

# building construction design


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Industry News  
Groundworks  
Structural Elements  
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Heating & Ventilation  
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Eco

April/May 2013







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editorial@netmagmedia.eu

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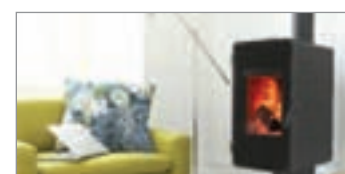
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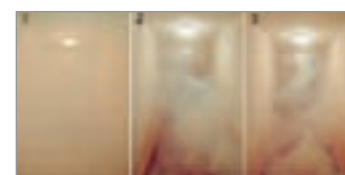
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Cover image supplied by  
Arbor; see page 43 for  
further information





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### Safety

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### Homogeneous

Pearlazzo PUR, Prestige PUR, Mystique PUR, Classic Mystique PUR, 2000 PUR, XL PU, Standard XL

### Heterogeneous

Forest FX PUR, Acoustix Forest FX PUR, Acoustix Gallery PUR

### Luxury Vinyl Tile

Expona Design, Kudos, Bevel Line, Camaro Flooring Collection



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## news

## 'Right to Light' planning law explained

Following the recent announcement that historic laws, which guarantee homeowners the right to enjoy light that comes into their homes could be changed, Steve Sadler, land manager at Waterfords Land explains what the law is and what changes could mean for homeowners. He comments: "As the current law stands, as a property owner you can acquire a legal right to a certain amount of daylight and within a home, just over half the room should be lit by natural light. Broadly speaking, the minimum standard is equivalent to the light from one candle, one foot away. Issues can arise when developments, including neighbour extensions, take

place and threaten the entitled amount of light entering a home.

"House extensions are a common cause of 'right to light' disputes, as homeowners may employ a local building firm to extend their property without knowing the development could affect their neighbours. The most common problem that we find is where the neighbour has a window to the side of their house to which the light is blocked by a high wall."

In revising the laws, Steve confirms that it could leave homeowners in more doubt over their rights to enjoy light, 'which is very important to people'.



## TrustMark's top tips for selfbuilders employing tradesmen

When undertaking a self build, one of the most important decisions you need to consider is taking on skilled and specialist tradesmen to help carry out the building work. With so many rogue traders out there, it's important that you find the right tradesmen, are clear about what you need them to do and develop a good relationship with them. TrustMark, the government endorsed quality mark signposting people to reputable tradesmen, has put together some top tips on how to deal with tradesmen:

- Always use reputable tradesmen who have been recommended to you, by friends, family or industry professionals and always check the quality of work they have had done. Make sure you're using a firm or tradesman that is registered for the particular trade you require – TrustMark's website has the largest database of accredited tradesmen.
- Be wary of a tradesman who say they can start work the next day or within a few days. A good tradesman is usually busy and will have work booked in advance.
- Where possible, source materials yourself, as tradesmen can sometimes introduce mark-ups. But if materials need to be bought in advance by the tradesman, it is reasonable that the customer is asked to pay a fair percentage of these costs as the job progresses.
- Always use a written contract as it offers you protection if anything does go wrong and agree in writing any changes to the agreed contract value and ensure these are agreed in writing before the work is done.
- Ask for a guarantee and proof that the tradesman has liability insurance to work in your home and ensure the tradesman belongs to a professional accredited scheme that supports the guarantee he or she offers you.
- Ensure you receive a full written estimate or quotation, including a full job specification, which is broken down and fully understood by you. Remember a quote is the only way to obtain a fixed price for your job.
- Agree a time scale for the start of a job and duration and establish who will be working in your home, such as how many workmen or labourers will be included.
- Ensure you communicate with your tradesman even if you are happy, but especially if you are not. You should be very clear about what you need them to do, and what you expect, and they should tell you what they can do. Always keep two-way communication with your tradesmen to ensure they are on schedule and happy with everything.
- Check the tradesman's work at regular intervals. Unless you are very confident, it's always a good idea to check on their progress and the quality of work to make sure it is what you agreed.
- Do not pay more than 25 per cent of the job value if you have paid a deposit to allow your tradesman to purchase materials for your job in advance, and ensure that your deposit is protected and underwritten by the organisation they belong to. If you have agreed staged payment ensure you have established at what stage the payments are to be made and do not make any payment if you are not happy that the stage or the standards you require have been achieved.
- All good tradesmen will operate a sign off procedure by checking with you on-site that you are happy with the completed work before final payment is made. This is the final control you will have over your job and should form part of the finalising of your guarantee.
- Do your homework! Learn some of the key trades that you need, perhaps by reading a book or by taking a short course, to become more familiar with some of the technical aspects of each trade and the jargon. That way, when you are talking with a tradesman, you have an understanding and are less likely to get smarted by a rogue trader.
- Develop a good working relationship with your tradesman – it's very important. You need them to do a good job and they need to protect their reputation, so work together.

## events

### Eco Technology Show

14-15 June, The Brighton Centre, Brighton  
The UK's premier event for trade, building owners, occupiers, and the general public covering sustainable build, energy, transport and technology.  
[www.ecotechnologyshow.co.uk](http://www.ecotechnologyshow.co.uk)

### World's first Quiet House at Ideal Home Show

The Ideal Home Show joins the Quiet Revolution this week with the World's first Quiet House; a showcase of the quietest technology for everyday living. The Quiet House will offer solutions to those looking for a peaceful life. Visit the Selfbuilder & Homemaker news blog, [sbh-news.blogspot.co.uk](http://sbh-news.blogspot.co.uk), and enter the reference number below to view more information.



# Will building performance suffer along with relaxed office-to-residential conversion planning rules?

At the end of January, the government announced that it is considering relaxing planning rules to make it easier to turn empty offices into residential space in a bid to boost the UK housing market. While, in theory, the conversion of redundant office buildings and relaxation of planning constraints will increase the number of residential properties coming to market, Tom Cox, innovation and product manager at Saint-Gobain Isover, believes there are many issues to be taken into consideration before projects of this type become mainstream.

As you'd expect, there are a number of fundamental design differences between offices and residential housing that must be taken into consideration when looking at conversion. The 70s and 80s were a boom period for office construction and at this time, building regulations were not as stringent as they are now. Some key areas of focus for contractors taking on office-to-house conversion projects should be the thermal, fire and acoustic performance requirements, which can require significant alteration in order to be brought up to today's standards.

In recent years there has been a lot of development in improving the thermal efficiency of buildings. This has been bought about initially by the government's Community Energy Saving

Programme (CESP) and, more recently, the advent of Green Deal. Thermally, offices being converted would have to be upgraded in order to make them suitable for residential use. One of the most simple and cost effective ways for contractors to meet regulations is to use an internal wall insulation (IWI) system, which works with the existing fabric of the building and has a quick installation time, keeping labour costs low.

As well as considering the thermal requirements of housing, contractors and installers tasked with office-to-house RMI work will also have to think about controlling noise transfer – both within and between dwellings – and enhancing fire measures.

The retrofitting of an acoustic measure is notoriously difficult due the vast array of potential flanking paths in existing buildings. When designing a building for a given purpose, acoustic performance is considered throughout the design and construction process in order to control noise transference both within building cavities and through structures. However, the retrofitted application of a measure to control noise, particularly impact sound, can be difficult in conversions of this type and if done poorly, can be a continuous source of annoyance to future occupants. In fact, this can be so extreme

that their health and wellbeing becomes affected. Solutions to control noise transference, both within and between dwellings, range from wall and floor insulation to specialist ductwork insulation systems.

In addition to thermal and acoustic considerations, fire requirements also need to be taken into account. In office development there is typically less escape routes than in residential developments. In order to comply with regulations, additional escape routes may need to be added, in the form of new stair wells for example. Alternatively, extensive passive fire measures will need to be installed in the form of higher performing fire partitions and fire control systems.

Office-to-house conversion may well prove to help ease the housing crisis, however it's vital that thermal, fire and acoustic standards are met and where possible exceeded. With a selection of systems and products available to facilitate the successful conversion of offices for residential use, there should be no issue bringing spaces in line with the required standards. I just hope building performance is held at the forefront of all conversions to create safe, comfortable, healthy dwellings.



## RM Architects gain planning for assisted living housing in Grade 2 complex

Designed by **Richard Morton Architects** working with Sidell Gibson, proposals by Beechcroft Developments for assisted living and keyworker housing on an historic site in Henley have been unanimously approved by the planning committee of South Oxfordshire District Council.

The proposals form part of a comprehensive redevelopment of the Townlands site, which also includes a new hospital and care home, to be delivered by a consortium under the leadership of regeneration specialists Amber Solutions for Care.

Richard Morton said: "I'm delighted to have got approval for this project which rounds off my 25 years of work at Sidell Gibson and which, as it moves forward, will provide one of

the first major projects for my new firm."

The majority of the 32 assisted living units will be created within the grade 2 listed complex of buildings which originally formed the Henley Workhouse. The complex, parts of which date back as far as 1790, had been neglected in recent years.

Richard continues: "The complex is regarded by English Heritage as an important survival and is now set to re-emerge as a housing development of great charm and character for older people. There is a big challenge in the complexity and sensitivity of these buildings but we believe that RMA's wealth of experience with listed buildings and with design for older people will enable us to deliver a top class result for Beechcroft."

### NEWS BYTES

The latest news for housebuilders and developers. Visit [www.hbd-news.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.hbd-news.blogspot.co.uk) and enter the Reference Number for more information.

Charles Church invest in a training programme for its talented sales advisors....  
**Ref: 58860**

NHBC freezes fees to support housebuilding industry...  
**Ref: 56046**

Planning measures will make best use of under-used buildings...  
**Ref: 14623**

£46 million boost for 132 local energy schemes...  
**Ref: 17347**

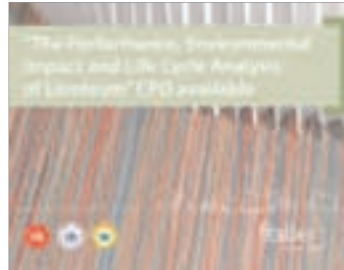
Hate rising energy costs? Green Deal With It...  
**Ref: 96468**



**Fibrelite**, who specialise in the design and manufacture of light-weight composite watertight access covers is delighted to announce the following RIBA certified CPD Providers Network material is now available to book as a CPD seminar: *Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) Composite Manhole and Trench Access Covers: A Safe, Light Alternative to Metal and Concrete and a Solution to the Metal Theft Epidemic*

01756 799773

[www.fibrelite.com](http://www.fibrelite.com)



**Forbo's** RIBA certified CPD seminar entitled *The Performance, Environmental Impact and Life Cycle Analysis of Linoleum* explores the environmental credentials and durability of this exceptionally sustainable and versatile flooring solution. Offering high quality, durable floor coverings that enhance the interior environment, while responding to today's ecological concerns, Forbo is a world leading supplier of linoleum, a floor covering made from natural materials such as linseed oil, rosin, wood flour and jute, for over 150 years. The company's market leading linoleum brand, Marmoleum, with twelve independently awarded eco-labels, has 97 per cent natural raw materials, 72 per cent of which are rapidly renewable and 43 per cent recycled. At this CPD seminar, one of seven offered by Forbo, attendees find out more about the independent life cycle assessment methodology and life cycle cost of linoleum and its performance and design. They see how the durability, cleanability and maintenance properties of Marmoleum have been enhanced with the introduction of Topshield2, a completely new and reformulated surface finish, and discover how the floor covering is being used to great effect across the health, education, retail, commercial and hospitality and leisure sectors.

