

Industrial Strength Images

Professional Photographer Greg Harding provides an insight into the world of construction.

Many of us know what its like to have the builders in – dreams of extensions or loft conversions that begin as sketches on a drawing pad gradually become reality as the bricks and dust become part of our everyday life for what can seem an eternity! Over the weeks our home changes and we begin to see how everything will finally 'fit together' just as we planned.

For large construction businesses it's a similiar process – architects spend hours creating designs down to the smallest of details, so when the physical work first begins the site may appear to simply represent organized chaos to the casual observer. However over the weeks and months the changes begin to become more structured and you could almost hear Rolf Harris asking his famous question "Can you tell what it is yet?"

Greg Harding is a commercial photographer who has worked with a number of construction companies to create a record of progress – not just the site itself but the people who all play their part in bringing drawings and sketches to life.

His clients include Catalyst Health-care who has led the £450 million re-development of four hospitals on the grounds of the Manchester Royal Infirmary. Work began in July 2004 and by this summer all four new hospitals will be open to patients. Greg has been a regular visitor and created a unique record of how the buildings have literally come out of the ground.

He explains: "There are so many challenges when photographing on such a large and busy construction site. Firstly there is a limit to the amount of equipment I can take with me – I'm pretty much limited to what I can carry around.



Add to this the serious Health & Safety aspects and protective equipment that





I need to keep me safe and you'll begin to understand that it's not just a case of wandering around and clicking away!

Finally, I have to factor in the amount of time I'm actually allowed on site – these people have a job to be completed to very tight deadlines, so they can't spend time indulging me with lots of different poses.

What I need to do, from the moment I put on my hard hat, is to have an eye for the creative – so much of it all just looks like dirt! But there are hidden diamonds in there if you look for them."

Greg has also been working with the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme which represents a new approach to capital investment in buildings and Information and Communications Technology to support the Government's educational reform agenda.

Photographing BSF projects across Lancashire, including Pendlevalle and Burnley, Greg has clearly demonstrated his innovative approach by not just capturing the actual building sites but expressing these images as silhouettes, for example.

So why would a construction company want such detailed photographs?

Greg believes that good customer relationships are at the heart of what is, essentially, a unique marketing opportunity. "Construction work is often about building dreams, whether it's a small kitchen extension at home or a brand new school campus offering outstanding educational facilities for hundreds of students. Most people only see the mess, the dust, the inconvenience. But when a company can show clients how their plans are taking shape, coming together and turning to reality, these images keep everyone enthused, excited and focused on the final result.

For me, I still get a real buzz when I'm a hundred feet off the ground at the top of a crane and see the whole site below. But I have to remember to keep my camera firmly strapped to my hand!"



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You can see examples of his work by visiting www.greharding.co.uk