

# HbD

# Housebuilder & Developer

January 2016

**Government to directly  
commission  
affordable homes**

**Government promotes  
Help to Buy: ISA**

**CITB and HBF join  
forces to launch  
non-construction  
training fund**

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Eco & Green Products  
Fires & Fireplaces  
Groundworks & Sewage Treatment  
Insulation  
Kitchens & Appliances

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housebuilding?

Manchester wins £10 million prize to  
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Cover image of Southern Housing Group's first ever scheme, Cameron Close, built to the PassivHaus standards

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David Mote,  
Housebuilder  
& Developer  
news editor

Editor's comment

I know it is a little late, but on behalf of the Housebuilder & Developer team may I wish all our readers a happy and prosperous New Year.

Looking back, last year was certainly eventful.

Based on the realisation that the country needs an additional 230,000 homes per year to keep up with the number of new households being formed the government has thrown itself behind the increased construction of new homes.

Looking forward David Cameron has already announced that the government will directly commission 13,000 affordable 'starter' homes and a £1.2 billion starter homes fund.

The next big step in this necessary catch up exercise will be the Housing and Planning Bill 2015 -16, which will make provision about housing, estate agents, rent charges, planning and compulsory purchase.

However, with the government tabling 65 pages of new clauses over the Christmas period and the housing bill debate then being delayed until 8.50pm on the 6th and finishing at 2am the next morning many tired MPs were less than happy about the progress of this stage of the bill.

They did agree a programme motion, which schedules the remaining stages on the bill to take place over two days.

As we went to print the report stage, legislative grand committee and third reading in the House of Commons was taking place.

So –interesting times ahead, which we will of course keep you informed of.

## HCA CHAIRMAN

Kevin Parry  
appointed new  
chairman of  
Homes and  
Communities  
Agency

Kevin Parry has been appointed interim chairman of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the Communities and Local Government Secretary, Greg Clark, confirmed.

Mr Parry will lead the HCA board for a period after current chairman Robert Napier steps down at the end of December. He will continue the role until a chairman is appointed on a permanent basis and took up the position from 1 January 2016.

Mr Parry is currently a serving HCA board member and holds a number of other non-executive roles, including being the senior independent director of Intermediate Capital Group Plc and audit committee chairman at Standard Life Plc.

He has considerable finance experience gained in his previous roles of finance director of Schroders Plc and as a managing partner of KPMG.

Communities Secretary Greg Clark said: "The HCA has a big role to play in driving forward housebuilding and Kevin's experience of being a board member will be invaluable in his new role. He brings significant commercial experience and I'm delighted he is taking on this position.

"Robert Napier has provided strong leadership in his time as chairman which can be seen in the way the HCA regularly meets the objectives of government. I'd like to thank Robert for his hard work over the years and wish him well in the future."

Kevin Parry said: "The Spending Review outcome clearly demonstrates the government's commitment to transforming housing supply and home ownership in this country. It is a privilege to chair the HCA at this crucial time and I am really looking forward to working with my Board, HCA staff, ministers and our outstanding partners to meet the challenge of building the homes the country needs."

Outgoing chairman, Robert Napier CBE, said: "I would like to take this opportunity to offer Kevin Parry my best wishes in his new role and offer my sincere thanks to the HCA's Board and staff for their hard work and support to me over the past seven years. When I reflect on my time as the Chairman of the HCA, I am incredibly proud of the fact that we met or exceeded our targets each and every year, in support of government priorities. Our work at the HCA has made a real difference to places across the country and hundreds of thousands of people have benefited from better homes and job opportunities."

## DIRECTLY COMMISSIONED STARTER HOMES

# Government to directly commission thousands of new affordable homes

The Prime Minister has announced that the government will directly commission thousands of new affordable homes. This new policy will see the government grasp the initiative and fast-track the building of 13,000 affordable homes on publicly owned land.

Having announced the new policy David Cameron said: "This government was elected to deliver security and opportunity, whatever stage of life you're at. Nothing is more important to achieving that than ensuring hard-working people can buy affordable homes."

"Today's package signals a huge shift in government policy. Nothing like this has been done on this scale in three decades, with the government rolling its sleeves up and directly getting homes built."

"Backed up with a further £1.2 billion to get homes built on brownfield sites, it shows we will do everything we can to get Britain building and let more people have the security that comes with a home of their own."

The direct commissioning approach has not been used on this proposed scale since Margaret Thatcher and Michael Heseltine started the London Docklands regeneration.

The government believes that by directly commissioning the building of homes on publicly

owned land will lead to quality homes built at a faster rate with smaller building firms, that will be able to start building on government sites where planning permission is already in place. The first wave of up to 13,000 homes will start on four sites outside London in 2016, up to 40 per cent of which will be affordable 'starter' homes. This approach will also be used at the Old Oak Common site in northwest London.

To add to the government's post Christmas housing present they also announced the £1.2 billion starter home fund to prepare brownfield sites for new homes. This will fast-track the creation of at least 30,000 new starter homes and up to 30,000 market homes on 500 new sites by 2020. This, they hope, will help deliver their commitment to create 200,000 starter homes over the next five years.

The new investment will help kick-start regeneration and secure planning permission in urban areas, renovating disused or under-occupied urban sites so that homebuilders can start building without any delays.

Speaking about the new initiatives Communities Secretary Greg Clark explained: "We're pulling out all the stops to keep the country building with a clear ambition to deliver a million homes by 2020 and support hard-working people into home ownership."

"Today's radical new approach will mean the government will directly commission small and up-and-coming companies to build thousands of new homes on sites right across the country."

"This, and the £1.2 billion new starter homes fund, will help thousands of people to realise their dream of owning their own home."

The government estimates that currently the top eight housebuilders construct 50 per cent of the UK's new homes. They believe that the announced direct commissioning approach will support smaller builders and new entrants who are ready to build but lack the resources and access to land.

## The pilot for direct commissioning on publicly owned land will commence at:

- Connaught Barracks in Dover
- Northstowe in Cambridgeshire
- Lower Graylingwell in Chichester
- Daedalus on Waterfront in Gosport
- Old Oak Common in north west London

## DIRECTLY COMMISSIONED AFFORDABLE HOMES

# Housing sector responds to government directly commissioned affordable homes announcement

The government's announcement that they will be supporting smaller homebuilders and encouraging faster new home production by directly commissioning affordable 'starter' homes on publicly owned land quickly attracted a number of responses from the housing sector.

Representing the private housing industry HBF executive chairman, Stewart Basely warned: "Allowing smaller builders to access publicly owned sites is a welcome move that must be part of a wider set of measures to assist SME builders and get more 'players on the pitch'."

"Direct commissioning will only be successful if it speeds up the release of public sector land and results in more housebuilding than would have happened using the more traditional

methods of public sector land disposal."

He suggested that both large and small housebuilders could benefit from the government's approach and added: "A lower risk model could allow larger builders to increase their output still further, while also enabling smaller housebuilders to increase input. Both have an essential role to play. It is not a question of either/or."

"If starter homes can increase demand by targeting a new section of the market, this will complement the supply measures announced today."

Speaking as a key construction supplier Michael Ankers, chairman of the Brick Development Association, said: "It is encouraging to see the government make this commitment to helping young people get onto

Kim Vernau



*Continued overleaf..*



the housing ladder.

"This direct commissioning approach is to ensure that smaller-scale building contractors are supported, as the top eight contractors currently work on a huge 50 per cent of new homes. Additionally, the investment in building on brownfield sites will help kick-start regeneration and enable planning permission to be secured more quickly, rejuvenating disused or under-occupied urban sites so building work can begin quickly. This increase in housebuilding will create a greater number of jobs and maximise employment of bricklayers in the housing industry."

Kim Vernau, Chief Executive Officer of BLP Insurance suggested that: "David Cameron's pledge to directly commission thousands of new homes will come as welcome news to small build-

ing firms in the UK. The availability of land has proved an ongoing challenge for SME housebuilders and this shift in government policy will help break down the barrier to increased levels of output in the future.

"The fact that previously public land will be sold with planning permission already in place will help address concerns over risks associated with brownfield sites which has historically deterred smaller building companies from taking on big construction projects.

"Over the last nine years we have seen a rapid decline in smaller housebuilders, faced with increasing regulations and a burdensome and protracted planning process. Cutting through this red tape is crucial and this step should be seen as encouraging for the UK housing industry and for consumers seeking either affordable or

privately owned homes."

Richard Donnell, Director of Research at Hometrack added an independent perspective saying: "One of the greatest challenges to growing housing supply has been the loss of capacity from small builders whose numbers have halved between 2007 and 2013. Only 2,710 are estimated to have been building in the last year. The barriers to small builders developing homes have risen with planning and finance risks limiting access to the market.

"The government needs as many types of builder as possible to meet its target to grow supply. While the number of homes announced today is relatively small it sends the message that smaller builders have an important role to play if we are to grow housing volumes."

## SMART CITY AWARD

# Manchester wins £10 million prize to become world leader in 'smart city' technology

**O**rdnance Survey (OS) is celebrating winning a £10 million competition for Manchester to be the UK's Internet of Things (IoT) Demonstrator, which was awarded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Manchester will now become an arena for in-field innovation trials that demonstrate the capability of the IoT. The 'CityVerve' proposition aligns with the city's on going devolution commitment to deliver innovative solutions to local needs and priorities and focus on the continued growth of the digital economy. This includes the more efficient and effective delivery of services such as transport, healthcare and energy. It is also intended that what is learnt in Manchester can be applied in other areas of the UK and around the globe.

Head of Smart Cities Practice, Miranda Sharp, said: "The Manchester project is an exciting development for OS and we are very much looking forward to working with the partnership that includes Manchester City Council, global technology giant Cisco UK, the University of Manchester, BT and innovative UK SMEs including Asset Mapping. We are involved in Smart City programmes across Great Britain and it is clear the needs and aspirations of towns and cities can vary, but the one constant is the need for accurate and interoperable mapping and location data to enable robust analysis. Without mapping, geography and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) it would be impossible to create a Smart City environment powered by the Internet of Things."

One of the earliest examples of mapping data being used to provide a Smart City type answer to a serious issue occurred when a cholera

outbreak swept through Soho, London, in 1854. Not satisfied with the authorities' explanation that 'bad air' was the cause of the epidemic, local physician John Snow created an accurate map of the area, plotting on it the exact location of each of the hundreds of deaths. Analysing the information and presenting it on a map alongside accounts of local witnesses, Snow was able to eventually prove that shared neighborhood water pumps were, in actual fact, responsible. His use of geography and the results derived from it prompted a decade's worth of improvements to public health and sanitation facilities that we still

benefit from today.

Miranda concluded: "If a picture says a thousand words, then a map says millions. Presenting information from different sources on a map can help people understand complex problems in seconds and identify areas of strength and weakness, as John Snow was able to do. A map contains all the small details, which, when analysed and exploited, is a valuable tool that helps you see the bigger picture. As the demand for smarter ways of working and Smart urban areas increase, the importance of accurate location data will only grow."



## ROADS OR ROOFS?



Wembley Park

## Unfinished roads and lack of street lighting frustrate UK homebuyers

**U**p and down the country there is an ongoing debate regarding new build residential sites. We know we need many more new homes but should the roads or the roofs come first?

Increasingly, buyers of new build homes are emphasising the importance of key infrastructure elements such as roads being in place before they purchase their property. Across the UK, buyers are complaining about lack of streetlights,

hazardous incomplete pavements and unfinished roads that lead to flooding and other problems.

The issue is exacerbated by the current legislation. Councils can ask developers to enter into a Section 38 Agreement in order to ensure that roads are finished to an agreed standard, but they cannot force developers to do so, resulting in many buyers of new build homes ending up frustrated that their roads, pavements and streetlights sometimes remain unfinished years after they have purchased their new property.

At Wembley Park in north-west London, developer Quintain has turned the situation on its head. The massive revitalisation of Wembley

Park will see some 5,000 new homes added to the area in total, several hundred of which have already been built, sold and are occupied.

Quintain's COO, James Saunders, explained: "One of the many unique features of Wembley Park is the fact that the area has an incredible infrastructure already in place, so we've got new build apartments going up while excellent transport connections and local facilities already exist. Of course, we're adding to those facilities all the time, with beautiful gardens and even a brand new London Square, but Wembley Park is definitely a prime example of the benefits of infrastructure preceding housing."

## FUTURE BUILDING TRENDS

## White Paper on future building trends

**B**SRIA has launched a White Paper on 'Future Building Trends – Impacts – Solutions', which asks: "What do you think will be the biggest, most relevant changes in buildings now and over the next 10 years, what will be the impact on our industry, and what products and services will be required in the future?"

Explaining the thinking behind the White Paper BSRIA Chief Executive, Julia Evans said: "Buildings that adapt to people, rather than the other way around, will be a major evolution and will lead to more productive environments, a higher level of satisfaction and comfort for occupants and the ability, for example, to avoid conditioning unoccupied spaces.

"The advance of the Internet of Things (IoT) is a major trend in building management. A growing abundance of data will lead to new services and solutions. However, there is a risk that the speed of change may create uncertainty, which can lead to hesitation and false starts.

"There is a trend towards home-working, which will cause a reduction in the demand for commercial building space."

The paper exams:

- How buildings can improve occupant productivity
- The relationship of buildings with their immediate environment as well as their connection to the wider world
- The changing landscape around the design and use of buildings, and their evolution
- How heating, ventilation and air

conditioning (HVAC) should be shaped in the future

In relation to drivers and trends the paper suggests that green construction and sustainability of construction will have an increased affect on the planning and design of buildings within the next few years.

### New technology

Covering new technologies the paper examines the increased uptake of building data capture, energy data analytics and an increasing proportion of applications going to the 'cloud'.

There is also a growing need for devices to be interconnected and converged onto common platforms and networks. This is driving demand for new skills, particularly in the area of IT and communications. Cyber security also needs to be improved and has moved rapidly up the agenda, representing both a threat to development of the building controls industry and a new business opportunity.

Julia concluded: "With increasingly complex buildings and the use of more technology to run them more efficiently, the whole service and maintenance of buildings could change and a new type of company evolve. The whole life cycle cost approach will become more popular. Building controls suppliers must have professional knowledge and competency in energy management, being able to predict building energy expense and remove risk.

Smart technology, in the form of self-learning and self-diagnosing products is emerging as

Julia Evans



well as software-based analytics. All of which are setting the industry on the path towards increasing artificial intelligence and new business opportunities.

Clearly, there is a lot changing in this industry and the players need to be aware of this and decide how they will respond. They need to evolve, move up the value chain, embrace new technologies, develop the necessary processes, and build the necessary skills."





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## COMMENT



# Is this the end of new social housebuilding?

Patrick Mooney of  
Mooney Thompson Consulting comments

**T**he chancellor of the exchequer has committed the government to a huge investment in new house building over the next four years – but the emphasis is all on housing for sale.

Development staff in Housing Associations and Councils have been left scratching their heads, wondering how and where they will be able to build new housing for rent at prices ordinary people can afford. The early winter storms, bringing record rainfall levels and flooding to many northern towns and cities has added a further complication. Where will the new houses be built and can they be better protected from rivers in flood?

Funding for HAs to build housing for rent is still being made available – dropping from £960 million in 2015/16 to £130 million a year from 2018, but this money is for “affordable rent” at near open market prices, rather than the lower priced “social rent”. These were usually set at between 40 and 60 per cent of private rents.

The chancellor seems to be the only person who does not realise the term “affordable rent” is widely discredited, as only families with at least average incomes are able to pay rents equivalent to the private rented sector.

## Housing concerns

Planned new housing for rent schemes are busily being re-cast as shared ownership, outright sales or even as schemes for private or market rent. Development departments are fast acquiring new commercial and marketing skills, to ensure the new housing gets shifted and does not become a huge financial drain on their books. How long before the word ‘profit’ features more prominently in the prospectus for developing HAs?

