



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**15<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

### **Construction students to rebuild the Gherkin**

70 students from Northumbria University are to rebuild the Gherkin and two other world famous landmarks.

Three North East companies have teamed up with Northumbria University to invest in the future of young people entering the construction industry, providing them with a more unusual form of hands-on experience. Construction firm GB Building Solutions, recruitment consultants Corepeople and Space Architecture, part of the Space Group, are all helping provide 70 students with a creative building challenge at Constructionarium.

The students, who are studying construction related degrees at Northumbria University's School of the Built Environment, will build scaled down versions of three of the world's most iconic buildings: the Swiss Re building in London, better known as the Gherkin, Sheffield's Millennium Galleries and the magnificent canopy roof of Naples Airport underground station.

Martin Smout, Chairman and Chief Executive of GB Building Solutions says: "This is the third year we have supported and invested in Constructionarium and we didn't think that the recession was any reason not to. The UK economy is heavily reliant on the construction industry and it is vital we take the time and money now, to invest in the people who will be fundamental to our growth of tomorrow."

-more-

Ian Storer is Executive Director for recruitment consultants Corepeople. He says: "We are the longest established and largest recruitment agency in the North East, specialising in the built environment, and receive regular comment from employers in the region that graduates rarely have the appropriate practical experience that employers need when they leave university. We are particularly pleased to have the opportunity to support this initiative as it helps meet a real need for employers."

As part of Constructionarium, the students will spend a week at Bircham Newton in Norfolk. Working under the supervision of professionals from GB Building and Space Group, they will be fully responsible for all aspects of the construction work from planning, costing, programming and health and safety considerations through to labouring.

Workshops have already been held at the University and at Space Group where the students discussed and planned how they would take the project from a bare site, through to fully completed scaled-down buildings.

The students will learn how to use Revit, the latest construction software from Autodesk. Space Group has invested in the package for several years and has seen the benefits of bringing several disciplines together to work on a single building database.

Space Group Chief Executive Rob Charlton said: "We are hugely committed to allowing time to invest in developing talent for the future and investing in multi skilled professionals in the industry. It is essential now more than ever that students leave university with project management, cost control and hands on experience and Constructionarium helps them in this."

Constructionarium works through the triangle of a university, a contractor and a designer working in partnership to deliver a new learning experience, which combines the academic perspective with the practical demands and skills of the design and construction professions.

Dr Paul Chan from Northumbria University says: "Constructionarium gives our students the opportunity to experience the entire construction process, with the invaluable support of our industry partners. It means that when our students graduate, they will go on site, not just with an excellent academic background, but also with the necessary practical skills to give them the confidence to take part right from day one."

-3-

Northumbria University is the only North East University to take part in the project and the students will be attending from Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April to Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009. Other universities taking part this year include Southampton, Leeds, Cambridge, Nottingham and Imperial College.

-ends-

***For further information please contact:***

*Debbie Staveley, bClear Communications on:  
0771 896 8434 or by email at: [debbie.staveley@bclear.co.uk](mailto:debbie.staveley@bclear.co.uk)*

*Or*

*Gemma Clarke, O Communications, tel: 0191 232 5690 or email [gemma@o-communications.co.uk](mailto:gemma@o-communications.co.uk)*

*Or*

*Ruth Laing, Senior Press Officer, Northumbria University on  
0191 2274905*

**Notes for Editors**

GB Building Solutions is a solutions-focused construction company which believes in adding value and delivering on the promises it makes to its customers.

GB Building Solutions has six offices based throughout England and undertakes a range of new build and refurbishment projects in both the public and private sectors. It specialises in five sectors:

- ❖ Accommodation
- ❖ Commercial
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Hotels and leisure
- ❖ Non–acute health

GB Building Solutions was previously known as Gleeson Building. The name change to GB Building Solutions was the final step in the transition that started with the management buyout of MJ Gleeson's building division in July 2005.