

# JCT NEWS

THE JCT CONTRACTS UPDATE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONAL

## SHOEMAKERS MUSEUM, STREET, SOMERSET



Shoemakers Museum, Street, Somerset

© Nick Guttridge for Purcell Architecture

In the heart of Street, a new cultural landmark has risen to celebrate 200 years of one of Britain's most recognisable footwear brands. The Shoemakers Museum, commissioned to mark the bicentenary of Clarks, is more than an archive and exhibition space. It is a carefully crafted statement about place, heritage and the enduring relationship between industry and community. The project was built on a JCT Standard Building Contract.

The significance of Clarks to Street and the wider Somerset area cannot be overstated. Founded in 1825, the company transformed what was once a modest rural settlement into a global centre of shoemaking. Generations of local families have

worked in its factories. The brand shaped not only employment practices but also housing, education and social welfare in the town. Parks, schools and community buildings bear testament to a paternalistic but progressive industrial model.

The Shoemakers Museum stands on part of the former factory site, embedding it physically and symbolically within this industrial narrative. As an archive and permanent exhibition, it consolidates a nationally important collection of footwear, design drawings, advertising material and business records. For the client, Alfred Gillett Trust — the independent charity that cares for the Clarks archive, the new building secures appropriate

environmental conditions for preservation while opening up the story of Clarks to a broader public audience.

Architect Purcell's design responds to both context and content. Known for its work with historic buildings, the practice approached the museum as a piece of contemporary architecture that speaks fluently with its industrial surroundings. The building's brick facades are a defining feature, incorporating relief patterns that reference Clark's shoe designs. These subtle imprints — echoes of soles, stitching and lasts — animate the elevations and root the building in the language of making.

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The use of brick is both contextual and symbolic. Somerset has a strong tradition of masonry construction, and the choice of carefully detailed brickwork reflects the precision associated with shoemaking. The building's massing is deliberately robust, recalling the former Victorian factory buildings while avoiding pastiche.

Inside, cross-laminated timber (CLT) forms the primary structural system. The exposed timber surfaces provide warmth and tactility, offering a deliberate counterpoint to the harder, more industrial exterior. CLT was selected for its structural efficiency, speed of construction and carbon-sequestering properties. Its prefabricated nature also aligned with the project's emphasis on craft and precision, echoing the modular logic of footwear production.

A particularly resonant material choice is the use of salvaged Blue Lias stone — a Jurassic limestone native to Somerset. Reclaimed during demolition works on parts of the original factory complex, the stone has been reintroduced into the new building's landscaping and detailing. This circular gesture embeds fragments of the past within the present, creating a tangible continuity across centuries.

Main Contractor Rigg Construction's role extended beyond straightforward delivery. Working under the JCT Standard Building Contract, the contractor collaborated closely with Purcell and specialist subcontractors to ensure the high-quality brickwork and timber installation met the design intent. The contract's clear allocation of responsibilities and well-established risk provisions provided a robust framework for a project that combined new-build elements with heritage sensitivity.

Sustainability was a guiding principle from the outset. The Alfred Gillett Trust and Clarks were keen that the project should reflect the company's Quaker heritage — a tradition associated with stewardship, social responsibility and long-term thinking.

The CLT structure significantly reduces embodied carbon compared with a conventional steel or concrete frame. The reuse of Blue Lias stone minimised waste and transportation impacts while preserving local character. High-performance insulation, airtightness detailing and energy-efficient building services reduce operational energy demand. Natural daylight is carefully controlled to protect sensitive archival materials while limiting reliance on artificial lighting.

Rainwater management and soft landscaping further reinforce the environmental agenda, enhancing biodiversity on what was previously a hardstanding industrial site. In both construction and operation, the museum reflects a holistic approach to sustainability that aligns with Clarks' historic ethos of responsible enterprise.

The permanent exhibition, designed by Nissen Richards Studio, occupies a series of carefully calibrated gallery spaces. Here, iconic shoes are displayed alongside prototypes, tools and advertising



Shoemakers Museum, Street, Somerset © Nick Guttridge for Purcell Architecture

campaigns that chart the brand's global evolution.