Meanwhile a study by The Guardian newspaper found that the nine biggest housebuilders in the country had enough land to build over 600,000 new homes, but their construction programmes were hampered by a shortage of council planners and skilled building staff. At The Daily Telegraph, it reported on research by Santander bank showing the average monthly rent in the UK is now £995 per household, significantly higher than the average monthly mortgage repayment of £805 for first-time buyers.

These news items coincided with housing shooting up the list of issues causing concern to the public, as measured by Ipsos Mori polling. In a recent poll, 20 per cent of over 1,000 people interviewed were worried about housing, compared to 52 per cent for immigration, 37 per cent

for the NHS and 26 per cent for the economy. After the floods hit the North of England these percentages are likely to alter as images of ruined homes linger in our memories.

Concerns over housing are notably different when viewed by geography and age. Eight per cent of people surveyed in the north of England saw housing as an issue compared to a whopping 43 per cent in London. Twenty four per cent of 18 to 34 year olds mentioned it as an issue but this fell to 17 per cent of those aged 55 and over expressed concern. Perhaps this is why the chancellor has devised a special version of help-to-buy just for Londoners, with interest free loans of up to 40 per cent of the purchase price. That’s a significant inducement!

## Big funding boost

The headlines after the Comprehensive Spending Review autumn announcement rightly proclaimed the massive expenditure boost given to encourage house building. It is more than doubling to £2 billion a year by 2018/19 with lots of different initiatives all aimed at increasing home ownership, which has been falling in recent years.

The amount of capital grant paid to HAs will decrease from £960 million in 2015/16 to £590 million in 2017/18, before increasing to £1.2 billion in 2019/20 and £1.7 billion in 2020/21. The bulk of the funding HAs are expected to receive in 2021 (£1.5 billion) will be for shared ownership. New pressures will be on the government to increase flood defence spending, so we do not yet know if the house-building budget will remain untouched.

And those demons of the housing market, namely buy-to-let landlords took a real hammering with a significant stamp duty rise of 3 per cent targetted specifically at them, which will add £7,500 to the cost of a £250,000 house from April. This came on top of the changes in tax relief announced in the budget. In the meantime, we can probably expect higher demand and further pressure on house prices driving them up higher in the short-term.

So the challenge for first time buyers will be can they raise the money for a deposit and get a mortgage offer, so they can benefit from George Osborne’s largesse with the taxpayers money. At least they can expect less competition from potential buy to let investors after Easter.

But what about the sizeable chunk of the population who cannot afford to buy property or do not want to buy? Well the chancellor and the housing minister believe that discounted Starter

Homes or Shared Ownership properties are the right solution for them. And will these changes in housing policy and funding address the public’s concerns as demonstrated in the Ipsos Mori poll?

## Sub-prime mortgages

Housing Minister Brandon Lewis hopes that by combining Help to Buy with Starter Homes, then home ownership will be within the reach of people with incomes of just £20,000. Whether mortgage lenders will share this view and lend to below average income households is another matter.

Restrictions on shared ownership purchases are being removed as the government looks to encourage this form of tenure as affordable housing and as an attractive alternative to social rent. But whether this works for low-income families, remains to be seen.

No-one wants to see a return to sub-prime mortgages and the conditions which lead to the collapse of financial markets in 2007 and 2008. The housing market fell, banks saw billions fall off their balance sheets and economies all over the world felt the chill.

As the UK economy finally appears to have recovered, the chancellor says he is helping “ordinary, working families” by ordering an annual 1 per cent cut in social housing rents. It is debatable how much this cut will make a difference to individual household’s budgets – surely a cut is better than an increase – but their impact on social landlords and their business plans is truly awesome and frightening.

## Rent cuts

It was initially estimated that the 1 per cent a year rent cut from next April will result in at least 14,000 fewer homes for rent being built by HAs. But since the autumn statement, the Office for Budget Responsibility has calculated the overall impact of the government’s package of measures will see the planned number of new builds cut by 34,000, to 185,000 new homes by 2020/21.

To this drop in affordable house building you need to add the thousands of planned new homes that local councils have now scrapped. For example Reading Council was due to build 1,000 new homes, but after the rent cut it is now planning on building just 78.

Similar cutbacks are being forecast by other councils up and down the country, with some authorities abandoning their housebuilding

*Continued overleaf...*

ambitions completely. Schemes near rivers and floodplains will also be scrutinised more closely to see if they are practical, with insurers likely to be more cautious about which sites get cover.

Perhaps the real reason for the planned rent cuts is a bid to bring some control to the housing benefit bill which has hit an eye-watering £25 billion a year and showing no sign of reducing. The chancellor is committed to cutting the welfare budget further and it is clear that he has housing benefit firmly in his sights.

Just before the Autumn statement, there was speculation the chancellor might increase the rent cuts to 1.5 per cent or even 2 per cent a year by the end of the Parliament, but those fears have not been realised – for the moment. There is of course still time for these bigger cuts to be brought in before 2020.

Shadow housing minister John Healy commented: “The reality is that while the chancellor says he wants housing associations to build more homes, his mission to shrink the benefits bill at any cost means he has cut off his nose to spite his face.”

## Right to Buy extension

Rather than protest at this, we see five HAs have decided to pilot the right to buy extension, which sees tenants of L&Q, Riverside, Saffron Valley, Sovereign and Thames Valley all able to start the process of buying their homes, on condition they have lived in social housing for at least 10 years. This compares to a three-year qualifying period for council tenants.

The pilot will run until April next year, when it is expected to be rolled out nationally. Discounts will be up to £100,000 in London and £70,000 in other parts of the country, making this attractive to tenants. Participating HAs will be able to limit the number of sales made during the pilot.

While the voluntary RTB agreement is said to be putting strains on relationships between councils and HAs, this could be exacerbated when councils have to start funding the discounts given to HA tenants. For the pilot scheme only, the government has agreed to pay compensation equal to the discounts to the five HAs.

The government has also announced it will introduce changes to the regulation of HAs in

order to reverse their reclassification as public bodies. It is desperate to get their billions of loans privatised, but this might take longer than initially thought with the HCA's new head of regulation, Fiona MacGregor suggesting the changes will happen in two phases. It is increasingly clear that changes being forced on councils (like Pay to Stay and ending lifetime tenancies) will only be ‘voluntary’ for housing associations to make.

Ms MacGregor also said the Homes and Communities Agency will not enforce the Right to Buy for HA tenants. Instead, its new homeownership standard will be used strictly to monitor sales rates and levels of requests.

At the same time the HCA will be grappling with sizeable cuts in its staffing budget, as part of the government's public sector savings. This could severely reduce its capacity for oversight, monitoring and trend spotting. Private lenders and investors might react to this by increasing the cost of loans to HAs, as in the past they have taken comfort from regulation and have lent at lower rates. Ironically the chancellor's actions might have ended those days.

## HOME SECURITY



John Meaden

## Home security - still a low priority for homeowners

**D**espite approved document Q – Security – Dwellings taking effect from 1 October new research from Toolstation, the trade and DIY supplier, has revealed that home security is still a low priority for British homeowners.

UK homeowners actually rated fitting draught excluders as more important than buying a secure home, upgrading or having simple security measures installed. This is despite thefts rising by around 38 per cent in the five months following the clocks going back at the end of October and the average burglary costing homeowners £2,178.

Director of Marketing at Toolstation, John Meaden explained: “It's surprising that home security is such a low priority for Brits, especially when you consider the significant rise in house burglaries during the dark winter months. However, most brand new homes in the UK now come fitted with security locks, burglar alarms and security lighting, as part of the standard specification. So new build homeowners, who can still also easily upgrade their new home's security, immediately enjoy the benefit of better protection against the significant stress and cost of being burgled.”

## AGENCY OF THE YEAR

# Ridgemount PR collects ‘Agency of the year’ at Construction Marketing Awards

**H**eld at the Radisson Blu, Portman hotel in London, the 15-year old CMAs are organised by the Chartered Institute of Marketing Construction Industry Group (CIMCIG) and showcase excellence in construction marketing and business development

The award's judging panel praised Ridgemount for its ability to create effective and

persuasive content, with its team of ex-journalists, PR professionals and digital enthusiasts who are able to find an audience and engage with it well.

The company was also highly commended in the PR agency of the year category, which was won by Tangerine.

The STAR awards recognise excellence in 16 marketing categories and 78 sub-categories.

SUPERSTAR and STAR

CMA Chairman, Neil M. Brown explained: “Our fifth annual Construction Marketing STAR Awards witnessed entrants from across the continent and many sectors of the construction industry. The 2015 winners demonstrated both creative excellence and marketing results, along with a growing internet marketing category.”



## APPRENTICE AWARDS



## William Davis present their apprentice awards

At their annual 'Apprentice of the Year' awards presentation evening William Davis Managing Director, Guy Higgins welcomed 29 apprentices, apprentice masters, college tutors, CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) apprenticeship officers and parents to the ceremony.

At the ceremony 20-year-old plumber, Jake Hankin, from Leicester, was named 'Apprentice of the Year' after demonstrating consistently high skills, quick progression, excellent academic results and a genuine interest and enthusiasm for work. Jake's CITB apprenticeship officer, Amanda Drabant commented: "I've known Jake for three years and can honestly say he is the most polite and cheerful apprentice I've worked with in 10 years. He receives nothing but praise from all his colleagues and his attitude is one we could all learn from."

Carpenter and joiner, Bryce White, now in his third year, was announced runner-up. Conscientious and well mannered, Bryce impressed his tutors with his positive approach

and willingness to learn, which has also made him a popular member of the site team.

William Davis' HR & training officer, Rebecca Jones said of the evening: "The Apprentice of the Year evening is always a cheerful occasion, as we bring together all those who support our young trades people as they learn their crafts. Jake and Bryce are exemplary students, both on track to make first-class tradesmen, and are considered great assets to their respective teams. We are delighted to announce them as our 2015 Apprentice of the Year and runner-up, and look forward to watching their careers continue to thrive with the company."

Now in its 80th year of building quality homes throughout the Midlands, William Davis has been employing apprentices since 1946. Last year, the company was announced as a Top 100 employer for apprentices by the National Apprenticeship Service and its apprentice programme was the winner in the NFB (National Federation of Builders) Awards.

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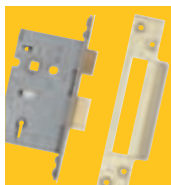
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## DIGITAL REVOLUTION REDUCES BUILDING COSTS

# Housing professionals must take advantage of digital revolution says academic report

New academic research has found that technology advances mean the housing industry is set to undergo a digital revolution which industry professionals must take advantage of, new academic research has found advantage of.

Studies carried out by Birmingham City University and members of the Building Alliance has shown that adopting emerging technologies such as Building Information Modelling (BIM) and Digital House Management Systems early was crucial to leading the change.

The report, titled *Housing: The Digital Revolution*, reveals that using digital methods would make it easier for supply chain partners to react to changes and issues raised by planning authorities, surrounding residents, customers and site staff.

The integration provided by digital approaches in the construction process could save organisations hundreds of man hours and dramatically slash wasted materials and expenditure lost using traditional building methods.

Working alongside dozens of industry experts and professionals the research also showed that technology connected to sensors could see future houses equipped with a 'digital nerve centre' linked to a house dashboard or smartphone app.

The changes will connect building and buying, allowing buyers and builders to work together more easily during construction.

Professor David Boyd, Director of Environment and Society at Birmingham City University, led the research.

He said: "What we are seeing right now is the industry on the brink of completely changing

due to the availability of new technology that is out there right now.

"BIM is just the beginning and if people want to make the most of the opportunities that these changes provide then taking on these technologies early is of the utmost importance.

"Essentially people will be buying and selling something different in the future, which means a change, but it also means there are new wide ranging benefits to be gained for builders, developers buyers and the community."

The technology will also provide advantages for customers by providing walk-throughs during the construction process and long-term servicing to help increase the value of their homes.

The industry will become more attractive bringing new skills and technology savvy people to the housing industry.

## UNOCCUPIED PROPERTY RATES RELIEF

## Unoccupied property rates relief altered in Scotland

As part of the 2016/2017 draft Budget, Finance Secretary John Swinney has announced a number of significant changes to the business rates regime in Scotland.

The changes include the removal of the existing 100 per cent rates relief for owners of empty industrial properties in Scotland and reducing the rates relief available to owners of empty retail and office premises. Previously owners of empty industrial properties which were vacant received full relief and therefore had no business rates liability.

He also announced that in 2016/2017, the overall business rate paid by occupiers of properties with a rateable value over £35,000 will be set at more than 50p in the pound. Together these measures will raise approximately £130 million

of income for the Scottish Government.

Brian Rogan, Head of Business Rates in Scotland for CBRE, commented: "The news that there will be an increased business rates burden for properties with a rateable value over £35,000 will be most unwelcome from the business community.

"It will be important for the Scottish Government to monitor whether the effects of these changes will bring empty properties across Scotland back into use."

Douglas Smith, chairman of CBRE in Scotland, added: "Changes in the relief available for empty commercial property, which will impose additional costs on owners and developers alike, are unhelpful to both the commercial property and construction sectors.



Brian Rogan

"In most parts of Scotland speculative commercial development is not yet viable as the extent of recovery enjoyed in other parts of the UK has not yet reached north of the border with any strength.

"Making provision for this additional cost burden will delay the point at which development viability is achieved and there must now be a real risk that wider UK markets turn downwards even before the Scottish markets have achieved levels of activity anywhere near 'pre-recession' levels.

"At a time when private sector capital investment is being actively sought and encouraged this announcement is likely to have a depressing effect on that ambition."

## COMMENT

## Are the principles of the planning process being placed at risk?

With the government's desire to build 400,000 affordable homes by the end of the decade Planning Partner at Bidwells, Andrew Blackwell asks 'Is the urgency of agreeing Local Plans putting the principles of the planning process at risk?'

We are all aware of the UK's pressing need for new homes and the need to find a solution to our housing crisis. In fact, the government is so concerned that Councils should get their Local Plans prepared quickly, they have appointed a task force to monitor those who are not delivering.

The new Housing and Planning Bill may lead to a much faster route to planning permission, which could be fine apart from the background of further spending cuts within local planning authorities where staff resources are already stretched.



## Cost-effective solution

To meet these pressing timescales and workloads, Councils are increasingly employing consultants for essential evidence work as a timely and cost-effective solution.

Current evidence suggests this is happening more and more and puts the onus on the consultants to respond quickly within the timeframe imposed. It is therefore essential that Councils select consultants who are highly experienced, and importantly, employed and accountable for the duration of the Local Plan process.

## Approach

Here is a recent example of where this has not happened. A London Borough sought a consultation to meet a pressing housing need, where the rolling back of the Green Belt was inevitable. It took place with the evidence base prepared by consultants and many people, including me, making representations.

However, in the course of the following ten months, the results of the consultation remained unpublished. The Council lost staff and the consultants used by the Council were no longer in business. It left a strange position where there was no one accountable for the evidence base that had informed the consultation.

## Difficult decision

To make matters worse, the local authority continued to reduce its planning department staff and was unable to push for appointments to

discuss the evidence. As a result, the Council faced a desperate chase to complete a Local Plan or risk appeal losses. Its response was to appoint new consultants to verify the findings of the original consultants. I was personally involved in this and when I asked if I could see the new consultants' report, I was told that it would be available when it informed a committee paper that would launch the next stages of a review Local Plan.

## Accountability

Other Councils are employing consultants for their Local Plan preparations such as for Green Belt assessment; landscape appraisals, strategic environmental assessment and so on.

So what is new? Well the difference is that in the past the use of consultancies has topped up gaps in expertise within local planning authorities but accountability and accessibility have remained with the Council Officers. In the process of the Local Plan preparation officers have been available for engagement and ultimately in the witness box to stand up and be counted. If their presence or the continued instruction and availability of the consultant is certain then who remains accountable?