01592 647209

[www.forbo-flooring.co.uk/linoleumcpd](http://www.forbo-flooring.co.uk/linoleumcpd)



*Resin Based Surfacing* is the title of the popular CPD seminar designed for Landscape Architects, Designers, Architects, Developers and Local Government provided by **Addagrip**. The seminar provides information on Resin Bound, Resin Bonded and Tree Pit surface finishes along with details of base build up specifications and SUDS. Addagrip CPD's are available nationwide and run for approximately one hour but can be tailored to suit.

01825 761333

[www.addagrip.co.uk](http://www.addagrip.co.uk)



**BAL** is offering architects a comprehensive family of seminars, each giving detailed coverage of a particular aspect of tiling. *Problem solving with tiling solutions*, *Specifying tiling in heavily trafficked areas*, *Specifying tiling for leisure facilities* and *Specifying natural stone* all use real projects for illustration of challenges and solutions. There is a detailed consideration of sustainability and environmental factors, alongside thorough coverage of all relevant standards.

01782 591100

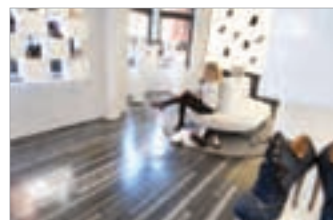
[www.bal-adhesives.com](http://www.bal-adhesives.com)



**Kemper System** has a world-wide reputation for quality dependable waterproofing with proven longevity. Kemper's RIBA assessed and approved CPD seminar is a succinct 45 minute presentation of the key areas relating to cold liquid-applied waterproofing for flat roofs and other applications. Liquid waterproofing is the fastest growing sector of the roofing market and in many cases now the preferred method for both new build and refurbishment.

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**Bona**, experts in wooden floor finishes, offer two RIBA approved seminars for architects and other specifiers. The first explains how to specify a finish for a wooden floor to achieve the required surface performance. The requirement may be for an anti-slip surface, very high durability, a natural, low sheen look, or a combination of several aesthetic or technical criteria. Bona's second seminar explains benefits of specifying adhesives as a means of wood floor installation.

01908 525 150

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**Creagh** offer a one hour CPD seminar that outlines the latest developments in *Precast Concrete Flooring Technology*, covering new systems available, designed to help architects and specifiers achieve Code for Sustainable Homes levels 3-6. The seminar also covers key factors to consider when specifying precast flooring and overviews the various features that precast systems offer the commercial and residential building sectors.

01480 217 454

[www.creaghconcrete.com](http://www.creaghconcrete.com)

## REVIEW

## Visitor numbers soar 15% at Surface Design Show



Exhibitors at Surface Design Show (5 - 7 February) were delighted as thousands flowed into the only UK event to focus exclusively on innovative and exciting interior and exterior surface solutions.

Explains show director, Christopher Newton: "There has been a real buzz on every day of the Show. At 4119, visitor numbers were up by close to 15 per cent on last year, and it's the highest number of visitors we've seen since Montgomery Exhibitions took over the show."

Surface Design Show hosted a series of presentations, debates and CPD Seminars across the three days of the show filing the two purpose built theatres. More than 750 professional visitors

attended the Preview Evening many joining in the FX Live Debate entitled Material People.

Architects and designers presenting 20 of their favourite slides, each one for no more than 20 seconds, was the highlight of the second day's PechaKucha Evening.

The first ever Surface Design Awards, hosted by Annabelle Filer of SCIN with a keynote address by Eric Parry of Eric Parry Architects, were presented in front of a packed audience. The Velvet Underground Nightclub in Singapore won the Supreme Award, beating an international field of surface projects.

The roles and purchasing power of the visitors was also a key consideration and feedback from

the exhibitors indicates that the majority of people enquiring at the stands had real projects for which they were looking for innovative surface designs.

Summing up the show, Christopher said: "The responses we have been receiving are incredibly positive and our exhibitors were genuinely delighted with the results they achieved. We couldn't have asked for a better match of exciting and unusual surface designs with architects and interior designers looking for materials for real-world projects. We are looking forward to building even more on this success for Surface Design Show 2014."

## Get set for the kbb LDN 2013 Innovation Awards

After the resounding success of the Innovation Awards at kbb LDN 2011, the prestigious competition is now back for its second year and is set to unveil yet again the most exciting advancements in the industry.

The kbb LDN Innovation Awards celebrate the most groundbreaking advancements across the kitchen and bathroom industries. This exciting competition allows industry manufacturers to not only put their products in front of an expert panel of judges, but also in front of thousands at the exhibition if selected.

Any product put forward for the award must demonstrate innovation at the highest level,

and have been or will be launched between May 2012 and May 2013.

The expert judging panel will be chaired by Martin Allen-Smith, editor of Designer Kitchens & Bathrooms magazine. Martin comments: "The kbb LDN Innovation Awards is an ideal opportunity for kitchen and bathroom brands to be rewarded and recognised industry-wide for their innovation and creativity. These are highly sought-after awards and the quality of entries in the past has been exceptional. I very much look forward to seeing what some of the leading manufacturers from across the sectors have in store for the judges this year".

The other two judges joining Martin

are Robert Timmons of Robert Timmons Furniture who will be bringing his specialist bespoke design skills to the judging panel and interior designer Daniel Hopwood, an expert in creative and practical design.

The judges will produce a shortlist of up to 20 entries that will be on display at kbb LDN. These products will then be assessed further by both judges and visitors alike, resulting in three winners for The Judges Choice Award, The Visitors Choice Award and The Online Choice Award. The winners will be announced and their awards presented live at the show 19 - 21 May 2013 ExCeL, London in a dedicated showcase.

## EVENTS

**The ARC Show**  
19 - 21 May, London  
[www.thearcshow.com](http://www.thearcshow.com)

**kbb LDN**  
19 - 21 May, London  
[www.kbb.co.uk](http://www.kbb.co.uk)  
**INTERIORS LDN**  
19 - 21 May, London  
[www.interiorsuk.com](http://www.interiorsuk.com)

**DX**  
19 - 21 May, London  
<http://dx-london.com/>

**OAS Development Awards**

14 June, London  
[www.oasdevelopmentawards.co.uk](http://www.oasdevelopmentawards.co.uk)

**Eco Technology Show**  
14 - 15 June, Brighton  
[www.ecotechnologyshow.co.uk](http://www.ecotechnologyshow.co.uk)

**Eco Open Houses**  
15 - 16, 22 - 23 June, Brighton  
[www.ecoopenhouses.org](http://www.ecoopenhouses.org)

**The Energy Event**  
10 - 11 September, Birmingham  
[www.theenergyevent.com](http://www.theenergyevent.com)

**Energy Efficiency & Renewables Awards**  
12 September, Coventry  
<http://energyefficiencyexhibitions.co.uk/awards>

**100% Design**  
18 - 21 September, London  
[www.100percentdesign.co.uk](http://www.100percentdesign.co.uk)

**Open House London**  
21 - 22 September, London  
[www.londonopenhouse.org](http://www.londonopenhouse.org)

**Timber Expo**  
24 - 25 September, Coventry

[www.timber-expo.co.uk](http://www.timber-expo.co.uk)

**Energy Efficiency Exhibitions, incorporating Renewables Roadshow**

10 September, Exeter  
12 September, Coventry  
17 September, Newcastle  
19 September, Edinburgh  
24 September, Surrey  
26 September, Manchester  
[www.energyefficiencyexhibitions.co.uk](http://www.energyefficiencyexhibitions.co.uk)  
[www.renewables-roadshow.co.uk](http://www.renewables-roadshow.co.uk)



Q. When is a bi-fold door not a bi-fold door?



A. When it's a folding sliding door  
(When it has more than two panels)

Why do so called Specialist bi-fold companies sell doors with more than two panels?

Q. If you have three shoes is it still a pair?

**Bi-fold door** (noun) An interior door (a door that closes off rooms within a building)

Meronyms (parts of "bi-fold door"): flexible joint; hinge (a joint that holds two parts together so that one can swing relative to the other)

**bifold** /bīfōld/ (adjective) 1. Twofold

**bi** /bī-/ or sometimes before a vowel (prefix) Two, twice, double



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## Building regulations compliance testing



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complex and demanding, builders and designers need good guidance and accredited testing to get them through the Regulations; BSRIA can offer this service.

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### WEBSITE



## Housebuilder & Developer

The Housebuilder & Developer (HBD) website is an online provider of past and present products and news items for the housebuilder or developer. [hbdonline.eu](http://hbdonline.eu) is a one-stop source for all the latest press releases providing any visitor with access to information about products and services that they may require for their project as well as news relevant to housing developments. From the website, you can find links to digital issues with live links to advertiser's sites, sign up to the fortnightly email newsletters, as well as a news blog that offers daily email alerts to keep you as informed as possible.



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Visit our showroom at: Carlton Works, Cemetery Road, Yeadon, Leeds LS19 7BD



## Vortice exhibits at Ecobuild March 2013



Ventilation specialist **Vortice** returned to Ecobuild for the 2013 exhibition, which took place from 5 – 7 March 2013. The company has several new launches planned for the first half of next year, all either responding to customer requests, or developing what Vortice believes are the next important innovations in the marketplace.

There will be three new domestic heat recovery units – catering for all sizes of property, each SAP Appendix Q eligible and abiding by Energy Saving Trust best practice. In the hygiene product range a new wall mounted hand dryer ideal for energy efficient commercial use will be launched and within the general ventilation fan collection.

01283 492949 [www.vortice.ltd.uk](http://www.vortice.ltd.uk)

## Energy saving radiator star of the show



Stelrad's energy saving serial feed radiator – Radical – was the star of the show at Ecobuild this year on stand N2720. With a 10.5 per cent independently assessed energy saving by using Radicals in a project – confirmed by KIWA – it's not surprising that the new radiator has been generating significant interest.

Stelrad has been giving a number of CPD seminars on the concept following approval by RIBA, generating enquiries from architects and building designers across the UK. The launch of Stelrad's free, online STARS radiator sizing and heat loss calculator has been phenomenally successful this year too and if you've missed that release – pop onto the Stelrad website.

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## FUNDING

## £600,000 boost for University of Leicester's New Galleries Appeal

The University of Leicester's plans to provide the city with a new home for contemporary visual arts have taken a significant step forward with the news that Arts Council England has agreed to provide £600,000 towards the capital costs of the project.

The New Galleries Wing will be an extension to Embrace Arts, the University's inclusive, multi-use arts venue at the Richard Attenborough centre on Lancaster Road. It will provide a number of interlinked spaces, all open to the general public, to showcase the best in contemporary visual art and sculpture.

It is hoped the new wing will be opened by early 2015, subject to the University of Leicester raising the remaining £900,000 of the £1.5 million cost.

The extension to Embrace Arts will provide an additional 400 sq m of gallery space, increasing the size of the building by 50 per cent. The building was the result of a campaign led by Lord Attenborough.

