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### Latest Contract Wins

The last quarter of 2012 was a buoyant period for William Birch. A number of new projects were secured across the business providing a confident start to the new year.

The £1.8m phased development at **Knavesmire School** in York was a welcome project after the successful completion of the initial phase last year for City of York Council.

An unusual £1.9m project to develop an **underground car park** & orangery with wine cellar is keeping one team busy near Thirsk for a private client, and work has continued York Hospital recently updating the **Maternity Services** & the **Stroke rehabilitation unit**.

Other wins include;

A refurbishment projects at **Prince Henry's Grammar School** in Otley

£1.3m extension & alterations scheme to Soothill Hall at **Ashville College**, Harrogate

Paul Goyea, Construction Director said *"The new projects secured have provided a positive start to 2013 but we are ever mindful that we are still in fragile times so we continue to talk to our customers about their business expectations as well as ensuring they continue to receive a high quality service from the team at William Birch"*

## 50 years at the University of York



The University of York is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year with a calendar of events planned. As one of the first contractors to work on the university buildings at Kings Manor we are proud to have been involved in the various developments on the Campus over the last fifty years, and congratulate them in their achievements during this period. Chris Birch, Managing Director commented

*"The University has grown from nothing to become a leading academic institution in the last 50 years and we are proud to have been involved in its development since it was founded in 1963. There have certainly been a lot of changes to the campus in that time & we look forward to the next fifty!"*

We have supported the University in their celebrations by contributing to the striking exhibition at Kings Manor which focuses on the personalities & early milestones in the University's first half-century & it's close links with the city. This free exhibition includes images of the very first works designed by renowned architect Bernard Feilden, completed at Kings Manor by William Birch back in the sixties.

## Normanton Baptist Church...completed



Normanton Baptist Church in West Yorkshire suffered a devastating fire back in 2009 and has not been an active place of worship since that time, much to the upset of the local community. It suffered another unfortunate turn of events when the contractor restoring the building fell into administration and restoration works stopped. William Birch were asked to step in and complete the £800k project to allow worshippers to once again occupy the 19<sup>th</sup> Century church and restore it to its former glory.

The project was handed over to the Church earlier this month and services will commence in time for the Easter celebrations.

## Sector focus: Chris Birch on the Commercial Sector

William Birch has always been active in the private sector, both on the development side and working directly for commercial customers. However during the latest recessionary years there has been a significant decline in opportunity. However there are signs of change. Chris Birch, MD of the business shares his views;

*"With the modest improvement in the private sector, which is partially offsetting continued contraction in public sector demand, we are seeing a shift towards a stronger pipeline of opportunity with our private sector customers. We have recently leased one of our properties to the North Yorkshire and York PCT on our Omega Business Village site at Northallerton and an office suite in Leeds to an interested property company, there are also sparks of interest in property we have elsewhere, demand is definitely picking up."*

Elsewhere in the business the contracting teams have a strong pipeline of opportunity in the private education sector and also on new build developments in Leeds. The latest report from Glenigan supports this, suggesting that the commercial sector has remained stable since December 2012 having experienced a 5 month period of decline. Chris continues *"Retailers are starting to upgrade their premises to remain ahead of the strong high street competition and we have been working with restaurateurs like Betty's and Taylors of Harrogate to improve their facilities. Whilst modest we do have confidence that this is the start of growth, from a low base, in this sector"*.