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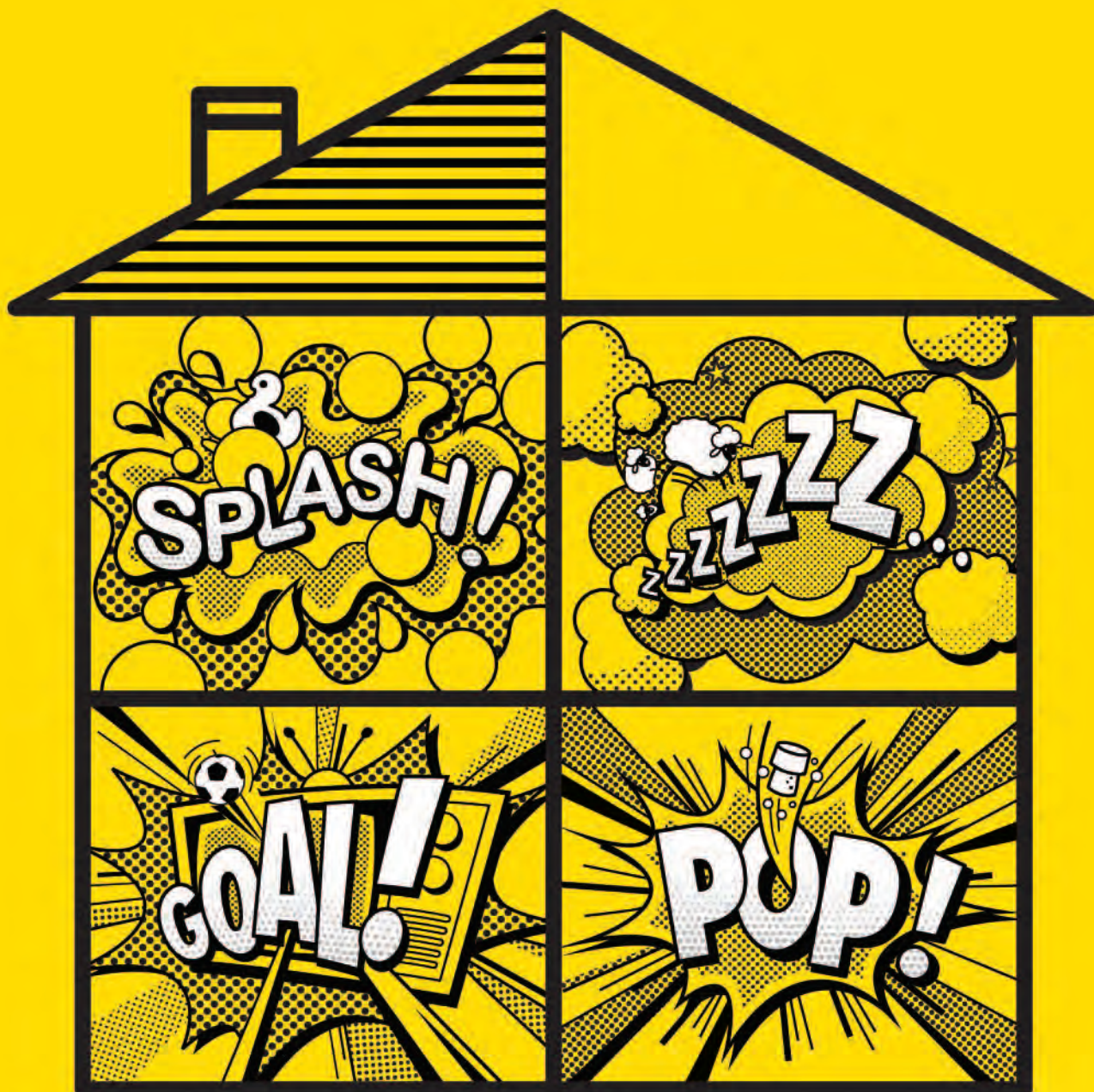
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HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

A NEW WAY OF LIVING

Report predicts £70bn growth in Build to Rent by 2020, with renters benefitting from a much wider range of extra amenities (see Industry News)



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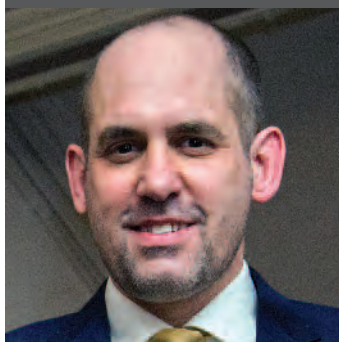
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James Parker

FROM THE EDITOR

The Grenfell Tower fire is probably the worst disaster of its kind since WW2, and what will necessarily be an extended period of investigation is unfortunately going to add further misery and trauma. However for the construction industry, and in particular those overseeing the system of regulations that are supposed to govern quality, this tragedy has thrown up a host of very searching questions which they must answer.

For anyone that knows the complexity of Building Regulations and the inspection regime, it should come as less of a surprise than to the general public that all 181 samples have 'failed' the BRE's new fire safety tests.

