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## The 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual ARCOM Conference “Network and Connectivity in Construction”



Welcome to the 42nd Annual ARCOM Conference! I am very pleased to welcome you to Loughborough University, which has been my home for almost a decade. To all our delegates, colleagues, sponsors and guests, I hope the next few days will be both intellectually stimulating and personally rewarding. As we greet old friends and make new ones, the ARCOM conference has become a place for us to extend our network, and in doing so, to strengthen our research community. It also provides us with the opportunity to muse about the different ways our work intersects, discuss and reflect on what matters in construction management research, and debate how to take our thinking forward.

This year's theme of “Network and Connectivity in Construction” captures issues at the heart of construction management research, namely, of connecting people, processes, and technologies to build solutions that meets societies' needs. The papers submitted this year represent the hard work of many and tackle the conference theme in explicit and implicit ways: The collaborations of project teams, the interface between construction processes, the creation of new linkages by use of digital technology and data exchange, innovative use of construction logistics and sustainable supply chains, whole-life approaches to the built environment, and inclusive work practices. These research inquiries allow us to create meaningful connections that shape the future of our built environment.

*“Construction is fundamentally about connections”*

For this conference, we have an exciting programme planned that encourages in-depth discussions as well as cross-sectional exploration. The conference theme prompts us to consider how the many, varied, and sometimes disparate threads of our collective research efforts are intrinsically intertwined. Rather than trying to untangle the many strands of research we might do well to embrace these inherent complexities. The programme is anchored by keynotes, plenaries sessions and panel discussions. Monday will kick off with scene-setting and asking the big questions; Tuesday's sessions will explore the ways we do research; and Wednesday will prompt us to reflect on the impact of our work on the broader society.

To our delegates who have travelled from near and far, we recognise how ARCOM has grown over the past decades to become a truly global community. Reflecting on past conferences and looking into the future, we will continue to find creative and innovative ways to engage with our global community as well as outreach to industry. This year sees an exciting new industry facing networking event on Wednesday afternoon that aims to extend the conversation beyond the confines of our research community and paper presentations. We intend this as a valuable form of engagement with wider stakeholders, ensuring the relevance and impact of our work, and sense-checking our academic thinking against industry practice.

Please enjoy the conference and take advantage of all that it offers.

*Dr. Vivien Chow  
ARCOM Conference Chair, 2026  
ARCOM Vice-Chair*



*Quorn & Woodhouse Station, Great Central Railway*



## Ron McCaffer C.Eng BSc PhD FICE FCIQB FREng FRSE

The Construction Management community lost one of its “giants” in January this year with the death of Professor Ron McCaffer. Ron was known to most of us, either personally, or through his many publications – the most well-known being his long-lived and ubiquitous textbook “Modern Construction Management”. Ron graduated from Strathclyde University with a degree in Civil Engineering in 1965 – he always described himself as a Civil Engineer. He “learnt his craft” with Babbie, Shaw and Morton, the Nuclear Power Group and Taylor Woodrow – these experiences convincing him that it was the procurement, management and delivery of projects and not their engineering that caused the most problems on site.

He was pleased therefore, and he admitted somewhat surprised, to be appointed as a lecturer on the then newly launched Construction Management MSc program at Loughborough in 1970. Together with colleagues – Frank Harris and Dick Neale – he quickly established Loughborough as the centre of Construction Management teaching and research in the UK. He was a pioneer in the early adoption of computer methods in Construction Management and specifically their role in estimating, measurement and cost control.

I first met Ron in the summer of 1979 – when I went for an interview as a Research Assistant at Loughborough – not realising that this would not only change my life – but give me a supervisor, mentor, friend and life coach (before such roles existed) – for the next 45 years. I joined his Computer-Aided Estimating Group – which he described as a worker’s collective – we worked and he collected! Other members of the group included Andrew Baldwin, later to become Head of Department at Loughborough and subsequently at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University; Willi Sher, later to become Professor at Newcastle University in Australia; Dr Moira Biggins; and Christine Siddons. The latter 2 were computer scientists and this highlights Ron’s instincts for what we would now call “multi-disciplinary teams”.

Working for Ron was never dull – 3 months after starting work he called me into his office to say he was going abroad for a while and wanted me to do his final year lectures – he said it would be “a maturing experience” – and he was certainly right. I was 22 at the time and the students (having spent a year in industry unlike me) – were also 22! It was a time when we were working with many construction companies, both nationally and locally to implement computer systems within their processes. Ron passionately believed that research had to have impact, long before the REF, so we were often on the road visiting companies and sites. He had a real affinity with site managers and operatives – reflecting his years of experience before becoming an academic.

As well as his Research Assistants, Ron supervised an army of PhD students over the years, many of whom have gone on to glittering careers in academia or industry. He was an excellent supervisor – and would always edit PhD chapters and papers meticulously – which was great if you could read his writing, which wasn’t often. After writing a particularly long and tedious chapter of my PhD

I gave it to Ron to read. When I got it back, I was amazed to find no comments at all in the text – however on the last page Ron had written “this is like a fat man floundering in the sea” – harsh but fair!

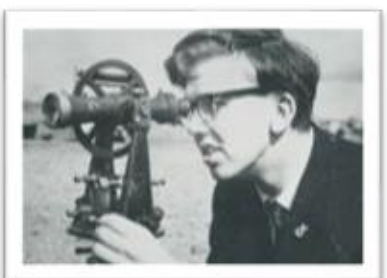
Ron climbed through the academic ranks to become Head of Department of Civil Engineering in 1987. At the (then) relatively young age of 43. During his tenure he introduced the industry sponsored degrees of Construction Engineering Management, and Quantity Surveying – and brought in a raft of new staff – also changing the name of the Department to “Building and Civil Engineering”.

Ron always enjoyed working closely with the International MSc students in the Department and as a proud Scotsman he enjoyed his football – he was a life-long Rangers supporter. Whenever England was playing, he would invite the students back to his house to watch the game – providing they supported whoever was playing England. This led to a big night in 1990 when I think every African student on campus was at Ron’s house to see Cameroon narrowly beaten by England in the World Cup.

