



MEDIA RELEASE

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NORTHERN BALLET THEATRE MARKS MAJOR BUILD MILESTONE

The new £12m Northern Ballet Theatre and Phoenix Dance Theatre headquarters reached a significant build milestone last week as Wates Construction held a topping out ceremony with the Deputy Lord Mayor of Leeds on the Quarry Hill site.

The development is due to be completed later this year and will see the creation of the largest dance space outside London. The six-storey building will comprise seven dance studios, a 200-seat theatre, a health suite, wardrobe facilities, office space, a restaurant and public exhibition area.

The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Patrick Davey was joined by representatives from Leeds City Council, Wates Construction, Northern Ballet Theatre and Phoenix Dance Theatre, as well as key stakeholders and partners in the city. In a twist on the traditional topping out ceremony, Wates Construction presented the dance companies with a symbolic yew tree to bring the building and those who will enjoy it, happiness and prosperity. Cllr Davey was then invited to bury a memory stick containing electronic memorabilia underneath one of the dance studio floors.

Historically, the topping out ceremony marks the topmost beam being placed in the building to complete the structure. Its origins harp back to pagan times where the purpose of the ceremony was to appease tree-dwelling spirits and bring good luck by placing a yew tree branch in the uppermost part of the building.

Bringing together two of the UK's leading dance companies; the headquarters will be the only space to house a national classical and national contemporary dance company alongside each other. The building will form part of the city's cultural-quarter with its neighbours the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Yorkshire Dance, BBC Leeds and the Leeds College of Music. It is the first BREEAM excellent building for Leeds City Council.

Dave Price, Wates Construction's regional manager, said: "It is fantastic to be part of such a high-profile project that will reinforce Leeds' status as a cultural powerhouse. We're making great progress and this topping out ceremony indicates a big step forward in the construction of this impressive building, which is already making its mark upon the city's landscape. I sincerely hope that the Northern Ballet and Phoenix dance companies flourish in their new home."

Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Patrick Davey said: "It is fantastic that Leeds has made provisions for such a great dance space in the city. The project is a brilliant way of showing Leeds' cultural mix and the topping out ceremony provides another great step forward towards the completion of the project."

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Please direct any media queries to Lisa Margis (07748 301005) or Fiona Kirwan (07974 722275)

Notes to Editors

Wates is one of the UK's largest family-owned construction services and development companies. Established in 1897, it remains privately owned by the Wates Family. Wates employs over 2000 people and had a turnover of £945 million in 2009. www.wates.co.uk

The company works across a range of sectors, including education, prisons, affordable housing, retail fit out and refurbishment, office interiors, land development and commercial buildings.

Wates has three areas of Corporate Responsibility focus: to reduce the impact of CO2 emissions from our activities, eliminate all non-hazardous waste to landfill by 2010 and boost skills and employability in areas of most need. Wates was awarded Silver status in the 2008 Business in the Community Responsible Business index.

NBT and Phoenix Dance Theatre are building a future for dance in Leeds for dance artists, enthusiasts and audiences across the north of England. The building has been designed by the Strategic Design Alliance, a partnership between Jacobs Architecture and Leeds City Council. To find out more visit www.building-momentum.co.uk