Yes, the cladding may have been switched for a cheaper alternative that did not offer "limited combustibility" required under Regs, but as commentators have pointed out, this may not give the full picture. I do not wish to pontificate or add more confusion in the wake of such devastation, but it is important that we avoid any knee-jerk conclusions – this needs to also be the approach taken by the investigation. It must leave no stone unturned.

Cladding is being stripped from buildings which were the subject of well-meaning regeneration programmes designed principally to drastically improve thermal performance, and try and make inroads on the UK's sluggish carbon reduction performance. If we just focus on one very visible construction element, aren't we missing the bigger picture?

What might be the most unforgivable legacy, because it could and should have been addressed, is that the system of regulations which should protect building users have been allowed to grow piecemeal into a web of convoluted and contradictory guidance which is hard for anyone to clearly interpret.

It's of course true that Building Regulations being vague and/or confusing could be useful for some seeking to achieve cheaper and less appropriate alternatives. Approved Document B has been interpreted by some commentators to mean that the insulation, not the cladding surface itself, is required to be fire retardant however, further clouding the issue. In this way, Grenfell may have 'complied with regs' but the cladding could still have been a major part of the reason for the fire spreading so rapidly.

If Approved Document B does not explicitly state that cladding should be of limited combustibility, we should not be surprised that this is interpreted to mean that it doesn't. Should we have accepted a regulatory framework where 'desktop studies' on product performance can be accepted if sufficient test data doesn't exist on them?

The only good thing to come out this appalling tragedy may be the possibility that the regulatory framework might be turned inside out, so the country ends up with a truly robust system that protects its citizens.

James Parker

HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

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ON THE COVER



07.17 HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER



A NEW WAY OF LIVING
Report predicts £70bn growth in Build to Rent by 2025, with renters benefitting from a much wider range of extra amenities (see Industry News)

Vantage Point Archway Tower
© Essential Living
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Picture courtesy of Natalie Oxford

Grenfell Tower blaze leaves at least 80 dead

Police believe the fire at Grenfell Tower in west London has resulted in an estimated 80 deaths, though many believe the final toll which is reportedly unlikely to surface this year will exceed that figure.

The 24-storey block, refurbished in 2016, suffered severe damage in the fire on 14 June which rapidly spread through many of the 120 flats. Eyewitnesses reported many residents trapped in their homes.

Grenfell Tower, which is part of Lancaster West Estate built in 1974 by Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council, was part of a borough-wide regeneration project and was re-clad last year, with

Rydon as main contractor. The two-year, £10m refurbishment was managed by Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO) on behalf of the council. A communal heating system was installed in addition to rain screen cladding, replacement windows and curtain wall facades.

The BBC reported that the local Grenfell Action Group had claimed, before and during the refurbishment that the block constituted a fire risk, and residents had warned that access to the site for emergency vehicles was “severely restricted”.

CLADDING CHECKS

Local authorities and housing associations across England have been asked to carry out urgent safety checks on their buildings’ cladding.

The Government has revealed that a total of 120 tower blocks have failed fire safety tests on cladding, following Grenfell.

Speaking during Prime Minister’s Questions following the fire, the PM iterated that she believed the cladding used for Grenfell Tower fell short of Building Regulations. She said that 100 per cent of the cladding samples tested by the BRE were found to contain combustible material.

In the aftermath of the fire, Melanie Dawes, permanent secretary at DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government), wrote to social housing providers asking them to identify if “any panels used in new build or refurbishment

“IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE BEST EXPERTISE FROM ACROSS OUR INDUSTRY, THE RESEARCH COMMUNITIES, THE PROFESSIONS AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR IS DRAWN OUT TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY AT THIS CRITICAL TIME OF NEED”

Dr Peter Bonfield, chief executive of the Building Research Establishment

are a particular type of cladding made of Aluminium Composite Material (ACM)."

While the police investigation into the tragedy is still ongoing, it is suspected that the composite aluminium and polyester-coated panels used during the tower's refurbishment may have contributed to the rapid spread of the blaze.

In the correspondence released by the DCLG on 19 June, Dawes stressed that "ACM cladding is not of itself dangerous, but it is important that the right type is used." Housing providers who find this type of cladding on their buildings have to test samples of it 'at no cost', while the 'testing facility' will also be made available to residential landlords.

Landlords were required to do the checks by the end of the day "or as soon as possible thereafter," ensuring they:

- identify and record the number of properties that are more than 18 metres high;
- identify and record the properties that have been clad with aluminium type panels;
- inspect those identified to establish whether they are panels made of an Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) and record this.

The letter stated that landlords need to check if the core material of the ACM panels is of limited combustibility when such cladding is used on buildings more than 18 metres high.

ADVISORY PANEL APPOINTED

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has announced an independent expert advisory panel to recommend measures to be put in place to safeguard buildings. The expert panel will look at any immediate action that is required, "so the public can be confident that everything possible is being done to make all public and private buildings safe as quickly as possible," said Javid.