In 1992 he moved from Head of Department to the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and, putting his professional knowledge to work, he oversaw the construction of new Engineering Buildings on the West side of campus bringing all of Engineering together. His next step was to Deputy Vice Chancellor striving as always to put Loughborough University at the heart of industry and commerce and leveraging his huge international network of friends and collaborators. His external esteem grew with him, and he was a proud Fellow of the Institute of Building, the Institution of Civil Engineers, The Royal Academy of Engineering, The Royal Society of Edinburgh, and the Smeatonian Society (the oldest Engineering society in the world).

He inspired great loyalty in those that worked closely with him – particularly his PAs who were fiercely protective of him – but if you got past them, he was not beyond hiding under his desk if he didn’t want to see you! Ron was intelligent, funny, kind and driven. He was a great academic and a great friend. He has left an enduring legacy on our discipline, on the and on all those of us who knew him – and his academic DNA resides in many of us.

*Professor Tony Thorpe  
Loughborough University*



*Professor Ron McCaffer*

## Twenty-five years of Engaging in ARCOM: A personal reflection, by Professor Paul W Chan

### Delft University of Technology

The year was 2000. The world had averted the crisis of the millennium bug and Auld Lang Syne was sung by many as they welcomed the new millennium at the Millennium Dome in London on New Year's Day. The year 2000 was full of optimism in the UK with the rise of the internet age and the dot-com boom, and the growth of financial districts in European cities (e.g. Canary Wharf in London, Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, La Defense in Paris and the Zuidas district in Amsterdam) supplanting a period of economic gloom in the early 1990s. The year 2000 was also when I embarked on my PhD journey in the field of construction management.

The early 2000s was characterized by a building boom. Creativity and innovation were buzzwords of the day. In the papers presented at ARCOM, two influential UK government reports – the Latham (1994) report *Constructing the Team* and the Egan (1998) report *Rethinking Construction* – were heavily cited as researchers introduced their research, often framed in the context of improving the efficiency and productivity of the sector. My own PhD also centred around the issue of labour productivity on construction sites, as I joined the Movement for Innovation, an industry-led programme in the UK at the time aimed at radically transforming the sector away from adversarial relationships towards improving collaboration and raising value created by the sector. In the mid-1990s, ARCOM even secured funding from the then Science and Engineering Research Council (the predecessor of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) to organise construction creativity clubs. Led by the stalwarts of ARCOM, including the late Professor David Langford (ARCOM's Honorary Life President), the creativity clubs were roadshows that brought together researchers and practitioners to share and exchange knowledge on construction management. Such knowledge exchange also involved learning from other sectors such as the manufacturing and aerospace sectors, as research funding was channelled towards Innovative Manufacturing Research Centres, in which Loughborough University of Technology, the University of Reading and the University of Salford became key centres in the UK for construction.

The pursuit of the efficiency and productivity agenda in the early 2000s was also met with increasing engagement with social issues. A number of sociologists began to connect with the construction management research field, including David Seymour and John Rooke who wrote a series of critical pieces in *Construction Management and Economics* in the mid-1990s on the need to promote qualitative research methods and to pay attention to the lived realities of those who work within the construction industry. Others like Linda Clarke raised the question of how we value labour as often-uncomfortable and inconvenient questions were raised about the balance of power between capital and labour and how surplus value of production is shared in society. Such critical engagement about what constitutes social justice and

fairness has also been featured in many of our keynote presentations and panel discussions. One of the most memorable panel discussions I chaired took place in Edinburgh during the 2011 conference when Professor Allyson Pollock (who founded the Centre for International Public Health Policy at the University of Edinburgh) passionately critiqued the use of public-private partnerships as instruments to deliver buildings and services, questioning the societal value of such procurement approaches that were deemed innovative at the time.

Just as the construction management research field had been open to learning from other sectors in the early 2000s, the early 2010s saw stronger engagement with theoretical perspectives from other disciplines. After all, as David Langford and Will Hughes noted in their edited book *Building a Discipline* (published in 2009 in celebration of 25 years of ARCOM), the construction management research field has developed a body of knowledge that “[embraces] the social sciences, ecology, management theory, history and many others which will form boundaries with CM without provoking unseemly turf wars” (p. 2). An example of engaging with perspectives from other disciplines is the keynote speaker for the 2007 conference in Belfast<sup>1</sup>. Professor Robert Geyer offered a political scientist's view on complexity in the built environment, emphasising the importance of uncertainties in complex systems. The response from the ARCOM audience was somewhat mixed. Despite recognising how the construction sector could act as a barometer for economic development, many wondered about the relevance of the political economy in the theory and practice of construction management. Some even considered embracing uncertainties to be challenging for construction clients who tended to be risk averse. Nowadays, with growing acknowledgement of the wicked problems confronting the sector and increasing number of studies that draw upon organisational institutionalism and change, it is widely accepted in the construction management research field that the sector is not simply a hapless recipient of government policies, but also an active agent in shaping the institutional landscape.

Of course, the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 brought to sharp focus critical reflections about the role of the built environment, questions around what constitutes productive capital and a growing emphasis on social value and sustainable development. This also coincided with growing emphasis on global cooperation, with the expansion of the European Union and international coordination on matters such as actions against climate change. The creation of the European Higher Education

<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, the second keynote presentation at the 2007 conference in Belfast was given by the developer, Nakheel in Dubai. Juxtaposing a political perspective on complexity in the built environment against an example of complex development in Dubai (a place characterized by inconspicuous capitalism) a year before the Global Financial Crisis seems rather ironic now in hindsight.