There is a pincer movement on Councils to save costs and at the same time produce timely Local Plans. With the example I have described the spectre of legal challenge arises if they short-circuit full public engagement, fair reflection on alternatives and an inability to present and professionally 'own' and justify their evidence base.

There is advice on the scrutiny of the evidence

that underpins a Local Plan in the National Planning Policy Guidance. It states: "Local planning authorities should publish documents that form part of the evidence base as they are completed, rather than waiting until options are published or a Local Plan is published for representations. This will help local communities and other interests consider the issues and engage with the authority at an early stage in developing the Local Plan."

## Need to engage

Localism is a word that has been much banded about and to be honest has been used for political convenience when circumstances suited. However there must be opportunity to 'engage' as the above advice states if the planning system is to carry any fair reflection of democratic participation and scrutiny. It must demonstrate confidence that the evidence base has been fairly tested to produce a sound Local Plan.

We are entering a new era. Local Plans are expected to be delivered quickly but carrying more weight to allow early planning permissions. I am concerned about the future process if reliance on consultants without access to scrutiny leads to a loss in the true participation of the public and stakeholders. Without that and clear accountability of process that reasonable alternatives have been tested, the Plan won't be justified. It will be found unsound only for the process to be repeated and at further public expense and perhaps beyond the control Councils' would wish to keep.

## HELP TO BUY: ISA

# Government scheme to help first-time buyer deposit savers

**L**aunched in December with a campaign on social media, TV and radio the government's Help to Buy: ISA is aimed at encouraging young people to save for the deposit of their new home.

Those saving to buy their first home can now save money into a Help to Buy: ISA and the government will boost the savings by 25 per cent. Every £200 saved will receive a government bonus of £50. The maximum government bonus that can be received is £3,000.

The Help to Buy: ISA is available from a range of banks and building societies.

The accounts are available to each first-time buyer, not each household. This means that those planning to buy with their partner could receive a government bonus of up to £6,000 towards their first home.

When the saver is in the process of buying their first home, their solicitor or conveyancer, who will have to register with the scheme, will apply for the government bonus.

The Housing and Planning Minister, Brandon

Lewis even used LinkedIn to reach the government's target audience saying: "I know many young professionals on LinkedIn will be wanting to buy a home of their own. So I wanted to tell you about the Help to Buy: ISA launching today where you can get up to a £3000 boost from the government.

"It's the government bonus to help you with your deposit and could bring you another step closer to opening the door to your own home. We are determined that anyone who works hard and aspires to own their own home should have the opportunity to do so.

"Already over 230,000 households have been helped into homeownership since 2010 through a variety of government-backed home ownership schemes. From today, anyone who is a first-time buyer or plans to be in the future can open a Help to Buy ISA.

"It will boost your savings by 25 per cent when you save up to £200 a month. So for every £200 you save the government will top it up with £50. That's £3,000 in total towards your deposit.

"And if you're wishing to buy a home as a couple, then you could potentially double your bonus to up to £6,000.

"Those eager to make the most of the scheme can also open their account with a one-off lump sum of up to £1,000 in addition to the monthly maximum.

"Barclays, Lloyds Banking Group, Nationwide, NatWest, Santander, and Virgin Money will be offering Help to Buy: ISAs, so if you're interested in boosting your savings towards your deposit, the wait is over."



## COMMENT

# Will 2016 be the year smart home technology goes mainstream?

With 2015 being seen as the year that smart home technology started to achieve awareness beyond early adopter communities, John Shermer, founder of LightwaveRF suggests that 2016 could be a make or break 12 months for the sector.

Many people have gained an understanding of smart home technology thanks to Google's Nest smart thermostat. The Silicon Valley leviathan has used its omnipotence to fantastic effect, marketing the product to an incredibly wide audience. For many, Nest has been the first step into the world of the Internet of Things and the creation of the 'connected home'.

Our contact with consumers tells us that there is now a desire to add to the capabilities of Nest with other products, such as smart radiator valves, lighting and electrical sockets, as well as blinds and curtains. According to Barclays' recent Digital Homes Report, the number of smart connected homes is forecast to grow by nearly 50 per cent in the next four years from 500 million to 700 million globally. People are looking at the basic enabling infrastructure that underpins the smart home, building in endless possibilities to develop a smart ecosystem that talks to itself, its owner and the outside world.

The challenge for many tech developers is to take advantage of developments by major players like Google and Apple, which are really driving the market. Consumers who have bought an Apple smartphone or tablet now expect that any other equipment they buy will work seamlessly with Apple's Homekit (the hidden framework on your smartphone that helps smart devices talk to each other) or Google's Weave. Building in this compatibility has been a huge area of work for LightwaveRF in 2015 and we are developing and enhancing our products all the time. But the beauty of being neither Apple nor Google means that we can cater to fans of both brands.

Homebuilders and homeowners can now create a complete smart home system using our thermostat, energy usage monitor, radiator valves, dimmable light switches, power sockets and more. Alternatively, interested parties can integrate one of these areas of control with other brands. For example, if a homeowner has already bought a Nest or Ecobee thermostat, it would work well with specialised radiator valves. The Nest app has a 'home and away' feature and both functions can be synced to work together, creating an integrated system.

Much development has also gone into user operated interfaces but before long sensors will start to play a big role. For example, we have produced a sensor that shuts windows when a radiator comes on, with the aim of preventing unnecessary energy usage. Before long, infrared

sensors will take off, bringing about not just smart homes but smart rooms that control lighting and heating in accordance with room usage and patterns of behaviour.

If smart homes deliver previously unimaginable levels of convenience and control, they also allow owners (and indeed renters) to reduce their impact on the planet and increase energy efficiency. We are seeing homes fitted with smart radiator valves and thermostats cutting heating demand by around a third over the winter season

– making a real dent in bills as well as carbon emissions.

It is an exciting time to be in the smart home sector. There is a technological revolution taking place before our eyes and it is starting to benefit our lives in many ways. In 2016 I predict the level of interest and demand for products will really pick up. Perhaps in five years' time, much of what we produce today will be taken for granted in the same way that satnavs are in cars.

Smart new homes adding convenience and control



John Shermer





## SELF-BUILD DEVELOPMENT



## Self-build development for South London

**R**USS, a community self-build group that aims to provide homes for those priced out of the housing market, has been named preferred bidder by Lewisham Council to deliver homes in Lewisham, South London. RUSS will develop a scheme of 30 new, high quality, sustainable homes on the site of an old school in Ladywell, Lewisham. This follows six years of work led by volunteers in the community to secure the bid.

The project will create a mixed community made up of people from diverse backgrounds. The development will include one-bedroom to four-bedroom homes, available on a range of tenures including social rent, affordable rent, shared equity and shared ownership. It will include properties aimed specifically at providing training opportunities through the construction of shared-flats for young people. The specific mix of properties and tenure will be tailored to suit the mix of residents that come forward for the scheme. People interested in the project will be able to get involved in the self-build process and learn new skills, regardless of their skill level at

the outset.

RUSS founder, Kareem Dayes, who grew up in Lewisham's early self-build housing scheme in Walter's Way in Honor Oak, said: "It is brilliant that RUSS has been chosen as preferred bidder. After five years of planning and negotiating we are now able to begin the real work of building a truly affordable and sustainable community. We can now move a step closer to empowering local people to create an alternative to private ownership and private rented housing.

"We aim to establish a new precedent, a replicable model in community-led housing that will benefit people currently unable to access housing on the open market. As a Community Land Trust we invite all local people to get involved, become a member of RUSS and participate in the realisation of this project. People can get in touch via our website and come to our public meetings and we'll be opening for official expressions of interest soon.

"This project is one step of many towards creating a better housing market that offers people high quality sustainable homes that they can

afford. Thank you to all the people who have supported RUSS over the years. We look forward to the continued development of our partnerships within the local community and Lewisham Council to create a space we can all be proud of."

Councillor Damien Egan, Lewisham's Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "This is an exciting initiative that follows co-operative housing principles. It shows that there are many ways in which we can creatively address our housing need. This is an aspirational, ambitious and affordable scheme from a passionate group who have got the local community behind them. Lewisham were pioneers of self-build housing in the 1980's and we're proud to welcome a new generation of self-builders."

RUSS will now work with Lewisham Council to finalise the development agreement and lease. The RUSS project team will also facilitate the members, local community, neighbours and the council to bring forward a sustainable design. The target for starting on site is spring 2017 with a view to completing by 2020.

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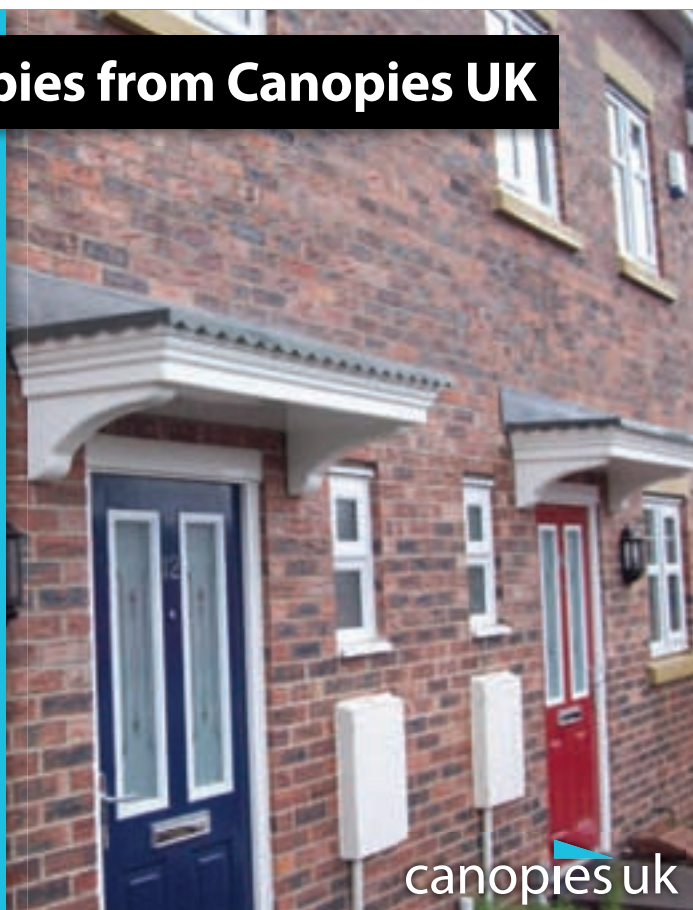


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## TRAINING NON-CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYEES

# HBF and CITB launch non-construction training fund

The Home Builders Federation (HBF) and Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) have joined forces to launch a £1 million fund to train non-construction employees.

The fund, which will run throughout 2016, is aimed at ensuring the thousands of non-construction related staff, including those in sales and marketing or business development employees also receive the required level of training to ensure the industry can deliver more, high quality homes.

The fund will help HBF members to target training to employees, graduate scheme trainees

and those on undergraduate placements to ensure that best practice is applied and high standards upheld. A portion of the fund has also been set aside to fund further training for sales and marketing staff. Driving up levels of customer service is a particular area of focus for the industry as more potential customers visit sales offices and more homes are sold.

Speaking about the new scheme HBF executive chairman, Stewart Baseley said: "The past two years have seen tens of thousands of new people recruited into housebuilding and a significant increase in the number of new homes being built.

As we look to increase output still further it is imperative we continue to increase industry capacity and develop the skilled workforce required to build the high quality homes the country needs. We need to ensure every member of staff in every part of the process is trained to the best possible standard."

Steve Radley, director of policy at CITB, said: "Industry told us that more needed to be done to address the range of skills challenges in the housebuilding sector. Working with HBF, this new pilot fund is a first step in addressing that important issue."

## WESTMINSTER MIXED DEVELOPMENT

## 230,000 sq ft Westminster mixed-use development to be constructed by BAM

BAM Construction is to substantially remodel the central Westminster residential and office space at 63-65 Buckingham Gate, Anquila Corporation Ltd of Hong Kong, to create a high-quality development to be known as 1, 2 & 3 Buckingham Green. The circa 230,000 sq ft mixed-use project is managed by Gardiner & Theobald on behalf of Anquila Corporation, who are in turn represented by London & Oriental.

The building is situated at the edge of St James's, close to Parliament and Westminster Abbey. Every day it is passed by thousands of people and the design, by architect Fletcher Priest, will transform an existing dark alley atmosphere by creating a new and open public realm space and increased transparency at street level.

BAM was selected as preferred contractor for the design, procurement, construction and completion of three mixed-use buildings, consisting of private residential, office and retail space.

Each of the three buildings has its own building block and individual design connected via street level urban realm plus a double storey basement.

The tower will be stripped back and entirely

re-clad to provide 65 high-specification one, two, three and four-bed apartments which will be available to rent and four floors of prime Grade A office space in the redesigned building inspired by Mies van der Rohe. The Podium will provide 33,000 sq ft of unique prime Grade A office space. The Annexe building will offer two bespoke 2,500 sq ft floors of modern studio office space alongside 12,000 sq ft of new A1 and A3 retail space across the scheme forming an entirely re-landscaped quarter.

The scheme was granted planning approval by Westminster City Council in September 2014.

Construction Director for BAM, Andy Mason, explained: "These are high-end offices / apartments and the architect's use of light and the high standards of public realm will transform their look and feel. The finished buildings must be capable of attracting a range of residential tenants, retail and commercial occupiers. The buildings recently served as headquarters for Rolls Royce reflecting their upmarket appeal. BAM's

work on complex and high-specification buildings is well-established, having worked on some of the capital's most impressive new builds, from the Angel Building, the current transformation of Kings Cross, and HQs for UNISON, Burberry and 55 Baker Street (the former M&S headquarters). This scheme is a fantastic vision in the heart of the capital and given the team's wide ranging experience we are all well placed to deliver."

Mark Cannell of London & Oriental added: "This is a long term investment project for Anquila and we believe that the exemplary design, the quality of materials and the attention to detail will help us to achieve this. We consider the contractor and the professional team are all "best in class" and representative of this philosophy."

BAM will make the buildings more energy efficient in use, reconfigure an existing car park, and deliver the Cat A fit-out. Works on site have commenced and will be completed towards the end of 2017.



The future 1, 2, & 3 Buckingham Green



## SHARED OWNERSHIP FUNDING MODEL

# Shared ownership gets multi-million pound boost from private sector



**T**he Mayor of London Boris Johnson MP has announced a significant boost for shared ownership in London with 1,000 new homes to be developed under a pioneering funding model with major institutional investors.

The announcements are part of the Mayor's drive to accelerate construction of shared ownership properties in London, making home ownership accessible to many more Londoners.

The two investments with Chaco Ltd and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham working with institutional investors have been allocated £45 million from the Mayor's First Steps Challenge Fund. The first investment under the First Steps Challenge Fund scheme will be delivered in partnership with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and part-funded by institutional investors, and result in up to 500 new shared ownership homes delivered in the borough by 2020. The Greater London

Authority will contribute £22.5 million to the development, which will be more than matched by pension funds and other institutional investors, and repaid within 15 years with interest.

The second investment will be delivered in partnership with Chaco Ltd, an organisation that provides institutional non-bank funding for housing associations and registered providers, to build 500 new shared ownership homes across London. Chaco Ltd has existing relationships with investors such as Aviva, CBRE and M&G Investments and it is hoped that this funding can help to stimulate further investment from these organisations into the sector. The Greater London Authority will provide another £22.5 million to this project, which will leverage significant private sector funding and be repaid over time. Chaco Ltd are working with housing association partner Genesis to develop a structure to deliver the units.