"We are one of only two purpose-built accessible arts centres in the East Midlands for the promotion of arts and disability," said Embrace Arts co-director Michaela Butter. "This new development will similarly be fully accessible and use the latest in technology, enabling disabled and non-disabled audiences to enjoy the very best of the contemporary arts in new and exciting ways."

Eric Rosoman of The Great Central Gallery & Studios said: "This new gallery space will help to bridge the gap between local artist-run spaces and museum exhibitions. We look forward to their exhibitions with interest and excitement."

## COLLEGE

## Transformation of Kidderminster College entrance promotes learning

In 2012 Kidderminster College approached architectural and interior designers McAndrew Watts to transform the entrance area of the building into an inspirational learning space for students.

The design brief that McAndrew Watts received from the college was a no holds barred brief to transform the environment for students.

Founder of McAndrew Watts, Ian Watts commented on the brief: "The first thing we gauged when we entered Kidderminster was that the reception space was very dark and intimidating with very little natural daylight. On top of this the area was simply trying to do too much; it was operating as a reception area, canteen, a learning resource area, a waiting room, and a support and information desk. It was just like being in a bus station rather than being a social space for students and staff to interact. Space has a great a psychological impact on you. If it is a bright or intimate space it automatically changes your feelings and emotions about the environment. We set out to inspire and create enthusiasm in the students through the space we created."

The ideas for the redesign were quite radical. The building was effectively a courtyard around an external space with a tensile fabric structure



filling the space at the upper levels. The central core on the ground floor consisted of the reception with a flat solid roof and there was no focal point to the building as a whole. McAndrew Watts decided that this needed to be taken out to open up the whole area. They raised the roof so every window would look onto the space and replaced the solid roof with a glazed structure. This transformed the whole building enabling natural light to spill down through the centre of the building, penetrating the corridors that run around the area. To maximise the effect of the natural lighting, the finish was kept to a blank neutral canvas to play on this.

## GOVERNMENT

## RIBA welcomes government action to enable pension fund investment in new homes

The government have announced that it will permit councils to invest twice as much of their pension fund assets in building more homes and infrastructure from 1 April. The announcement made by Local government Minister Brandon Lewis on March 8 directly reflects the recommendation made after a year-long study by the Future Homes Commission. The Commission proposed that money from local authorities' pension funds should be used to create a £10 billion Local

Housing Development Fund, which would build mixed-tenure housing in communities suffering from a shortage without increasing the government deficit. Following a consultation the Government has decided that the current limit of 15 per cent was an unnecessary obstacle for authorities seeking to invest in infrastructure. The rules have been changed to enable councils to invest through limited partnerships up to thirty per cent of their holdings.

## news bytes

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Government should take action now or risk widespread poorly planned development say CPRE...  
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BREEAM helps deliver Antwerp's green city ambitions...  
Ref: 17960

Kingston University students displayed a nine-metre high replica cathedral spire at Ecobuild...  
Ref: 50400

Grant Associates and CCHE Architecture et Design SA are to design a new international academy in Switzerland for GEMS Education...  
Ref: 54370

## Taking care of the under 10s PLANNING PIPE UK CONSTRUCTION PROJECT ALERTS

A recent Home Building Federation (HBF) report pointed to a surge in residential planning approvals towards the end of 2012 – up over 60 per cent on the number of units approved last year. HBF members are primarily drawn from the largest developers but planning regime changes have of course also been helping developers of far more modest schemes.

This unusually stark piece of good news from out of the planning system has come from a number of factors:

- **Actual Planning Reform:** There has been, without doubt, a genuine shift in the balance in

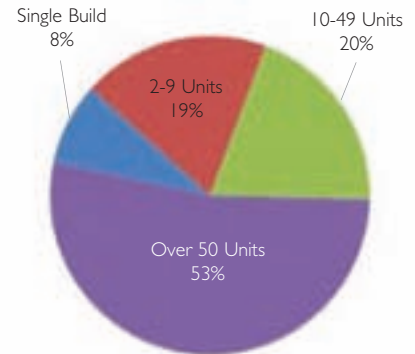
favour of developers since the start of planning reforms in March 2012. Even the HBF goes as far as to say there has been a 'potential improvement' in the planning system.

- **Perceived Planning Reform:** Many developers perceive a more positive planning regulatory environment and are simply submitting more schemes for consideration. With an average 83 per cent approval rate for residential schemes – more submissions lead to more approvals.
- **More Positive Economy:** Whether real or perceived, highly incentivised or illusory, there has been more optimism than pessimism about the prospects going forward for the housing sector. More confidence means more proposals and hence more approvals.

Around 90 per cent of planning applications involve less than 10 units. There were nearly 5,500 proposals for projects under 10 units submitted for planning approval to local authorities across the UK during January and February. It is this large volume of small schemes that have arguably benefitted the most from a more benign planning and economic backdrop.

The big news is that the smaller scale residential project pipeline remains consistent and robust. And while a comparative trend analysis of smaller schemes is less established, there is good evidence of positive pipeline growth built up over recent months. The further good news is that smaller projects

### Detailed Plans: New Units January - February 2013

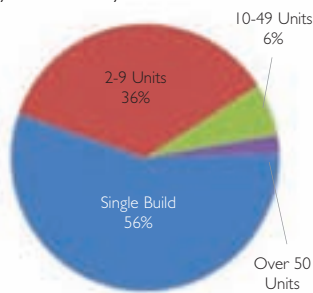


form the primary basis for future jobs for tens of thousands of small and medium sized contractors and construction supply firms across the UK.

However, like it or not – and many environmental groups don't – it is less than 10 per cent of schemes that propose to contribute over 85 per cent of the UK's new housing units.

Smaller schemes produce the overwhelming majority of tender opportunities, benefit from reduced lead time in both planning and financing and can even attract the support of environmental groups. Could the construction industry help itself a little bit more by focusing a lot more on smaller residential schemes?

### Detailed Plans: New Housing Projects January - February 2013



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# Drainage and other components for outdoor sports facilities

Tim Connolly, sales and marketing director at Hauraton Limited considers how current UK government thinking will impact on the provision of school and community outdoor sports facilities

Even though it has been reported there could be a possible reduction in the size and number of sports fields, the UK government is seemingly now set to encourage more sport participation in schools and the community in general. It can be expected local sports facilities will be more intensively used and need to be designed to meet higher safety and performance criteria. Be it an athletics track or playing field, school, community or regional facility, designers will have to ensure optimum condition for those actively participating and for their supporters. Just like national or prestigious international venues, smaller local facilities will have to be robustly designed to

withstand higher use and incorporate surface drainage systems to control rain water run-off.

Over the years, Hauraton has built a trusted reputation of supplying products for sports facilities to exacting specifications. The company is highly experienced at providing advice about reliable surface drainage and auxiliary components for running tracks and playing surfaces. The latest 68 page, Sport catalogue features a comprehensive range of products designed specifically for modern sports venues. Hauraton supports designers with project specific proposals, including expert specification and technical advice from the initial survey through to completion.

The Sport catalogue, available digitally on [www.hauraton.co.uk](http://www.hauraton.co.uk), features drainage and other essential components for IAAF (International Association of Athletic Federations) approved venues as well as surface drainage and safety products for school and community athletics and other sports facilities including synthetic running tracks, tennis courts, artificial turf playing pitches and playgrounds.

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## Vortice brings new products to Ecobuild



When Vortice Ltd exhibited at Ecobuild, visitors saw the launch of some fantastic new products. The HR200 Evo, for domestic ventilation, is an evolution of the highly specified HR200 compact heat recovery unit. New filter access makes it even easier to access

and service. Vortice also launched the Invisible, a brand new heat recovery system designed to sit 'invisibly' above ceilings, so perfect for applications where living space is at a premium. Invisible offers heat recovery in the 80 per cent range for kitchen plus up to four wet rooms and the HR200 Evo offers 92 per cent heat recovery on kitchen plus up to four wet rooms, each is SAP Appendix Q eligible.

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## Aquarian Cladding partnership agreement



Aquarian Cladding has announced a partnership agreement with Michelmersh Brick, which will see Michelmersh as the sole UK provider of stock bricks for the Gebrik insulating brick cladding system. The partnership brings a number of stock brick finishes to the Gebrik

range, all carefully selected for their superior quality, appearance and technical specification. Finishes now includes First Quality, Selected Dark and Danehill Yellow facings from Michelmersh's Freshfield Lane brickworks, and Hampshire Red, Sussex Red and Victorian Red handmade bricks from its Charnwood factory. The first Gebrik project to feature Michelmersh stock bricks has been completed, being used for the refurbishment of Isabella Court in London by developer Henley Homes.

## Metrotile lightweight steel roofing



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## Kemper System sustainable roofing solutions



Kemper System's stand (S1930) at this year's Ecobuild (5-7 March) marked the company's return to the show for the second time building on the success of last year's Ecobuild with its Kemperol 2K-PUR solvent-free liquid waterproofing system and Stratex Warm Roof System. Kemper System's innovative Kemperol 2K-PUR solvent-free

and odourless system is the first solvent-free wet-on-wet cold liquid waterproofing system available on the UK market and remains the only product of its kind available. Kemper System also showcased the company's Kempergro Green Roof System, a three-section system comprising a reservoir attenuation composite, growing medium and vegetation.

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## Wood coatings experts join Remmers UK



Remmers UK Ltd, a leading wood coatings specialist, are pleased to welcome Dave Christie (left) to our Wood Coatings team as a Technical Sales Manager to partner his fellow Technical Sales Manager Brian Priestley (right). With over 40 years of experience between them in the UK

timber industry, both Brian and Dave have worked with a number of major companies and are equipped with the specialist knowledge of wood treatments and coatings. Their aim is to greatly expand the future growth of Remmers timber section and win competitive tenders with Joinery Manufacturers, Clients, Consultants and Specifiers, in today's challenging marketplace.

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## newsletter

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# Home grown sustainability

Tony Pell, windows product manager at JELD-WEN comments on the battle for sustainability



Housebuilders and manufacturers have never been under more pressure to hit sustainability targets. While housing associations have an array of building performance and aesthetic criteria to meet, tenants battling rising utility bills are also demanding attractive properties that are economical to heat and, ultimately, more energy efficient. With increasingly stringent Code for Sustainable Homes requirements and the government's deadline for 'zero carbon' properties also on the horizon, the need for innovation and collaboration within the building sector has become paramount.

## Chasing the U-value

The Code for Sustainable Homes rates a property on its entire energy efficiency and carbon emissions, rather than focussing on its individual elements, so for housing associations to understand how they can develop the most energy efficient properties, they need to appreciate that every

stage of the construction process is critical to the whole building's performance. Historically, the industry has focussed on the distinct elements of a property but understanding how these components work together can have a huge impact on a property's overall U-value performance.

From selecting the doors and windows to considering the glass and thresholds that operate alongside these, developers need to be aware that the arrangement of these separate components is essential in meeting performance targets. The junction between a window's frame and external fabric, a crucial element when striving for higher performance standards, is often overlooked but considering this relationship at design and specification stage can drastically improve a property's energy efficiency. Housing associations are now recognising that timber windows are manufactured from the only truly sustainable material, so specifying these alongside the latest triple glazing technology can

achieve the very lowest U values. As the thermal performance they are capable of achieving is also equal and, in some cases better, than many other materials, they can even reach extra low U-value specifications of zero carbon properties.

