we also had several calls from industry contacts giving us positive feedback that they valued finding out more about McNamara's new venture.

## Authorities express concerns over Commonwealth Games projects

<https://www.building.co.uk/news/authorities-express-concerns-over-commonwealth-games-projects/5094836.article>

Born out of research for an extended feature on the work required in Birmingham for the Commonwealth Games, this story revealed details of two jobs authorities had expressed concern about delivering on time and on budget. Marshall encountered a number of roadblocks in putting together the piece, with the rushed timescale of the Games meaning the involved local authorities and the organising committee had not set up designated press teams to handle inquiries and were, therefore, not responding to requests. However, by looking through council and combined authority committee papers, Marshall found both the aquatic centre and a key rail project had been flagged as high-risk projects. She has since been able to stack up several stories regarding key roles and projects that are part of the Commonwealth Games programme of works. This was one of our top performing news stories online for the month and the number of hits was a bigger achievement given that it ran in August, a traditionally slow month.

## Two firms left in race for prized £200m UCL deal

<https://www.building.co.uk/news/two-firms-left-in-race-for-prized-200m-ucl-deal/5095043.article>

Having broken the story on the initial main contractor shortlist for the job Marshall, who recognised the significance of the scheme as part of the enormous regeneration project at Stratford, continued to follow the project. After speaking to a significant number of sources over a number of months,

Marshall was able to stack up the story when the list was cut down to just two firms. The £200m deal is the first building on the new UCL Campus and is set to play a significant role in the East Bank development. She has also developed a good working relationship with UCL, which is not only developing the four-phase Stratford campus but carrying out extensive works across its wider estate. The story was in the top 10 most viewed for the month and attracted above-average hits for “shortlist” stories of a similar nature.

## **Team builder: Flan McNamara talks to Building**

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For a man who lives in and loves the north of London, and who built the city's tallest tower, McNamara's latest venture entails him looking beyond the capital more than ever before. Last December he left Shard creator Sellar to join start-up developer Vanguard Real Estate, a move that McNamara, who is 60 years old, concedes may look back-to-front to many. "It's probably a bit unusual to do this towards the end of your career rather than at the start, but I am loving the opportunity to work on multiple projects at once across different cities," he says. "It's completely refreshing, which is why I've chosen to do this now."

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The firm has projects under way in Belfast and Glasgow, and is looking at work across Europe and India. While the venture is new, the relationships are not. Jim Osborne, who is also a director at Vanguard, worked with McNamara in Jakarta building the Sheraton hotel for Schal in 1996-97. Osborne's son Connor also works with the company. "I have pictures of us all in Jakarta – my kids grew up with Connor – so it's something quite special," he says. "That is in essence what we are doing. We are keeping the good relationships we already have and building new ones."

The importance of family to McNamara, in both a traditional and a non-traditional sense, is obvious. It is clear as he talks about his wife, Ann, and his three children and three grandchildren, who are only allowed to call him “Flandad”. And it is clear when he talks about the importance of a close-knit team on construction jobs. Straight-talking McNamara values communication and experience, saying they are critical to project success, and that his biggest pet peeve is big egos and glory hogs in the industry.

In his new venture McNamara is taking his relationship-based approach to the UK regions – which he says are “overlooked and undervalued” – and beyond. Vanguard is currently working on the £400m Belfast Waterside project, which is set to deliver 750 homes, a hotel, offices, retail and creative space over the next five years, as well as a 280,000ft<sup>2</sup> office building in Glasgow, which is due to go for planning in the next month. And what next? McNamara says he has never travelled more, with the firm eyeing jobs in Munich, Amsterdam, Vienna, Malta, Copenhagen and as far abroad as India. He says: “We work with local partners, and that’s what it’s all about, building those relationships.”

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“It was very formative for me in terms of how big projects are run, how you manage teams and how you get the best out of people. It was a very well-led and run project,” he says.