A further £120 million from long-term private sector investment will add to the Mayor's loan funding. The fund is aimed at attracting investment from institutions such as pension funds and insurance companies to build part-buy, part-rent housing for low and middle income Londoners. It is expected to attract more than double its initial investment, providing strong value for the taxpayer. The Fund adds to successful efforts to

encourage institutional investment for the purpose-built private rented sector, building a bigger pool of investors and new providers to support housebuilding. The Mayor's First Steps scheme has so far helped 52,000 Londoners to buy a home, with typical household incomes of £40,000, and some deposits as low as £5,000.

In addition the Mayor has instructed the GLA to explore purchasing land in areas, such as Housing Zones, where the shared ownership model could be expanded. This would ensure vacant plots are put to productive use and preserve the developments for shared ownership properties. The GLA has successfully brought to market all of its surplus sites since the Mayor was elected, providing almost 50,000 new homes, and will now look to make acquisitions where it will accelerate or unlock new homes.

Boris Johnson said: "This scheme is a brilliant way to open up home ownership to Londoners on modest incomes, making the first step on the property ladder just that little bit easier. We have already helped 52,000 Londoners to buy their first home and realise their dream, and I'm very pleased that the first institutional investors have come on board through my First Steps Challenge Fund. This is a great vote of confidence in a housing model which is incredibly popular with consumers, and we need to see more of it in London."

## NEW BUILD FAMILY HOMES ARE TOO SMALL

# Over 50 per cent of new-build homes are too small for families

**O**ver 50 per cent of new-build homes are too small for families. More than half of the new homes being built today are not big enough to meet the needs of the people who buy them, according to new research published by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

The report suggests that the squeeze on the size of our houses is depriving thousands of families of the space needed for them to live comfortably and cohesively, to eat and socialise together, to accommodate a growing family or ageing relatives, or even to store possessions including everyday necessities such as a vacuum cleaner.

RIBA's #HomeWise – Space Standards for Homes reveals:

- On average buyers of a new three bedroom home are missing 4 sqm – that's the size of a family bathroom
- The smallest three bedroom homes surveyed by RIBA are missing space equivalent to an entire double bedroom

- Homes in Yorkshire are by far the smallest in England – the average new three bedroom home in Yorkshire is 25 sqm smaller than one in London. At only 84 sqm, the average new home in Yorkshire is smaller than one in London by the equivalent of a double bedroom and a family living room

RIBA is using this research to make the case for an urgent amendment in legislation currently passing through Parliament to end to the building of sub-standard homes.

In October 2015 new rules were introduced to allow local authorities to set minimum sizes (space standards) for new homes, but the process is extremely complex and onerous.

The level of administration required means that it will take several years for local authorities to adopt any changes.

The space standard does not apply to all new homes, for example for housing developments that are created under new rights that allow the change of use from office to residential use.

RIBA is calling for a national space standard

that applies to all homes, in every location.

RIBA President, Jane Duncan, said: "Tiny rabbit-hutch new-builds should be a thing of the past. But sadly our research shows that for many people, a new home means living somewhere that's been built well below the minimum space standard needed for a comfortable home. We urgently need new homes, but building small homes or cutting corners when converting office buildings to flats is short-sighted and fails the people these new homes are meant to serve. The government must take action to ensure a fairer minimum space standard is applied to all new homes across the country."

RIBA is campaigning for the national minimum space standard to be embedded within Building Regulations that set the standards for housing design. This would mean that all new homes across the country would be covered. A regulatory approach would create a level playing field and a fair housing offer wherever you live, irrespective of tenure.



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# Industry movers

The latest movements and appointments within the housebuilding industry

## GRAVEN HILL

A new managing director has been appointed to the Graven Hill Village Development Company tasked with leading the delivery of the UK's largest self-build housing project. Philip Singleton joined the team on 4 January 2016 where he is responsible for managing the company employees, meeting the project's targets and objectives and providing strategic guidance and direction to the board of directors. He has also become an ambassador for Graven Hill, responsible for engaging with clients and stakeholders to ensure the self-build project is a positive experience for all concerned. He said: "I am thrilled at becoming the new managing director for Graven Hill Village Development Company."

## DUNLOP

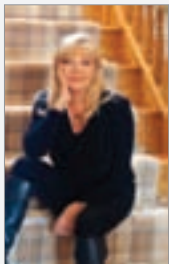


Dunlop, specialist manufacturer of tile adhesives, grouts, finishing and decorating product through its Pro Décor brand, has appointed Paul Clayton as Area Sales Manager (ASM) for the Midlands. As an ASM, Paul will help drive awareness of the Dunlop and Pro Décor brands and work to increase sales with builders' merchants, decorating supplies centres and tradesmen throughout the region stretching from Nottinghamshire in the North to Oxfordshire in the South. Paul has nearly 15 years' of industry experience.

## HILL

Hill, the top 20 UK housebuilder, has appointed Mark Duffield as Technical Director. The new role will see Mark implementing design and innovative methods across the housebuilder's most complex developments in London and the South East. Mark Duffield has a strong background in structural engineering and spent the past 13 years as a Technical Director at a London housebuilder. He will be using the knowledge obtained on past projects to help train and lead teams on Hill's most challenging schemes. Mark's work will include projects like North West Cambridge – a major joint venture with Cambridge University that will see Hill deliver the first phase of 250 homes. The development will eventually provide up to 3,000 new homes.

## LARKFLEET



Bourne-based housing and development company Larkfleet Homes has appointed Helen Hick to the new post of joint managing director. Helen has been instrumental in the running and growth of the business since its inception. This new appointment acknowledges the depth of her experience and knowledge, not only as part of the company but also within the industry as a whole.

## TTF

The Timber Trade Federation has announced the appointment of David Hopkins as new Director. Mr Hopkins is currently Director at Wood for Good, the timber industry communications campaign. He will now take a position on the Board of Wood for Good as he moves into his new role at TTF. Keith Fryer, President of the TTF said: "I am delighted that David has accepted the position of Director. It was a tough recruitment battle with a number of top-class candidates. We need somebody with vision, skills and knowledge to take the Federation forward through a period of great change, David is that man."

## ST. MODWEN



St. Modwen, one of the UK's leading regeneration specialist, is pleased to announce two senior residential appointments a Guy Gusterson has been promoted to Group Residential Director from Managing Director of its housebuilding business. David Smith has joined St. Modwen as Managing Director of St. Modwen Homes, replacing Guy following his promotion.

## SOUTHERN HOUSING

Southern Housing Group, one of the largest housing associations in the south east of England, has appointed Will Routh as its first Head of Sustainability to lead the Group's expertise in this field. Will joined the Group five years ago as an Environmental Sustainability Officer. In his new role, Will will work to extend the Group's environmental sustainability expertise and continue to drive the Group's efforts to reduce the environmental impact of its activities. This includes the development and delivery of the Group's new Environmental Sustainability Strategy and increasing collaborative work with residents, suppliers, staff and partners to tackle some of the biggest challenges the Group and its residents face, including fuel poverty and climate change.

## GEOSMART INFORMATION



Highly regarded legal and property product expert joins the fast growing environmental data provider to lead on sustainable development reports. GeoSmart Information, a sister company of ESI, one of the UK's leading environmental consultancies, continues to expand its team with the appointment of Chris Taylor as Product Development Director. Chris has an unequalled track record of bringing exemplary due diligence risk reports to the market for property professionals.

## PDW

Housing and development consultancy, Project Development Workshop Ltd (PDW) has appointed a new product manager to its Warrington team. Carly O'Sullivan brings a wealth of experience to her new role at PDW, having previously worked at Styles and Wood where she was head of compliance and supply chain for five years. Carly's main responsibility at PDW will be leading on the management of the company's products, notably the Development Procedures Manual (DPM) and the Sales Procedures Manual (SPM) which provide step by step guidance to the development and sale of new homes and are tailored to the specific requirements of any organisation. PDW specialises in housing and development consultancy.



## EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

# Hand housing back to communities to solve building crisis

A new report from cross-party think tank Demos calls on the government to support local authorities and help them do more to tackle the UK's housing crisis, by encouraging community-led developments and pushing for greater transparency in decision-making.

The report, 'Community Builders' finds that many Councils, particularly those in rural areas, are 'dragging their heels' on approving new planning applications. This includes some Councils where a third of all proposals for large developments are being rejected in the face of significant population growth.

Rather than arguing for Whitehall to step in to drive projects forward, the report argues that it is only through empowering communities to be more involved in housing projects that sufficient homes will be built.

Developed following extensive qualitative and quantitative analysis, including focus groups with residents throughout the country, 'Community Builders' shows that concern for collective, community goods, such as local aesthetics, green spaces and community facilities are the primary drivers of opposition to development. Many participants in the research focus groups cited a lack of trust in the planning process, and a skepticism over whether local people would benefit from the availability of new housing, as their motivating factors in resisting new projects.

By contrast, the report finds that when sufficiently democratic, transparent and inclusive in their structure, projects driven by community-led building schemes can help local residents to feel greater ownership over developments.

The report found that the legitimacy of these groups in the eyes of residents and Councils have meant that community-led projects are more likely to gain planning permission. However, they are also slower to be approved, suggesting that the sector could benefit from more professional expertise and greater understanding of their bene-

fits amongst council officers.

Overall, urban districts were found to approve the highest proportion of planning applications, and more quickly than their rural counterparts. However, local hostilities towards housebuilding are stopping many much-needed developments from even reaching application stage. Of the modest number reaching councils, almost 20 per cent of applications are being rejected nationally, in the face of one of the most acute housing shortages in our history.

To encourage greater local support for house building, across both metropolitan and rural districts, 'Community Builders' recommends that:

- Local authorities should be supported to create hyper-local housing waiting lists, to ensure people in need in the immediate vicinity are prioritised for housing
- Community-led groups should have formal, democratic decision-making structures that enable the wider community to participate through community-shared schemes
- Those groups that have gained support among local residents should become more involved in the planning process, as their visible participation, such as being formally named as the applicant for planning permission, can help to generate active support among residents
- The Government should ensure that all community-led schemes are exempted from the extension of Right-to-Buy
- Councils should ensure they have formal policies in place that encourage planning decisions to be made in consideration of the wider benefits of community-led schemes.

Commenting on the report, its author, Charlie Cadywould, said: "The shortage of affordable housing is one of the biggest problems we face. It's good to see that the Chancellor is committed to building more homes, with the doubling of the housing budget. However, money is just one side

of the equation. We also have to find a place to build all these new homes. At the moment, the government's will to get building is rarely matched by local residents who will be most directly impacted by new developments. By engaging local residents, by being democratic and acting as a credible, representative voice, community-led groups can ensure new developments match the needs and desires of local residents, and in doing so turn concern for the community into active support for more local housing."



Charlie Cadywould

## Analysing local planning data between 2010 and 2015, Demos found:

- Local authorities in the North of England are granting a much higher proportion of planning applications for large housing developments than those in the South (89 per cent in the North East compared to 75 per cent in the South East) where the housing market is suffering most from a shortage of supply.
- Northern councils are also more likely to meet the 13-week target for making decisions, compared to those in the South (68 per cent in the North East compared to 57 per cent and 59 per cent in the South West and East).
- Metropolitan districts are approving a far higher percentage of residential applications (90 per cent) than shire districts (78 per cent), although London boroughs (81 per cent) were found to be performing relatively poorly

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## CASE STUDY

# The Annie McCall – new homes born out of old buildings

Famous for being the first hospital to be founded, staffed and run entirely by women, as well as being the birth place of Bond actor Roger Moore, The Clapham Maternity Hospital, founded in 1885 by Dr Annie McCall, is now a sought after south London community

**T**he Annie McCall is a new community created by Henley Homes within a historic site. The renovated development incorporates a mix of period buildings and new build elements, all in a landscaped environment. The 30 homes, which include eight affordable and one shared ownership home have been created through the thoughtful conversion, renovation and extension of existing buildings. These existing buildings have then been enhanced by the construction of modern but sympathetically designed new build structures.

Located only 400m from the London landmark Battersea Power station The Annie McCall can be found on a 0.72 acre site, which once comprised of the grounds and buildings that formed the former Grade II listed, Victorian, Clapham Maternity Hospital.

The site was purchased by Henley Homes, subject to planning, from London Borough of Lambeth in December 2011. The planning application was submitted in November 2012 and granted in February 2013. Work on the now iconic development commenced in July 2013 and with 90 per cent of the homes being sold within four months of the official launch, the properties were occupied in two phases, between June and November 2014.

## Original architecture

The original buildings were constructed of red brick with stone dressings, had a basement, concrete floors and an asphalt covered flat roof. All the windows were timber sashes or horizontal hinged casements and on the northwest front of the building the windows are dressed with rubbed brick arches, stone keystones and stone aprons. Also, the central bay had brick and stone banded pilasters, a pediment with stone dentil cornice, and a stuccoed projecting ground floor with a vase balustrade to its parapet.

The central entrance portico had rusticated piers, Ionic half-columns, a broken pediment framing a large cartouche. The retained timber front doors are original and the 1938-9 extension is part single-storey, part three-storey built in red brick with rubbed brick and stone dressings and the southeast elevation of the existing building is still more utilitarian than the facade, clad in render with rows of undecorated windows and a canted bay at each end.

The building was long and shallow on plan, with a spinal corridor on each floor. A row of five

*Continued overleaf...*





small wards ran along its southeastern side, and a single ward, WCs and utility rooms in the northwestern side with internal windows provided light from the wards to the corridors.

All floors in the wards were woodblock or timber planks and the corridor floors were terrazzo, which swept up to form a skirting to the walls, a device to facilitate easy cleaning. The entrance lobby had a mosaic terrazzo floor, while the cantilevering open-well concrete staircase had a metal balustrade and timber handrail.

It has been widely agreed that the final design

of The Annie McCall works so well because it identified common themes that exist across all the buildings including:

- Wide corridors
- Sweeping staircases
- High ceiling
- Huge windows; and
- Large grounds

These themes were combined with cutting edge build technology to create generous communal areas and light filled modern apartments,

which feature as much period detail as could be restored.

## Challenges

Reflecting the site being occupied for 20 years by a local artists' co-operative, the scheme now also includes 16 new build artists' studios for rent. Following detailed and lengthy discussions, Henley designed and built the new studio facility within the grounds while supporting the existing artists' phased relocation from the site to enable work to begin. The first artists moved back in May 2014 and are now running art classes for the local community and schools.

However, the number and contradictory nature of the various local stakeholders, including the artists' co-operative, created an early challenge. Henley worked closely with the London Borough of Lambeth, which was both the vendor and planning authority, the listed status organisations and the resident artists. This ultimately resulted in a proposal that addressed everyone's requirements while retaining and enhancing the existing buildings, as well as providing social housing and enterprise space. The constrained nature of the site and the variety of building styles also added to this challenge.

Henley remained in close contact with the art collective, which occupied the site up to and during the site's acquisition. Many of the artists perceived Henley Homes as a stereotypical new homes developer and feared that the company's emphasis would be based on maximisation of profit above all other considerations. To help dispel this unfair assumption Henley consulted with as many of the artists as possible and, while many remained confrontational and unhappy the balance began to change their attitude.

This was because Henley Homes was able to demonstrate its overt intentions to save and restore a building, which was on the brink of serious dilapidation by sharing information, plans and models, while keeping stakeholders informed of ongoing progress. It was made clear that the new build artists' studios would be as generous as space would allow and that Henley would enable the artists to stay on site until the last practical moment, before offering them the opportunity to relocate temporarily to another site, if they wished. They were then able to rent the newly-completed studios at very affordable rates.

Creating the new studio space itself was a real departure from the company's typical working methods and it proved an interesting process of gaining an understanding of stakeholders' needs, and balancing these with what was achievable in the time and space available.

Henley Homes has extensive experience of working with existing and listed buildings but the advanced deterioration of some of the buildings at the site proved to be real a challenge.