Area in 2010 (through what was known as the Bologna process that began in the late 1990s) led to the growth of the number of degree programmes delivered in English. Shifts from traditional monographs to compiled theses comprising published papers also saw widening participation in ARCOM conferences by colleagues in Europe, notably from the Netherlands and the Nordic countries of Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway. Engagements with researchers from Europe provided fresh perspectives on project organising, collaboration and organising for sustainability transitions. The ARCOM conference and network also served as a template for several international networks, including the CREON (the Nordic Conference on Construction Economics and Organisation), CRIOCM (Chinese Research Institute of Construction Management) and WABER (The West Africa Built Environment Research) networks.

In the year 2000 when I embarked on my PhD journey, Yahoo was the search engine of choice. Searching for a conference network for construction management research, there was only one result found on Yahoo, and that was ARCOM. My first conference in Salford in 2001 comprised around 50 paper presentations, and the paper review process was done via email. The after-dinner speaker at that conference was the late Fred Dibnah, a renowned steeplejack and television presenter in Britain who was fascinated by the engineering marvels that shaped the built environment during the industrial revolution. The early foundations of the construction management research field were of course rooted in the engineering tradition, with textbooks from the late 1960s such as the *Principles of Construction Management for Engineers and Managers* by Professor Roy Pilcher at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. Such engineering focus still guides construction management research in certain parts of the world, most notably in North America.

Since my first conference in 2001, I have been to 25 ARCOM conferences. Over time, the dominance of the engineering approach gave way to the social turn. As

former Chair of ARCOM, I led the organisation of the conferences in Manchester (2016) on bringing work and labour back in, as well as Cambridge (2017) on understanding brutally innovative construction. At the Cambridge conference, Nicolas Caille, David Coulet and Simon Evans from Bouygues Construction shared their lived experiences of developing innovative ways of building the New Safe Confinement Project at Chernobyl; while presenting this project as an engineering feat, their story also emphasised how such a technical endeavour was made possible through social networks between professional disciplines and between academia and practice. Thus, ARCOM continues to provide a space for understanding construction as a sociotechnical challenge, where questions about the technical can meet problematising in the social.

ARCOM has professionalised with a well-established paper-handling and review processes together with its administrative and website support. Nowadays, the ARCOM conference regularly attracts 200 participants, and the topics have also broadened beyond studying and analysing what goes on in practice, to including thinking about and co-designing futures. With the higher education sector going through some transformation, and with geopolitics pushing governments and peoples to look within, ARCOM represents for me a network that has always dared to combine both zooming out to learn from others (whether it be other sectors, disciplines or global challenges) while zooming in to reconfigure and update its body of knowledge. This allows us to navigate through the tensions of staying rigorous while being relevant, and I have been privileged to be part of the journey of ARCOM and of the development of construction management as a research field.

*Professor Paul W Chan  
Delft University of Technology*





## Beyond the Coop: Gentle nudges for circular construction management research, by Dr. Marc van den Berg University of Twente

“We are all doing things in a very stupid way”, said a key informant to me during a recent interview. He was clearly frustrated by the default order of things in the construction industry. The interviewee reflected on the mess that mankind has created. Many construction management researchers have described that mess in one way or another. Our industry has the notorious reputation of producing more waste, extracting more resources and emitting more greenhouse gases than any other industry. Researchers nowadays label these unsustainable facts as symptoms of a ‘linear economy’. But every now and then, I am fortunate enough to talk to some circularity pioneers who illustrate today’s problems much more vividly. For example, by introducing chickens during an interview.

Interviews with practitioners can often reveal surprising insights. They are particularly valuable for exploring how practitioners may accelerate or obstruct the changes needed to replace our current economic system with another one based on cyclical resource flows. Research may expose how people make sense of circularity in their everyday work, what enables them to experiment, and what keeps established routines firmly in place. Transition scholars remind us that systemic change emerges through interventions across multiple interconnected levels. In construction, we need new measurement systems, data standards, procurement guidelines, design tools, governance models, logistics solutions and so much more. While seemingly small in isolation, together these interventions may reinforce each other and transform the entire industry. And because all these changes are enacted through the everyday work of practitioners, they create numerous entry points for engaged scholars. Not only to understand change, but to help shape it.

These many entry points are also reflected in the growing body of circular construction management research. Over the last decade, there has been a clear rise in the number of studies dedicated to examining the impacts of circularity. Some of those studies even go a step further and explicitly attempt to support the transition. This includes action-oriented research that designs solution concepts that practitioners can then use to augment their own work. An example would be developing a digital platform for monitoring stocks of reusable materials. I believe this type of research is very exciting, yet demanding, as it requires a precarious balancing act between scientific robustness and context sensitivity. Most circular construction management studies do not intervene in any practice though. Instead, they may draw inspiration from natural ecosystems to theorise new ways of project organising or make sense of the changing roles of demolition firms in the value chain. It also remains tempting for many to map all kinds of circularity barriers. Important work, for sure, but problematising the transition comes with limited predictive power. After all, it often remains unclear whether removing these barriers will effectively generate any circularity benefits.

This brings me back to my interview. Promoting an alternative, more solution-oriented angle, my team and I investigate certain innovative circular construction practices. During a data collection moment, our informant shared the following story. “When I was a kid, I had to dig out the chicken coop every year. We had to, because my mother used to say, ‘The chickens keep pooping themselves higher and higher. If we don’t dig it out, eventually they’ll end up pressed against the roof of the coop.’ Well, that’s basically what we humans do on this planet. We keep pooping ourselves upward.” Suffice it to say, I did not see that metaphor coming. During my lectures, I like to tell students how Kenneth Boulding’s 1966 vision of the earth as “a single spaceship, without unlimited reservoirs of anything” resonates with today’s idea of a circular economy. Or I explain how Ellen MacArthur used her experiences of solo sailing around the world to help popularise that very concept. But the chicken coop was new to me. The interviewee continued: “So, we can keep digging out our chicken coop every year, or we can simply stop pooping ourselves upward in the first place. To me, that seems like a much more logical solution.”