A common misconception in the industry is that, as walls have a significantly lower U-Value than windows, developers need to choose between energy efficiency and natural light. However, the latest developments within timber window manufacturing have produced ultra slim frame, resulting in lower U-values and greater light transmittance, therefore achieving a harmonious balance between natural light levels, insulation and cost.

## A beautiful future

In the current climate, cost is a primary consideration in any buying decision but the lower tooling costs associated with timber windows means they can remain competitive while still achieving a high thermal performance. As the high cost of an energy efficient window is down to the price of premium performance glass, the differential reduces between timber and other materials, particularly when considering the life expectancy of a window. Evolution in the manufacturing process means that premium suppliers also offer life-long guarantees to meet the needs of the industry,

*Continued overleaf...*



**Housebuilders and manufacturers have never been under more pressure to hit sustainability targets**



including safeguards against rot and fungal attack. Increasing these lifetime values means that developers can significantly reduce 'whole life' costs for housing associations and landlords by minimising maintenance and retrofitting expenditure during a property's lifetime.

A new study by Dr Gillian Menzies of the Institute for Building and Urban Design, Heriot Wyatt University, Edinburgh, shows that in buildings with mild to severe exposure wood windows manufactured to Wood Window Alliance standards have an expected service life of 56-65 years.

A long-term approach to property development has added benefits when hitting targets for sustainable developments. The Lifetime Homes requirements, which counts towards Code for Sustainable Homes level achievement, provides a

model for building accessible and adaptable homes that support the demands of a household through life. From raising small children to coping with illness or dealing with reduced mobility later in life, the choice of windows and doors can be fundamental in ensuring people's lives are easier to manage. Low thresholds on doorways are a good example of this adaptation – ensuring that properties are easily accessible by parents with pushchairs or wheelchair users.

Focusing on sustainability doesn't mean that developers need to compromise on design or aesthetic appeal. Another advantage of timber windows is that they can be machined to match specific architectural styles, meeting design aspirations and providing attractive homes for tenants to move into. There has also been a notable increase in the rise of aluminium clad

windows, which marry the natural benefits of timber with the weathering advantage of aluminium. As aluminium clad windows are also available in a range of colours, developers can provide windows with both extremely low maintenance costs and an attractive finish, which makes them appealing to both housing associations and tenants alike.

Properties that appeal to tenants, keep costs low for housing associations and meet all of the government requirements, are the holy grail for builders and manufacturers. The latest, pioneering developments in timber window and door manufacturing are ultimately paving the way to providing these appealing, life-long homes with a sustainable future.



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# Condensing the right approach to roofing

Alun Price and Jenny Deacon, of Glidevale, look at roofing issues in modern build techniques



As we increase levels of insulation, and build increasingly airtight homes, the need for adequate and appropriate roofing ventilation is even more important. Even a building needs to breathe, and if you create a sealed box, it can't!

Logically, as insulation levels increase, so does

the temperature difference between warm, occupied areas and cold, unoccupied areas, thereby increasing the potential for moisture in the internal air to condense unless controlled, bespoke air passages exist for that moisture to escape to the outside atmosphere.

The key is to construct the roof in such a way

that heat retention is optimised but any moisture can be effectively removed, in an efficient and cost-effective way, that minimises snagging and remedials: a 'fix and forget' solution. But, as with any aspect of building, the efficiency of the techniques is dependant on the quality of workmanship in the first place. Indeed, a new document published by CITB-Construction Skills, emphasises the need to check materials are properly installed, so they do not adversely impact on either their performance, of the performance of related materials – for example, insulation should not be laid so it covers/obstructs roof space ventilation.

Building component suppliers are bringing to market products that utilise latest technology, such as low resistance (vapour permeable) and high resistance (non-vapour permeable) underlays, and ventilators for eaves, roof and ridge. Many help the builder by reducing or removing the requirement for a high level of skill – for example, dry fix and mechanical fix. 'Multi-tasking' continuous aluminium dry fix ridge ventilation systems, for example, will last the lifetime of the building, while ventilating the ridge at high level in accordance with both BS5250 and the latest NHBC requirements, and overcoming the need for skilled mix and application of mortar.

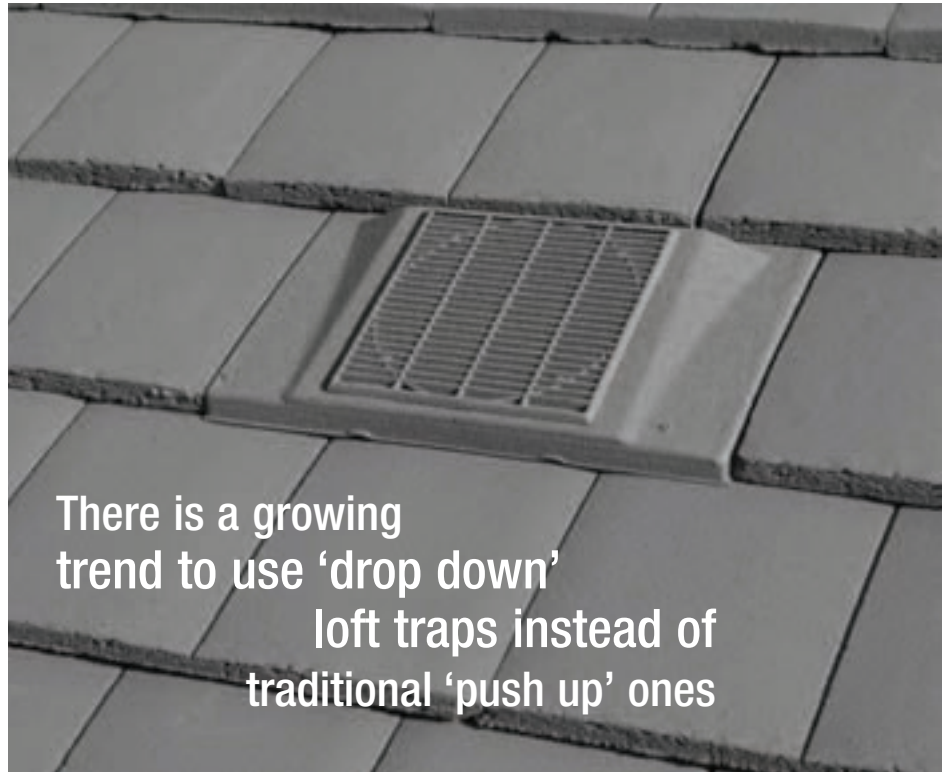
Firstly, however, the builder needs to decide his construction process, and achieve it in such a way that it optimises airtightness while complying with Regulations, yet still allows moisture to escape in a controlled manner.

BS5250 is the main means of compliance with regulatory requirements throughout the UK. In Scotland, Northern Ireland and Eire, BS5250 has

*Continued overleaf...*

**Building Regulations require roof space ventilation of equivalent to a 10mm continuous gap at low level or 10,000mm<sup>2</sup>/m**





always been the means of compliance in their respective Building Regulations. Approved Document Part C in England and Wales does not make any specific recommendations to control condensation in roofs but refers to BS5250 as a means of compliance with the Regulations.

Building Regulations require roof space ventilation of equivalent to a 10mm continuous gap at low level or  $10,000\text{mm}^2/\text{m}$ . The solution being opted for in many cases is the use of a breathable (vapour permeable) roofing membrane, with ridge, and perhaps eaves, ventilation. The recent cold winters have prompted the NHBC to update its Standards in line with BS5250, and specify  $5,000\text{mm}^2/\text{m}$  of high-level ventilation is included in cold roofs.

The only situation where ventilation is not required is in warm roof construction, and then

only when using a vapour permeable (low resistance) underlay. Such constructions require a well-sealed ceiling and a separate vapour control layer with sealed laps.

Well-sealed ceilings have been a consideration since the introduction of BS5250: inevitably, a well-sealed ceiling minimises the risk of any moisture entering the roof space in the first place. The stricter airtightness levels make the creation of well-sealed ceilings even more important.

Inclusion of an airtight membrane at ceiling level is an effective solution, but so often, we find the loft trap compromises the ceiling airtightness.

Figures from the Building Research Establishment have shown that 50 per cent of vapour transfer from the warm home to the cold loft space occurs around the loft hatch cover, especially if the hatch is a conventional unsealed version.

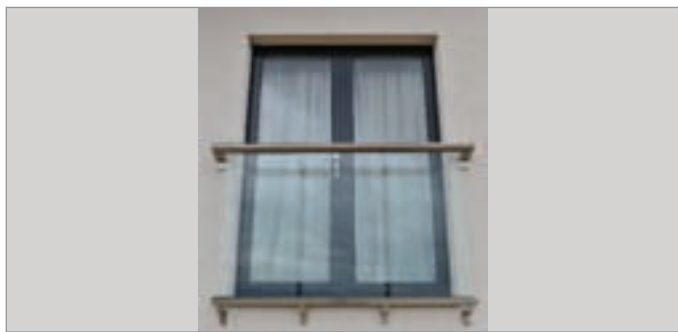
The loft trap needs to incorporate integral closed cell seals and insulation, to provide continuity of thermal insulation at ceiling level. They virtually eliminate heat loss by air movement around the trap door and water vapour migration into the loft space.

And as insulation levels in the roof space increase, there is a growing trend to use 'drop down' loft traps instead of traditional 'push up' ones. Under natural laws of physics, the weight of 'hinge down' loft traps can encourage the hatch to react to gravity and drop away from its frame, negatively impacting on the airtight seal. Thus care needs to be taken on product choice, as manufacturers have become aware of this issue and are now engineering traps to overcome it.

It is not a case of 'build tight, ventilate right', but 'build tight and right'.





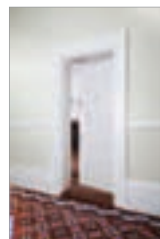


### Balcony Systems

When Clifton and Louise Palese-Gordon embarked on their challenging self-build project, they knew that only a **Balcony Systems'** Juliet balcony with the BalcoNano® self-cleaning glass coating would fulfil their demanding requirements. Clifton self-installed the 1.86 metre wide Juliet with aluminium handrail in Shiny Chrome finish to retain views from the master bedroom at their stunning new Peterborough property, which was completed in 2011. Delighted with their first Balcony Systems' Juliet balcony, which they easily installed on their previous home, the couple again specified the low-maintenance product with its contemporary clean lines to enhance their modern high-spec home on a self-build development. "We knew we would use Balcony again if the opportunity arose and this time we chose the self-cleaning glass coating option for ease of maintenance," said Clifton. "We have noticed a positive difference; the glass certainly stays cleaner compared to the first Juliet balcony. And it suits the style of our home perfectly." The couple have not ruled another self-build project in the future and Balcony Systems would again be their first balustrading choice. Balcony Systems is a specialist in sophisticated glass and aluminium balustrading solutions and stunning curved patio doors.

01342 410411 [www.balconette.co.uk](http://www.balconette.co.uk)

### Todd Doors period-style reproduction doors

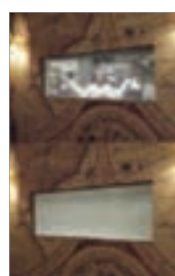


A leading independent timber door retailer **Todd Doors Ltd** has launched a new range of exceptional period reproduction doors. The 'Knightsbridge' doors can be produced to any size, and customers can specify rail and panel sizes and moulding details to replicate existing doors. Eramo Developments recently fitted these doors throughout 63 apartments in their prestigious conversion of a Victorian hospital at Normansfield Court, Teddington. They successfully

achieved the required conservation approval. Also produced as FD30 ½ hour fire rated doors, the 'Knightsbridge' range is available to order on a short lead time of four to six weeks.