The inclusion of ichthyosaur fossils, excavated during demolition of Clark's original Victorian factory, introduces a striking juxtaposition. Visitors encounter footwear born of industrial ingenuity alongside remnants of prehistoric marine life embedded in the same geological strata. This dialogue between natural and industrial archaeology underscores the layered history of the site: from Jurassic seas to Victorian enterprise to contemporary cultural destination.

Interpretation is immersive but restrained, allowing the objects — whether finely crafted leather uppers or fossilised vertebrae — to speak for themselves. The exhibition reinforces the museum's core message: that making, in all its forms, connects people across time.

For a project of this complexity and symbolic weight, the choice of a JCT Standard Building Contract was both pragmatic and appropriate. The form is widely understood across the UK construction industry, offering clarity on roles, risk allocation and procedures. In a scheme involving a heritage-focused architect, a charitable client, specialist materials and archaeological sensitivities, that clarity was invaluable.

The contract supported collaborative working while maintaining defined responsibilities between the client and contractor. It provided mechanisms to manage change, cost control and quality assurance — critical in delivering a building that had to meet archival standards as well as architectural ambition.

Two centuries after Clarks began trading, the Shoemakers Museum stands as a confident addition to Street's built environment. Rooted in local materials, shaped by craft traditions and delivered through a tried-and-tested contractual framework, it secures the brand's legacy for future generations — and reaffirms the enduring bond between industry and place.

## PROJECT DATA:

<b>START ON SITE:</b>	January 2024
<b>COMPLETION:</b>	September 2025
<b>GROSS INTERNAL FLOOR AREA:</b>	2,210m <sup>2</sup>
<b>OVERALL SITE AREA:</b>	91ha
<b>CONTRACT:</b>	JCT Standard Building Contract
<b>CONSTRUCTION COST:</b>	£4.25 million
<b>ARCHITECT:</b>	Purcell
<b>CLIENT:</b>	Alfred Gillett Trust
<b>MAIN CONTRACTOR:</b>	RIGG Construction
<b>EXHIBITION DESIGNER:</b>	Nissen Richards Studio

<b>STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:</b>	Mann Williams
<b>M&amp;E CONSULTANT:</b>	QODA
<b>QUANTITY SURVEYOR:</b>	Currie + Brown
<b>LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT:</b>	Studio Loci
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	MCMS
<b>CDM PRINCIPAL DESIGNER:</b>	Purcell
<b>APPROVED BUILDING INSPECTOR:</b>	LABC
<b>FIT-OUT CONTRACTOR:</b>	Realm
<b>SHOP AND RECEPTION FIT-OUT:</b>	Resolution Interiors
<b>CAD SOFTWARE USED:</b>	Revit

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# WHY PRE-CONSTRUCTION SERVICES AGREEMENTS ARE BECOMING A STRATEGIC TOOL IN DELIVERY

**JAMES RIVERS** — OPERATIONS HEALTH AND SAFETY DIRECTOR, CHURNGOLD CONSTRUCTION



James Rivers

Pre-Construction Services Agreements (PCSA) are no longer a niche procurement route reserved for complex projects; they are increasingly becoming a strategic tool for managing risk, cost and programme certainty in today's construction environment. As development sites become more constrained, regulated and technically demanding, early contractor involvement is often the difference between a buildable scheme and one that struggles to progress.

At its simplest, a PCSA is a formal agreement that appoints a contractor to provide defined pre-construction services ahead of a main works contract. These services typically include buildability advice, cost planning, programme development, logistics strategy, risk identification and technical input into design development.

The key benefit is timing: the contractor's practical expertise is introduced while design decisions are still fluid, rather than after constraints have been locked in.

One of the clearest advantages of a PCSA is risk management. Early contractor involvement allows site-specific challenges such as contaminated land, complex utilities, high groundwater levels or restricted access to be identified and addressed before they impact cost or programme.

Contractors experienced in enabling works and remediation are often best placed to advise on realistic methodologies, sequencing and temporary works strategies that designers may not fully appreciate at concept stage.

A good example can be seen on the University of Bristol campus project, where **Churngold Construction** was engaged under a 12-month PCSA to support the development of an enabling and groundworks strategy for a highly constrained city-centre site. The project faced a combination of technical challenges, including a high water table, contaminated ground, proximity to live railway infrastructure and river frontage constraints.

Through early collaboration with the design team and specialist stakeholders, Churngold's input helped to shape

practical construction methodologies, inform environmental licensing requirements and align programme assumptions with on-the-ground realities. This early-stage involvement ultimately provided the confidence needed to progress into main works with reduced risk and greater certainty.