Inspiration for advancing circularity may thus come from surprising sources. That would be more than welcome, given that international reports consistently show that circularity outcomes continue to lag behind ambitions. Sceptics also argue that any environmental progress is quickly offset by additional resource consumption due to global population growth and rising prosperity. I nevertheless strongly believe that small actions matter. They simply add up until a tipping point is reached and principles such as ‘reuse, unless’ are the new normal. Global supply chain disruptions and geopolitical conflicts are also fuelling this discussion, prompting nations to pursue greater ‘strategic autonomy’. Researchers can contribute significantly by expanding their focus beyond environmental impact reductions and showing how circular practices can simultaneously create economic value, strengthen resilience, and reduce resource dependencies. Ancient construction practices may also offer inspiration. For most of human history, construction materials locally sourced, maintained, disassembled and reused. Construction management researchers are well positioned to rediscover such practices of pre-industrial times.

Particularly promising circular construction management research, in my view, offers actionable knowledge by critically engaging with evolving practices. With a subtle nod to our chicken example, I propose that our community could benefit from some ‘COOP’ thinking. That is, in close cooperation with practitioners, circular construction management scholars should: Consider the entire asset life cycle, Openly question conventional practices, Orient research towards a restorative and regenerative future, and Promote transformative change instead of incremental fixes.

These four general principles are intended as a gentle nudge for construction management research, encouraging scholars to develop positive futures with an explicit commitment to circularity. Embracing them could hopefully contribute to transforming construction practices so that any future interviewees would no longer describe their everyday work as stupid.

*Dr. Marc van den Berg  
University of Twente*



## Building Confidence, Competence and Community through ARCOM Workshops

One of ARCOM's greatest strengths is its commitment to supporting researchers throughout their academic journey. Beyond providing opportunities to present research, ARCOM workshops create welcoming and constructive environments where participants can build confidence, develop research competence and gain a better understanding of the bigger picture surrounding their work. Over the years, ARCOM workshops have covered a wide range of topics, helping researchers strengthen methodological skills, engage with theory, improve publishing strategies and connect with colleagues from across the construction management research community. These events provide valuable spaces for discussion, reflection and collaboration, enabling participants to receive feedback, share experiences and develop networks that often extend well beyond the workshop itself.

A recent example was the ARCOM Thematic Doctoral Workshop: Digital Pathways to a Sustainable and Circular Construction Industry, held at the University of Nottingham on 27 March 2026. The workshop brought together doctoral researchers and academics from the UK and beyond to explore how digital technologies such as BIM, artificial intelligence, digital twins, the Internet of Things and blockchain can contribute to sustainability and circular economy objectives within construction. Participants shared emerging research, discussed industry challenges and explored opportunities for digital innovation to support sector-wide transformation.

Importantly, the workshop demonstrated the supportive ethos that characterises ARCOM as a community. Doctoral researchers were encouraged to present work-in-progress, receive constructive feedback and engage in open discussions with peers and senior academics. The event highlighted the value of interdisciplinary thinking and provided participants with a broader perspective on how individual research projects contribute to larger industry and societal challenges.

Looking ahead, ARCOM is committed to expanding opportunities (globally) for research training and professional development. Future workshops are expected to address emerging topics including artificial intelligence (AI), large language models (LLMs), digital research methods and their implications for construction management research and practice.

We encourage members at all career stages to participate in future workshops, share ideas for new training opportunities and help shape the next generation of ARCOM research development activities. Together, we can continue to build a supportive, innovative and inclusive research community.

*Dr. Emmanuel Aboagye-Nimo FHEA MCIOB  
Research and Development Officer*



*Impression of an ARCOM Doctoral Workshop Setting*

## Doctoral Workshop Explores Digital Pathways to a Sustainable and Circular Construction Industry

On 27 March 2026, the University of Nottingham hosted the *ARCOM Doctoral Workshop Digital Pathways to a Sustainable and Circular Construction Industry* at the Monica Partridge Building. The event was organised by Dr Serik Tokbolat and Dr Carlos Osorio-Sandoval (University of Nottingham) together with Dr Emmanuel Aboagye-Nimo (Birmingham City University and ARCOM Researcher Development Officer). The workshop was formally opened by Professor Mark Gillott, Faculty Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience and Professor of Sustainable Building Design, whose remarks emphasised the importance of research, innovation and collaboration in addressing the sustainability challenges facing the built environment. He also provided an overview of several pioneering research initiatives at the University of Nottingham that are advancing sustainability, decarbonisation and innovation within the built environment sector.

The workshop brought together doctoral researchers and academics from universities across the UK and internationally to explore how digital technologies can support sustainability, circular economy principles and wider transformation within the construction sector. The event was inspired by the growing need to tackle resource consumption, waste generation and carbon emissions, while exploring how digital innovations such as BIM, artificial intelligence, digital twins, IoT and blockchain can facilitate more sustainable forms of construction.

The programme featured a diverse range of presentations covering topics such as circularity assessment, digital twin applications for net-zero carbon buildings, BIM-enabled safety management, embodied carbon tracking, machine learning for sustainable design, modern methods of construction, and energy-efficient building systems. The breadth of contributions reflected the strength and diversity of current doctoral research at the intersection of

digitalisation, sustainability and circular construction.

A particular highlight of the day was the supportive and collegial atmosphere that enabled doctoral researchers to present work-in-progress, receive constructive feedback and engage in meaningful discussions with peers and experienced academics. Beyond the individual research projects, participants reflected on the broader challenges facing the construction sector and the role that research can play in supporting positive change.

On behalf of the organisers, we would like to extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to the preparation and delivery of the workshop. We thank the presenters, attendees, reviewers, session contributors and support staff whose efforts helped make the event such a success. We are also grateful to Professor Mark Gillott for opening the workshop and to all participants for their enthusiastic engagement throughout the day.

The excellent level of participation demonstrated the value of researcher development activities that build confidence, strengthen research capability and foster new collaborations. As the construction sector continues to grapple with pressing environmental, social and economic challenges, we look forward to future ARCOM events at the University of Nottingham that will further support researchers in developing innovative approaches to sustainability, circularity and the long-term transformation of the built environment.

