

# Big enough to matter, small enough to care

**MARK LANE** looks at the meteoric of Northern Construction

Solutions Limited, a versatile provider of engineering solutions to overcome a range of structural, environmental and buildability issues



WHEN a company goes from a standing start to being a £4m turnover business employing 28 staff –

all inside three years – one is entitled to believe that the team behind it must be doing something right.

For Sean Anderson and Dave Gardner, Directors of Sunderland-based Northern Construction Solutions Limited, however, the key to business development has been a simple case of going back to basics.

Sean and Dave had both previously worked on major schemes for major contractors before establishing Northern Construction. Although successful in their fields, they felt they could offer a different – and what they believe to be superior – kind of service by going back to basics.

Says Sean: “We formed Northern Construction in 2002 having developed a growing dissatisfaction with the stifling trend for main contractors to lean towards management contracting, with the emphasis on reporting and bean counting and thus reducing the opportunity to make a real and lasting impression on the core activity – delivering quality product, safely, on time, and at agreed costs.

“We both had a burning desire to create, to our own exacting specification and standard, a highly professional and efficient construction company, operating at the small to medium end of the market with the work carried out by a directly employed, skilled and experienced workforce.”

Such strong beliefs were quickly borne out by the success of a company that now acts as either principal contractor or specialist sub contractor on a traditional or full design build basis, covering a broad range of markets. These include

educational buildings, industrial buildings, reinforced concrete structures, industrial floors, drainage and sewer systems, piling works, external works and hard landscaping/streetscape.

The company's performance to date has been impressive to say the least. This is evidenced by being chosen to work on a range of demanding projects including:

- **Sunderland Empire Theatre** – specialist foundations and RC structures
- **Newcastle International Airport** – fire training ground drainage system upgrade
- **High Flags Outfall** – flood defence scheme between river Hull and Barmston to Beverley Drain
- **West Park Regeneration, Hull** – new creche facilities and park improvements
- **Park Lane Interchange, Sunderland** – external finishes
- **Newcastle Schools PFI** – groundworks, drainage and RC floors to Wingrove school development

Despite its early success, much of which can be attributed to a loyal, hardworking team of staff and extensive repeat business, nobody at Northern Construction is getting carried away. Sean says: “Although the current state of the construction industry is buoyant and there are many exciting developments occurring within our region, it would be irresponsible of us to believe that these levels of construction activity can be relied upon.

“This period of short to mid term buoyancy is being used to establish our company on a solid foundation of good practice, reliable reputation, robust finances and trusting relationships – thus providing the opportunity to develop and grow our business on a



sustainable basis long into the future.”

Sean and Dave's careful and considered approach to the market coupled with their company's willingness to ensure it gets the basics right rather than trying to dazzle clients with science, would appear to bode well for the future of the business.

Dave adds: “The company aims to provide engineering solutions to overcome a range of structural, environmental and buildability issues.

“With a management team lead by qualified civil and building engineers, enjoying a combined experience in the industry of some 120 years, the strength of the company lies in the technical capabilities of its project managers together with the skill and experience of the site resources.

“This blend enables the company to offer the organisation, professionalism and services normally associated with major national contractors, to small/medium size projects.”

Sean concludes: “Ultimately it is our aim to establish a strong performance business that is recognised for excellent product quality and delivery, that is big enough to matter yet small enough to care.”

- Sean Anderson and Dave Gardner, Directors of Sunderland-based Northern Construction Solutions Limited

## CONTACT

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