

Case study: The Carey Group

Careys' excellent project management approach combines with Asta Powerproject and Asta Easyplan for business success



About The Carey Group

The Carey Group is a leading independently owned construction company, operating across the UK and Ireland. Its key services are Civil Engineering, Construction, Concrete Structures, Demolition, Building and Environmental Solutions. It is passionate about delivering quality projects and client satisfaction, and strives for excellence in everything it does.

The Group's continued investment in training, specialist plant and strategic assets, plus its strong internal culture of teamwork and well-grounded family values are integral to the company's success.

The Carey Group provides an unparalleled range of specialist construction and waste management services, and its portfolio of services has been developed to meet the challenges and requirements of markets and clients. Clients can count on rock-solid standards of reliability and financial security. Careys employs the highest standards of ethics to ensure that it builds relationships and partnerships that extend far beyond the project in hand.

Find out more about Careys here: www.careysplc.co.uk.



London Cable Car – South Tower Steel Work Installation

The Carey Group is a multi-disciplinary construction company providing a total construction service with group resources from inception to finished project. Over the past 42 years it has developed a trusted reputation for delivering a diverse and extensive range of contracts. Its civil engineering sector is recognised as one of the UK and Ireland's specialist Civil Engineering Contractors. It has a wealth of industry experience and in-house expertise to deliver the most challenging of projects; particularly those relating to complex concrete structures and poor ground conditions. It delivers both minor and

major contracts, while operating either as a Principal Contractor or in support of a Construction Partner, to time, to budget and to quality; its success is borne out by its long-standing relationships with its clients.

What is exceptional about The Carey Group (Careys) is that all of the individual Carey businesses can operate both as standalone business units, with their own experienced team of experts, or as integrated businesses to deliver multi-disciplinary contracts. A major strength of the company is the management teams who not only understand their own businesses,

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but are experienced in working with colleagues from other divisions as part of a 'joined up' seamless project team of specialists. Careys likes to use Asta Powerproject to operate the end-to-end management of its contracts; this is mainly because the various modules of the software are able to integrate and run concurrently, in support of the Carey approach.

Used in conjunction, Asta Powerproject and Asta Easyplan (which form part of the Asta Powerproject suite of project, portfolio and resource management software) give the company the right mix of software to help run projects which, while diverse in nature, all complement each other when integrated. The Asta Powerproject suite allows sharing of files between its software solutions, and is compatible with other software, so is a complete resource for transferring critical information between users. With the way Careys works, Asta Powerproject is preferred primarily by the planners for its wider functionality, while Asta Easyplan is the right fit for the project managers.

Senior Project Manager, Jamie Smith, with more than 20 years' experience in the civil engineering industry, talks about why he and his team of site engineers use Asta Easyplan as their preferred project management software.

"We use Asta Easyplan from tender stage right through to construction. We find it particularly useful as a site, live document programming tool, taking the main programme and developing it specifically for site purposes. Programmes change throughout the life cycle of a project and Easyplan makes it simple for us to manage those changes."

Asta Easyplan's ease-of-use is greatest benefit

"What we like about Easyplan is that it really does do what it says – it makes planning easy. Anyone with the smallest amount of construction knowledge can easily and quickly plan a project from start to finish – it is a logical and intuitive piece of software."

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London Cable Car – South Tower Base Complete

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"We make use of Easyplan a lot to create Short Term Target Programmes. Working against the master programme (in Asta Powerproject) we produce our own target programme that spans blocks of two weeks. The advantage of this is that we can set our own end points. Projects are constantly evolving and changing owing to the nature of site conditions and client objectives; milestones in the master programme therefore also change. So if we finish a target date earlier than in the programme for example, we don't necessarily want that information to be transparent at this stage; so we manage our schedule of short-term events separately with all the information we need incorporated, then feed it straight back into the master programme. Easyplan is great for this because you can put together a fully populated schedule so much more quickly than in MSP or even Excel."

Asta Easyplan meets the challenges too

"Easyplan is especially good at managing the shorter-term projects of the subcontractor, or those with a tighter timescale. It is perfect for our projects because we don't need our programme to cover buying the land at one end, right through to painting the walls at the other. We want it to be project-specific."

"One particularly challenging project we worked on recently was the Thames Cable Car project. This crossing link runs for 1.1km and rises to 50m (164ft) above the river. The cable cars link two 2012 Olympic venues, the O2 arena in Greenwich with the Excel exhibition centre in the Royal Docks in east London – it is an incredible piece of engineering. Constructing the support columns – the third of which in the middle of the Thames itself – brought so many challenges and nuances of change to the programme, especially since the nature of the project meant it was set across four different sites under one contract, with one being constructed in a marine environment. We had to manage around tidal constraints and difficult ground conditions. On top of that we had a very tight time frame to complete before the Olympic Games commenced – with no leeway. We needed flexible software – one that would allow us to make almost constant changes, and do it quickly: after all, what we want to do is get on with the job, not focus on admin and management. With Easyplan we could accommodate the changes super-fast – saving lots of time – and stay on track."

