

# Edge Debate 53 – 31st January 2013

## Construction needs Women, because .....

**David Adams**  
 Willmott Dixon  
 Construction  
**Guy Battle**  
 dcarbon8, Deloitte  
**Dr Bill Bordass**  
 Usable Buildings Trust  
**Chris Beauman**  
 European Bank for  
 Reconstruction and  
 Development  
**Caroline Cole**  
 Colander  
**Dr Alison Cooke**  
 Cooke Associates  
**Paddy Conaghan**  
 Hoare Lea  
**Dr Frank Duffy PPRIBA**  
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**Dr Garry Felgate**  
 Chop-Cloc Ltd  
**Rachel Fisher**  
 Nation Housing Federation  
**Prof Max Fordham**  
 PPCIBSE  
 Max Fordham LLP  
**Andy Ford PPCIBSE**  
 Mott MacDonald  
**Simon Foxell**  
 The Architects Practice  
**Bill Gething**  
 Sustainability +  
 Architecture  
**Jim Green**  
 Daylight Properties  
**Prof Peter Guthrie**  
 University of Cambridge  
**Dave Hampton**  
 The Carbon Coach  
**Stephen Hill**  
 C;0 futureplanners  
**Mike Hitchens**  
 Pell Fritschmann  
**Dr Dorte Rich Jørgensen**  
 VP Heriot-Watt University  
**Prof Paul Jowitt, PPICE**  
 Heriot-Watt University  
**Janet Kidner**  
 Lend Lease  
**Prof Doug King**  
 Francis Li  
 Buro Happold  
**Richard Lorch**  
 Building Research and  
 Information  
**Dr Mike Murray**  
 One Creative  
 Environments Ltd  
**Robin Nicholson**  
 Cullinan Studio  
**Michael Pawlyn**  
 Exploration Architecture  
**Adam Poole**  
 Buro Happold  
**Dr Sunand Prasad**  
 PPRIBA  
 Penoyre and Prasad LLP  
**Lars Ostenfeld Riemann**  
 Ramboll  
**Yasmin Shariff**  
 Dennis Sharp Architects  
**Prof Richard Simmons**  
 University of Greenwich  
**Simon Smith**  
 Smith and Wallwoek  
**Lynne Sullivan**  
 sustainableBYdesign  
**Chris Twinn**  
 Arup  
**Prof Lorna Walker**  
 Lorna Walker Consulting  
**Bill Watts**  
 Max Fordham LLP  
**Elanor Warwick**  
 Kings College  
**Jane Wernick**  
 Jane Wernick Associates  
**Prof Mark Whitby PPICE**  
 Davies Maguire + Whitby  
**Albert Williamson Taylor**  
 AKT II  
**Jane Powell**  
 Debate Secretary

The premise of this Debate is that if there were more women in the Design/Construction/Management Industry the current culture of competition and confrontation could evolve to embrace processes and outcomes that work effectively for all stakeholders. Women's attributes would encourage co-operation and shared goals and enable participants to work together across disciplines to achieve exceptional results and proper engagement with sustainability. In other sectors women are better represented at all levels, so how can the Construction Industry learn from these?

It has been shown that businesses with more senior women on their boards out-perform those with the least, with 42% higher return on sales, 66% higher return on invested capital and 53% higher return on equity (The Bottom Line: Corporate performance and women's representation on boards, Catalyst, 2007). The Davies Report of 2011: 'Women on Boards' called urgently for a more diverse selection of skillsets in the governance of business. In July 2012, the Credit Suisse Research Institute showed that companies with at least some female board representation outperformed those with no women on the board, citing share price improvements of 26% over the past 6 years.

Where do we go from here in the light of such evidence? How can the perceptions and behaviours of both men and women be changed so that they co-operate more effectively? How can policy-makers devise and enforce relevant mechanisms? How can women be encouraged to stay in the Industry, and how can the Industry be influenced to respect the essential role of women? Currently women represent an average 11% of the workforce in our industry.

Can change happen fast enough for better solutions to be achieved, that can support our delicate ecological system, and also help resolve the current financial crisis?

**Host:** Anne Hedensted Steffensen, Her Excellency the Danish Ambassador in London

**Chair:** Mike Putnam, CEO Skanska UK

**Speakers:** Katherine Whitehorn, The Observer  
 Stephanie Wray, Hyder Consulting  
 Credit Suisse (invited)

Suggested hashtag for the Debate #edgewomen.

The Edge is an inter-institutional ginger group involving CIBSE, ICE, RIBA and the RICS and seeks to promote interdisciplinary co-operation between construction professionals. We seek to encourage change in the industry through intellectual debate, political lobbying and inter-institutional working. Synopses of previous debates are recorded on our website [www.edgedebate.com](http://www.edgedebate.com)

The debate is an invitation only event. If you would like to join us please contact Simon Foxell at [sf@architectspractice.com](mailto:sf@architectspractice.com) to confirm your place. Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come basis.

**Venue:** Danish Embassy  
 55 Sloane Street London SW1X 9SR

**Timing:** Debate 6.30 - 8.30 pm  
 Drinks and networking - 9.00 pm