The panel will be made up of a range

of building and fire safety experts, and will be chaired by Sir Ken Knight, former London Fire Commissioner and former Government Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser.

Other core members of the panel will be Dr Peter Bonfield, chief executive of the Building Research Establishment; Roy Wilsher, chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council; and Amanda Clack, president of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and a partner at EY.

The panel has a wealth of experience in fire and building safety, including testing processes. They will also draw in wider technical expertise as necessary to inform their advice to the Communities Secretary.

Dr Peter Bonfield commented on the appointment: "It is important that the best expertise from across our industry, the research communities, the professions and the public sector is drawn out to support the government and society at this critical time of need.

"I look forward to working with Sir Ken and drawing in expertise which will help address the challenges faced. I know that the will to positively contribute from professional bodies and others is strong, and we will deploy this to support our work."

A separate independent Public Inquiry will investigate what happened and who was responsible for the disaster, and will be chaired by retired Court of Appeal judge Sir Martin Moore-Bick.

HOUSING ACQUIRED

The Government acquired 68 homes in a luxury residential development in south Kensington to rehouse some of the residents affected by the Grenfell Tower disaster.

Sajid Javid announced that the homes, a mix of one, two and three bedroom flats across two blocks, are "newly-built social housing", part of the Kensington Row scheme. It is hoped they will become permanent homes for some of the displaced residents.

Javid said: "Our priority is to get

everyone who has lost their home permanently rehoused locally as soon as possible, so that they can begin to rebuild their lives."

Kensington Row, part of the £2bn Warwick Road masterplan, is developed by St Edward (part of Berkeley Group) and features a 24-hour concierge, a leisure suite, a private cinema and gardens, while apartments on sale start at £1.5m.

The developer has committed extra staff to complete the social housing flats by the end of July, while the Government-imposed working-hour restrictions have been relaxed in order to fast-track the completion. The Government has also provided additional funding to fit out the flats and promised that each home will be fully furnished and completed "to a high specification".

STATEMENT FROM THE FIRE SECTOR FEDERATION ON GRENELL TOWER

Although a fire on such a scale is unprecedented in the UK, there have been a number of similar incidents both here and around the world. The FSF has long expressed major concerns about the apparent disjoint in the processes which aim to ensure fire safety within the built environment, as well as concerns about the combustibility of certain modern building materials.

While we must wait for a full investigation into the cause of the fire and the reasons for such rapid fire spread, the Fire Sector Federation will be continuing to campaign for improvements in fire safety legislation and in ensuring the safety of the public and our built environment.

Paul Fuller CBE, Chair of the Fire Sector Federation said: "Today's tragedy will be felt throughout the fire sector, where all our efforts are focussed on ensuring the safety of our communities and of ensuring that our buildings are adequately protected.

"We wish to express our heartfelt condolences to all those affected by this terrible event and pay tribute to the fire service which once again has shown its bravery and professionalism in its response to this incident.

"There is no doubt that there will be questions to answer and the Fire Sector Federation will continue to investigate and campaign for improvements in fire protection and fire safety legislation."



Sajid Javid



Melanie Dawes



£2.3bn infrastructure fund announced

£2.3bn of funding for infrastructure to support housing has been announced by Communities Secretary, Sajid Javid.

The so-called Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) is intended to finance the building of roads, bridges, energy networks

and other utilities, the absence of which is frequently a major setback in developments.

Javid explained the reasons behind the move: "To build the homes this country needs, we need to deliver the right infrastructure, in the right place, at the right time.

"By investing in local infrastructure, we can help unlock the building of thousands of new homes in the areas where they are needed most."

He said the fund will "make sure we have better public services in place for local communities."

Funding for schools, healthcare centres and digital infrastructure to accommodate growing communities and relieve pressure on public services will also be available.

The move is part of the rollout of the £23bn National Productivity Investment fund announced in the 2016 Autumn Statement. The wider fund targets spending on areas critical to boosting productivity, including on housing, transport and digital communications.

Exchequer secretary to the treasury, Andrew Jones commented: "Where we live plays a huge part in our lives; from the distance of our commute to the local facilities available.

"By ensuring we have enough housing in areas where it is needed the most, we can boost productivity and support new communities to grow and thrive."

Local Government Association chairman Lord Porter commented that, going forward, "What's crucial is that the arrangements to access this fund are flexible, especially around different housing tenures, and that all councils can access funds to deliver housing for their communities.

"Councils know their communities and the places in them best, and so it's right that approaches to invest in local infrastructure are led by local authorities."

£2.3bn of capital grant funding will be allocated to local authorities on a competitive basis. The funding will be available from 2017-18 to 2020-21.

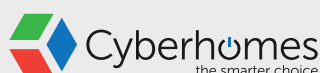
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Andrew Jones, exchequer secretary to the treasury

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Sharma is sixth Housing Minister since 2010



Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West, has been appointed as the new Housing and Planning Minister.