PCSA also play a growing role in improving cost and programme predictability. Rather than relying on provisional allowances and generic risk pricing, clients benefit from informed cost plans grounded in real site intelligence.

This typically results in fewer late-stage variations, more robust programmes and a smoother transition from planning to construction – an increasingly important consideration in a market where funding approvals and delivery milestones are under intense scrutiny.

That said, PCSAs are not without drawbacks. They require clearly defined scopes, transparent commercial arrangements and a shared understanding of how the PCSA may convert into a main contract. Without this clarity, there is a risk of blurred responsibilities or dissatisfaction if expectations around appointment are not managed from the outset.

Despite these challenges, PCSAs are becoming more prevalent, particularly on brownfield regeneration and complex urban schemes. Increasing regulatory obligations, tighter lending criteria and a growing emphasis on ESG compliance mean that early technical certainty is no longer optional.

Lenders, planners and stakeholders increasingly expect demonstrable evidence that risks have been properly understood and managed before construction begins.

In this context, PCSAs are proving to be less about early commitment and more about informed decision-making, allowing projects to move forward on the basis of evidence, collaboration and buildable solutions rather than assumption.

*This article was first published in Building Magazine on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026*



## JCT Pre-Construction Services Agreement 2024

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# INCREASING KNOWLEDGE AND CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP IN CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

PETER HIBBERD — PAST JCT CHAIR

## A knowledge and skills gap

The UK construction industry has for some time been concerned with shortages in skilled labour. Recent evidence such as the RICS Surveying skills report 2025 shows the problem extends beyond just site operations, which is the primary focus of the Skills policy in England report (2025). A less visible – yet increasingly critical – gap is opening in professional competencies, particularly those in project and contract administration. A gap that will be exacerbated by decisions flowing from Skills England, such as the setting up of 10 technical colleges specialising in construction to train primarily on-site workers to underpin the governments push for growth in construction.

These knowledge and skills gaps have significant consequences that extend beyond staffing challenges. Such gaps mean there is a barrier to efficient procurement processes, inconsistent contract management, and rising numbers of disputes rather than a lessening. The situation will worsen without actions specific to project and contract administration.

## The challenge

The challenge of addressing this is acknowledged within the sector, regular industry commentary highlights the issue clearly. The pace of change in procurement, combined with the introduction of new contract forms and increasing digitalisation has outstripped the ability to make appropriate provision, even before further growth in construction activity. This impacts on education and training providers who need to make changes that include making provision more tailored to the workplace; theory must be seen applied to practical situations. It also impacts on current professional employees who must keep their skills up-to-date. Shifts in procurement structures, and evolving contract suites, such as JCT 2024 all require practitioners to possess a solid grounding not just in contract principles but in the application of those principles in practice. Additionally, there is need to respond to rapid technological change, such as Artificial Intelligence, embrace its immense potential, and consider how it might impact upon contract administration.

## Why the skills gap exists

Several structural pressures contribute to the shortfall:

- A failure to attract sufficient new entrants to professional pathways because, not least, the relatively poor image of construction and the perception of inadequate reward.
- Slowness in making provision for and in acquiring new knowledge and skills to meet the expansion of procurement approaches and associated building contract forms.
- Inadequate awareness among students and early career professionals of the centrality of contract administration to modern project delivery.

## The cost of inaction to address knowledge and skills gaps

A shortage of contract administration capability manifests itself in the following ways:

- Inconsistency in procurement outcomes, especially where teams lack capability in selecting or administering the appropriate contract form.

- Inefficiencies in project delivery due to poorly referenced or inadequate documentation.
- Limited understanding of the different cost control and payment mechanisms.
- Greater risk for clients and contractors where contract terms are misapplied or misunderstood.
- Increased likelihood of disputes arising from misunderstandings of obligations and unclear drafting. The case of *John Sisk & Son Ltd v Capital & Centric (Rose) Ltd* [2025] being instructive.