*Dr. Emmanuel Aboagye-Nimo FHEA MCIOB  
Research and Development Officer*



*Delegates of the Digital Pathways Doctoral Workshop, held at Birmingham City University*



## *PhD Abstract: “An Exploration of The Relationship Between Personality Traits and Interpersonal Conflict Factors in The Built Environment”*

**by Tadhg O’Neill, University of Limerick**

Interpersonal conflict is an inherent feature of the built environment and is widely documented within construction management literature. While contemporary research predominantly examines conflict through structural, contractual, or formal dispute conditions, limited consideration is given to tensions which begin at an interpersonal level. Frustration, poor communication, perceived unfairness, and differences in expectations can all shape how professionals experience conflict before it escalates into formal dispute processes.

My PhD investigates interpersonal conflict factors within the built environment in the Republic of Ireland, examining which conflict triggers are most frequently experienced by construction professionals and considers how individual tendencies may interact with these experiences. This study brings together organisational conflict theory and personality trait theory, but its central focus is on better understanding the human element through which conflict emerges in construction practice. This research adopts a sequential, quantitatively dominant mixed-methods design. The first phase involved semi-structured interviews with industry practitioners to validate and refine a literature derived list of interpersonal conflict factors. These validated factors are then used to develop a structured questionnaire, which is piloted to ensure clarity and comprehension before being distributed to construction professionals. Data analysis includes reliability analysis, Hierarchical Cluster Analysis, correlation analysis, and Multiple Linear Regression.

Findings show that interpersonal conflict is commonly associated with everyday project tensions rather than only severe or exceptional behaviours. The most frequently experienced factors included differences in views, frustration, differences in personalities, dishonesty, refusal to take responsibility, pressure and workload, interpersonal communication, complaining about work, and unrealistic expectations. Hierarchical Cluster Analysis organises these factors into experience-based conflict groupings, reflecting patterns of co-occurrence rather than latent psychological constructs. While personality traits show some modest associations with conflict experience, the findings indicate that personality is a limited contributor rather than a determining cause. The wider contribution of the research is therefore to provide a clearer empirical foundation for understanding interpersonal conflict in construction, supporting future work in conflict management, professional development, leadership, and construction management education.

*Supervisors: Dr. John P Spillane and Dr. James G Bradley*



*Dr. Bradley, Dr. Spillane, Tadhg O’Neill, and his external examiners Dr. Gledson and Dr. Aboaguye-Nimo*

## *PhD Abstract: "The needed suppliers' perspective in construction industry ecosystems"*

by Gijsbert van de Waerdt, University of Twente

The construction industry faces broad societal challenges, including transitions in sustainability, energy, and circularity. My research group at the University of Twente in the Netherlands explores how new collaboration formats, such as ecosystems, can address these challenges. The ecosystem concept offers a lens beyond individual projects, which is deemed necessary for sector transformations. Drawing on Adner's (2017) definition of ecosystems as the "alignment structure of the multilateral set of partners that need to interact in order for a focal value proposition to materialize", the ecosystem concept considers a broad set of organizations, including suppliers, regulators, knowledge institutions, and other stakeholders with distinct roles and interests. This allows us to look beyond traditional analysis of the client-contractor collaboration or the supply chain perspective (Pulkka *et al.*, 2016; Vosman *et al.*, 2023).

While part of the research group focuses on the leading roles of public clients, my PhD research particularly considers the perspectives of private actors and examines the interplay between value, roles, and orchestration beyond projects. It primarily uses qualitative data collection methods, including document analysis, observations, and interviews. My research, for example, examines the flow of value within ecosystems, and what kinds of (non-monetary) value matter to actors. It identifies how the value added by individual organizations clashes with or competes with that of other organizations within the ecosystem. Confusion, for example, occurred among other organizations when a (public) financier sought to create value through efficient and effective projects and, at the same time, sought to drive innovation in those projects. Furthermore, the transparent, lawful value creation by a public client at times clashed with the effective value creation by private contractors, who also faced constraints due to extensive paperwork. Through such an analysis, it becomes clearer why the flow of value is hindered within an ecosystem. Furthermore, my research considers how all the value created is captured by organizations, even though the organizations that create the value may not be able to retain their expected share of that capture. Hence, I explore how professional and strategic value, such as knowledge and innovation, may slip away to other actors within the ecosystem.

Moreover, the research studies the orchestration of ecosystems by private organizations. It investigates how different constellations of private organizations successfully orchestrate others around a shared value proposition. These shared value propositions are broad, project-transcending aims, such as reducing CO2 emissions in concrete or developing zero-emission machinery. Such value propositions require collaboration among a large set of heterogeneous actors. Preliminary findings from my research suggest that the orchestration role of private actors can significantly contribute to

successful outcomes. For example, a bunch of large construction firms coordinating to produce more sustainable concrete is quite effective at convincing other private firms to adopt this value proposition. In contrast to industry associations, which are more distant and seem to struggle with committing to innovative value propositions. My research further identifies how the orchestrators divide orchestration activities and implement orchestration mechanisms.

Lastly, the ecosystem concept offers alternative roles beyond those the sector is more familiar with, such as the traditional client-contractor relationship. I utilize the ecosystem concept, for example, to shed light on roles and role dynamics in a multiple-case study of urban development. Analysis reveals, among other things, how ecosystem leader roles emerge and shift among public and private organizations within the ecosystem. Such a perspective on roles may be more organic and appropriate to innovative endeavours than the traditional client-contractor constellation and can therefore help address future challenges and transitions.

