



Status building: buying Broadgate has assured Ritblat a place among the industry's leaders

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Winner John Ritblat



In the cut and thrust of the property world, where respect is a hard-won asset, one recent deal has won almost universal admiration. Buying Broadgate has finally assured British Land's chairman John Ritblat a place among the sector's undoubted leaders.

Anyone who can take on the country's largest property transaction and absorb £700m of debt without visible damage deserves such kudos. But gaining that status has been a long and often bloody struggle.

Some analysts still query the wisdom of putting so many eggs in Broadgate's basket – effectively a heavy bet on a recovery in City rents. But Ritblat has been shrugging off such barbs for as long as he can remember. He nursed British Land through three recessions, rising from a penny a share to rank second only to Land Securities as Britain's largest property company. And he still has time to dip his fingers in a host of other pies, taking strategic stakes in far smaller joint-venture companies.

A developer for our time.