The features that make the difference

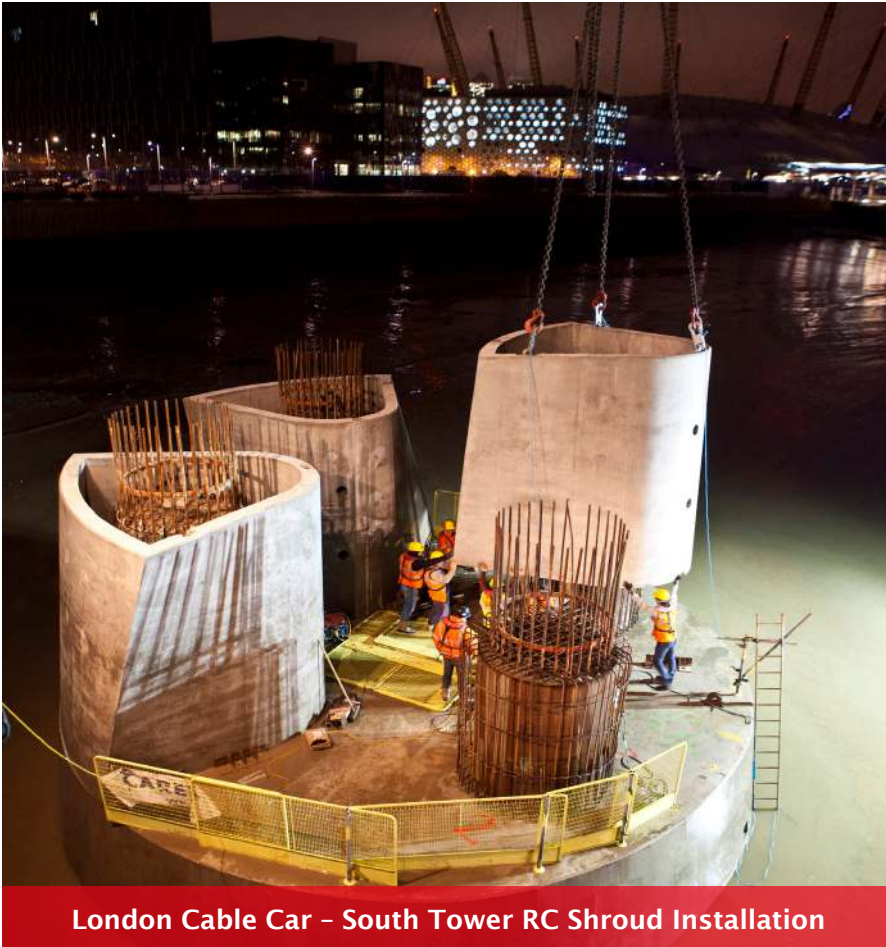
"With all projects, the headache comes when times and tasks change. Project management is really change management – being able to make changes quickly and resolve issues efficiently, is key to our project success. It's all about speed. This is why we like Easyplan."

"A great feature for us is how simple it makes the often complicated job of linking tasks. Moving jobs around

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London Cable Car – South Tower RC Shroud Installation

means breaking those links – linking them back up again can be an onerous task. Easyplan’s advantage over every other piece of software I have used is how easy it makes this process.

With other software – you can get lost in the amount of links you make. Keeping tabs on where everything ends up is difficult. But with Easyplan it’s simple to break links, move things around,

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and link it all back up again quickly and with little effort. Nothing gets lost or out of place. For example, you might be pouring ground floor slab concrete. The next task might be erecting the columns. Every item is linked in sequence. But in the real world, bad weather might mean you have to move the start date of the first job. In Easyplan, you just break that link, move your slab to the desired position, everything moves and with a click you can link it all back up again.”

“Given the choice we would go for Easyplan above Microsoft Project every time. In a nutshell, you can dive straight into it without being a planning expert, you can use it without thinking about it, the output looks good, and it works.”

Scaling up to meet expectations

Careys’ business philosophy centres

around a model of self-delivery, which allows it to fully manage all elements of a project while ensuring it excels in the delivery of a quality and safe project. Being best placed to drive programmes and control budgets is important, and Jamie can see the potential of Asta Easyplan to support this.

“ What we like about Easyplan is that it really does do what it says – it makes planning easy. ”

“You don’t always have to use the more fully functional version of the software to fulfil your needs – Asta Easyplan gives us exactly what we need but is scalable too: you can add bolt-ons to accommodate your needs as they develop, and get training on modules as you need them. Our plan in the next 12 months is to attend an advanced Asta training module to incorporate budget control. There is a real need for this – like any contractor you always need to report on progress in terms of revenue generation or constraints. What this module will give us is sight of budget challenges, or where the opportunities lie, or what the effect will be on the bottom line if we are behind schedule and need to employ more resource; Careys likes to know it can adapt to deliver client expectations. It will also allow us to compare where we are versus the original estimate, and how we have performed against budget. This brings value not only to the project management and planning community but reaches beyond into commercial. Easyplan is a great asset to anyone that comes into contact with a project.”

With its unique approach of offering integrated, seamless project management, Carey’s teams are able to reduce project costs, ensure consistency, consolidate programmes and effectively manage more construction risks. It is able to run its projects speedily with no compromise to quality, no matter the diversity or complexity – putting its customers’ expectations at the heart of its business is what makes Careys so successful.

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