As I witness interesting studies in literature and experience relevant cases in practice that embody the ecosystem perspective, I'm excited to discuss this new perspective with fellow scholars. Following the upcoming ARCOM 2026 conference in Loughborough, I'm especially interested in shaping future ecosystem research in the construction industry. Adopting the ecosystem concept across different collaboration initiatives, such as projects, programs, alliances, networks, and sectors, potentially yields distinct ecosystem typologies. Furthermore, the ecosystem concept can be used to analyse various dimensions of value alignment, roles, and related factors. More research is necessary to develop the ecosystem concept across its typologies and dimensions. At the same time, our field of research would benefit from distinctive future research paths. That can only be achieved by leveraging our own ARCOM research ecosystem, for which I encourage you to participate. I look forward to meeting you at the ARCOM conference.

*Supervisors: Professor Leentje Volker & Dr. Hans Voordijk*



## News from Emerald Publishing

### New Publishing Mission coming soon

Emerald launches various mission campaigns throughout the year to highlight global issues that research seeks to address. We do this to highlight our authors' research, provide free resources for stakeholders, increase accessibility, and foster meaningful dialogue.

### Cracks in the system: Are our cities next to fall?

Our next mission, launching in September, will explore how infrastructure failures emerge, spread and escalate across connected systems. It will examine where weaknesses begin, what causes failures to cascade, and how better design, monitoring and intervention can strengthen resilience before small cracks become wider system breakdowns.

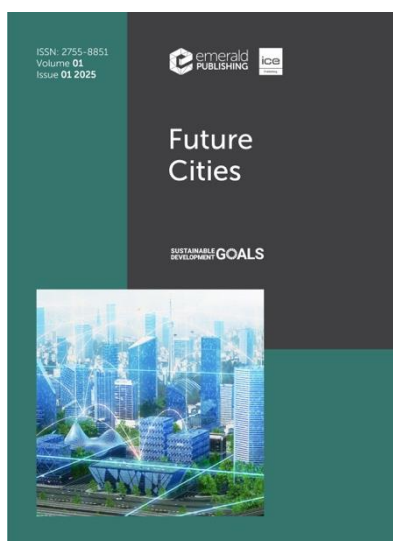
In this mission, we ask:

How can we uncover hidden failures early, and what triggers help operators act before failures cascade?

Which upgrades deliver the biggest reliability gains fastest (smarter design, better operations, or targeted renewal) and how should engineers measure and report cascading risk?

How can we prioritise the most vulnerable parts of our infrastructure for immediate reinforcement?

We invite you to join the discussion. If you have related research or insights that begin to address these questions, or the broader challenges within this area, then we'd love to hear from you!



### New journal: Future Cities

Future Cities is an open access, peer reviewed journal that focuses on solving complex urban challenges by advancing cutting-edge research in sustainability, resilience, digitalisation, and people-centric design and governance. The journal aligns to multiple UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

An Article Processing Charge of £1,250 is waived for all papers submitted before 31 December 2026, offering an excellent opportunity to share your work with a global audience. (An APC covers the cost of turning a manuscript into a published article and disseminating it to the widest audience).

### New special issues

Emerald is always on the lookout for high-quality special issues to publish in its property management and built environment journals. If you have an idea for a focussed special issue of a publication, please contact the journal's Commissioning Editor at Emerald, or the academic Editor (contact details on each journal's website) to discuss the idea further.

### Forthcoming special issues

Below is a selection of open special issues which are currently seeking submissions:

#### Journal of Engineering, Design and Technology

*Human-Centric Construction Systems: Ethical Governance, Workforce Development, and Wellbeing*  
Submissions close 1 November 2026

#### Facilities

*Circular and Future-Adaptive Facilities*  
Submissions close 7 December 2026

#### Smart and Sustainable Built Environment

*From Data to Decisions: AI, Digital Twins, and Cyber-Physical Systems for Intelligent and Sustainable Built Environments*  
Submissions close 31 December 2026

### Latest ICE Publishing books

**Mental Health in the Construction Industry** brings together the latest international research on mental health within the construction sector. It examines psychosocial hazards in the industry, alongside the legal and practical challenges of managing these risks, and their cascading impact on workers' wellbeing. The book also outlines essential measures to support, protect, and promote mental health across the construction workforce.

**Navigating an Evolving Sustainable Built Environment** offers a clear, practice-oriented guide to the shifting landscape of sustainability in the built environment, from foundational principles to emerging trends such as net zero buildings, climate adaptation and the circular economy. Combining key frameworks with global case studies, it equips practitioners and decision-makers with the tools to deliver future-ready, regenerative solutions.

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## New Routledge books for the ARCOM community



It's been another bumper year of new books of great relevance to the ARCOM community. In this newsletter I am particularly keen to highlight some of our latest textbook offerings like the 5th edition of the **Quantity Surveyor's Pocket Book**, **Industrialized Construction in the Age of AI and Robotics**, and **Cost and Project Management of Modern Methods of Construction**. These books are specifically written with students in mind and designed to support their learning in this fast paced and ever evolving field. Many of you who teach related topics can request access to inspection copies of these books by following the links.

A highlight of the year so far is publishing the latest book in our **Social Value in the Built Environment** series, **Socially Successful Projects in the built environment: Demystifying social value and stakeholder engagement** this May. This series is very much connected to ARCOM with the initial idea discussed and developed at the Lincoln and Manchester conferences in 2015 and 2016, and the first book **Social Value in Construction** publishing in 2018. You can read more about the series scope on our website and if you have ideas for new books please speak to me, or to the series editors Ani Raiden, Martin Loosemore and Suhair Zaid Alkilani.

Our aim is to provide the community with the variety of books it needs to advance knowledge in all aspects of management in construction by supporting education, research, and engagement with the professions. We remain committed to publishing top level research in book format, with new titles such as **Smart and Innovative Solutions for a Net-Zero Built Environment**, edited by Sepani Senaratne, Niluka Domingo, and Srinath Perera, whilst providing professionals and policymakers with practical resources like **Buildability in Practice: Shaping a Sustainable and Equitable Built Environment** by Innocent Chigozie Osuizugbo and Bankole Osita Awuzie, and **New Insights in Flood Risk Management: Learning from Global Case Studies of Stakeholder Partnerships** edited by Divine Kwaku Ahadzie, David Proverbs, Robby Soetanto, and Victor Oluwasina Oladokun.