Sharma will now fill the role of Minister of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government, becoming the sixth Housing Minister since 2010.

With no background in housing, Sharma is a qualified accountant by trade, previously working in corporate finance before moving into politics.

He has previously served as the PM's infrastructure envoy to India, minister for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth office, as well being on the Treasury and Science select committees.

With a 2,876 majority, Sharma was re-elected in the recent general election, down from his 6,650 lead in 2015.

INDUSTRY REACTION

Brian Berry, chief executive of the FMB, welcomed the appointment. He said it is "vital" that, to deliver the Government's ambitious housing targets, Sharma "ensures that the recommendations within the 2017 Housing White Paper...are delivered in full."

"The fact that the Conservative Party's manifesto opened up the possibility of local authorities taking a more active role in housebuilding suggests that the Government was still open to new and radical approaches to solving the housing crisis. It would be a shame if such radicalism was dropped in light of the hung parliament," Berry commented.

He concluded: "We look forward to working closely with the new Minister, whose experience in the Treasury should hold him in excellent stead for the challenges ahead."

Praising Sharma's "parliamentary record in highlighting the damaging impact of late payment" for SMEs, the House Builders Association (HBA) congratulated the new Minister on his appointment, looking forward to establishing a "good working relationship" with him.

Rico Wojtulewicz, policy advisor for the HBA, commented: "We need to get on with the job of reforming the planning process, unlocking access to finance for SME housebuilders and enabling them to take on more apprentices."

"Our members," he continued, "are encouraged by Sharma's previous parliamentary work on tackling late payment, supporting sustainable development and valuing local employment. As housing and planning minister, we hope he will be a champion for SMEs."

Dan Gandesha, founder of Property Partner, urged the new Minister "to make clear without delay that commitments made in the Housing White Paper still stand, and that investment in homes of all types remain key priorities for the new government, particularly when it comes to affordable, quality rental stock."

He hopes the "disruptive 3 per cent additional stamp duty charge" will be reviewed, as well as suggesting that, "if the

incoming minister also acted to speed up the planning process alongside taxing land as soon as it has planning permission, to prevent land banking, then they would be set to make a revolutionary impact on the problems faced by buyers and tenants nationally."

FAREWELL, BARWELL

Gavin Barwell, the now former Conservative Housing Minister, lost his seat in Croydon Central to Labour.

After a night where the Conservatives lost 12 seats, the UK was left with a hung parliament, and Barwell without a job. He wasn't out of work for long however, and has since been appointed as chief of staff to PM Theresa May.

Barwell won his Croydon Central seat with a slim majority of 165 votes in 2015, but in the general election Labour candidate Sarah Jones received 29,873 to Barwell's 24,221.

He is likely to be missed by many in the construction industry, with his Housing White Paper having laid down the future agenda.

Barwell was however responsible for a controversial Conservative U-turn during the campaign, after rebutting promises to build a "new generation" of social housing in the manifesto. The pledge to build thousands of new social homes in fact related to "affordable rented homes".

Brian Berry said Gavin Barwell "deserves credit for his work in pushing forward a wide range of reforms," hoping that his successor can "build on his legacy."



Prolong balcony living



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Windoor's balcony enclosures have been integrated into the development of three flatted blocks at Eriboll Street, Glasgow. The blocks, designed by Collective Architecture, include attractive elevated outdoor spaces often referred to as sunspaces or winter gardens. These balconies provide an additional living space suitable for a variety of uses.

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Housebuilders must do more on diversity to avoid a workforce crisis

Housebuilders need to do more to attract women and young people if the industry is to avoid a “workforce crisis”, according to new research from the NHBC Foundation.

The report, entitled ‘The gender and age profile of the housebuilding sector’, warns of a significant shortfall in workers caused by an over-reliance on an ageing, male dominated workforce, not forgetting the potential restrictions to migrant labour following Brexit.

With estimates showing that the sector needs to recruit 700,000 more people to replace those retiring or moving on, plus an extra 120,000 if the Government’s aim to build one million new homes by 2020 is to be achieved, the NHBC Foundation has called on Government and housebuilders to recognise the seriousness of the problem, urging them to act now to address the shortfall.

Based on data from the Office For National Statistics’ Labour Force Survey, and detailed interviews with housebuilding companies and sector industry commentators, the report provides insights into age and gender diversity within the housebuilding sector.

The report revealed that just 12 per cent of the UK’s housebuilding workforce is female, with the majority working in secretarial or administration jobs, less than 4 per cent having a skilled trade role. It also found that young people, especially girls, are put off working in the industry, because of the negative, stereotypical image of a

male-dominated housebuilding industry.

One of the main findings of the report is that women are still seriously under-represented in skilled, technical and managerial roles in housebuilding. It identifies a number of challenges that need to be tackled by the sector, and the broader construction industry, that are deep-rooted and endemic, such as ongoing stereotyping and antiquated recruitment practices.

Uniformed and outdated careers advice in schools is also failing to make all young people aware of the variety of jobs and roles on offer, with advisers “unable to effectively promote the many attractive career opportunities in the sector.