## Addressing the knowledge and skills gap – solutions

There is no single way of tackling the problem of the knowledge and skills gap; it is a complex issue. In addition to efforts by various public and private sector organisations, an essential requirement in closing the knowledge and skills gap is coordinated action across industry, education, training organisations, and professional bodies. Specific measures to close the gap include:

- Developing clearer educational pathways that more extensively connect theory with actual contract administration practice.
- Broadening awareness and access to structured knowledge bases, making contract administration, and building contracts more intelligible for new and existing professionals.
- Strengthening continuing professional development (CPD) to ensure existing practitioners keep pace with procurement changes, and the impact of technological developments.
- Providing support packages tailored to contract administration to include building contract forms, to help both new entrants and experienced practitioners build competencies.
- Adopting policies that change the perceptions that prospective members have of the UK construction industry.

Various initiatives within the construction industry have been taken to address the knowledge and skills gaps, but one specific and topical example is the updated JCT Contracts Discovery publication (published March 2026). It provides a resource for teachers and students involved in the study of JCT contracts and contract procedures. Following substantial restructuring, and alignment with JCT 2024, the updated publication offers an excellent starting point for:

- Students developing foundational contract literacy.
- Education and training providers seeking authoritative content.
- Practitioners needing a concise refresher on contract administration principles.

## A call to action

The construction industry cannot meet its future productivity, sustainability, and delivery goals without strengthening its professional skills base. Contract administration is not an optional competency – it is central to project success. Doubling the effort in addressing the skills gap is an imperative to ensuring the next generation of professionals enter the industry prepared for modern practice. Both knowledge and relevant competencies are essential.

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## JCT RELEASES UPDATED EDUCATION MODULE FOR 2026



JCT has announced the release of the latest version of its education and learning module, **JCT Contracts Discovery**.

JCT Contracts Discovery is designed for teachers and students involved in the study of JCT contracts and contract procedures in the construction industry.

It can be used by education providers for teaching about JCT contracts either as a stand-alone topic, or as part of a broader study of the construction process and construction contracts.

This latest publication of JCT Contracts Discovery has been substantially revised from the previous 2018 version.

It has been updated to cover the JCT 2024 Edition of Contracts – including the JCT Target Cost Contract – and has undergone significant changes in terms of the content, chapters, and structure.

### The module provides:

- a general understanding of the JCT contract range
- a review of procurement methods and appropriate uses for JCT contract forms
- guidance on how to set up a contract using a JCT contract form
- an understanding of the arrangement of JCT contract forms, including layout, style and the language used
- an understanding of the primary obligations of the employer and the contractor
- a review of the roles played by contract administrators, quantity surveyors and others
- a review of how JCT contracts deal with key aspects of the contracting process, including control of the works (quality, time), payment, variations, insurances and security documentation, third party rights and collateral warranties, termination and dispute resolution.

JCT Contracts Discovery forms part of JCT's wider remit to provide education and training services to the industry, in relation to the understanding of construction contracts and their use.

JCT chief executive, Neil Gower, explained:

*"JCT takes its obligation to help address the issues of skills shortages and knowledge gaps in the industry seriously, particularly in providing services that support the development of competency and skills in the use of construction contracts."*

*"JCT Contracts Discovery is an invaluable tool to gain an understanding of the JCT contract process, and forms a crucial part of JCT's wider services, including JCT training courses and materials, to support this initiative."*

**JCT Contracts Discovery is available now in both hardcopy and e-book formats.**

For more information, visit: [www.jctltd.co.uk/product/jct-contracts-discovery-2026](http://www.jctltd.co.uk/product/jct-contracts-discovery-2026).

More information about JCT's work related to education and training is available at: [corporate.jctltd.co.uk/initiatives/education-students](http://corporate.jctltd.co.uk/initiatives/education-students).

For JCT Training courses and video modules, visit: [www.jctltd.co.uk/jct-training](http://www.jctltd.co.uk/jct-training).

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## JCT TRAINING – ONLINE RESOURCES FOR CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS



Learn about JCT Contracts from your desktop with our online courses and video modules

The Spring 2026 series of JCT Training is underway, but there is still chance to book a place on one of our online training courses. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about the JCT Design and Build Contract 2024 and the JCT Minor Works Building Contract 2024.

The sessions to take place and the dates are as follows:

### Online courses

Wednesday, 22 April 2026

JCT Design and Build Contract 2024

Wednesday, 20 May 2026

JCT Minor Works Building Contract 2024

Book your place today at: [www.jctltd.co.uk/jct-training/available-courses](http://www.jctltd.co.uk/jct-training/available-courses).