I know that many of you reading this newsletter will have made contributions to our books, and I thank you for your continued interest in working with us to bring your work to a wide audience.

I am always happy to hear from the ARCOM community about new book projects they are planning, to answer questions about book publishing with Routledge, or make recommendations for those who are less familiar with our catalogue. Please don't hesitate to contact me at any time and I hope to continue what has been a long and productive relationship with members of the community.

*Ed Needle*

*Publisher, Engineering*

*ed.needle@tandf.co.uk | <https://www.routledge.com/>*



*New Routledge books for the CM Community*

## An Introduction to ARCOM Membership

The Association of Researchers in Construction Management (ARCOM) brings together all those interested in construction management research. Its aim is to further the advancement of knowledge in all aspects of management in construction by supporting education, dissemination, and research. Our lively newsletter keeps members in touch with the latest ARCOM news. The highly acclaimed annual conference brings together researchers from all over the world.

Various research workshops provide a means to develop specific subject themes as well as general research methodology. Our publications form a very useful resource for all researchers in this field. These activities help to encourage excellence in the research of our members. Our members include research students, lecturers, professors, consultants, other practitioners and institutions. Although we are primarily a UK association, we welcome members from all over the world. It provides opportunities for contact between researchers in similar fields and between researchers and practitioners.

We have two types of membership available: Institutional Membership and Individual Membership.

### Institutional Membership

Postgraduate Researchers at university departments taking out institutional membership will enjoy the membership discounts at ARCOM conferences which is currently £25 (though note that staff members will not receive a discount unless they are individual members).

University departments taking out institutional memberships will also have their names included on the ARCOM website in public recognition of their commitment to this research community.

Institutional membership relates only to registered Postgraduate Researchers of the respective University. This enables a University Department to pay a single fee for all of its Postgraduate Researchers. The fee for institutional membership is determined by the number of Postgraduate Researchers registered in the department concerned. The annual subscription (from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> April) for institutional membership payable by university departments, is based on a flat band fee, as follows.

- University departments with 1-10 postgraduate researchers - £150
- University departments with 11-20 postgraduate researchers - £300
- University departments with over 20 postgraduate researchers - £500

An invoice can be raised for payment purposes, where we can also note a Reference and/or Purchase Order number if required. ARCOM also accepts a Standing Order arrangement as well as a cheque made payable to "ARCOM."

### Individual Membership

Individuals taking out an ARCOM membership will enjoy a membership discount at ARCOM conferences, which is currently £25. (Please note only paid-up members are eligible for the discount).

Individual membership is open to any interested person, regardless of discipline and background. Individual members pay an annual membership fee (from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> April). There are two types of individual memberships, and their associated costs are as follows:

- Full membership: £20
- Student membership: £15

To join ARCOM as an individual member, if you have not already done so, please first create a "MyARCOM" online account, or use the "Forgot Password" if you have done so previously but cannot remember your login details. Once complete, then register yourself as a member, using the link in the middle of the webpage, where I will then process your application. If you are a registered PhD student, please ensure that your profile reflects this and that you have ticked the option for "student", to enable you to apply for student membership..

#### For further inquiries about ARCOM membership contact:

Dr. John P Spillane

Membership Secretary,

ARCOM, 7 Bell Yard, London, WC2A 2JR, United Kingdom  
membership@arcom.ac.uk or ask at Conference Reception

## ARCOM Membership 2026

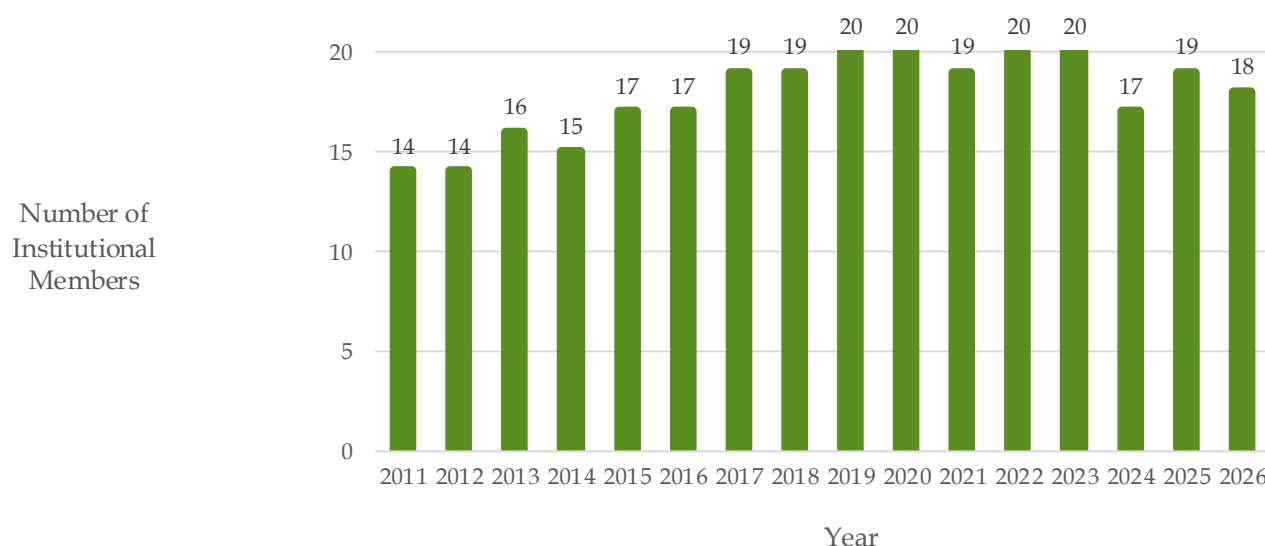
**Membership Officer Dr. John Spillane provides an update**

**ARCOM has 109 Individual Members and 18 Institutional Members**



Currently there are 109 individual ARCOM members; of which 15 are entitled to the reduced student fee of £15. The number of individual members remains steady, with circa 80-110 members, paying their membership fee each year. At this time of year, the paid membership figure is in line with these projections and is anticipated to grow, as we move towards the end of the membership cycle (30th April). Currently, our individual members originate from the United Kingdom (73 members), Netherlands (5), United States (5), Sweden (3), Ireland (3), Australia (3), Ghana (3), Hong Kong (2), and Germany (2). The remainder of our membership covers individuals from South Africa, Portugal, Nigeria, Kuwait, Malaysia, France, Finland, China, United Arab Emirates, and Canada (1 each).