It was therefore decided that a phased approach would be most appropriate, in order that the structurally sounder and easier areas could advance separately from the areas which





required more extensive work. The speed of the sales also provided an unexpected but welcome challenge with the development being completely sold before any formal marketing material could be created. The interest in this unique site, piqued at an early stage, encouraged by intense local press coverage covering the buildings' obvious decline along with the site's prominent and very desirable location.

### The new community

Following the extensive renovation of the existing buildings The Annie McCall development now comprises of four main elements.

Block A, 37-39 Jeffreys Road:

The two original four-storey bay-fronted 1860s dilapidated houses, used originally for hospital staff accommodation, had been squatted in for many years and was almost completely covered with ivy and graffiti. Even in their tired state they were still impressive buildings with pillared porticos and imposing stairs from the front garden, as well as areas of stucco render in the traditional Portland style.

As part of the site's refurbishment these buildings have been cleaned, sympathetically renovated, extended and converted into eight apartments, seven of which are for private sale and one of which is affordable housing. These new apartments feature high ceilings, communal gardens, many retained character features, all coupled with high specification contemporary kitchens, bathrooms and finishing.

Block B, the main hospital building facing McCall Close:

The main building is a large three-storey Edwardian red brick structure, with decorative stucco on the front and a white rendered finish to the rear, and a side extension. The building has airy wardrooms lit by large casement windows. The communal corridors are wide and staircases broad and curved. However, the pre refurbishment condition of the building was very poor, due to the art collective having limited finance to maintain the fabric of the building. The external envelope of the building was also in need of maintenance with the roof being at the point of collapse and several rooms being too dangerous to enter. This block has now been converted into 13 spacious and well-proportioned apartments, all of which were for private sale.

Block C, the new build social housing block adjoining 37-39 Jeffrey's Road:

These homes have been built in the space formerly occupied by 41-43 Jeffrey's Road, which was demolished following damage caused during the Second World War. The area was used as a car park until the hospital closed. Eight shared ownership apartments have now been created, in a block that forms one side of the entrance courtyard to the main building. This also creates a bridge with dark neutral brick, large windows and strong lines of symmetry, which links Blocks A, and B.

Block D, new build artists' studios and an adjoining new build residence known as



The Lodge:

This part of the development comprises of sixteen studios, arranged over two floors with wide areas of glazing and flexible internal configuration. These studios and The Lodge are located to the rear of the site, forming a 'bracket' around the end of the former hospital grounds.

The grounds, which had become overgrown with self-seeded trees and shrubs, had to be cleared and landscaped to offer a green and peaceful communal space, which forms an attractive outlook for many balconies to the rear of Block B.

### Main design challenge

Henley Homes' favourite aspect of the project was the opportunity to restore the notable Victorian and Edwardian architecture found on this historic site to its former glory, and creating a new chapter for the well loved buildings. However, their main design challenge was to link the existing, stylistically disparate and derelict

buildings into a coherent scheme, including a contemporary new build scheme, while preserving and using as much as possible of what remained on the site and maintaining links with the old hospital's historical and communal significance.

The fact that Henley has scooped awards for The Annie McCall, including the International Design and Architecture Awards and The London Evening Standard New Homes Awards suggests that their objective has been successfully achieved.

Speaking about the development's challenges and awards Henley Homes Sales and Marketing Manager, Katy Mazen said: "We are delighted that The Annie McCall has been recognised for so many awards. It was a challenging conversion project of a listed landmark building but we have worked closely with the borough of Lambeth to deliver quality new homes and retain the rich heritage of this historic site."

# Editor's Focus

Werner

The world leader in ladders has launched a new double-section sliding roof ladder that excels against the competition. The ladder from Werner is as safe as ever with its added benefits, such as the new heavy-duty roof hook, creating a stronger more superior fit across the roof apex. Perfect for trade use with its 150kg load capacity, the ladder doesn't compromise on strength and is in fact lighter than other products on the market. The redesigned wheels require less force to position the ladder and also increase grip when rolling up the roof. The box section stiles reinforce the strength and rigidity of the ladders creating a lightweight roof ladder that does not compromise on strength.

Enq. 105



Nordan

Tanums have been manufacturing high performance wood windows and doors since 1949 and with triple glazing since the 1970s. Tanums new range has improved security and an overall frame U-value of 0.9W/m<sup>2</sup>K as standard. They also carry the stringent Swedish 'P' mark class C for severe exposure locations and buildings over eight storeys. The extensive range includes top turn fully reversible windows; side hung, outward opening windows and French doors; inward opening windows and French doors, and sliding doors. Tanums complete range can also be aluminum clad to reduce maintenance. Tanums also manufacture security frames up to EN-1627 Class RC2.

Enq. 106



JT Pumps

JT Pumps' sewage pumping stations and grey water pumping stations are ideal for use in areas where gravity flow is not available. At JT Pumps, the company supplies packaged pumping stations for small extensions, garden annexes, basement flats going up to houses, schools, pubs, caravan sites, and supermarkets (Vortex or Macerator pumps). All the systems comply to building regulations. Most pumping stations are held in-stock for next day delivery. For more information about JT Pumps and to see the full range of products, please call 08444145800 or visit the company website at [www.jtpumps.co.uk](http://www.jtpumps.co.uk).

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## BREEAM REDUCES CO2 EMISSIONS

# Recent study shows BREEAM 'Excellent' building saves in excess of 30 per cent CO<sub>2</sub>



Gavin Dunn

A new briefing paper gives an overview of BREEAM's contribution to global carbon reduction in buildings. Published during the global climate change conference COP21, the paper also gives details of how BREEAM has evolved since the standard was created 25 years ago and how it might develop in future so it continues to challenge the industry to go beyond standard practice.

The paper also includes an analysis of assessment data (from 2011 onwards), which shows that BREEAM assessed buildings achieve an average 22 per cent reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to buildings designed to regulatory minimum performance requirements. BREEAM 'Excellent' buildings save more than 30 per cent and 'Outstanding' rated buildings in excess of 50 per cent. To date over 530,000 buildings and homes have applied the standard in over 70 countries around the world.

One of the main aims of the BREEAM energy

strategy moving forward is to strengthen the links between schemes covering different life cycle stages, with a particular focus on the relationship between the New Construction and In-Use schemes, and opportunities for addressing the 'performance gap'.

The British Research Establishment (BRE) made a pledge to further reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions over the next 5 years by 900,000 tonnes, by certifying a further 9,000 commercial buildings to the BREEAM standard. This pledge, together with other pledges from leading organisations in the built environment, forms part of the 'Collective Commitment' created by the World Green Building Council as part of COP21 Paris talks on climate change.

BREEAM Director, Gavin Dunn explained: "Over 150 world leaders recently gathered in Paris to discuss how to drive down carbon emissions and manage rising temperatures due to climate change. Given that buildings and

homes together account for over 40 per cent of the UK's total carbon emissions, it's more important than ever that standards like BREEAM are used to drive down emissions and reduce running costs over the life time of a building."

BREEAM has recently turned 25, and has experienced a quarter century of setting the standard for sustainability globally.

To celebrate it BREEAM's 25th Birthday the BRE has also launched a new website [www.breeam.com](http://www.breeam.com).

BREEAM is also about to fully launch The Home Quality Mark as national standard for new homes, pared down slightly from the previous version after its industry consultation. This could, if embraced by both homeowners and as a result the housebuilding sector, be a worthy and more all-encompassing successor to the Code for Sustainable Homes.



## Vandersanden Group wins export award



Belgian brick and pavers manufacturer, **Vandersanden Group**, has been awarded the inaugural Voka Limburg prize for export. The company was recently crowned winner at a gala dinner hosted during International Entrepreneurship week in Belgium. The export award aims to recognise all export industry sector and encourage other Belgian companies to

participate in international business development and markets. The prize recognises Belgian enterprises that produce quality products and services, and remain domestically and internationally competitive.

+32 89 510 140 [www.vandersandengroup.co.uk](http://www.vandersandengroup.co.uk)

Enq. 108

## Brett Landscaping appoints new MD



**Brett Landscaping and Building Products** has announced the appointment of Alastair Forbes as its new Managing Director. Alastair, who joined the company at the beginning of December, will take over the role of Managing Director from Alan Smith who has been promoted to become the Chief Operating Officer of the Brett Group. Having

worked for over 30 years across a variety of functions within the building products sector, Alastair brings a wealth of experience, from sales and production to management, to his new role.

0845 608 0570 [www.brettpaving.co.uk](http://www.brettpaving.co.uk)

Enq. 109

## Crowds flock to Howarth trade day bonanza



More than 1,000 visitors and 60 leading brands helped **Howarth Timber Group** celebrate its 175th anniversary as a spectacular trade day took place at Elland Road in Leeds. The event marked the climax of the company's year-long celebrations, taking place at the roadshows that have visited the 29 Howarth branches around the country, and a huge crowd

turned out to see leading brands showcase their latest products.

Howarth Timber is one of the UK's leading timber firms, offering one of the widest ranges of building materials in the country. Its reputation has been growing since the company first formed in 1840.

Enq. 110

## Designer Contracts supports KidsOut



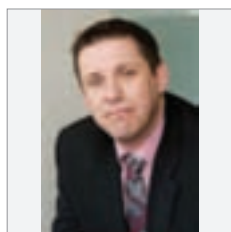
KidsOut children's charity has awarded **Designer Contracts**, one of the UK's largest flooring contractors, 'Outstanding Supporter' for its dedication and commitment to helping disadvantaged children. Designer Contracts has been a faithful supporter of the charity over the past five years and has been a main sponsor for its Cardiff events, donating

£3,000 in 2015 at the city's first Question of Trivia. Peter Kelsey, MD at Designer Contracts, said: "We are delighted to be able to support such a worthy cause."

01246 854577 [www.designercontracts.com](http://www.designercontracts.com)

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## Andy Jones joins Synseal



Andy Jones has joined the **Synseal** board of Directors in a newly-created position of Group Sales & Marketing Director, reporting to Chief Executive David Leng. Andy enjoyed 13 successful years at Edgetech UK, most recently in the role of Managing Director. He said: "When I joined Edgetech there were three people working in the UK, now there are 73, and

working together to grow that business has been most rewarding. However, I am excited to be joining Synseal and look forward to getting stuck in and meeting my customers and new colleagues."

01623 443200 [www.synseal.com](http://www.synseal.com)

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## Nuaire adds to Ductmaster range



The leading ventilation specialist in the UK, **Nuaire**, has introduced a useful extension to its already impressive, patented Ductmaster Thermal range with the new 220 x 90mm duct size offering even greater efficiency in low profile spaces. The Nuaire Ductmaster Thermal range is now available in 125mm and 150mm round, 204 x 60mm and now the

additional 220 x 90mm dimensions, giving installers the widest range of domestic ducting options and the only complete solution on the market.

029 2085 8200 [www.nuaire.co.uk](http://www.nuaire.co.uk)

Enq. 113

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Enq. 114



# Indoor air quality – the next big issue in housing

Andy Mudie, marketing director at Nuaire, one of the leaders in the ventilation sector addresses ventilation for new build and new social housing along with repairs and maintenance



After years of improvements in social housing driven by ‘affordable warmth’ and a desire to improve the quality of the UK’s leaky housing stock, a new potential major issue is taking over as the main ‘bet noire’ of the residential housing arena across the UK. Indoor air quality.

In very simple terms, housing across the UK has been given acres of insulation to stop heat leaking out of these homes so that properties are warmer and cost less to heat. But by sealing them so efficiently, we have stopped air getting in and out of homes with a subsequent rise in problems arising from humidity, mould and condensation. The problem has moved from heating deficiencies

to ventilation deficiencies.

Rather than address these issues head on, there is a tendency to do so retrospectively and address the problems when they arise rather than to anticipate the issues and integrate a solution up front, and the resultant problem is more often than not attacked with individual extractor fans, which are not the best way of dealing with whole house ventilation and improved air quality.

We’re in the ‘condensation season’ which tends to run from September to February each year. It’s all down to outside moisture levels and at the first cold snap experienced across the UK, condensation issues begin to raise their ugly heads.

On the positive side of things there is growing public awareness of the need for better indoor air quality and a growing realisation that in some cases the quality of air indoors can be worse than that outdoors. For new build homes, it could be about providing filtration on its systems at the entry level to a property – filtering the incoming air at the grille on the outside of the home. Particularly in urban areas, the levels of toxins – in particular nitrogen dioxide and particulates from heavy traffic – can cause havoc with those susceptible to asthma and other breathing related issues. So as well as filtering the air when it is circulating in a home, they are looking at filtering it on entry.

For existing properties, it’s about having a

retrofit solution that is not intrusive so options such as positive input ventilation (PIV) works well here.

Indoor air pollutants are potentially important but the extent to which they affect health is not

**“We’re in the ‘condensation season’ which tends to run from September to February each year. It’s all down to outside moisture levels and at the first cold snap experienced across the UK, condensation issues begin to raise their ugly heads”**

fully known. However in today’s sealed homes – with double glazing, better insulation and much reduced opportunities for indoor air to escape, it’s clear they play a huge role in the indoor air quality that millions of people in this country are subjected to. Strangely, there is currently no single government department with ownership of this issue – and that is something that has to change if it’s to be taken as seriously as it should be. Heating and cooking appliances and environmental tobacco smoke are the most important indoor sources of pollution in UK homes, and that’s before the effects of external air quality



problems comes into play. The main health effects of poor indoor air quality are the same as poor external air quality – to the lungs and heart. And of course children and those who are already ill are most at risk from poor air quality, wherever it is experienced.

Sadly, many people take indoor air quality for granted. It's clear that people would not drink brown water from a tap in the kitchen as it's visibly dirty, yet what is the condition of the air that you are breathing right now?

**“The main health effects of poor indoor air quality are the same as poor external air quality – to the lungs and heart. And of course children and those who are already ill are most at risk from poor air quality, wherever it is experienced”**

One of the challenges of attacking air quality issues is that there is no definition of unacceptable internal air quality. There is no yardstick by which to measure it. It's possible this may be best practically measured in terms of humidity levels, CO<sub>2</sub> levels, VOCs and temperature. But this is an area that needs to be addressed and quickly so

that we can inform homeowners and tenants about the quality of air they live in, quickly and simply.

Increasingly we are seeing proper purpose designed ventilation systems being included in new build properties to ensure that the problems associated with poor indoor air quality are addressed. Many of the systems being used currently include heat recovery systems – MVHR systems (Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery) – that, as well as improving air quality, also recover heat from the air being expelled so it can be used to heat the incoming air – offering significant savings on the costs of heating the properties, particularly in the winter months. This offers a win-win situation for the owners and for tenants of social housing and for the operators of public buildings where these systems are used on a commercial scale to improve the air quality of those using the buildings.

It's clear that addressing indoor air quality is of growing importance and that over the next few years it will be seen as a mainstream issue that requires attention and the installation of good quality ventilation systems – incorporated at the build stage for new build properties and as retrofit options for existing properties where problems are identified. The use of ventilation systems is clearly a less expensive option longer term than the short term fix approach that may be required



almost on an annual basis where the problems persist, which will include the need to re-decorate homes and properties that suffer the visually obvious effects of condensation, mould and damp in particular.

It's an issue that is growing in importance and one that needs urgent attention as studies are suggesting. The age of ventilation as an essential contributor to well-being, is here.

Enq. 115

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Enq. 116



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The image shows three Nuaire MVHR units: a ceiling-mounted unit labeled 'AE', a wall-mounted unit labeled 'WALL MOUNTED', and a unit labeled '12'. In the background, a diagram of a house shows air circulation paths.

Enq. 117

**Rega vent**

# Whole House Ventilation with Heat Recovery...

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**www.regavent.co.uk**



A close-up photograph of a brown and orange butterfly with black spots, perched on a bright yellow flower.

Enq. 118

## Warming to ASHPs



Air source heat pumps are becoming mainstream options when it comes to new-build housing, both private and social. The new Therma V IV ashp from leading brand LG are finding high levels of interest around the UK.