Chi Onwurah MP said it’s “hugely encouraging” to see NHBC recognise that diversity isn’t an “optional add-on, but a key measure of success in the modern world.”

She commented: “Having worked as an electrical engineer for two decades, I know the importance of achieving greater diversity in male-dominated professions.

“Like NHBC, I believe more can be done to promote opportunities for women

in the housebuilding sector, and inspire the sector’s next generation of female leaders.”

Zara Fairman is Redrow Homes’ site manager and 2016 NHBC Pride in the Job Seal of Excellence winner. She commented on her experiences as a woman working in the housebuilding industry: “It’s a real privilege to be able to show that it’s not just a man’s world, and that women can do well in the housebuilding industry.

“It’s also important to know that you don’t necessarily have to be from a trade or engineering background – there are lots of transferable skills needed for this job.”

Commission formed to tackle build quality issues

The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) has announced the formation of a Commission of Past Presidents.

In light of the report into the defects that led to the closure of 17 schools in Edinburgh earlier this year and subsequent events, the Commission will investigate the issue of build quality in the construction industry, and what needs to be done to address it.

The formation will consider what steps the CIOB needs to take to address the already identified issues around management and supervision, the importance of the education framework, and whether there are further steps the industry can take to contribute to improving build quality.

Chair of the Commission, CIOB past president Paul Nash, said the tragic events at Grenfell Tower “further underlined the need for an urgent review of the way in which quality is managed in our industry.”

He continued: “While aspects of the public inquiry must necessarily focus on the issues of regulation and inspection, I think we have to look beyond this, at the behaviours that have led to a lack of focus on quality at all stages of the build process, from design and procurement through to construction and re-fit.

“As professionals, we have a duty to the industry and wider society to act responsibly and ethically. This defines what it means to be a professional. And we all have a responsibility for the reputation of our industry and, most importantly, the wellbeing of those who use the buildings that we create.”

FIVE OBSTACLES TO AGE AND GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

- Working Conditions – The belief that all work in the industry takes place outdoors in all weathers
- Fears of a sexist environment – concerns about the language and behaviour of male workers on site
- Poor hiring and recruitment practices – over-reliance on gender-biased recruitment literature and advertising, and an over-use of personal contacts and networks to recruit workers
- Skills shortages – cycles of recession and growth mean that many skilled workers leave the industry during downturns, which has a knock-on effect of reducing the talent pool
- Outsourcing of site staff – a large proportion of on-site trade roles are managed by sub-contractors, and therefore housebuilding companies themselves have little say on who is actually working on site



Construction contract figures drop to three-year low

As the UK prepared for the general election, overall construction contract figures in May dropped to their lowest value for more than three years, with residential and education the only sectors to buck the trend.

According to the latest edition of the Economic & Construction Market Review from Barbour ABI, £4.9bn worth of construction contracts were commissioned in May, which was a £500m reduction on the previous month, and a significant £1.5bn drop compared with figures from May 2016.

Looking at construction across the UK regions, it was the South West that led with 18 per cent of the UK's construction contract value, largely thanks to a £400m mechanical and engineering contract at the Hinckley Point nuclear plant project based in Somerset.

London, which usually sits firmly at the top of the regional rankings for market share, only accumulated nine per cent of the UK's total construction contract value in May, with five regions contributing more value than the capital.

Residential and education construction were the only areas in which contract values increased from May to April. Both increases were only minimal however, at 1.9 and 0.9 per cent respectively. The remaining sectors all saw decreases, with infrastructure hit hardest, falling by 22 per cent on the month and by almost 40 per cent compared to 12 months ago.

Outside of the Hinckley point contract, some of the biggest projects awarded in May include a £300m Blyth offshore wind farm off the coast of Northumberland, a £130m halls of residence planned at the University of Hull, and the luxury Vincent Tower hotel scheme in Liverpool, which is valued at £70m.

Michael Dall, leading economist at Barbour ABI, commented on the figures: "While the pre-election jitters will have no doubt affected these recent figures, many of the sectors within construction – such as the infrastructure and medical & health sectors – have been performing below par for some time now, with the industry being too heavily reliant on residential building performing strongly each month."

New data protection rules pose threat to construction firms

British construction and building firms are thought to be largely unaware of the new wide-ranging data protection rules which come into force in less than a year's time, despite 25 per cent admitting the maximum fine for non-compliance would force them out of business.

According to a YouGov survey of 190 construction firms, which was commissioned by law firm Irwin Mitchell, only 30 per cent admit to being aware of the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which commence on 25 May 2018.

GDPR represents the biggest change to the way businesses process personal information in 25 years, replacing existing data protection laws, the firm said. Under the new rules, the maximum fine for certain data breaches in the UK will rise from £500,000 to €20m or 4 per cent of global turnover, whichever is larger.

77 per cent of respondents were unaware of the new fines, and 25 per cent admitted they would go out of business if they received the maximum punishment.

