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## **Bob Little: Specialist builders help to construct Britain's economic renaissance**

2 August 2013 • By [Bob Little](#)

**Traditionally, activity in the construction sector is one of the key indicators of economic boom or bust.**



Dennis Barnard with ME Construction's finance director, John Yeo, with the firm's 'Fast Track 100' trophy

It's a sector that's been pretty quiet in recent years – Olympic building projects aside – but there are signs that this is changing. And one of the constituent parts of the construction sector to provide this boost is the small, specialist business sector.

Last December, [ME Construction](#) – the London-based specialist refurbishment contractor – was the only specialist construction company named in the current 'Fast Track 100', a list of the UK's 100 fastest growing privately owned companies. ME Construction works in the [conservation](#), [refurbishment](#), [healthcare](#) and [selected new build](#) sectors throughout London and the surrounding areas. It concentrates on the delivery of small to medium-sized projects – typically, not exceeding £4.5m. It was named in the Fast Track 100 – admittedly only in 93<sup>rd</sup> place – as a result of sales growth for 2011/12 of 52.57% to some £12.6m.

The company's Operations Director, Dennis Barnard, commented: "We've certainly seen growth in both sales and projects – and that growth has been translated into an increased headcount, so we're doing what we can to help the UK's economy – as well as meet and exceed our clients' expectations."

ME Construction's recent [projects](#) include a [high-profile refurbishment](#) at Westminster Abbey. Working with architects Purcell Miller Tritton LLP, ME Construction converted the Abbey's Grade II Listed Air Raid Shelter into an archive centre, comprising an office, a strong room and related sanitary facilities. This included the provision of new services including ventilation, mains power, heating and lighting. Working with the same architect, ME Construction carried out external works to the rear of a Grade I listed structure inside the Abbey grounds. This involved demolishing an unlisted single storey extension and re-configuring the area to form an external paved sunken garden; rebuilding a 15th century party wall and restoring the original timber door and window frames, as well as inserting new external doors and windows.

Earlier this summer, Dennis Barnard represented the company at a reception to 'celebrate small business' held at Number 10 Downing Street and hosted by the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon David Cameron MP. Mr Barnard said: "We aim to be professional and profitable, focusing on quality delivery. It was good to meet other businesspeople at Number 10 who also promote – in their respective sectors of the economy – the principles of high quality results, achieved through collaborative teamwork."

Now, at the invitation of both Lord Young of Graffham, the Prime Minister's Enterprise Adviser, and Sir Terry Leahy, the former Tesco Chief Executive, ME Construction has become one of 250 companies – collectively known as the Accelerate 250 – nominated by the Government to lead Britain's economic renaissance. Members of the Accelerate 250 are intended to represent the UK's so-called 'vital six per cent' of businesses that create more than half of the nation's new jobs by changing industries and creating new markets.

According to ME Construction's Business Development Director, Paul Driver, "Apparently, we received our invitation to join the Accelerate 250 because of our ability, as a company, to create change and innovate in our sector."

Dennis Barnard added: "Naturally, we're delighted to have been identified as one of the country's key firms, creating jobs at a time when the UK needs them most. So we're keen to contribute in helping Britain's business start-up community to think bigger, bolder and better – and help make Britain a global centre for industrial and commercial excellence in the coming years."

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