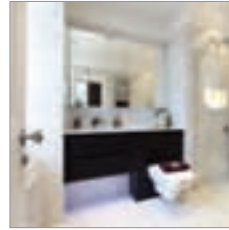
A typical, traditional wet heating system offers a Coefficient of Performance (COP) of around or slightly lower than

1.0. ASHPs provide users with a maximum COP of around 4.5. Please visit the company website, or contact the company directly for more information.

01753 491500 [partner.lge.com/uk](http://partner.lge.com/uk)

Enq. 119

## Wetroom solution for St Joseph's Gate



**Wetrooms UK** is a nominated installer to Berkeley Homes and was approached by them to supply and install wetroom systems into this unique Grade II listed building. Wetrooms UK specified a range of wetroom solutions. For the timber floors, Modular Wet-Floor Systems with wastes, traps and 1400mm solid stainless steel linear wall grills were used. Wet-decs

with 130mm solid square grills were employed for the four way fall wetrooms and floors that had less than 100mm depth, a Modular Wet-Floor System with waterless trap and solid linear wall grill.

0845 045 6001 [www.wetroomsuk.co.uk](http://www.wetroomsuk.co.uk)

Enq. 120

## Hultafors Group launch Safety Shoes range



With a premium product portfolio that already includes Tools and Workwear in the form of the Hultafors and Snickers brands, the **Hultafors Group** is now launching a top quality range of Safety Shoes for the UK market. Now owned by the Hultafors Group, the Solid Gear and Toe Guard brands are the fastest growing in Scandinavia, where demands for safety,

quality and value are high. With 23 different safety shoes available across the 2 brands, the footwear is available in trainer, shoe and boot styles, all with in-built hi-tech designs that combine top quality materials, ultimate comfort and maximum safety.

Enq. 121

## New TROJAN® range adds style and colour



**Arco**, one of the UK's leading safety companies, puts style on a par with safety as it introduces a new range of colourful safety boots and shoes to the ever popular TROJAN® brand. UK wearers are noticeably more demanding of their boots' appearance and with the range now available in a choice of colours, there is no compromise between being safe and

looking good. Designed to meet exacting standards, the range incorporates comfort, contemporary style and reliable safety features that buyers expect from a trusted brand.

[sales@arco.co.uk](mailto:sales@arco.co.uk) [www.arco.co.uk](http://www.arco.co.uk)

Enq. 122

## Snickers Winter Warmers

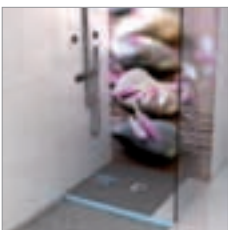


This new 100 per cent Wool Sweater makes for the ideal combination with **Snickers** undergarments, to provide a truly warm and cosy wrapper when you're out on site in the chilly winter months. The special wool weave is really soft, but also highly moisture-absorbent and breathable. What's more, it resists odour naturally and can be worn for long periods

without washing. With a zip-up neck line collar and polyamide-reinforced elbows and lower arms for enhanced durability, this really is a top quality, highly practical garment for keeping warm and looking smart at work.

Enq. 123

## CE backed waterproof wet room solution



**wedi systems UK** has provided a total system solution in CE backed waterproof wet rooms for an impressive new development of apartments at London Square Bermondsey Village for award winning developer London Square. The wedi 65mm thick, fully integrated trap, Fundo Plano system provided the ideal solution for the floor build up from the

concrete slab. The tray thickness fitted alongside wedi building boards ensured that the requirement of a floor level shower was still achieved. The end result was a comprehensive CE backed waterproof system. For more information, please visit the company website.

Enq. 124



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Enq. 125



## New Specifiers Guide from Sheerframe



An informative new Specifiers Guide has been published by **Sheerframe Ltd**, to provide a handy product specification reference source for use by architects and designers, residential or commercial building applications, trade fabricator partners and professional window industry installers. The new Specifiers Guide summarises the calcium organic

stabilised PVC-U window and door product range. Flood door solutions and hands-on design service support for curtain walling and structural items are also itemised in this helpful guide.

01623 443200 [www.sheerframe-windows.co.uk](http://www.sheerframe-windows.co.uk)

Enq. 126

## Force 8 adds Halo's Rustique to its range



Stockport-based Network **VEKA** member, Force 8 has added the coveted Rustique profile system to its extensive offering. Force 8 specialises in providing arched frames bent from one continuous length of profile. The company has attracted customers from far and wide, who want a seamless finish for their arched windows and doors, without the

need for unsightly joints. MD Dennis Sumner explains: "As a company, we're proud to offer our customers a host of specialist products and services that they wouldn't find elsewhere."

01282 716 611 [www.vekauk.com](http://www.vekauk.com)

Enq. 127

## Hueck's Volato M sliding system used for future-proofing London projects



Leading European manufacturer of aluminium window, door and facade systems, **Hueck**, has reported an increase in demand from the high-end market, focused on superior weather tightness. The trend is highlighted by a number of recent projects supplied by the company, incorporating the Hueck Volato M profile system for sliding and lifting-sliding windows and doors. As a project solution, Volato M can meet the same stringent specifications expected from curtain walls, in accordance with the Centre for Window and Cladding Technology's standard for systemised building envelopes. Hueck's Volato M door has successfully passed the 600 Pascals water penetration test pressure at 2001 to 2400 Pascals wind pressure, while installed in an aluminium facade. These standards, which correspond to the CWCT methodology, enable specifiers not to compromise on the performance of the building envelope when integrating a door system. The Volato M sliding system can accommodate double and triple glazed units from 22mm to 48mm, with glass loads of up to 400 kg. Developed to integrate with all other Hueck systems, the Volato M allows for a wide variety of design options, providing a highly versatile solution for any project.

01217 671344 [www.hueck.com](http://www.hueck.com)

Enq. 130

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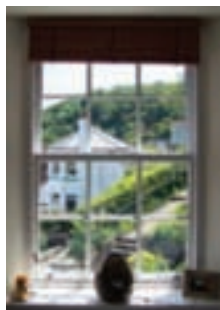
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## Lock down for Winter with Garador

Home security is big business these days but not everyone gives the same attention to the garage. Considering the valuable equipment often stored in a garage, such as expensive DIY tools and gardening equipment, it is no surprise that garages can be key targets for burglars. Ensuring a secure garage door in any build is a big plus for home owners and the best choice has to be a door from **Garador's** specialist Guardian range. The Guardian range is Britain's first range of Up & Over doors that are Secured by Design accredited. The garage doors have additional back braces on the inside of the door for greater rigidity, improved and reinforced locking systems and a unique anti-snap cylinder with a sacrificial front to prevent entry even after an attack. The Guardian range comes in three different styles, Carlton, Horizon and Salisbury, each available in a range of fresh, vibrant colours.

01935 443709 [www.garador.co.uk](http://www.garador.co.uk)

Enq. 129



## Celsius Solid Roof granted LABSS approval



The recently-introduced Celsius Solid Roof system from Synseal is now fully approved and registered by the LABSS (Local Authority Building Standards Scotland) as checked for compliance with Scottish Building Regulations under certificate number EWS550. Synseal's Head of Marketing, Mark Schlötel, comments: "Celsius Solid Roof has been

carefully designed to avoid excessive loadings and weighs the equivalent of our popular Global or K2 aluminium/PVC-U conservatory roofs glazed with toughened roof glass."

01623 443200 [www.synseal.com](http://www.synseal.com)

Enq. 131

## Thistle Windows has a year of success



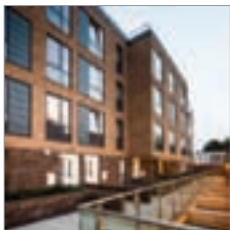
Thistle Windows rounds off the year with another success. Long-standing Network VEKA member Thistle Windows and Conservatories has been named 'Conservatory Installer of the Year' at the highly respected G15 Awards. The hard-working Aberdeen-based team were delighted to win the award in the same year they celebrated the company's 20th anniversary.

Thistle Windows and Conservatories' Managing Director Ian Bruce collected the trophy from popular comedian Jason Manford at the glittering London ceremony.

01282 716 611 [www.networkveka.co.uk](http://www.networkveka.co.uk)

Enq. 132

## AluK specified for housing development



A site in East London has been demolished to make way for the new residential development, Tredegar Place. AluK aluminium window and door systems were specified for the development. The project fabricator and installer chose AluK 58BW window system and 58BD and GT55 TB door systems for their slim sightlines and

profile sizing, which matched the developer's design intent. The thermally broken aluminium profiles helped the development to achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating due to their energy efficiency.

01633 810440 [www.aluk.com](http://www.aluk.com)

Enq. 133

## WarmCore Installation Video now available



A WarmCore installation video is now available on YouTube, it details exactly how to fit a new "warm aluminium" folding sliding door. Featuring two highly experienced engineers from Synseal, this informative 8-minute video shows the removal of an old inline sliding patio door and its replacement with a brand new 3-2-1 bi-fold door in popular RAL 7016 Grey

finish. Glass unit toe and heeling and WarmCore's straightforward glazing method using handy push-fit beads with integral gaskets is also clearly demonstrated.

01623 443200 [www.synseal.com](http://www.synseal.com)

Enq. 134

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Enq. 135



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Enq. 136

# The benefits of solar PV systems

Ray Paice, from GB-Sol Ltd, relays the benefits of solar energy in housebuilding, not just to be 'green', but in the marketing benefits they can provide



Many housing developers are embracing renewable technologies not just to be 'green' but for many of the marketing benefits they can provide, despite the government reducing the requirements of the 'Code for Sustainable Homes'.

The Solar Photovoltaic (PV) industry will feel the loss of many retrofit schemes with the latest Feed in Tariff (FIT) cuts, but will continue to offer products into the new-build market.

Over recent years Solar PV was often only considered as a way of reaching the SAP requirements, and installers were often being asked "can you add a couple of panels to the roof" providing a few hundred Watts or just enough to offset a carbon reduction number.

Many such requirements are being achieved by a retrofit system installed over the finished roof providing a token amount of energy but compromising the aesthetics of a new home; but there are better solutions which are not widely understood.

In 1994/5 the first integrated solar PV roof was designed for Professor Sue Roaf's inspirational Oxford Eco house. Sue is a Professor of Architecture at Edinburgh University and a true advocate of Solar PV systems. This system was designed to replace the roofing materials not only providing a sustainable energy solution but being cost effective by offsetting the cost of the roof tiles.

This original design provided not just a solar PV array, but also incorporated solar thermal and opening roof lights. Now 20 years old this solution is still performing well electrically, but more importantly is still keeping all the weather out.

The PV market developed quickly when in April 2010 the UK government's Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) intro-

duced a Feed In Tariff to encourage home owners to invest in these now self funding systems.

So successful was the tariff that it was quickly decided to scale down the incentives and the tariff has continued to fall ever since. Over the same period solar PV modules developed and a basic 1m x 1.6m panel developing 250W became the norm and, although higher outputs are available, the market likes the ease of calculation 250W provides, e.g. 4kWp (kiloWatt peak) is simply 16 x 250W panels.

**"Over recent years Solar PV was often only considered as a way of reaching the SAP requirements, and installers were often being asked "can you add a couple of panels to the roof" providing a few hundred Watts or just enough to offset a carbon reduction number"**

The rush to install retrofit systems resulted in a slow adoption of the 'in-roof' or BIPV (Building Integrated PV) systems as the apparent lack of a good looking solutions kept the developer from including them in the designs.

Since the introduction of the RIS (Roof Integrated System) on Sue Roaf's property other systems have been introduced with varying levels of success. These systems include:

## Plastic Membrane Solutions

These are basically an overtile system, substituting a 'plastic' additional membrane (typically HDPE High Density Polyethylene) and adapting bracketry to suit. The installation of

these systems tends to be more involved and therefore more time consuming. They use standard framed modules.

## Tray Mount System

Several manufacturers produce these systems are basically a moulded polymer tray/frame that is fitted on top of the roof battens before corresponding standard framed PV modules are fixed to it. Fitting them together is an interlocking process so can be quicker than the 'Membrane' solution above.

These systems are either portrait or landscape and can only be installed in one orientation.

## Solar Roof Tiles/Trays

Architects and house designers alike have always liked the idea of solar tiles or slates mimicking the size and even colour of these traditional products. In the UK we have had at least two companies producing tile sized solutions but both have withdrawn from the market. The main issue is the cost of the labour intensive product manufacture and installation. Each tile has many of the costs of production of a much larger solar module so the whole array can be expensive. Installation and wiring is time consuming and should a tile fail it could be difficult to isolate.

## Trays

Or larger strips of PV are surrounded by a simple interlocking frame that can be mounted similar to tiles and overlapping at the frame edge provides a similar solution to traditional tiling. Usually different dimensions to surrounding tiles and as interlocking, like tiles, each row may be staggered creating a checkered edge. Because of this they cannot be used from verge to verge and



the aesthetics are compromised.

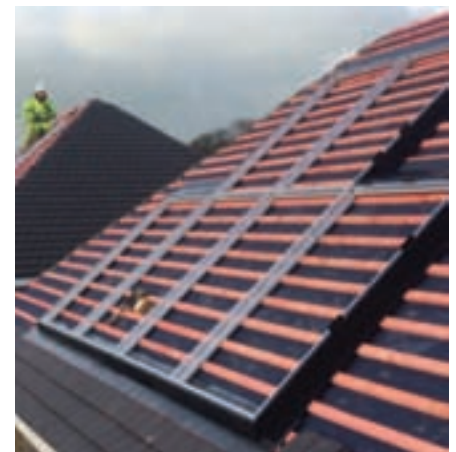
### Roof Integrated System (as used on the Oxford Eco House)

The roof integrated system is a very versatile extruded aluminium rail frame product that mounts directly onto the battens, roof decking, or purlins. Once in place solar panels in laminate form (frameless panels fitted with EPDM UV resistant gaskets) are placed on the frames before riveting cap strips in place to fully seal the roof. The rails also have a secondary drainage system to provide backup and collect any condensation that may form.

Benefits include a very quick installation, extremely weatherproof (tested by the BRE to simulated hurricane conditions in their wind-tunnel), aesthetic solution (and like glazing the cap strips extend only 2mm above the glass) and versatile since the panels (laminates) can be manufactured in any size and shape to fit any roof, even triangles and trapezoids.

With such a range of solutions it is no wonder that housebuilders and developers are now seeing the benefit of including solar PV systems within their designs. This trend seems to have started with the medium size builders, although at least one major player is looking to introduce decent sized arrays onto their homes soon.

For example, a Welsh developer who was plan-



ning to use solar thermal arrays to heat water recognized that PV does not need pipes, just cables, is more cost effective and can still heat water with the introduction of a smart switch. A smart switch heats water by directing spare energy from the array to the immersion heater before exporting excess power to the grid.

To maximise output the Welsh developer ensured there was at least one elevation of every home orientated predominantly in a southerly direction (most efficient for solar) then added 2kWp to every roof and marketed the fact that all their homes provide 'free electricity'. Their sales staff stated it was the "most amazing sales

tool" as financially stretched buyers recognise that they do not have to worry about such large electricity bills.

Benefits to developers and their customers include:

- Aesthetic appearance
- Contribution to SAP requirements
- Savings on the equivalent roofing materials
- An "amazing sales tool" customer benefit
- The ability improve green credentials

With these major benefits it is anticipated that soon every new home will include an integrated solar PV array.

Enq. 137

### Door oil treatment from Osmo



Leading wood specialist **Osmo UK** has developed another eco-friendly finishing treatment to its already sizeable range, Osmo Door Oil. Designed specifically to protect and preserve wooden doors and all internal joinery, Osmo Door Oil is easy to use and gives a professional touch to internal doors, ensuring a high quality, tough and durable finish. Osmo Door Oil

is a solvent-free solution, created from natural vegetable and plant oils and waxes. These organic properties ensure the treatment is quickly and deeply absorbed into the wood, enriching the wood's natural beauty and strength without cracking, flaking or peeling.