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### ESG Polyvision™ rebrands as ESG Switchable™



Essex Safety Glass (ESG) has quite literally switched the branding of its ESG Polyvision™ glass range. Now aptly known as ESG Switchable™, the brand instantly reflects the versatility of the high quality LCD privacy glass. When discretion is required, ESG Switchable™ provides control over privacy or the public gaze. With its impressive technical qualities and design-led features such as iPad remote controls or integration with business management systems, ESG Switchable™ is quickly

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## RMIG provides a sound solution

More than 3,800 sq m of perforated metal cladding from RMIG, which incorporates Soundtex acoustic damping material, has been used to line the interior of the

iconic Crystal building on Copenhagen's waterfront district, which is now the headquarters of Danish financial services group, Nykredit.

Designed by architects Schmidt Hammer Lassen, the multi-faceted structure uses a triple glazed façade to refract and reflect light throughout the interior, while also helping minimise any solar heat gain within the building. Its crystalline shape, designed in the form of a 'Z', rises asymmetrically above the ground to a height of 34 metres and incorporates two atria to further improve lighting and aid the building's natural ventilation.

As the building is constructed using an extensive glass clad structure, the architects wanted to ensure that the working environment was free from noise and echoes caused by sound reflected from the glazing and the internal structural components, without compromising the building's clean modern design.

To help achieve this, RMIG worked with Schmidt Hammer Lassen and contractor Jakon, to create the sound absorbing perforated panel design, which is installed throughout the building's interior on walls and within The Crystal's two triangular atria.

Manufactured from mild steel and finished with a polyester powder coated finish in an RAL 9016 white, each of the 2,258 panels incorporate Soundtex acoustic damping material and were designed by RMIG to include a special number code to enable them to be installed in the precise individual location by the contractor.

Prior to manufacturing the panels for the project, RMIG created a series of full sized 'mock-up' panels for testing and approval by the contractor, to ensure they met the precise manufacturing and acoustic performance criteria demanded by the architects.



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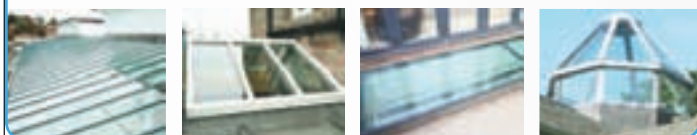
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### Sustainable access for green business park

Greenhills Real Estate Ltd has installed a third Tormax entrance system at the highly successful, energy efficient business park in Watford, Croxley Green. Set in impressive glass façades, the four-leaf manual revolving doors positively contribute to a greener environment by helping reduce heat loss from the buildings, while the low-energy automatic swing doors to either side take full advantage of Tormax iMotion technology, which is almost entirely manufactured using recyclable material. Contracted to design, manufacture and install the new entrance system to Building 8, Tormax worked with R&M Glazing to deliver a high quality solution that reflects the sustainable ambitions of the business park. The manual revolving doors create a prestigious frontage while delivering a solution that allows smooth pedestrian access. The automatic swing pass doors offer a DDA-compliant option for less-able staff and visitors to the site as well as allowing easy access for deliveries, etc.



## Formica® laminate is a key design feature



Designed by Capella Garcia Arquitectura, Espai Ridaura is a multi-purpose building located in Santa Cristina d'Aro, Spain. The architects, Juli Capella and Miquel Garcia created a stunning look using VIVIX® exterior façade panels. An exceptional feature of the Espai Ridaura project is

its entrance; or rather the canopy above the entrance door. Featuring VIVIX® exterior façade panels in Fantasia Marron, an earth tone evocative of the area terrain, the canopy is a unifying element of the whole structure linking the inside with the outside. Carrying the Carbon Trust's Carbon Reduction Label, VIVIX panels incorporate **Formica Group's** commitment to sustainable principles and practices.

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## Halo is proud to hit a new low!



**Halo**, the pioneering new window system supplier, has unveiled the TwinSash, which can achieve a U-value of 0.38 W/m<sup>2</sup>K and reduce noise levels by around 50dB. This level of performance is reached by using triple-glazed, krypton-filled units and foam-filled sections. It can even achieve extremely low U-values using what is considered to be the industry's most cost-effective combination of components; using two 28mm double glazed IGUs (air

filled, float glass and aluminium spacer bar) the TwinSash can still achieve a U-value of just 1.2. The TwinSash can offer a combination of open-in/open-out casements, along with Tilt 'n' Turn windows.

01282 716611 [www.halo-uk.com](http://www.halo-uk.com)

## Levolux makes tracks in Calgary



Following almost 30 years of planning, Calgary recently opened its new Light Rail Transit (LRT) route serving its south-west communities with six new stations, featuring state-of-the-art, energy efficient components including a Levolux solar shading solution. As a leading provider of Solar Shading solutions, Levolux was

invited to develop bespoke solutions for six buildings, comprising its Infiniti® Fin System and Aerofoil Fins, formed from extruded aluminium components. In total, Levolux supplied 227 aerofoil-shaped Fins, applied against vertical, inclined and curved elevations. The Fins, measuring 300mm or 400mm in width, provide effective passive solar control to glazed openings in ticket halls and platform enclosures.

## Ultra slim profiles feature on Hi-Finity system



A stylish, new sliding door range, from **Reynaers Aluminium**, Hi-Finity is a sustainable, ultra-slim profile system that made its debut at Ecobuild. Innovative in style and design and with industry-leading profiles that hardly impact on the exterior view, Hi-Finity

allows, more than ever, the internals of a building to merge seamlessly with the outdoors. This not only gives a light and airy feel to any living space, but also increases the feeling of spaciousness. Providing extra strength and durability, the glazed units can accommodate large glass panels of up to 500kg. Although the large glazed areas already offer good thermal efficiency, Hi-Finity is also available in double and triple glazed versions to provide increased levels of thermal and acoustic insulation.



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## Contemporary comfort in listed property

Nestling in the beautiful Oxfordshire countryside, sections of this magnificent three-storey Grade II\* Listed building date back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Among the many outstanding features are two imposing Tudor fireplaces and a beautifully preserved 1614 Jacobean staircase. The main part of the building, however, is 18<sup>th</sup> century and features long wide halls traversing each floor, helping to create a house of majestic proportion.

The house has been a family home for the past 42 years. With spiralling fuel costs, the owners felt the time had come to investigate ways of providing a warm and draught free environment. Serious consideration was, therefore, given to thermally insulating the windows.

The owners, as members of the Historic Houses Association, frequently attend Association sponsored conferences. "It was here we met energy consultant Jonathan Clarke, one of that day's speakers. Following the conference we engaged Mr. Clarke to produce recommendations on our behalf.

"The resulting report included particular reference to Selectaglaze's secondary glazing systems and their experience working with listed buildings. And, of course, secondary glazing is an option approved by English Heritage. Initially, we had the windows on the ground floor treated and



immediately realised what a difference secondary glazing made to our comfort. They are also very unobtrusive and beautifully tailor-made, so we decided to do the top floors as well."

A total of 47 sash and casement windows needed to be treated, many with existing wooden shutters, which were to be retained. It was also essential that the windows remained fully operational to facilitate cleaning and maintenance, without introducing additional sightlines. To accommodate this exacting

brief, Selectaglaze recommended a number of styles including its very slim sectioned Series 47 Hinged Casements – a range designed specifically for heritage buildings – together with its Series 20 Slimline Vertical Sliding units.

Several rooms feature 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century oak and ash panelling with window frames painted to match. To blend imperceptibly with this internal décor, Selectaglaze supplied secondary glazing finished in a brown polyester powder paint. All units were glazed with 4mm toughened low emissivity glass to provide the very best thermal insulation.

Founded in 1966, Royal Warrant holder Selectaglaze has gained a reputation as one of the country's leading secondary glazing specialists and, as such, has led the way with innovative and informative literature, including the company's comprehensive Product Guide and Energy Conservation Guidance Notes. Selectaglaze's literature is free upon request.

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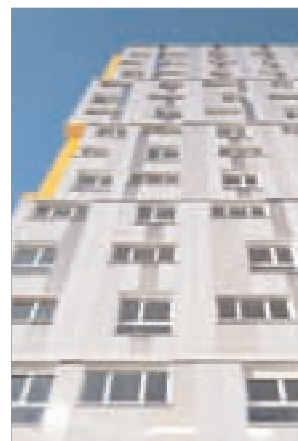
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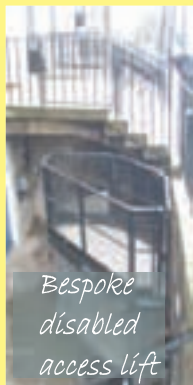
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# This is the time to specify electric heating

There's something of a renaissance for electric heating taking place across the UK, and many architects are seriously considering electric heating as an option in new build; particularly in refurbishment projects where the installation time and costs – as well as on-going heating bills – can be lower than with traditional wet heating systems.

In many older building refurbishments, and conversions of buildings to residential usage, not having to install complex pipework can make a huge saving to the project costs. Also, with the advanced and extremely flexible wireless controls that come with the latest electric heating systems, electric is often the most viable option you can consider.

Now that controlled electric heating is as inexpensive or even less expensive to run than oil or gas heating, it's not surprising that so many specifiers are turning to electric space heating – especially when they can source a wide range of products including low surface temperature products for schools and care

facilities, fan assisted heaters for places that need rapid warm up, and a range of clever RF controls. It's strange that it was not so long ago that the phrases 'energy saving' and 'electric heating' would not have been heard in the same breath, but now, because of the lower cost of installation and the highly controllable nature of electric heating, it's not just a concept, it's a reality.

The joy of the modern range of offerings, including those from **Ecolec**, is the simplicity of installation, compared to the time and effort involved in installing a wet system for example. They come complete with easy to fit hanging brackets and can be fitted pretty much anywhere. Ecolec even has a range of radiators with angled edges that fit perfectly into the corner of a room.

However, it's the controllability of electric heating that makes it such an attractive option in today's marketplace. Ecolec firmly believes that the primary carbon footprint of our homes and properties can be reduced by installing properly controlled electric heaters. To achieve this, heating times and temperatures must be managed well, with different zones independently controlled. In addition, Ecolec claims to help reduce the secondary carbon footprint by using local suppliers, using 100 per cent recyclable steel in the manufacture of its products, by avoiding the use of any toxic materials in the radiators and controllers, and by supplying heaters that can be repaired even after 15 years of use.

Ecolec is believed to be the only UK manufacturer to repair and refurbish existing radiators.

Chandru Ray, managing director of Ecolec, says: "We are providing heating systems for new build developers and for refurbishment projects that can be installed by a locally based NICEIC electrician more quickly and using far less components than would be required for

a plumber-installed wet system. Our products are slimline products that can easily be installed in difficult to access areas of a home; in hallways, in bathrooms and in small rooms or alcoves where installing a wet system radiator would be a nightmare."

