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Experts in virtual construction win international award for billion dollar building

Building Information Management specialists from BIM Academy at Northumbria University, Newcastle, have been named the overall winners of the 48-hour Build Sydney Live 2013 competition.

BIM Academy, a joint venture between Northumbria University and Ryder Architecture Ltd, competed with teams from around the world in an 'against the clock' virtual challenge to create the best building proposal for the new \$1 billion Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre at Darling Harbour.

For the first time ever, the judges had to delay their final decision overnight; such was the level of competition. But in the end BIM Academy was announced as the winner in what organisers described as ‘the closest fought Build Live event so far’.

BIM Academy Managing Director, Peter Barker, explained how his team, including Northumbria University staff, collaborated with colleagues from Norway, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK, to create the winning proposal.

He said: “BIM Academy is delighted with this result. We have achieved success in previous BIM competitions, but this is the first time we have really tested the potential for multidisciplinary working across the globe.

“We were able to work intensively across multiple time zones with our colleagues at Ryder, AECOM, dRofus, KyKloud and Colour and produce a wealth of information about the design, construction and operation to meet a very challenging brief in a landmark location in Sydney.

“Building design was only part of the challenge - we also needed to simulate demolition and construction, develop a cost plan and achieve a high sustainability rating as well as demonstrate collaborative team working across multiple locations.”

Build Live events are worldwide competitions held to demonstrate how new technology is revolutionising the way buildings are designed, built and used. They also show the potential for collaborative working and public engagement.

Building Information Modelling (BIM) is a process involving the structured sharing and coordination of digital information about a building project throughout its entire lifecycle, from design, procurement and construction to the operation and management stage. This involves the use of coordinated 3D design models enriched with data which are created and managed using a range of interoperable technologies.

BIM allows the development and testing of a digital prototype of a building in advance of its physical realisation, thereby delivering greater cost certainty, eliminating error, improving programme duration and reducing risk.

As a joint venture between Northumbria University and Ryder Architecture Ltd, BIM Academy is an independent and impartial body that undertakes consultancy, research, software development, training, education and support for the entire construction industry.

For further information, including examples of forthcoming BIM Academy events, such as BIM For Free, the three-day Virtual Project collaborative CPD and other courses, go to: www.northumbria.ac.uk/bim and www.bimacademy.ac.uk.

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