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### New products enhance Schueco's offering



New from leading sustainable building envelope specialist, **Schueco UK**, are two products, SmartClose and SmartStop, that underline Schueco's commitment to innovation, operational safety and engineering excellence. Developed for use with Schueco's range of sliding door systems, both products make the sliding vent easier to operate. Both products are

simple to install and easy to adjust to suit a particular installation. They are primarily designed for Schueco ASS 50 and ASS 70.HI premium segment systems. For more information, please visit the company website.

Enq. 139



### New heat pump matches requirements

**Mitsubishi Electric** has launched a new 4kW Ecodan air source heat pump designed specifically to tackle the needs of new-build homes, with a system that matches the hot water requirements, while still meeting the lower heating demand of today's well insulated properties. New homes built today differ from previous ones because the requirement for hot water is likely to exceed the demand for heating for the first time. A reduction in fabric U-values and thermal bridging has reduced the energy requirements for heating and also allows for smaller plant. The Ecodan QUHZ unit is MCS-Approved and straightforward to install, delivering water at 70°C to a packaged 200 litre thermal store. From this thermal store, mains water is heated directly up to 65°C via Mitsubishi Electric's unique plate heat exchanger, meaning the homeowner receives hot water on demand. The QUHZ model also offers exceptional noise levels with a whisper-quiet 41.2 dB(A) at 1.5 metres from neighbouring properties, making it ideal for almost any new-build scenario.

01707 282880 [www.mitsubishielectric.co.uk](http://www.mitsubishielectric.co.uk)

Enq. 140



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

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Enq. 141

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Enq. 142



# Bespoke fireplace designs: What's next?



Andrew Munro, MD of CVO Fire, offers his predictions and advice for 2016 fires and fireplace trends

## Trends

The two main predicted trends in interior design for 2016 are high efficiency and bespoke fireplace designs for special developments, where a one-off look that is unique to that property helps house builders to sell.

Domestic customers are more practical and tend to err towards efficiency but there is a real demand for clean lines and minimalism, using colours such as neutrals and black. This is largely because a fire becomes a focal point in a room and has to fit with the design style of that room, whether 'shabby chic' or something more modern.

One of the biggest shifts as 2015 has progressed is that people are definitely moving back to gas from wood-burning fires as gas can create a much cleaner look and one of the cheapest fuels to run if budget is key. Gas fires are more adaptable and are able to offer either a contemporary or traditional style. It is also straightforward for fireplace designers to provide bespoke options for gas fires, which isn't always the case with wood burners. For example, a gas fire ribbon burner box is exceptionally adaptable

**"One of the biggest shifts as 2015 has progressed is that people are definitely moving back to gas from wood-burning fires as gas is a much cleaner look and one of the cheapest fuels to run if budget is key"**

design-wise. It is very easy to create a bespoke solution for developers and housebuilders tailored to the individual look required. The same burner can offer a host of very different style solutions in various design situations.

2016 is also going to see the demand for 'high efficiency' continue. Throughout 2015 sales of so-called 'HE fires' soared as people want lower heating bills and fewer emissions without compromising on style.

Gadgets are always popular too and, therefore, remote controls for fires are becoming a necessity, such as thermostatic remote controls which operate a fire to sustain an ambient temperature set for a particular room in the home.

## Advice for choosing the right fire

Designers, developers and home owners are advised to consider the following when choosing their fire:

**Which energy source will suit the property best?** Natural gas, LPG, electric, bio-ethanol and wood-burning all offer different costs linked to heat output. Natural gas will always be the most cost efficient option especially if you opt for an energy efficient fire, such as HE or flueless.

**How much heat is needed for the property?** This sounds a strange question but is perhaps the most important. All fireplaces (except imitation electric fires) have a flame and that means they will produce heat. When you make the flame larger or wider then there will be more heat generated. When buying a fireplace you have to consider how often you will use it and enjoy the warmth and atmosphere that it creates. If you buy a very large fireplace for a small room it may be impractical as it will generate too much heat meaning you never have it switched on.

**What flue system will you use?** The flue system (or chimney) is used to take the products

*Continued overleaf...*

of combustion away from the fireplace. If you have a brick built chimney you may decide to keep it or change to a modern flue liner system. If you have no flue system in your home then you will need to consider a flueless gas fire, bio-ethanol, electric or balanced flue.

**Budget** – Knowing what you have to spend at the very start will make the process of choosing a fireplace easier. There are two main costs to consider – the cost of the actual appliance and the cost of the installation. You can buy a cheap fire but it could cost you a fortune to install if the correct planning has not been done first. Each type of fireplace has differing installation requirements and costs associated with it. Most importantly, you need to consider that ultimately homeowners will sit and look at the appliance and will not see the installation behind it. Too many people focus on buying a cheap gas fire or wood burning stove because so much of the budget is going on installation. This can result in the wrong type of appliance. The appliance should always cost more than installation.

**Efficiency** – As already mentioned, fireplaces have differing efficiency ratings based on the type of appliance. The fireplace type will decide if you will save money on your utility bills when using the heating appliance chosen. However this needs to be linked to a low cost fuel type like gas otherwise having an energy efficient appliance



means nothing.

**Ventilation** – This is very important for health and safety reasons. Some types of fireplace need to have room ventilation provided by an air vent to the outside air. Can your property be fitted with an air vent? Older houses that may have had a coal fire when they were built may already have

an air vent fitted, however this should be upgraded to a modern vent that will not allow drafts. The myth is that an air vent causes drafts. If there is a hole in the wall then there will be a draft. However if you invest about £35 in a modern high quality vent then drafts will not occur. The positioning of the vent is also critical.

Enq. 143



Enq. 144



## Log effect for Valor Ridlington gas stove



Valor has extended its popular Ridlington gas stove range with a new log effect model, along with new remote control operation for both coal and log effects. The 4.7kW Ridlington gas stove was first launched last year, giving homeowners the option of a clean, convenient stove with all the same charm and design appeal of solid fuel models. With the added benefits of

gas heating such as low fuel costs per kWh, high efficiency, cheaper installation and the huge number of chimneys in UK homes, the Ridlington design has already proved extremely popular.

0844 879 3587 [www.valor.co.uk](http://www.valor.co.uk)

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## SmartFireUK join retailers House of Fraser



A fireplace company has become one of the first to stock bio-ethanol fueled heaters with House of Fraser's online store. SmartFireUK will be selling their eco-friendly heaters through the retail giant's online store and will include both Bromic and EcoSmart Fire products. The designs are sleek and stylish, blending in with a variety of outdoor spaces and

perfect for the growing trend of beautifully crafted and stylised back gardens. Plus, the gas heaters are fuelled with LPG gas, which not only lasts longer than traditional fuel but is environmentally friendly as well.

020 7384 1677 [www.smartfireuk.com](http://www.smartfireuk.com)

Enq. 146

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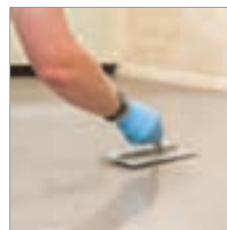
## Contractors keep faith in F. Ball



A range of high performance floor preparation products from **F. Ball and Co. Ltd.** have been used to create a stunning new floor at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Pyrford, Surrey. After taking up the existing floorcoverings and removing the asphalt subfloor, the contractors conducted relative humidity tests and found that a waterproof surface membrane was required to protect the new installation from moisture damage. Contractors used F. Balls Styccobond F54 linoleum adhesive to install the new modular linoleum tiles which, when completed, formed an image of the cross on the floor of the church.

Enq. 150


## Setcrete™ compound for challenging floors




**Setcrete** High Performance floor levelling compound and wearing surface offers professional builders and tradesmen a simple, easy-to-use, cost-effective solution to problematic flooring installations. Setcrete High Performance is a high-strength floor levelling compound and wearing surface, specifically designed for use over plywood subfloors, as well as over


concrete and traditional sand/cement screeds. The product is fibre-reinforced, meaning that it can 'flex', allowing it to accommodate the movement inherent in wooden floor coverings. For more information, please visit the company website.

Enq. 151



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Enq. 154





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Enq. 156



## Flexible solutions for SuDS

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# Groundworks for domestic buildings



Dr. Bill Price, National Commercial Technical Manager, Tarmac discusses how best to handle cement in groundworks

**W**hen applied to domestic construction, the term 'groundworks' encompasses all manner of products and structures – from ground-bearing floor slabs to trench fill, foundations and drainage.

Because it is such a wide-ranging term, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the individual components that contribute to the good performance of groundwork. For instance, it is easy to forget the importance of cement in the equation, but it is an absolutely essential component of concrete which is, in turn, responsible for the solid, stable foundations of most buildings.

Given that the entire structure is built on top of the foundations, it is critical that they are durable, steady and capable of supporting the weight of the house. To this end there are several factors that must be considered.

## Dimensions

The dimensions of any foundations or footings are very important. They will vary widely depending on the weight of the structure being supported and the type of earth that they are excavated in. The depth of the foundations will generally be lower in rockier soils than in those

that are composed of sand or clay. Because of the precision that is necessary in this stage of devel-

**"The strength of the concrete for 'normal' houses will usually be a 'C25' or stronger. This indicates that the 28 day concrete strength will be greater than 25 Newtons which, assuming the foundations were correctly laid, should support the house against any cracking or crumbling"**

opment, all foundations must be inspected by a building control officer before they are filled with concrete. An interesting new development is the use of low density 'foundation blocks' on top of traditional concrete foundations, but below DPC level as a means of reducing the time for constructing cavity walls. They can also improve the perimeter insulation of the floor.

For small foundations such as garden walls, pre-mixed bag concretes are perfectly acceptable and are available in various strengths. Some

people prefer to batch concrete on site from packed cement, sand and aggregate but users must be cautious to measure the right proportions – rough estimates are not accurate enough and people should use more formal guidance, such as that offered from NHBC.

For more substantial projects ready-mix concrete is often the best option – so long as the concrete is able to be discharged safely.

## Strength

The strength of the concrete for 'normal' houses will usually be a 'C25' or stronger. This indicates that the 28 day concrete strength will be greater than 25 Newtons which, assuming the foundations were correctly laid, should support the house against any cracking or crumbling.

For ground-bearing slabs, a stronger 'C35' concrete is sometimes advisable. In these instances people are advised to clear the area of vegetation and topsoil first before excavating. Adding and compacting hardcore before a layer of sand is necessary, followed by a damp-proof membrane that will prevent moisture rising through the slab and protect the concrete from any potential sulphate damage.

*Continued overleaf...*

**“Certain substances in the soil or groundwater can attack the concrete and cause damage such as softening or cracking. These problems are most commonly found in areas of clay soil which often contain high levels of sulphates, or in spaces where the ground has been contaminated by former industrial use”**

### Durability

The long-term durability of the foundations is another factor to remember. Certain substances in the soil or groundwater can attack the concrete and cause damage such as softening or cracking. These problems are most commonly found in areas of clay soil which often contain high levels of sulphates, or in spaces where the ground has been contaminated by former industrial use. In these areas, special consideration must be given to the type of cement used in any concrete that will come in contact with the soil. There are a variety of solutions available to builders and developers, including a number of ‘sulphate resistant’ cements which have greater

resistance and are recommended for use in all concretes below or in contact with the ground. If ‘foundation’ blocks are being used be aware that both the block itself and the mortar used to join them must be resistant to the ground conditions.

### Safety

Finally, wearing the correct protective clothing is important. Working with concrete is safe but it is an alkaline material that can cause irritation, dermatitis or burns when exposed to skin and precautions must be taken to minimise any risks. Gloves, goggles and face masks are a good way to ensure that no wet concrete comes into contact with your skin, eyes or respiratory system. Should you get anything on yourself then be sure to wash it off straight away and remove any concrete-contaminated clothing.

If you bear all these factors in mind when preparing for a domestic building project, you should be well equipped to handle the cement and concrete elements of ground working effectively. One last piece of advice is that, as is the case in all construction projects, forward planning is key and if properly executed can save time, waste and money. For instance, you should explain your requirements and restrictions to your concrete supplier to ensure that you get the correct volume and the right product that you



need. You must also ensure that the locations of the foundations and drainage trenches are correctly laid out as this will always pay dividends. Not only will it save you the hassle and expense of re-digging trenches or sourcing additional concrete, it might also prevent disputes with building control.

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### Clark-Drain extends range of 300 series

Drainage product and access cover leader, **Clark-Drain**, has added several new inspection chamber products to extend its 300 series of below ground drainage systems for building and construction. Already one of the building industry's most recognised names, Clark-Drain, who currently provide a 0.6m invert depth offering, is expanding its 300 series of covers, bases and risers to include a range of shallower chamber assemblies to invert depth from cover level of 0.4 metres. Manufactured in-house from tough 100 per cent recycled polypropylene, the 300 series will be sold as complete chamber assemblies. Additional products include a range of 300mm clear opening circular, square to round and recessed paviour covers for pedestrian and domestic driveway drainage applications. There is also a new 3 inlet ‘level’ base and riser with an effective depth of 0.19m, ideal for use at the first drainage point close to buildings.

01733 765317 [www.clark-drain.com](http://www.clark-drain.com)

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### Evinox ModuSat HIU's are tested by BSRIA

Evinox shared the results of tests conducted by BSRIA Ltd on a range of their ModuSat® heat interface units (HIUs). The objective of the testing was to establish the performance of its HIUs against best practice recommendations in the CIBSE Heat Network CP1. The results show that its ModuSat units have the ability to achieve a large Delta T of up to 65 degrees and deliver a low system return temperature. This ensures that the heat network operates at peak efficiency. These results demonstrate that in all tests the HIU's surpassed the benchmark requirements, set out in the CIBSE Heat Network Code of Practice, for both duty and return temperature performance. Evinox chose to have testing conducted by BSRIA Ltd in accordance with British Standards to ensure integrity and reliability. These tests demonstrate continued commitment to the development of quality, efficient products, and a desire to exceed client's requirements.

01372 722277 [www.evinoxenergy.co.uk](http://www.evinoxenergy.co.uk)

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## Biminster Homes chooses Calor Gas



When Biminster Homes began developing the 'Woodlands' site in Essex, mains gas was not available, meaning the developer had to consider the range of alternative fuel options available for providing home heating and hot water, and turned to **Calor** for help. As a regional house builder with a small project team, Biminster Homes needed an option

that was viable from a cost and ease-of-installation perspective. Emma Allen, Project Manager at Biminster Homes, said: 'We're really pleased with the outcome and would definitely recommend Calor LPG for other developments in the future.'

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## New Heat Mat Thermostat Frames



**Heat Mat's** 16Amp NGTouch colour touchscreen thermostat is now available with premium square frames in high-end materials. As the only part of an underfloor heating system that a homeowner sees, the thermostat finish is incredibly important. This led Heat Mat to extend the range to include new frames with contemporary finishes, providing

customers with more choice. The NGTouch thermostat and premium frames are extremely quick to install and compatible with standard UK back boxes. They are available nationwide for £149 (RTP).

01444 247020 [www.heatmat.co.uk](http://www.heatmat.co.uk)

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## Spirotech makes lasting impression



Eighteen months ago Wolverhampton Homes chose to switch to **Spirotech** and the SpiroTrap MB3 magnetic dirt separator. The SpiroTrap MB3 features a detachable, external magnet that contains unique field booster technology helping to quickly separate and remove even the smallest dirt particles, both magnetic and non magnetic, from a heating system.

Offering advanced specification in a compact and easy to install unit, the SpiroTrap MB3 has been designed to ensure heating systems operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. For more information, please visit the company website.

