

**CONTRACTOR** Taylor Woodrow is due to complete phase one of a £26.2m Smithfield Meat Market refurbishment - the East Market - at the end of May. The executive architect and lead consultant is HLM Architects, structural engineer is YRM Anthony Hunt Associates, services engineer is WS Atkins, and QS is Northcroft Neighbour & Nicholson. This week the Corporation of London is being asked to approve phase two, a £25.7m refurbishment of the neighbouring West Market. Approval will be conditional on three-quarters of the trading space being pre-let. Construction of the West Market is likely to start early next year.



## Latham review to spawn quango

*Australian model could implement inquiry's findings. Adrian Barrick reports.*

WHITEHALL and industry leaders are debating whether to launch a government-backed agency to implement Sir Michael Latham's report on conflict in construction.

DOE sources said this week that ministers and senior officials are determined to ensure that Latham's report, due to be published in July, is not shelved like its predecessor, the 1963 Banwell inquiry.

The model under consideration at the DOE is the Australian Construction Industry Development Agency (see right).

Executive director of the Australian Institute of Building Don Debus said that since CIDA was launched in 1991 "there have been very encouraging signs in the performance of the big contractors".

If it were adopted in the UK,

the Australian-style agency would be the prime vehicle for implementing Latham's recommendations. The agency would be funded by government and industry, and would include clients. Industry leaders want it to be headed by Sir Michael.

The UK plan is already gathering support among consultants, subcontractors,

builders and clients. But Jim Turner, the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors' director of external affairs, said the Australian model "would not work here. It is too formal.

"We have told the DOE in no uncertain terms to wait and see what Latham produces before we decide how to follow it up."

Stephen Davies, the BEC's

director of legal affairs, said: "I would take some convincing to establish some sort of quango."

Davies said he would prefer to continue the monthly meetings of industry leaders held during the inquiry.

But CIC chief executive Graham Watts said: "The CIDA is a good model. It is 70% funded by the Australian government, it is not very bureaucratic and it is project based."

The specialists SEC Group spokesman Rudi Klein said he was interested in the CIDA proposal, but he warned: "We are concerned that whatever is created has some teeth. It has to be statutory and have government backing."

Will McKee, director general of the BPF property group said: "The rapport and goodwill built up during the Latham inquiry should not be lost."

**AUSTRALIA'S Construction Industry Development Agency was launched jointly by the government and industry in December 1991 to boost productivity, reduce internal conflict and lift research and development.**

**The 15-strong agency was given a three-and-a-half year lifespan and a £5m budget. It is supported by 20 action teams, including 220 industry representatives.**

**The CIDA has already introduced "pre-qualification criteria" which are mandatory on all federal government and many state government-funded schemes, and requires firms to demonstrate they have adequate financial resources, can build safely and on time.**

**The CIDA will be wound up in June 1995.**

## MP asks Parliament to strengthen subcontractors' arm in insolvency cases

**CALLS FOR** a long-awaited reform of insolvency law to protect subcontractors and suppliers when a main contractor collapses were made in Parliament this week.

Conservative MP Julian

Brazier presented a private member's bill on Tuesday in an attempt to introduce a lien system, which is modelled on a four-year-old system used in Canada.

The lien, which is a charge on the contractors's assets,

allows subcontractors and suppliers to claim payment for any goods and services if the contractor goes bust.

Under current law, when a receiver is appointed it has control over all materials on site - and very often

retention money - and has to pay off the banks first.

Brazier is taking his case to Department of Trade and Industry minister Neil Hamilton next month and wants the proposal included in the Latham review.