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The latest JCT Training Video Modules covering contracts from the JCT 2024 Edition are now live. Our series, 'Introduction to JCT Sub-Contracts 2024' provides an overview of the provisions found in JCT Sub-Contracts, using the Design and Build Sub-Contract 2024 as a main reference point.



The latest JCT Training Video Modules can be purchased at [www.jctltd.co.uk/category/jct-training-videos](http://www.jctltd.co.uk/category/jct-training-videos).



# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



## Zoë Decker



### YPG MEMBER SPOTLIGHT QUESTIONNAIRE

**Full name:** Zoë Decker

**Title or occupation:** Solicitor

**How long have you been a YPG member:** Two years

#### Professional Spotlight

**1. Tell us a bit about your background; what is your current role, and why did you decide on a career in the construction industry?**

I am a Solicitor in the Construction team at Edwin Coe LLP.

Coming from a family of Architects and Architectural Historians, I have always been very interested in the built environment – which I realise is a hugely broad term! From the very beginning of my legal career, I was keen to gain experience of working in Construction Law. My early exposure confirmed that I wanted to stay in this sector: the application of specialist technical knowledge and core legal principles to something tangible is almost totally unique to this area of law.

I now focus on non-contentious work. Non-contentious lawyers are very much part of the project team from inception, and it is incredibly satisfying to be part of the process of getting a project off the ground.

This is a period of enormous change for the industry, and I am lucky to be working within a fantastic and committed team advising on some of the most significant developments in Construction Law.

**2. Can you tell us about any specific work you're currently doing that has any association to JCT and its contracts?**

JCT Contracts are the contract of choice on the majority of projects with which I am involved, and so I am working with JCT in some form every day. As a team, we advise on a lot of Government-funded cladding remediation projects, to which the JCT PCSA and JCT Design and Build are particularly well-suited.

At the moment, I am also working on an analysis of the recent hearing of *Providence v Hexagon* in the Supreme Court; the case really is testament to the importance of JCT to the industry.

**3. What do you see as the main challenges for the construction industry over the next five years?**

I see the industry facing two main challenges in the immediate future – building safety and incorporating sustainable practices. Interestingly, the way in which each has been approached thus far differs enormously.

Building safety is now heavily legislated, whereas the approach to incorporating ESG principles is much more laissez-faire despite it being such a huge concern to the industry, and the construction sector having a key role to play in ensuring environmental sustainability in the wider economy.

Arguably, ESG goals have been present in the industry for much longer than is often imagined in the form of governance of construction supply chains and challenging bribery, corruption, modern slavery, and human trafficking. However, there is still much to be done in terms of environmental sustainability: in addition to incorporating new technologies, maintaining investment, and changing behaviours and practices, there must be a consistent way to measure and report on meeting those environmental goals. The Restoring Parliament Project is an interesting one to watch!

There is a great deal of uncertainty around both these issues and I do believe lawyers have a key role to play in allocating risk, lessening uncertainty, and therefore helping projects to continue to progress.

**4. Does JCT and the Young Professionals Group have a wider role to play in the industry beyond producing contracts?**

Absolutely. The construction industry is made up of so many different roles, disciplines and stakeholders.

Encouraging the young construction professionals who will one day go on to shape the industry to exchange perspectives, experiences and concerns can only be beneficial.

**5. What else do you hope to gain from YPG membership?**

This is a moment of great change in the industry and I am very keen to broaden my experiences within it. I would love to see the creation of specific interest groups – for example, for those interested in historic buildings, which present a unique set of opportunities and challenges – and events such as site visits.

#### Fun Questions

**1. What are you reading, listening to, or watching that you'd recommend?**

I am rediscovering the Golden Age of detective fiction while commuting. I enjoy reading about 1920s London while travelling through London in the 2020s.

**2. Do you have any hobbies?**

I play the cello with the wonderful Kensington Symphony Orchestra, have enjoyed boxing since discovering it at University, and have recently (re)taken up ballet. As well, I love exploring London's buildings, galleries and museums.

**3. Favourite place you've travelled?**

Brasilia; it is such a beautiful city, with an incredibly distinctive architecture primarily by Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer. As a modernist, planned city, the way in which it is experienced is completely different from a city such as London, where I grew up. There are also plenty of gorgeous natural reserves to explore nearby.

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