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He says having the ability to speak your mind if there is a problem is key to success when running a major project. “It is relatively straightforward. The businesses that have the right culture and reward success are the ones that have good management and communication.” For McNamara, it comes naturally: “It’s very much straightforward for me with my Irish background – we are used to speaking our mind,” he says.

### ***Irvine Sellar and the Shard***

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While admitting that Sellar, a man famed for his unrelenting focus, could at times be difficult, McNamara says the positives of working with him far outweighed any negatives: “He was very focused on it happening when everyone said it wouldn’t, and for that I will be eternally grateful.” McNamara recalls speaking to Sellar daily, as he needed to ensure the project was running how he wanted it to. “He’d ask questions he already knew the answer to, as he just needed to double-check everything.”

On Sellar’s relationship with Renzo Piano – the architect whose appointment came as somewhat of a surprise to the industry as he’d never previously worked in the UK – McNamara sums it up simply: “They were like brothers”. He said their shared passion for the project not only brought them together but is what got the project off the ground.

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“Bernard was taking a step back with an eye on retiring,” he says with a laugh, “something he still hasn’t done. So I transitioned into managing more of the day-to-day aspects of the job.”

McNamara says he loves seeing the building on the skyline when driving around London. He attributes the project’s success largely to the input of Irvine Sellar himself and architect Renzo Piano, as well as to contractor Mace’s commitment to getting it done. The scheme was Mace’s first as main contractor. “Mace’s appointment did surprise some, but they were the only firm who confidently came forward with a price and said ‘we can do this’,” says McNamara. “Gareth Lewis [chief operating officer] was on site full-time and the job had the attention of Steve Pycroft [chief executive] so any hurdle was cleared.”

While keen to share the glory with others, McNamara can’t hide from the achievement of managing the construction of London’s tallest building. “Of course I’m incredibly proud,” he says of the Shard: “It redefined London.”

McNamara’s passion for the industry is obvious: he lives and breathes it. It offers endless opportunities, he says: “Everything is open to you. If what you want to do is run major industry projects then you can do that – you just have to be prepared to work for it. If you do that, the sky is the limit.”

# **Authorities express concerns over Commonwealth Games projects**

## **Aquatics centre and transport hub given high-risk ratings**

Just a week after Wates won the scheme to build the aquatics centre for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, Building can reveal the job is one of two authorities are so worried about being built on time that it has already been given a red risk rating.

The centre, which is being built in Smethwick, and the £15m-£20m redevelopment of Perry Barr railway station, which will service the main stadium and athlete's village, have both given a high risk of busting their deadline or budget.

At a meeting of client Sandwell council's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee last month, the aquatics centre, which has a construction budget of around £50m, was given a risk rating of 12 – meaning it has been categorised as 'red'. Sixteen is the highest risk rating that can be given.

The report said: "If the council does not put in place robust project arrangements for the successful delivery of the aquatic centre to project scope, timescales and cost, then this will result in significant reputational damage to the council."

It said while the project, which is set to be built by Wates, had completed RIBA stage one "an issue around the capital budget allocated for the Aquatic Centre and the assumptions the council has used in preparing the design has come to light".

It said the issue, which it did not identify, was yet to be resolved.

But Sandwell Council leader Steve Eling said he was "not concerned at this stage" about the project.

Eling said: "It is part of a complicated Commonwealth Games project. If we were delivering it on our own it would be a much simpler process.

"The risk rating would be smaller if we had the whole funding. There are still a number of details across the whole Commonwealth Games to be decided.

"It's not something I'm concerned about at this stage. The assurances I'm getting is things are on track.

"The Games are in 2022. They can't be put back a few months so that creates a higher risk than would otherwise be the case."

Eling said he wanted to ensure things were in place by the autumn so construction could begin early next year.

He said: "It is a red risk because it is a major project and it is time sensitive but we are on track and dealing with the things we have got to be dealing with.

"If we get to later in the year and we still haven't got things in place then I'm going to have to be rattling somebody's cage."

Meanwhile, the West Midlands Combined Authority's Transport Delivery Committee has given the redevelopment of Perry Barr station (pictured) an 'amber/red' rating.