The Ecolec range is impressive and extensive and can be accessed via the company's website. The company offers



cost effective, radiant electric heating that provides heat and comfort where you need it. The Ecolec radiators respond rapidly to demand for heat, reaching the required temperature in minutes, yet the company offers a range of products that meet the different requirements of a range of end uses, with pre-set temperature ranges; 70°C for its standard range, 55°C for its 'safe to touch' and 43°C for its range that meets the strict requirements of the NHS low surface temperature standards.

All these products are current and available but more development work is going on for new products that make radiant electric heating an exciting option for the future: heated glass walls; electric radiant heating concealed in the wall fabric so you don't need radiators at all; heated room dividers that allow workers to control the heat for their individual work stations; further work on controllers and timers – these are exciting times for electric radiant heating.



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# Purchasing a wood burning stove

To help you make an informed decision, Tony Ingram, technical service manager at Morsø, offers a few pointers on what to consider when purchasing a wood burning stove

Installing a multi-fuel or wood burning stove in your home can inject sentiments of warmth and timeless style in addition to creating a focal point in any room. Benefitting from an array of both practical and aesthetic qualities, wood burning stoves are a convenient and safe heating source that allows you to be in total control of the fuel burning and heat output. However, with so many options on the market and the array of technical specifications to decipher, it can be a minefield of information if you are not armed with the correct details.

Opting to burn wood is not just an atmospheric and cost effective form of heating but is also referred to as being 'carbon-neutral'. This means that burning wood produces the same amount of carbon as if it were left to rot naturally on the forest floor; plus it is a renewable energy unlike fossil fuels, which are a finite resource that will eventually run out. Before purchasing a stove you must first consider the area you live in and confirm whether you are in a smoke controlled area. This is due to the restrictions on wood burning in towns and cities, which has been determined by criteria given in the Clean Air Act 1993. You will need to check with your local authority before purchasing a wood-burning stove to ascertain if your property falls within a smoke control area. A wood burning stove can only be installed in a restricted zone if it has been approved with DEFRA\* (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs) as an exempt product. Achieved by advanced air systems and refined combustion technology, smoke exempt stoves will improve the burning process and reduce emission of particles to an absolute minimum.

Essential for optimum performance, another major consideration before selecting a stove is the heat requirement for the intended location. To calculate the heating demand of a particular space, simply work out the volume of the room in cubic metres and divide by 14. For example, a room 6m long by 5m wide and 2.4m high equals 72 cu m. Dividing this figure by 14







rated output of approximately 5kW. Buying the wrong size stove will prove problematic due to over firing, or more commonly under running the appliance, which is potentially more damaging to the stove, flue and the environment.

Once these key factors have been measured you can then sort stoves by method of the heat delivery into a room; radiant and convector. Radiant stoves emit straight line heat and are ideally suited to an inset installation in an existing traditional chimney breast and where the heating requirement is primarily for a single room. Convector stoves give optimum performance when in a free standing installation. The appli-

ance utilises the natural air movement present around any heat source, drawing cool air from floor level into the stove, where it is heated before passing back into the room. The current of warm air gives a more even and comfortable heat to larger living spaces or where there is a desire to heat secondary rooms.

To further filter your design choice, wood burning stoves are available in two types of body form; iron and steel. Cast iron is at the heart of stove design due to its unique properties of thermal tension, which allows the material to endure the common reactions to heat, such as expanding or twisting. The thickness of cast iron can retain

and distribute heat extremely efficiently, meaning that you can comfortably enjoy the heat from your stove for a long period of time. Additionally recent technological advances in the production of steel has allowed for stoves to now be created in this versatile and modern material. Able to heat up faster and engineered to give precise lines and defined shapes, steel stoves are ideal for quality and contemporary design.

Once a chosen design, size and position have been selected, a stove must be fitted by either a suitably qualified engineer such as a HETAS registered installer who is authorised to commission and sign off the installation. Another



*All types of wood logs can be used in a wood-burning stove; however the wood must be untreated and well seasoned*

option is for it to be installed by a competent person with the installation then approved by your local building control inspector. It has to be said the first of these options is usually the simplest and most cost effective. The installation of your stove must also comply with the requirements of Building Regulation Approved Document J 2010.

All types of wood logs can be used in a wood-burning stove; however the wood must be untreated and well seasoned (the process of splitting and drying wood so it's ready to burn). The maximum moisture content of a log ready to burn is 20 per cent, although ideally it should be closer to 15 per cent. This is easily determined with the use of a moisture meter, which are widely available from stove dealers and are an essential piece of kit to ensure the best performance from the stove.



## Sense and safety with conservatory flues

With many people adding a conservatory to their property, rather than move, there has been an increase in the questions relating to stove and flue installations within these extra rooms. David Ebbs, technical manager at **Specflue**, offers these simple answers to the common questions. The question arises is the home owner happy to look out of the window at the flue? The very purpose of the flue is to remove the smoke and products of combustion. There will be times when, with the wind direction, the smoke may blow towards the house and windows. Is the stove large enough? Will the conservatory area even be used in the winter? A larger stove will require air vents, resulting in more cold air being drawn into the room. If it is simply to keep the chill off the room during the spring and autumn evenings, a smaller stove could be sufficient. Most flue systems, can free stand around 2.5m, (with structural locking bands).

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## Teardrop range makes a splash



Solus Ceramics introduces the sophisticated Teardrop range, which is a unique and elegant series of wall tiles inspired by oriental flowing shapes and curved lines. The scale-like tiles are available in six lavish colours including a deep turquoise and a regal red, and can be selected in both a matt and glossy finish. The tiles, which measure 115x195mm create dramatic patterns

when laid together resembling the textures of exquisitely woven fabric. Most recently the tiles have been featured in the brand new Hard Rock Café in Barcelona and were even backlit to exciting effect. For more information contact Solus Ceramics.

0121 753 0777 [www.solusceramics.com](http://www.solusceramics.com)

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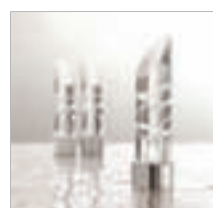
## Next generation in integrated LED downlights



Scolmore has launched the industry's most sophisticated integrated LED downlight to date: one that will provide contractors and installers with a high light output, high performance product that can be fitted into the shallowest of ceiling voids. Inceptor is a fire-rated, integrated LED downlight with pre-wired driver and flow connector. Unique to Inceptor is the innovative flexi-driver element, which means it can be fitted into a recess depth of just 60mm –

making it one of the most flexible fittings currently available. Scolmore has integrated its popular Flow Connectors into the product, which will make it quick and easy to install, as well as to remove and replace for the purpose of circuit testing.

## Silent Gliss Metropole Range



Silent Gliss is introducing some sophisticated and stylish new additions to its popular Metropole range. Grove and Shard, two new finials that will add a touch of elegance. Groove Ball a contemporary with a twist of tradition – the Groove Ball range of finials successfully adapt to both styles. The Groove Cylinder is simple yet stylish. Clean lines

combined with design detail. Both Groove are available across a wide range of sizes and colours. Shard: clean lines of glass form the basis of the Shard range. Choose between a sharp clear design or select a more eye-catching and unique appearance with the etched glass option.

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## Total-ly new approach to accessibility

Specification of accessible toilets, bathrooms and washrooms is now simpler and quicker than ever, through major technological changes at **Total Hygiene**. Britain's leading provider of disabled toileting solutions has completely re-worked its website - [www.clos-o-mat.com](http://www.clos-o-mat.com) – to optimise accessibility via all the latest media. Further, it has generated pages on key social media. As a result, whether using a mobile phone, tablet, laptop or PC, specifiers have a user-friendly site that is purpose-designed to deliver access to all appropriate information, and a means by which to keep up-to-date with new developments. The website's opening page itself gives an instant overview. At a click, tap, or flick, each individual sector is quickly downloaded and accessible, from individual product summaries via detailed technical installation, servicing and maintenance information, through to legislative and design guidance for more complex hygiene rooms and Changing Places toilets.

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## New suite of digital marketing tools



Crosswater, Bauhaus and Simpsons have launched a comprehensive range of Apple Brochure Apps available free of charge from iTunes Newsstand as well as a new line-up of page-turning interactive brochures on the company's group website. This significant investment in new marketing media will be a

real asset for both the trade and the consumer and is the result of a year-long research and commissioning programme. Marten Baker, commercial manager for Crosswater explains: "The interactive brochures and brochures apps will be heavily marketed in consumer magazines and in store, we at Crosswater are extremely keen on modern marketing techniques and see both these initiatives as crucial."

## Evo-Stik high performance sealants



High performance sanitary sealants from adhesive and sealant manufacturer **Evo-Stik** are ideal for installation and maintenance jobs in the kitchen or bathroom. The range includes Evo-Stik Quick Set, which is ready for use after just one hour. Because the sealant cures at an accelerated rate, bathrooms and shower rooms are back in use as quickly as possible. This means customers experience the minimal disruption to their routine. Also in the range are Evo-Stik Anti-Bacterial and Evo-Stik Stay

White / Stay Clear. Evo-Stik Anti-Bacterial Sanitary Sealant not only stops mould and fungi growth, it also kills germs on contact – including MRSA, e-coli and salmonella – making it ideal for jobs in restaurants and schools.

## Spectrum is top of the class again



Neaco's nylon coated aluminium balustrade has been specified in the redevelopment of Midgley School in West Yorkshire, where a new classroom extension features their Spectrum system with a perforated panel infill to internal stairwells, external steps and a terrace. The external balustrade includes a double-handrail design catering for the varying heights of users in line with DDA guidelines and the terrace also features Neaco's Techdek aluminium decking.

Neaco's national sales manager, Richard Richardson-Derry, commented: "Our Spectrum modular system is a well-established specification in educational developments and refurbishments – it provides a variety of attributes, which are ideally suited to their particular demands. In contrast to the mess and high energy consumption of fabricated solutions, Spectrum offers pre-engineered modular components, which are connected internally with no welding required. This means fast, low-energy installation, which minimises disruption to school activities and works within tight building schedules constrained by school timetables. Spectrum is also smooth and warm to the touch with a zero-maintenance, non-chip finish, which is durable in typically high-traffic areas such as school stairwells."

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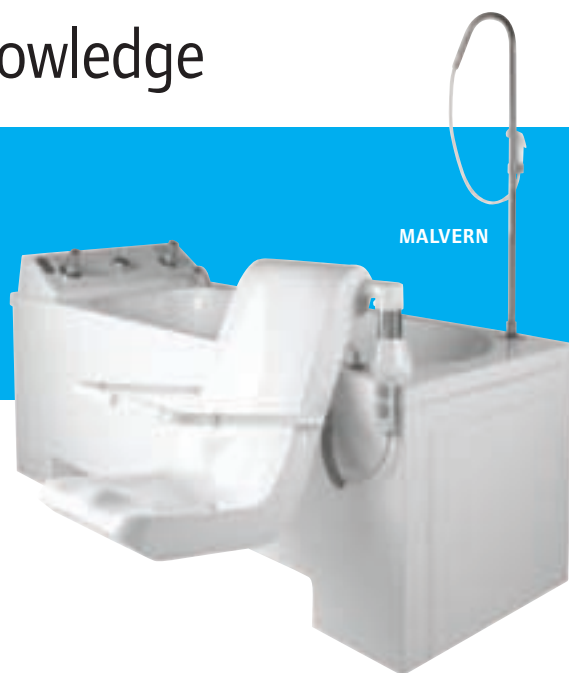
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## Ellis Furniture's new bathroom ranges



Ellis Furniture has launched two contemporary, modular bathroom ranges – Solus and Duo – which are available in four widths of 600mm, 800mm, 1,200mm and 1,600mm. Select from 17 different door options spanning three competitive price bands, 16 diverse carcass choices and a variety of 17 handles. The wide range of high gloss colours or beautiful natural wood grains mean you can mix and match door and carcass colours and finishes for a truly

individual design. For those who prefer to go handleless, Solus and Duo are available with the Ellis minimo push to open technology.