The number of institutional members remains steady. Figure 1 shows that the number of institutional members has increased from 14 in 2011, to 18 this year.



*Development of institutional membership between 2011 to 2026*

### ARCOM currently has 18 Institutional Members

15 Institutions from the UK (Glasgow Caledonian University; Leeds Beckett University; Liverpool John Moores University; London South Bank University; Loughborough University; Northumbria University; Queen's University Belfast; Ulster University; University College London; University of Brighton; University of Huddersfield; University of Manchester; University of Reading; University of Salford, University of the Built Environment),  
2 Institutions from the Republic of Ireland (Technological University Dublin and University of Limerick), and  
1 Institution from Denmark (University of Southern Denmark). For an up-to-date list of registered institutional members for 2026, please refer to the ARCOM website ([www.arcom.ac.uk](http://www.arcom.ac.uk)) and the ARCOM membership page.

For any ARCOM Membership inquiries, be they Individual or Institutional Membership, please feel free to email the Membership Officer, Dr. John Spillane on [membership@arcom.ac.uk](mailto:membership@arcom.ac.uk)



## ARCOM Outreach

As summer has just begun and temperatures across Europe have reached record highs in June, many of our members and conference delegates will have experienced first-hand the impacts of a changing climate on the built environment. In our 1960s office building at the University of Twente, our (air-conditioning-free) corridor nearly reached an indoor temperature of 30°C on 26 June. Just as buildings were subjected to heat stress, so too were infrastructures and infrastructure projects. “Code red” alerts issued in countries such as France, Belgium, and the Netherlands – and later in Poland – led to warnings against road use and, in some cases, the closure of public buildings such as schools. Conditions were at times too hot for asphalt paving operations, bridge joints required cooling to prevent excessive thermal expansion, and railway and road systems faced heightened risks of damage.

*What does this have to do with our newsletter?* Events such as these demonstrate the pressing need for construction researchers to share insights into how we can future-proof the construction industry. This ranges from advancing sustainable and circular practices, to developing partnership frameworks, enabling digitalisation, and delivering mass-scale energy renovation. Together, these efforts can help the sector address major global challenges while fostering a safe and just industry. We therefore need to exchange within our community but also reach out.

ARCOM’s Outreach and Communications activities are expanding. Our Conference Chair is organising the first Industry Day at this year’s conference, we are making more active use of our LinkedIn group, and we have recorded the first episode of the ARCOM Construction Management Research Podcast series. I am pleased to be part of such an engaged group, committed to reaching both our research community and the broader field of construction management. We hope you are (or want to become) too!

Should you wish to contribute in any way, please contact me or other Committee Members in person, via the ARCOM website or LinkedIn.

*Dr. Léon olde Scholtenhuis, University of Twente  
Newsletter Editor  
Outreach and Communications Officer*



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# ARCOM 2027: Announcement

## **New Grounds, Shared Foundations: Novel approaches for a dynamic and changing world**

We are delighted to announce that ARCOM 2027 will be held at the University of Twente in Enschede, the Netherlands. For the first time in ARCOM's 43-year history, our flagship annual conference will take place outside the United Kingdom. This momentous move reflects ARCOM's outward-looking spirit, our commitment to engaging with the global research community and our ambition to address the challenges facing the built environment of tomorrow.

The theme of ARCOM 2027, "New Grounds, Shared Foundations: Novel approaches for a dynamic and changing world", captures this vision. Holding our annual conference outside the United Kingdom for the first time is an act of transposition, as in music: translating a score into a different key. As ARCOM ventures outside our traditional geographical boundaries we are tasked with examining our stance, prompting us to assess what works, critically questioning the status quo and processes that have been taken for granted. Transposing the ARCOM conference beyond the UK's borders is the next step of a planned trajectory of the Committee to embrace new voices. We are proud to now have elected Committee members representing the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Germany, Australia and the Netherlands, a body that now so ably represents the international character of our vibrant research community.

For our 43rd conference, we will travel to the Netherlands and the University of Twente. Founded in 1961 on the former Drienerlo Estate in the city of Enschede, this outstanding institution is one of the four Dutch technical universities. First established through the works of Professor André Dorée and Professor Leentje Volker, a strong and productive relationship has developed between the Construction Management & Engineering Department at Twente and ARCOM. Their collective contributions both to our annual conference and our community have grown exponentially over the last decade. Amongst these have been studies and workshops covering project delivery and organisation, transition management, circularity, digitalisation and research methodology.

Holding our annual conference in outside the UK means that the ARCOM conference dates will fall at the end of August 2027, so **please mark your calendars for Wednesday 25 –Friday 27 August 2027** and keep a close eye out for next year's paper submission deadlines which be published as part of the call for papers and on our website. Preparations are already in progress for what will be a landmark ARCOM conference. There will be regular updates on submission deadlines, the conference theme and other information for authors. Please visit the ARCOM website ([www.arcom.ac.uk](http://www.arcom.ac.uk)) and keep an eye on the November Issue of the Newsletter for further updates.

## **Contact and Further Information**

Conference Chair: Dr. Vivien Chow, Loughborough University

Conference Secretary: Dr. Christopher Neilson, The University of Manchester

All email queries should be directed to [conference@arcom.ac.uk](mailto:conference@arcom.ac.uk) in the first instance.