Joanne Bone, partner and data protection expert at Irwin Mitchell, said the results were "concerning."

He commented: "With next May's

deadline fast-approaching, and with so much at stake, our study reveals there's a very real possibility that a large number of construction companies will not be compliant in time."

Under the new regime, the notification of certain data breaches where there is an impact on privacy must be given to the regulator within 72 hours. However, the survey found that only 18 per cent of construction companies are certain that they would be able to detect a data breach within their organisation. Only 27 per cent said they were confident they would notify the relevant stakeholders within the required timescale of three days.

Bone added: "It's hard to think of a business today that does not use personal data – if the data relates to an individual, you will be caught by the new data protection laws."

Gordon Anderson, head of construction London at Irwin Mitchell, said: "Good data governance can build customer trust, and the right permissions may also help construction businesses take advantage of the 'Big Data Revolution', enabling them to commercialise their data to their advantage. But ignoring the new rules can lead to hefty fines – at the very least."





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Digital change raising the bar for lenders, says CML

Digital change is radically altering consumer expectations in the mortgage market and “raising the bar” for what borrowers expect from their home buying experience, according to research published by the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML).

Launched at the recent CML Mortgage Tech UK conference in London, the research ‘Digital Change and Mortgage Borrowers’ iterates that technology has the potential to differentiate what individual lenders have to offer to customers, enhancing the competitiveness of the UK mortgage market.

The research, which was conducted for the CML by associate Accenture, included interviews with firms and customers from across the mortgage sector. The researchers looked at developments in mortgage markets around the world, and how technology is affecting other industries.

Figures showed that 84 per cent of companies believed technology could improve customer experiences and relationships, with 76 per cent believing it could improve their own operational capabilities. Researchers also found that 68 per cent thought technology could put customers in greater control, and 40 per cent believed it had the potential to unlock the power of data.

Using apps, customers can now arrange and manage their mortgages to digital property searches, with technology able to deliver automated decision making.

However, the research also highlights the challenges for lenders in a market in which two-thirds of customers prefer to speak to an adviser about complex products, and value being able to ask questions and receive and personalised service.

Other challenges technology presents include the limitations imposed by legacy thinking and systems, the need for external collaboration and to keep pace with change, and the way in which compliance with

necessary regulation can inhibit the pace of digital development.

Commenting on the research, CML director general Paul Smee said: “This report highlights the enormous potential of technology in the mortgage market.

“It is already enhancing what lenders are able to offer their customers, as well as improving the efficiency of work behind the scenes.”

He gave a word of advice: “The pace of change will not slow, and firms will need to ensure that their plans for developing technology are underpinned by the clearest possible understanding of all the implications of digital change.”

Survey reveals trades bullish about Brexit

Nearly half (45 per cent) of those working in a trade occupation believe their business won't make a loss as a result of the country's decision to leave the EU.

A survey of trade industry workers, conducted for TradePoint, revealed that while 30 per cent of respondents believe the effects of Brexit have already started to be seen in the UK, it still hasn't taken hold for those working in the trade.

The main concern raised by 21 per cent of those in a trade was the loss of skilled workers, yet 34 per cent of respondents had “no concerns” over Brexit, and 43 per cent of those in a trade who voted to leave the EU said Brexit presented no concern.

25 per cent of respondents envisaged better trade deals with the rest of the world as the main opportunity for the trade industry as a result of Brexit.

79 per cent of leave voters in the trade industry agreed the sector will be able to support itself when it comes to sourcing materials, whereas for those who voted to remain, only 42 per cent agreed.

Lisa Wise, marketing manager at TradePoint, said: “While the effects of Brexit are still yet to be determined, we are glad to see that those working in the trade are positive their sector and the industry will continue to grow from strength to strength.”



£70bn to be invested in UK Build to Rent market

£70bn of institutional funding is set to be invested in the UK's Build to Rent market, says a report published by Knight Frank.

Investment is expected to climb from £25bn in 2016 to £70bn by 2022, according to the report. The model is well-established in North America, where it is known as multifamily housing.

Build to Rent has been praised for its ability to offer American-inspired hotel style rented housing, providing renters with a choice outside of buy-to-let landlords.

The report predicts that the proportion of households in the private rented sector will rise to 24 per cent by 2021, with some 68 per cent of renters currently expecting to still be living in the rental sector in three years' time.

The survey results reiterated that rental affordability remains the key concern for tenants looking for rental property.

Darryl Flay, chief executive at Essential Living, commented on the company's approach when Building to Rent: “Our ambition is to provide professional services, onsite management and a range of lounges and workspaces that enable renters to think of the whole building as their home.”

Some such properties include onsite residents teams to encourage a hotel feel, whether it's to mount a TV or collect a parcel.

He believes this approach is only possible by developing and designing buildings “specifically for renters.”