Both the athletes' village and Alexander Stadium, which is hosting the athletics, as well as the opening and closing ceremonies, are in Perry Barr.

According to the authority's definition, an 'amber/red' rating means: "Successful delivery of the project/programme is in doubt with major risks or issues apparent in a number of key areas. Urgent action is needed to ensure these are addressed, and whether resolution is feasible."

Work has started on the £15m-£20m project, which is due to complete on 1 May 2022, less than three months before the Commonwealth Games kick off.

Atkins has been appointed to progress with feasibility, option selection and single option development on the project. According to the report, funding for construction is yet to be confirmed.

Birmingham city council is responsible for leading on this aspect of the scheme.

## **Two firms left in race for prized £200m UCL deal**

### **Winner due for first building at new Stratford campus in coming weeks**

The race to land the first building for a new university campus in east London has narrowed to two firms.

Mace and Laing O'Rourke are understood to be the final pair left in the ring for the prized deal for UCL in Stratford.

The pair declined to comment but a UCL spokesperson confirmed the contest had gone down to two firms from the original five with a winner for the £200m deal due to be announced in the coming weeks.

Rival bidders Lendlease, which is working on the International Quarter London business district in Stratford, Sir Robert McAlpine and Bouygues are all believed to be now out of the running.

Called Marshgate I (pictured), the building has been designed by Stanton Williams, a former Stirling Prize winner, and will be a new 35,000m<sup>2</sup> research, innovation and teaching building. Construction is expected to start by next summer.

Marshgate I is part of the first phase of the university's wider UCL East campus project which is being built to ease the pressure on space at its central London site in Bloomsbury.

UCL has also begun the search for a contractor for the first phase's second building, Pool Street West, with shortlisted bidders expected to be notified in the coming weeks.

The university is on the hunt for a design and build contractor to deliver the Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands-project, which will provide a mix of student accommodation and academic space.

UCL East, which is being built close to Zaha Hadid's aquatics centre, is part of the wider Stratford regeneration and neighbours the East Bank cultural and arts project, which has previously been known as Stratford Waterfront and Olympicopolis.

The section of the project being built for Sadler's Wells theatre, the London College of Fashion, the BBC and the V&A museum is being designed by Allies & Morrison, O'Donnell & Tuomey and Arquitecturia. Mace is set to project manage the construction of the arts and culture precinct.

# TEAM BUILDER

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McNamara says he loves seeing the building on the skyline when driving around London. He attributes the project’s success largely to the input of Irvine Sellar himself and architect Renzo Piano, as well as to contractor Mace’s commitment to getting it done. The scheme was Mace’s first as main contractor. “Mace’s appointment did surprise some, but they were the only firm who confidently came forward with a price and said ‘we can do this,’” says McNamara. “Gareth Lewis [chief operating officer] was on site full-time and the job had the attention of Steve Pycroft [chief executive] so any hurdle was cleared.”

While keen to share the glory with others, McNamara can’t hide from the achievement of managing the construction of London’s tallest building. “Of course I’m incredibly proud,” he says of the Shard: “It redefined London.”

McNamara’s passion for the industry is obvious: he lives and breathes it. It offers endless opportunities, he says: “Everything is open to you. If what you want to do is run major industry projects then you can do that - you just have to be prepared to work for it. If you do that, the sky is the limit.”

# Authorities put Commonwealth Games projects on red alert

Aquatics centre and transport hub given high-risk ratings, but council leader says 'things are on track'

By Jordan Marshall

Just a week after Wates won the scheme to build the aquatics centre for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, Building can reveal the job is one of two that authorities are so worried about being built on time that it has already been given a red risk rating.

The centre, which is being built in Smethwick, and the £15m-£20m redevelopment of Perry Barr railway station, which will service the main stadium and athletes' village, have both been given a high risk of busting their deadline or budget.

At a meeting of client Sandwell council's audit and risk assurance committee last month, the aquatics centre, pictured, which has a construction budget of around £50m, was given a risk rating of 12 –



meaning it has been categorised as "red". Sixteen is the highest risk rating that can be given.