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## Vortice supplies Walton Homes with fans



Developers Walton Homes recently chose **Vortice** fans for their energy efficient ventilation. The Vort Quadro fan is aesthetically pleasing within the bathroom, ideal for longer duct runs and available in inbuilt or surface mounted installations. The unit is also easy to maintain, filters are washable and there are various versions. The Punto Filo axial fan

has a slim aesthetically pleasing profile which works well alongside Quadro and it has timers, PIR and humidity control versions suitable for bathrooms, utility rooms and kitchens.

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

Enq. 165

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## Staying compliant

Matthew Evans, technical manager at Kingspan, discusses the increasingly confusing regulatory system in the UK, and how housebuilders can simply and consistently deliver homes which meet the many energy efficiency requirements

**T**he changes to Section 6 (Energy) in Scotland, introduced last October, are just the latest piece in what has become an increasingly confused regulatory puzzle across Great Britain. With housebuilders already facing the difficult task of trying to address the housing shortage, the question is how to simply and consistently deliver homes which meet the separate energy efficiency requirements in England, Scotland and Wales?

The fabric-first approach provides a clear way forward. By creating properties with highly insulated building envelopes, it is possible to tick all the regulatory boxes without having to rely on expensive renewable technologies.

### What are the regulatory requirements?

The separation of the English and Welsh Approved Documents in 2014 means that the approach and targets for reducing carbon

emissions can vary greatly depending on the region. For example, while the adjustments to the carbon emission targets for domestic properties in England and Wales were relatively small (an uplift of 6 per cent and 8 per cent respectively on the previous requirements), in Scotland the change was far more pronounced, with an uplift of 21 per cent on the previous requirements. Despite this, all three nations recognise the central importance of fabric performance.

In England, ADL1A 2013 includes a Fabric Energy Efficiency Standard. Compliance is only achieved if the Dwelling Emission Rate (DER) and Dwelling Fabric Energy Efficiency (DFEE) meet or exceed the Target Emission Rate (TER) and Target Fabric Energy Efficiency (TFEE).

ADL1A 2014 in Wales and Section 6 (Energy) – Domestic 2015 in Scotland take a different approach. While the TER and DER elements are retained, they use stricter fabric backstops (Figure 1), rather than a Fabric Energy

Efficiency Standard, to encourage a fabric-first approach.

It is important to emphasise that these backstops are the minimum requirements, and that to achieve a compliant DER, and make a lasting impact on heating bills, much better U-values are required in almost all cases.

One way of ensuring compliance is to follow the notional specifications provided in all three regions. This elemental approach provides a clear set of parameters, including U-values and air-tightness, which vary depending of the fuel type used. If dwellings are constructed following this precise formula, then they will meet the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and fabric energy efficiency targets, as well as the limiting values for individual fabric elements and fixed building services.

This simplified approach has obvious advantages, but provides no flexibility for developers and may not always be possible to meet. For three of the five fuel types within Section 6 (Energy) – Domestic, the notional specification also requires the use of photovoltaic panels, adding further cost and complexity to construction work.

The values in Figure 2 have been modelled using SAP 2012 and provide a starting point for housebuilders looking to take a more flexible approach, which omits renewables and instead focuses on strong fabric performance. This future-proofs the building fabric, while still allowing for the possibility to add on renewables should they be needed to meet future regulations.

	Area-weighted average U-value for ADL1A 2013	Area-weighted average U-value for ADL1A 2014	Area-weighted average U-value for Section 6 (Energy) – Domestic 2015
Wall U-value (W/m <sup>2</sup> .K)	0.30	0.21	0.22
Roof U-value (W/m <sup>2</sup> .K)	0.20	0.15	0.15
Floor U-value (W/m <sup>2</sup> .K)	0.25	0.18	0.18

Figure 1. Limiting Fabric Backstops



With the continuing housing shortage, it is obviously essential for housebuilders to maximise the number of units on each development. As such, premium performance insulation options should be carefully assessed when targeting these U-values in order to minimise construction depth, therefore maintaining the largest possible internal living area.

**“With the continuing housing shortage, it is obviously essential for housebuilders to maximise the number of units on each development. As such, premium performance insulation options should be carefully assessed when targeting these U-values”**

The best starting point U-values for Scotland, identified in Figure 2, must also be accompanied with excellent detailing, a highly airtight building envelope and the use of mechanical ventilation and heat recovery units. These units use the heat from outgoing stale air to warm incoming fresh air, providing a pleasant living environment and reducing heating demand.

This approach has been effectively used for several years on Passivhaus properties, however,

the level of detailing required can extend building costs, particularly on traditional brick and block projects. It's therefore worth looking at alternative, modern methods of construction, which lend themselves to these requirements, such as structural insulated panels (SIPs).

### A modern solution

SIPs typically feature a highly insulated core sandwiched between two layers of oriented strand board (OSB). The panels are designed and cut to each project's specification, minimising on-site adjustments and waste. Domestic properties can typically be erected in just a few weeks, following a reliable construction programme. Once a breather membrane is applied, the panels form a watertight shell, allowing internal fit out to begin at a far earlier stage than would be possible with traditional construction methods.

In addition to delivering extremely low U-values, the inherent continuity of insulation at junctions means thermal bridging can be easily limited within SIP constructions. Their jointing arrangement also makes it possible to create extremely air-tight structures with air leakage rates as good as  $1 \text{ m}^3/\text{hour}/\text{m}^2$  @ 50 Pa.

### Fabric forward

Regardless of whether dwellings are being constructed in England, Scotland or Wales; it is clear that fabric performance must now be a primary focus for housebuilders. The methods used to achieve this will vary from project to project, however, it is essential that the industry does not simply fall back on traditional solutions and fully considers modern approaches, such as SIPs, which can greatly reduce project timescales and complexity.

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	ADL1A 2013 and 2014	Section 6 (Energy) – Domestic 2015
Wall U-Value ( $\text{W}/\text{m}^2\cdot\text{K}$ )	0.16	0.15
Roof U-Value ( $\text{W}/\text{m}^2\cdot\text{K}$ )	0.11	0.10
Floor U-Value ( $\text{W}/\text{m}^2\cdot\text{K}$ )	0.11	0.13

Figure 2. Best starting point U-values





## Bostik improves energy performance

An external wall insulation (EWI) system from adhesive specialist, **Bostik**, has been used to improve the energy performance and aesthetic appearance of 252 Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH) owned properties on the Waldgrave Estate in Liverpool. Installation of Bostik's Climatherm system on the solid walled homes is estimated to reduce the U-value of the properties from approximately 2.1 W/m<sup>2</sup>K to 0.3 W/m<sup>2</sup>K in accordance with current UK Building Regulations, while saving tenants up to £260-a-year in fuel bills. The Climatherm system can be tailored to individual property requirements and comprises three key components – insulation, mesh reinforced base coat and finish. These can be selected from a range of products that all meet Bostik's strict performance requirements, allowing greater flexibility in both price and performance in comparison with other external wall insulation systems.

01785 272625 [www.bostik-climatherm.co.uk](http://www.bostik-climatherm.co.uk)

Enq. 168

## Refurbishment with Remmers iQ Therm



A former Schoolhouse was renovated and extended to create a new energy efficient family home. So that the exterior facade of the existing property was not altered in any way, insulation was installed to the interior of the stone walls. Due to the build up of condensation, it became apparent that a "breathable insulation system" would be required. **Remmers iQ**

**Therm** was chosen as it has the highest level of insulation for given thickness of breathable systems. iQ Therm is a complete system of fixing/insulation and finishing available in 3 board thicknesses.

01293 594010 [www.remmers.co.uk](http://www.remmers.co.uk)

Enq. 169

## Cook it in style with BLANCO's new hob



**BLANCO's** new hob collection includes the very latest technology for high-speed, energy-efficient cooking at home. The new BH467831 is a 78cm-wide ceramic induction hob with six different cooking zones, 14 heat levels, six sleek sliding controls and residual heat indicators. Highlights include a flexible induction zone that accommodates pans of varying

sizes and a boost option, which brings food/liquid to boiling point in seconds. Other clever touches include automatic pot localisation, an automatic bridge for different heat levels on the same pot or pan, a grill function, pause-and-recall, and three keep-warm levels.

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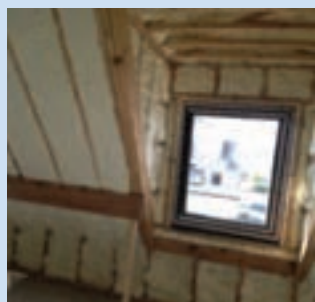
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NORTHWICH, CHESHIRE: 01606 41292

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# Home appeal on tap

Boiling water taps are fast becoming 'must have' items which help to complete a home. Stephen Johnson, managing director of Quooker UK, believes that choosing the right boiling tap has real advantages for the house developer

In any kitchen, home owners expect to see certain appliances. In the past, the list has always included washing machine, fridge freezer and dishwasher; increasingly it also includes a boiling water tap. This is not surprising when you consider that once installed, this rapidly becomes the most frequently used appliance in the kitchen, being pressed into service multiple times a day. However, this is only true if it can dispense genuine 100°C boiling water, not just very hot water.

Anything less than 100°C and a 'boiling' tap can't actually replace the kettle, causing frustration and wasted energy. But install a genuine 100°C boiling water tap and it can have a positive impact on the homeowner's daily routine. Most people start the day with tea or coffee and just as many choose to end their day with a hot drink too. In between, boiling tap owners use their taps even more often than they would a kettle as it can tackle so many tasks and save so much time.

Whereas the kettle is mostly used for making hot drinks and snacks, the boiling water tap also makes short work of cleaning a wok or frying pan and even difficult items such as barbecue grills and oven shelves. For new parents and busy families it can also be invaluable for making up baby bottles and sterilising teats and dummies or for filling flasks and hot water bottles.

For a lot of tasks you also need washing up

water, and a combination boiling water tap saves a lot of energy while providing an endless supply of this. These systems mix cold water with boiling water and dispense it as hot water from the mixer tap. It provides all three water temperatures from the cold feed only, so the central heating boiler can be used less often. Not only does using this generated water not deplete the supply from the hot tank, it also avoids wasting both energy and water, as it doesn't involve running the mixer tap until the water is hot enough to use. It also prevents heat loss from standing water in pipe runs after the tap is turned off, saving significant energy and therefore making it well worth considering.

Having a boiling water tap also helps speed up the cooking process. Pans of water for boiling pasta or vegetables can be filled instantly, rather than heated for ten minutes on the hob, which

**"Anything less than 100°C and a 'boiling' tap can't actually replace the kettle, causing frustration and wasted energy. But install a genuine 100°C boiling water tap and it can have a positive impact on the homeowner's daily routine. But install a genuine 100°C boiling water tap and it can have a positive impact on the homeowner's daily routine"**

also saves energy and is therefore more ecological.

It pays to specify a boiling water tap from a specialist manufacturer with its own installation team. Your property buyers not only want a good

*Continued overleaf...*



product, they will expect great aftersales service too. Boiling water taps are safe and easy to use, but do need occasional servicing. Buying from a specialist company that both manufactures and installs only boiling water taps, means the engineer knows all there is to know about the product – he or she won't have installed a chilled drawer the day before or be scheduled to install an oven the next day. They will be expert at installing and knowledgeable in troubleshooting or servicing the appliance. Boiling water needs to be handled with respect and expertise and getting it right first time is essential.

**“Buying from a specialist company that both manufactures and installs only boiling water taps, means the engineer knows all there is to know about the product – he or she won't have installed a chilled drawer the day before or be scheduled to install an oven the next day”**

If you are marketing – or indeed living in – a family home, it makes sense to ensure that the boiling water tap you specify has plenty of safety features such as a push and turn operating me-



anism. An added bonus is an LED light to alert you to the fact that it's in boiling mode. Provided it has robust safety features, it will actually be safer than a kettle, as it can't be tipped over or switched on accidentally.

Having a boiling water tap does seem to make homeowners very happy. It can generate a lot of good will towards the developer, creating a fur-

ther point of distinction in the benefits of buying their properties over another company's. Because boiling water taps are still relatively new in the UK, though less so in the rest of Western Europe, they really do create quite a talking point and are hugely enjoyable to own. It would certainly seem that once people have owned them, they never want to be without one.

Enq. 173

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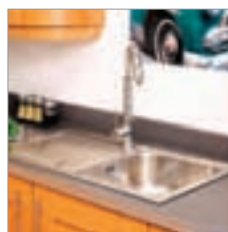
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Enq. 174

## The Centurio Series from Reginox



**Reginox** has launched the Centurio Series, a range of high quality sinks offering simple but stylish design. Manufactured from 0.9 stainless steel, all sinks in the Centurio range feature a luxurious, highly polished finish, providing a strikingly consistent and flawless appearance. The linear-style draining board offers a contemporary look while a deep 180mm

bowl ensures plenty of space for washing up. A range of accessories, incorporating stainless steel and plastic colanders, wooden cutting boards and a wire basket, is also available.

01260 280033 [www.reginox.co.uk](http://www.reginox.co.uk)

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## Brett continues commitment to merchants



**Brett Landscaping** is continuing its commitment to providing only the highest level of service to its merchants by improving safety and building brand awareness. The ability to provide an efficient, effective and excellent service while still retaining high levels of health and safety is of paramount importance to both Brett and its customers. The

company has also recently invested significantly in new livery for its fleet of delivery lorries, making them instantly recognisable, building the Brett brand and promoting a professional image.

0845 60 80 577 [www.brettpaving.co.uk](http://www.brettpaving.co.uk)

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## Integral LED and Toolstation team up



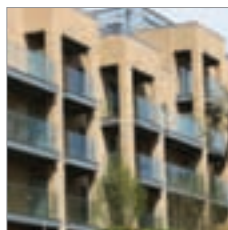
**Integral LED** has announced a new retail partnership with Toolstation. Together, the manufacturer and retailer aim to promote new lighting technology and enable an easy transition for customers switching to LED lamps, spotlights and downlights. British brand, Integral LED has earned a reputation for keen prices and product quality which has recently

earned four Which? Best Buys and five star LUX Magazine reviews. Toolstation has been successively named as the Which? top online retailer in the DIY products category for the last three years.

0208 451 8700 [www.integral-led.com](http://www.integral-led.com)

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## Hillside residences enhanced with Sapphire

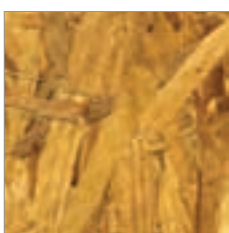


The clean, contemporary lines of glass balcony balustrades by **Sapphire** are contributing to the singular style of One Hove Park, a new residential development on the Sussex coast. Most of the scheme's 71 apartments benefit from balconies or terraces from which residents can look out over the area's abundant green spaces. The use of glazed balustrades from Sapphire's

Crystal frameless structural glass system, which has no vertical support posts to impede views, enhances the sense of light and space inside the high quality homes. Please visit the company website for more information.

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## SterlingOSB: a name commanding respect



A survey of users and suppliers found that 58 per cent of jobbing builders and 63 per cent of builders' merchants not only recognise the SterlingOSB name, but say that it's a name that commands respect. Made entirely in the UK from British-grown softwood, SterlingOSB from **Norbord** is one of the UK's leading brands of OSB. Renowned for its quality and

durability, it is also environmentally-friendly and competitively priced. Both FSC-certified and CE-marked for structural use, SterlingOSB can be relied upon to be sustainably-sourced and fit for purpose. Availability is also a key advantage.

Enq. 179

## neaco balconies maximise river views



**neaco's** glass panelled balconies are allowing residents to make the most of their picturesque river views at a development of luxury apartments in West Yorkshire.

neaco's UK Business Development Manager, Peter Melia, said: "As well as the kerb appeal of their contemporary style,

our balconies provide a clearer view out and more sunlight penetration to give interiors a spacious and airy feel. They are ideal for this type of development, where an unobstructed view of a scenic setting maximises a major selling point."

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## Flow Switches

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