THIS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE ENORMOUS POTENTIAL OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE MORTGAGE MARKET

Paul Smee CML director general

Events & awards

2017

National Housing Awards

7 September, London
www.nationalhousingawards.co.uk

RESI Conference

13 – 15 September, Newport
www.resiconf.com

Health & Housing

14 – 15 September, Belfast
www.cih.org/events

NHF Annual Conference & Housing Exhibition

19 – 20 September, Birmingham
annual.housing.org.uk

British Homes Awards

21 September, London
www.britishhomesawards.co.uk

UK Construction Week

10 – 12 October, Birmingham
www.ukconstructionweek.com

Build Show

10 – 12 October, Birmingham
www.ukconstructionweek.com/build-show

24housing Awards

12 October, Coventry
www.24housingawards.co.uk

London Build Expo

25 – 26 October, London
www.londonbuildexpo.com

RCI Show

1 – 2 November, Coventry
www.rcishow.co.uk

Women in Housing Conference

2 November, Manchester
www.womeninhousingconference.co.uk

Women in Housing Awards

2 November, Manchester
www.womeninhousingawards.co.uk

WhatHouse? Awards

17 November, London
www.whathouse.com/awards

Homes

22 – 23 November, London
homesevent.co.uk



Enterprising first project for veterans

Work is underway to transform a former army barracks into the UK's first housing and enterprise project for service veterans.

The multi-million pound development, at the former Erskine Barracks near Salisbury, will see Our Enterprise work alongside Redrow homes to establish the first purpose built community based campus for services veterans, creating new homes and an enterprise hub.

Plans were approved by Wiltshire Council in 2016 for 292 family properties to be built by Redrow and 44 one and two bedroom flats for former service personnel to be developed by Our Enterprise for Our Wilton Trust.

The flats will be available to rent by veterans for between six to 24 months, and during that time they'll receive business and skills training at the enterprise hub. The project will provide a range of jobs for veterans, who will be running the onsite community cafe and their own ground maintenance enterprise, alongside a range of volunteering, training and education opportunities to support their "move to independence."

A former field base for the US Army during World War II, Erskine Barracks was named after British war hero General Sir George Erskine. It was a major military base for UK forces right up until 2010, when troops were relocated elsewhere.

The abandoned site became available for housing development in 2010, but community leaders were keen for the area's military heritage to be respected.

Receiving considerable support, the project was granted £3.5m from the Libor Fund and £500,000 from the Armed Forces Covenant.

Matthew Bell, CEO of Our Enterprise, commented on the project: "I believe we have come up with a scheme which will

reinvigorate this community and transform many lives for the better.

"Hopefully it will be a blueprint for future developments across the UK, and help open doors for our returning service personnel."

Work is now underway on the site, with the first veterans due to move in mid 2018.

Norwich eco scheme wins top planning accolade

Carrowbreck Meadow, a development of 14 eco-homes which is the largest of its kind in Greater Norwich, has won a national planning award.

The scheme took the top prize in the 'Excellence in Planning to Deliver Housing' category at the Royal Town Planning Institute's (RTPI) Awards for Planning Excellence 2017, held at a ceremony in London.

Carrowbreck Meadow is a development of 14 Passivhaus homes in a woodland setting. The scheme is said to have set new benchmarks for sustainable development, not only meeting the demanding requirements of full Passivhaus certification, but also providing 43 per cent of the site as affordable homes, an "over-provision" of 10 per cent.

The positioning of the homes maximises access to solar energy in winter, while preventing overheating in summer. Their thermal bridge and draught-free building envelope is said to exceed regulations for airtightness five times over.

Fresh filtered air is provided to the homes by a heat recovery system, capable of achieving over 90 per cent efficiencies. All homes have electric car sharing points, rainwater butts and connection points for photovoltaic installation.

Nick Raynsford, former planning and housing minister and chair of the judging panel, was impressed with the "innovative and proactive approach taken," and the "excellent use of publicly-owned land."

He continued: "With over 40 per cent of affordable housing on the site, it is a great example of how innovation, quality and affordable housing can be delivered hand in hand."

Running for over 40 years, the RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence celebrate exceptional examples of planning and the contribution planners make to society.

Virtual reality breaks new ground in housing

The latest virtual reality design software from Virtual Worlds has been launched, allowing what is claimed by its developers to be an 'unprecedented' level of spatial awareness and immersion to housebuilders and buyers.

In contrast to previous iterations of the software, 4D Theatre doesn't require a controller, allowing customers to walk around their 'dream' kitchen, bedroom or bathroom freely via a specially designed headset.

The headset tracks a user's body and hand movements, relaying them onto the screen, "making customers feel like they have jumped in to the room created by the designer."

Products from more than 100 manufacturers are represented within the system, increasing the level of immersion and allowing users to do anything from stepping inside a shower to opening up a cabinet drawer, by physically "walking over and touching them."

Consumers and developers can freely

move around the room using the headset, giving them a platform to experience the full potential of the space and experiment with a range of configurations, quickly and easily.

Nathan Maclean, managing director and Virtual Worlds, commented on the launch: "Our software is all about providing customers with peace of mind, giving them the information at their fingertips to ensure they have an informed decision through the design process."