The report said: "If the council does not put in place robust project arrangements for the successful delivery of the aquatic centre to project scope, timescales and cost, then this will result in significant reputational damage to the council."

It said while the project had completed RIBA stage one, "an issue around the capital budget allocated

for the aquatics centre and the assumptions the council has used in preparing the design has come to light".

It said the issue, which it did not identify, was yet to be resolved.

But Sandwell council leader Steve Eling said he was "not concerned at this stage" about the project.

He added: "It is part of a complicated Commonwealth Games project. If we were delivering it on our own it would be a much simpler process. The risk rating would be smaller if we had the whole funding. There are still a number of details across the whole Commonwealth Games to be decided.

"It's not something I'm concerned about at this stage. The assurances I'm getting is things are on track."

Eling said that he wanted to ensure arrangements were in place by the

autumn so construction could begin early next year.

He said: "If we get to later in the year and we still haven't got things in place then I'm going to have to be rattling somebody's cage."

Meanwhile, the West Midlands Combined Authority's Transport Delivery Committee has given the redevelopment of Perry Barr station an "amber/red" rating.

According to the authority's definition, an "amber/red" rating means: "Successful delivery of the project/programme is in doubt with major risks or issues apparent in a number of key areas. Urgent action is needed to ensure these are addressed, and whether resolution is feasible."

 For more on preparations for the Games, see P30

## CHP use at risk after energy regulations changes

Changes to the tool used for calculating compliance with energy regulations will encourage electric heating and could spell the end of combined heat and power (CHP) generation solutions on new housing developments, according to industry experts.

The revised version of the Standard Assessment Procedure, called SAP10, has cut the amount of carbon assumed to be produced by electricity generation by nearly half because of the growth in

wind power and other low carbon power sources. It also assumes the CHP technology is less efficient than previously thought due to greater heat losses from district heating pipes.

SAP is used by housebuilders to work out how to comply with Part L of the Building Regulations. Opting for low carbon heat and power makes meeting the targets in Part L easier.

CHP is promoted by many local authorities and the

GLA, which encourages it through the London Plan as a low carbon way of supplying heat and power to housing and other buildings.

James Ford, partner at M&E engineer Hoare Lea, warned the big drop in the electricity carbon factor would mean a move away from CHP. He said: "The greatest impact will be on CHP. It could be pretty significant because as soon as the carbon benefit isn't demonstrated there is no incentive to use it."

## Last Carillion contracts transferred

The last of Carillion's 278 contracts have finally been transferred to new suppliers, according to an update from the Official Receiver.

The trading phase of the liquidation has come to a close almost seven months after the construction giant went under.

The liquidation trading period, which started on 15 January, ensured the continued provision of essential public sector services

across hospitals, schools, roads, rail and other key infrastructure without any service disruption or major incidents, the official receiver added.

As part of the update it was confirmed that another 429 roles had been transferred to new suppliers, taking the total jobs saved to 13,945. Just nine staff were axed this week, down significantly on the 356 people who lost their jobs in the previous week.

## Bouygues UK appoints former Midas boss as new chief exec

Bouygues UK has appointed Rob Bradley as its new chief executive, replacing company veteran Lionel Christolomme.

He takes up the role following the resignation of Christolomme, who is returning to France to pursue other opportunities after 28 years with the French giant, which owns a telecoms arm and the French TF1 TV channel, the most popular in the country.

Christolomme had held the chief executive position since February 2016.

A former managing director at Willmott Dixon, Bradley was in charge of Leadbitter when it was bought by Bouygues in 2012.

He left in February 2016 to join Midas, where he was an executive director, before leaving the regional contractor last September.

# Mace and Laing O'Rourke vie to land UCL East building

London university confirms race to build £200m teaching centre is now down to just two contractors

By Jordan Marshall

The race to land the first building for a new university campus in east London has narrowed to two firms.

Mace and Laing O'Rourke are understood to be the final pair left in the ring for the prized deal for UCL in Stratford.