01484 514 212 [www.ellisbathrooms.co.uk](http://www.ellisbathrooms.co.uk)

## HELIFIX launches new literature



Since developing the original helical fixing in 1984, HELIFIX has continued to innovate, expanding its range to include specialist helical wall ties, fixings and masonry reinforcement systems for use in both new build and refurbishment. In addition to full product information, the new brochure 'Principles, Products and Applications' also includes a summary of the company's innovation accomplishments spanning almost 30

years. Helifix products have proven an effective cure for common structural defects in most construction materials including masonry, timber and concrete.



## Circa casings for Liverpool University labs

Circa pre-formed and pre-finished plywood column casings from Encasement have been installed at Liverpool University as part of a £multi-million refurbishment and upgrading of its Donnan chemistry laboratories. Encasement's Circa casings are used extensively in the laboratory's ground floor café and multi purpose area to not only conceal existing features located around the perimeter, but also help provide a practical solution by their use as part of a high level table design built around existing structural columns in the centre of the café area. The eight perimeter column casings are 450mm diameter extended circles and incorporate 250mm flat panels on each side to provide an optimum solution to conceal the building's existing structure. While these casings are finished in purple Formica F6903 laminate, the nine 250mm diameter centrally located column casings are finished in a red Formica K2046 laminate with contrasting black collars and stand three metres high.



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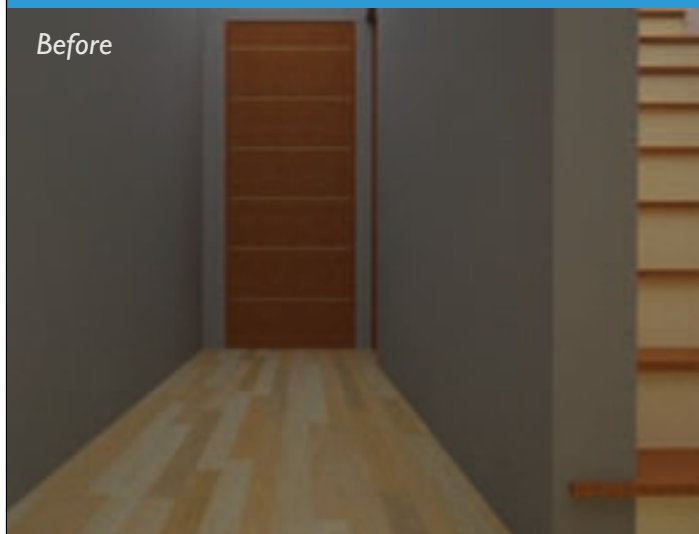
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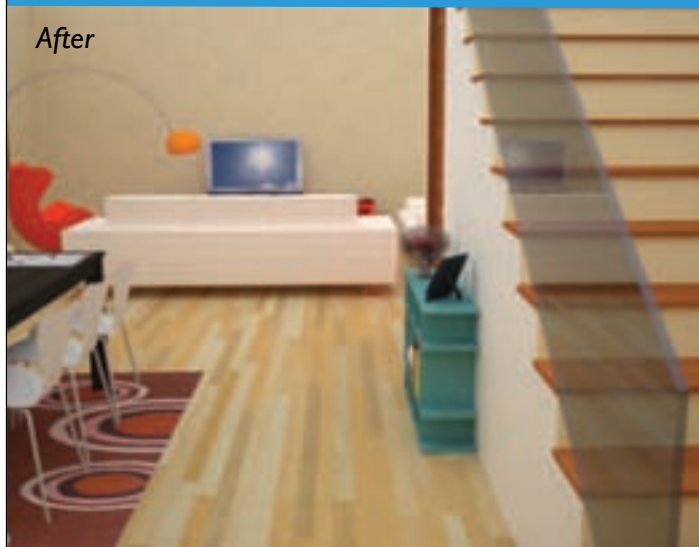
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**Plumis**  
Seamless fire protection

## Automist watermist suppression now an LABC Registered Solution

There is increasing demand for open-plan living space and the Automist pre-engineered watermist solution from Plumis provides designers with an active fire protection option to protect escape routes and aid evacuation, offering design flexibility and reducing costs while meeting building regulations.

Building Control approval is essential and Automist has now been assessed and accepted as an LABC Registered Solution – Registered Detail RD171 to provide active protection for escape routes and facilitate open plan layouts in suitable loft conversion applications. LABC Registration allows a company to register a product so individual local authorities can automatically approve it. The scheme enables much faster approval of most open plan layouts, allowing building control officers to approve loft conversion projects without a long and detailed investigation. It assures approvers that the system has been rigorously checked and independently peer reviewed. The scheme is designed to streamline the adoption of innovative solutions like Automist in appropriate applications.

Plumis commercial director Alan Hart explains: “Now that Automist is registered, it assures the whole construction industry that it has been rigorously checked by LABC members, enabling developers, architects, designers, technical specifiers and contractors to register or use existing design details to minimise the Building Control checking and approvals process in loft conversions with open plan ground floor.”

To make the process straightforward, approvers can download the relevant technical information and requirements that need to be verified on each particular layout from the Plumis website.



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# Effective smoke ventilation design – compliance is critical

Smoke ventilation is a critical element in fire safety, particularly in multi-storey residential buildings as it not only helps occupants to escape, but also improves the access for fire fighters by keeping corridors and other areas clear of smoke. Will Perkins, group managing director of SE Controls, looks at building design and the legislative framework together with some of the obligations and issues they raise

Usually when talk turns to building design the focus tends to be directed towards aspects such as innovative exteriors, construction methods, energy efficiency and interior space, yet good building design must also ensure that it is safe.

Fire safety is a vital component of any building design and unsurprisingly there is a robust legislative net in place to ensure that every aspect of a building's design, including fire safety and protection systems, meet the required standards. From a smoke control perspective, this not only covers the design of the products used in the system and their method of operation, but also the installation, commissioning and ongoing maintenance.

This clearly places a considerable burden of responsibility on architects and systems specialists, such as SE Controls, as well as on contractors involved in the specification of smoke ventilation solutions, where a lack of familiarity with regulations could put them at risk of litigation for non-compliance.

While the complex matrix of legislation for smoke ventilation and safety systems design for buildings includes Building Regulations, particularly Approved Document B (ADB), and the BS9991:2011 Code of Practice for residential fire safety design, these form only part of the story. Other European regulations and UK legislation overlay and augment these documents depending on their individual focus.

Also, there are a couple of anomalies within the current regulatory environment, which can trip-up the unsuspecting designer, such as the Construction Products Directive (CPD), which relates to the compliance of products with European CE marking requirements. Currently, there is no obligation to CE mark products in the UK, yet it is mandatory in parts of Europe, which inevitably creates a 'grey' area.

As Section 7 of the Building Regulations states that the products used must merely be "fit for purpose", then there is potential for misinterpretation. In safety critical situations, the best way to ensure the installation is 'fit for purpose' is to use CE marked products, which are already certified as compliant.

However, on 1 July 2013 this issue will be resolved automatically, when the CPD becomes the Construction Products Regulation and CE marking becomes mandatory in the UK

and BS EN12101 will take precedence on product construction standards, which forces compliance with the regulations. Leading companies in this field, have been voluntarily complying with this legislation for some time.

While these changes will have a powerful and vital influence on building design and smoke control solutions, The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) is arguably the most important piece of legislation for architects, designers and contractors working on UK projects.

The RRO creates a clear set of procedures and places responsibility on the building's operators to provide a duty of care for fire safety in relation to the building's occupants, via regular risk assessments and action. Crucially, under the RRO, the designer and installer are contractually obliged in connection with the safety aspects of the building and continually liable, even if the building and systems have been approved by building control.

Designers, consulting engineers, QS and building service engineers also have an obligation to comply with the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM) and work to

improve construction safety by eliminating hazards.

Several recent incidents including the Salamanca Tower fire in Lambeth in July 2011 are bringing the real implications of the RRO to the fore. When a serious incident occurs, not only will the investigation look at the immediate management regime, it will often assess the original designs, suitability of equipment, fitness of the installation as well as the effectiveness and frequency of maintenance.

Importantly, design responsibility resides with everyone that has been directly involved in the decision process – ranging from product selection criteria, cable selection and routing all the way through to testing and commissioning. The overarching point that designers involved in smoke control systems and other fire precautions systems, should take from this broad legislative overview, is that compliance is essential as the risks of non-compliance can cost lives.

Regulations are necessary, but can be impenetrable. Seeking advice and input on smoke ventilation systems from companies that are constantly working within this tightly regulated environment can not only provide effective solutions, but also help avoid playing Russian roulette with compliance and safety.



Effective smoke ventilation in a residential building

***'The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) is arguably the most important piece of legislation for architects, designers and contractors working on UK projects'***

Will Perkins, group managing director, SE Controls



# Platform lifts and the disabled access market

Craig Merry, director at Invalifts Limited discusses the choices there are when specifying a platform lift



***'Service providers and workplaces are to make reasonable provisions and/or adjustments to overcome physical features, which obstruct the less able to access facilities'***

Craig Merry, director,  
Invalifts Limited

**T**he market for platform lifts increased significantly after the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in 1995.

From 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act. The aim of the Act is to end prejudice against less able people. It has been significantly extended and now gives less able people rights in the following areas: Renting or buying land or property, education, employment, access to goods, facilities and services, clubs, sports, associations and activities. Where there is restriction in the vertical circulation within a building the provision of a lifting platform may provide a solution.

Under the Equality Act, service providers and workplaces are to make reasonable provisions and/or adjustments to overcome physical features, which obstruct the less able to access facilities. To overcome a physical feature means to either remove it, alter it, provide an alternative access route, or make services

available to the less able in another way.

There is an obligation to ensure that access is provided for the less able to ensure compliance with the Equality Act. Regarding vertical circulation, this can be implemented by the use of ramps, lifts or lifting platforms.

Designers can put forward the type of lifting device within the access statement that in their opinion is suitable depending on the environment and usage among other factors. The Requirements of Platform Lifts are contained in Part M of the Building Regulations, BS:8300 (called up within the regulation), BS:6440 and EN81-41.

## **What is a platform lift?**

A platform lift is defined as a 'machine' rather than a lift. Their design, manufacture and installation is controlled by the Machinery Directive (MD2006/42/EC) and other European Norms rather than by the Lift Regulations. The different



regulations mean that there are significant differences between a platform lift and a traditional lift, the main ones being that a platform lift does not require a deep pit or as much top floor headroom and that it travels at a slower speed than a traditional passenger lift. The maximum speed is 0.15m/s, which is normally sufficient for the environments that they are used for. There are five main types of drive systems that are used for platform lifts namely traction, hydraulic, chain, belt and screw. Each drive system offers differing ride quality and ongoing maintenance costs.

There are many platform lift variants that have been developed to suit particular circumstances:

1. Low rise vertical units in order to deal with relatively small changes in height such as a few steps in front of a building rising 1m. These are usually unenclosed in that they do not have a shaft around the rising platform.
2. Medium rise vertical units for travel heights up to 3m. Again they are usually unenclosed.
3. Enclosed vertical units are usually provided with their own shafts. These units are used primarily for travel over 3m as there is a legal requirement that vertical platform lifts are enclosed when operating over 3m. These units are often used in retail outlets, offices and public buildings. Over recent years there has been an increasing trend to design and manufacture small footprint platform lifts that would be suitable for residences but not necessarily be required to carry a

### ***'Platform lifts are a cost effective method for dealing with height changes'***

Craig Merry, director, Invalifts



*Continued overleaf...*

Advertorial

## **Axess4All's larger capacity platform lift!**

Unlike other platform lifts available in the marketplace, the A8000 sets itself apart. It not only offers the capacity for up to 1,000kg, but this unique design boasts three sizes, that range between 1,980mm and 2,480mm in length and 1,405mm wide, and is suitable for both commercial and industrial use. Unrivalled in the marketplace, the A8000 can be installed with minimal building work, therefore proving to be the perfect, no hassle, cost effective installation.

The option of a high quality steel shaft and glazed panels makes this the ideal installation for commercial premises, such as offices and public attractions, where the aesthetic benefits of the lift are as important as the functionality. The option of basic steel panels makes the A8000 well suited to warehouse use as it not only has the benefit of a capacity to withstand a 1,000kg load, but also has the added width and length to

accommodate longer loads. The maximum 1,300mm entrance and 2,480mm length, means that the A8000 sizes comply with Class III Healthcare requirements, allowing adequate space for a bed and two persons, making this model a natural choice for care homes and medical centres as it can be installed with the least possible interruption, space requirements and expense.

Easy to install, the A8000 is the perfect solution for existing as well as new premises; there is no requirement for a meter deep pit or separate motor room, which has already made this model the preferred choice for a number of commercial and industrial customers. These include Cardiff University and Lewis Manning Hospice in Poole. Both had very different requirements but the unique qualities and flexibility of the A8000 made it the perfect solution for both venues.



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wheelchair. Some of these home lifts have a floor footprint as small as a standard armchair. These lifts are quite different to the 'through the floor' lifts that have been seen in homes for many years. The 'through the floor' lifts do not have a full shaft or full height doors, the bottom of the lifting platform becomes the ceiling on the ground floor when the lift has risen to the next floor and visa versa, the roof becomes the floor of the upper floor when the lift is at the ground floor.

4. Inclined platform units are used where the lift is to follow the angle of a flight of stairs. These lifts should not be confused with stairlifts seen in private homes where the user sits in a chair that is part of the mechanism. An inclined unit has a platform for a full wheelchair to access although some units do have the option of a flip down seat to be added to the unit.

*'Over the last five years we have seen considerable improvements in drive technology and this is set to continue.'*

Craig Merry, director, Invalifts Limited



Some units are capable of negotiating curves, which can be useful if the landing position for the lift can not be at the foot of the stairs.

#### Why specify a platform lift?

Each situation will bring its own list of requirements but the reasoning for a platform lift could include:

1. Cost – platform lifts are a cost effective method for dealing with height changes in a building. Both from an installation and an ongoing maintenance point of view.
2. Practicality – some part M compliant lifts have small footprints such as 1,250mm X 1,560mm.
3. Efficiency – power consumption of some platform lifts is incredibly small (less than a boiling kettle). Most platform lifts only require a normal 240V supply rather than three phase.
4. Customisation – a specific shaft colour or door colour can be incorporated into the design along with glazing of the shaft. Some manufacturers can actually produce a fully glazed shaft thereby making a quality feature of the lift.

#### Future for platform Lifts

Manufacturers are continually looking to advance the platform lift product both aesthetically and mechanically. Over the last five years we have seen considerable improvements in drive technology and this is set to continue. Applications for the units are growing with platform lifts being used now for small goods lifts and residential lifts.





## Never a bridge too far for Neaco decking

Neaco's Techdek aluminium open grille system has become a popular choice for bridge applications, having been specified as decking for pedestrian or cycle ways at some of the UK's most prestigious bridge schemes.

Techdek's T-Bar profile provides a 74 per cent contact area on the surface, yet drains water efficiently, and its swage-locked construction between the bars enables high structural efficiency.

Those qualities, combined with a maintenance-free durability and the option of a serrated anti-slip surface for increased safety, make Techdek an ideal specification for the external conditions and high traffic demands of a bridge. Neaco's national sales manager, Richard Richardson-Derry, comments: "Bridge developments have become a major market for our Techdek system with the product featured on some of the UK's most high-profile bridge projects in recent years. In addition to its many practical qualities, Techdek provides a high architectural aesthetic that is manufactured to last. Its versatile modularity can adapt to unusual angles and curvatures, allowing it to serve some of the most creative aspects seen in contemporary bridge architecture."

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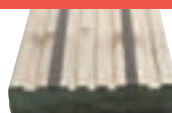
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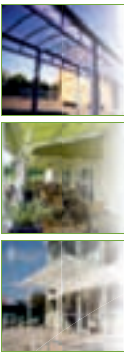
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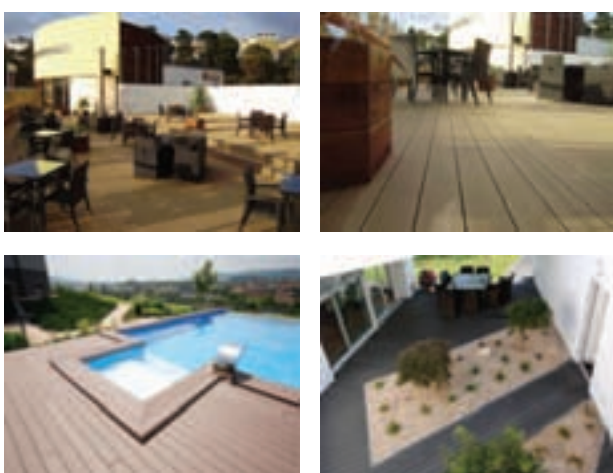
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# What to consider when specifying composite decking

Composite decking can provide architects with a fantastic solution for exterior flooring projects. The technology used has developed exponentially over recent times that some manufacturers can now provide a recycled decking product that won't rot, split, fade or stain and with guarantees that can extend to around 25 years. Marc Foster, manager at Arbor Forest Products Ltd offers advice on what to look for

As well as a long guarantee, composite decking should only ever need an occasional wash down and will never need oiling, painting or staining. Manufacturers are not only producing functional and ultra-low maintenance decking but products with fantastic aesthetics guaranteed to look that way for decades to come.

As with timber decking there are various solutions available and many of these provide differing benefits. Here's a check list of some queries that you may wish to consider when specifying composite decking:

## 1 % of recycled material

Manufacturers offer products with varying levels of recycled material. For example there is a product in the UK with 50 per cent recycled content and another that uses 95 per cent recycled material.

## 2 Timber content

Many composite decking products include timber as part of their makeup (composite decking is usually a mix of plastic polymers and wood fibres). The EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) comes into effect in the UK from 3rd March 2013 and is a legal obligation for any company placing timber or timber products on the European market to conduct due diligence on these products to minimise the risk that they are from illegal sources. It is worthwhile checking with the manufacturer whether their product meets this requirement or is exempt from the regulation. Further details can be found at [www.ttf.co.uk](http://www.ttf.co.uk).



## 3 Guarantee

Generally there are two elements to consider here. Firstly the length of the guarantee (usually differs between commercial and domestic residential applications) followed by what the guarantee covers. Most manufacturers will guarantee their product won't rot or split; others will offer you further cover such as a guarantee their decking will never fade or stain.

## 4 Fixing method

Some composites work with the traditional face-fix method – using a screw through the face of the board. Others offer concealed fixings for a seamless appearance and some can offer both options with the same product. One argument against concealed fixings is that if you needed access under the deck boards it was difficult and time consuming to remove them. However a number of the latest concealed fixings allow removal of individual deck boards relatively easily.

*Continued overleaf...*



**5 Appearance and functionality**  
Composite decking is available in a wide range of shapes, sizes, lengths, colours and finishes. There is likely to be a product to suit every taste, trend and functionality. Some products have the appearance of hardwood or reclaimed timber; others have a more contemporary ribbed effect and most come in a variety of colours to compliment a plethora of surroundings. You may also wish to consider other aspects such as more durable options for high traffic areas; stain resistant boards for areas used for eating and drinking and longer length boards for a continuous appearance across the deck. Some manufacturers can also offer a deck board that you can curve for a totally unique appearance.

**6 Grip levels**  
Many composite decking products available in the UK will



meet the requirement for 'low slip potential' in both wet and dry conditions. As a further option many manufacturers can provide you with alternative colours that may help when distinguishing between a change in height such as steps or a ramp. Further details on slips and trips can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/>.

**7 Retro-fit**  
Composite decking is usually installed in a similar way to timber decking. This means that it may be possible to retro-fit composite decking over an existing sub-frame. The considerations here would firstly be if the sub-frame is sound and likely to last as long as the new deck boards. Secondly does the existing construction meet the manufacturer's technical requirements for their product – for example are the joist centres the correct spacing. Retro-fit is certainly worth consideration if you are replacing an existing deck.

**8 Railing**  
There is a vast array of deck railing options available to architects today, many of which work extremely well with composite decking. Product options can include composite, glass, aluminium, wood or even a mixture of these. Whether you specify railing from your decking manufacturer or a standalone parapet company you may wish to ensure their products meet the requirement for your application whether domestic or commercial. For further details on deck railing specification please visit <http://www.tda.org.uk/>.

Timber decking is a huge success in the UK and will continue to be so. However where there is demand for a functional, attractive and ultra low maintenance deck there is now a variety of composite products to meet that requirement and potentially surpass your client's expectations.



## POD Point



Another eco-planning requirement is on the horizon. Electric car charging provision is now mandatory in many parts of the UK. **POD Point**, one of Europe's leading electric car charging companies, advises on installation requirements, load management and passive provision, engages with planning teams, liaises with grant funding bodies – and provides intelligent on-street and domestic charging solutions that

leave a margin for the developer. Fill in the reply card to find out more about electric car charging. They'll even send you a copy of the new guidance Installing Charging Facilities for Electric Cars.

## Rainline specified for supported housing



Lindab's steel based Rainline rainwater drainage system was recently specified for an award winning supported housing scheme designed by Liverpool based architects, Denovo Design. The Cherry Mill development in Liverpool won the 'Best Green Home' award at the recently held 'Your Move Awards' and a Silver Green Apple

Award for Environmental Best Practice. Quick and easy to install, Rainline is precision engineered by Lindab to simply click together for a perfect watertight fit. On-site labour time and costs are kept to a minimum. Available in 10 stylish high build polyester colours, the finish of which is guaranteed for 15 years including the increasingly popular Silver Metallic.

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