The pair declined to comment but a UCL spokesperson confirmed the contest had been whittled down to two firms from the original five with a winner for the £200m deal due to be announced in the coming weeks.

Rival bidders Lendlease, which is working on the International Quarter London business district in Stratford, Sir Robert McAlpine and Bouygues are all believed to be now



Marshgate I

out of the running.

Called Marshgate I, the building has been designed by Stanton Williams, a former Stirling prize winner, and will function as a 35,000m<sup>2</sup> research, innovation and teaching centre. Construction is

expected to start by next summer.

Marshgate I is part of the first phase of the university's wider UCL East campus project which is being built to ease the pressure on space at its central London site in Bloomsbury.

UCL has also begun the search for a contractor for the first phase's second building, Pool Street West, with shortlisted bidders expected to be notified in the coming weeks.

The university, which recently named former Ministry of Defence estates boss Francesca Fryer as its director of estates, is on the hunt for a design and build contractor to deliver the Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands project, which will provide a mix of student accommodation and

academic space.

UCL East, which is being built close to Zaha Hadid's aquatics centre, is part of the wider Stratford regeneration, and neighbours the East Bank cultural and arts project.

Mace is set to project manage the construction of the arts and culture precinct, which will be home to the London College of Fashion, the BBC and the V&A museum.

Meanwhile, UCL has also started the search for a contractor to deliver facilities to enable it to relocate its dentistry school. The project, which is being procured as a two-stage design and build contract, will take place across unconnected spaces on the building's ground, first, second, third and fourth floor.

## Government confirms bailout for stalled Carillion hospital job

The government has agreed to provide funding to complete Carillion's stalled Midland Metropolitan Hospital job eight months after the contractor's collapse.

Earlier this month, the board of the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust reversed earlier decisions to finish the job under a private finance model and instead opted for a direct contract with a building contractor, with funds to be provided from central government.

This proposal, which was submitted to both the

Department of Health and Social Care and the Treasury on 2 August, has now been accepted by the government.

Commenting on news the government would foot the bill, trust chief executive Toby Lewis said: "We will continue to engage with the construction market over coming weeks and build towards a formal procurement by November this year. We always said Midland Met would be delivered and the doubters were wrong."

Neither the government nor the NHS trust

confirmed how much public funding would be provided to complete the project that Carillion originally won under a £350m PFI contract in 2015. The firm had been paid £205m of this when it went bust in January.

An unnamed major contractor quoted between £319m and £424m to finish the job, according to a financial assessment by Deloitte on behalf of the trust. The contractor's £319m price tag for the job is based on the job being completed under a straight construction contract.

## Welsh NHS winners named

Four firms have landed spots on an NHS framework in Wales to carry out work across the country.

Bam, Kier, Interserve and Willmott Dixon have been appointed to the NHS Building for Wales national supply chain partner framework. The £224m framework covers jobs valued at £12m and over.

A team including Sir Robert McAlpine and Vinci is reserve bidder.

And the same four firms on the

national framework have been joined by Swansea-based Dawnus on the regional framework which covers jobs worth between £4m and £12m.

This framework covers north Wales, south-east Wales and south-west Wales and is worth £336m.

Both frameworks, which replace the existing Building for Wales frameworks, will run initially for four years, with the option for an extra two years based on performance.

## Canadian consultant buys Peter Brett Associates in UK push

Canadian giant Stantec is buying UK consultant Peter Brett Associates for an undisclosed sum in a push to expand its UK presence.

Stantec has signed a letter of intent to acquire the Reading-based consultant.

The deal, which is expected to close in September, will see Stantec take on more than 700 engineers, planners, scientists and economists from Peter Brett Associates, which has 14

offices across the UK and another three in Europe.

Gord Johnston, Stantec president and chief executive, said: "Regionally, the project landscape is promising with the UK government's policy to build 300,000 new homes per year, a five-year program to invest £4.4bn in new and refurbished schools, a robust university upgrading initiative, and a major national investment program in UK infrastructure."