'Homes down the track'


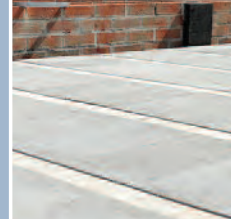
The London Assembly Housing Committee has released a report which looks at the scope of Transport for London (TfL) to develop homes.

The report 'Homes down the track – a marathon and a sprint for TfL' makes a number of recommendations to TfL, the Mayor, and their partners.

TfL, like most other public landowners, is not currently a property developer. This is brought to attention by the report, which says that going that route will mean time and money, and implies organisational change with long-lasting consequences.

The London Assembly warned that delivering affordable homes on expensive sites requires significant subsidy, adding that many TfL sites are in inner London, so the opportunity costs could prove substantial.

It urged small developers to get back to building homes, rather than 'just loft extensions and conservatories'. The report suggested TfL needs to work closely with the boroughs, as planning authorities, to shoulder some of the extra costs.

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Berkeley's East Thames branch picks up RoSPA trophy



Berkeley Homes East Thames has been awarded this year's Sir George Earle Trophy by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) at its 2017 Health and Safety Awards.

The Sir George Earle Trophy is the pinnacle of the RoSPA Awards scheme, and is internationally recognised.

Bringing together organisations from a range of industries, the annual ceremony celebrates best practice in health and safety management.

Berkeley Homes East Thames beat 20 other companies to be awarded the Trophy, with judges praising the passion of its senior leadership team in upholding robust and effective health and safety standards.

Karl Whiteman, divisional managing director for Berkeley Homes East Thames, commented on the award: "Our talented and varied workforce is our strongest resource, and their health and safety is paramount."

"We believe that a safe environment is created through the active participation of senior management and staff in identifying hazards and taking positive action to eliminate or control them, and are proud of our record in doing so."

Errol Taylor, RoSPA's acting chief executive, said the panel was impressed with Berkeley Homes East Thames' "competency assurance throughout the supply chain, as well as their readiness to assist partners in improving their own performance."

"Innovation was also a strong feature of their entry," he continued, "with a simple,

yet effective example of this being various trade contractors sharing the same offices on site, ensuring that learning was shared and communication improved."

In recognition of Berkeley Homes East Thames' record on health and safety, the business will be invited to become and active member of RoSPA's National Occupational Safety and Health Committee for 12 months.



Larkfleet donates £4,000 to young students

Larkfleet Homes has donated £4,000 to an Oakham school, while helping young student journalists to learn about jobs in the construction industry.

The housing developer welcomed year five and six students from the Young Journalist Academy at Cottesmore Millfield Academy in Oakham to receive a cheque for £4,000 for the school and to learn about the roles of Larkfleet employees.

Students used a camera, microphone and pre-prepared questions to interview Larkfleet employees. The talented group asked questions such as what each member's role involved, what qualifications they needed to attain the role, and what their proudest moment at the company was.

The information the students gathered will form part of a real-life report for other students to enjoy and use as a guide when planning their future careers.

Sam Hart, Larkfleet sales director, said his experience as an interviewee was "a great pleasure."

"They all enjoyed a tour of our show home," he continued, "followed by the cheque presentation for £4,000."

"I was extremely impressed with their enthusiasm and talent, and we definitely

have some future stars among the group!"

Each of the students were presented with a safety helmet and high-visibility vest, which they were able to take away with them.

Rachel Thomas, headteacher at Cottesmore Millfield Academy, said: "Interviewing staff at Larkfleet Homes will form part of the students' work to learn about different jobs, which they will then share with other students on the young journalist academy website."

"The students had a great time learning all about construction roles, and enjoyed the tour of the showhome. They are also delighted with their builder's helmets and high vis jackets!"

Duchy Homes staff win health and safety award

Site managers David Mills and Dean Ellis of Duchy Homes have been announced as 'Commended Winners' at the NHBC Health and Safety Awards.

Mills and Ellis are two of 56 site managers from across the UK housebuilding industry that have been commended in the first round of judging for their management of their South Yorkshire developments: Tower Gardens in Scawthorpe and Watermill Gardens in Penistone, respectively.

Both will go on to compete for the Runner up and National Award, to be released at a gala event held in Birmingham on 7th July 2017.

The awards are the sixth year running that Duchy Homes have been recognised in the Small Builder category for excellence in Health and Safety.

Stephen Ashworth, NHBC health and safety services manager, gave his "congratulations" to them on their success.

He said: "To win an award at this level clearly shows commitment to preserving an excellent health and safety record, and ups the ante for other site managers."

"We wish both David and Dean the very best luck in the next stage of the competition."

Now in its eighth year, the NHBC Health & Safety Awards recognise site managers' excellence in health and safety. The awards also help to drive up safety standards in housebuilding by showcasing and sharing best practice.

INDUSTRY MOVERS



Ian Byers

Churchill

Churchill Retirement Living has appointed Ian Byers as regional managing director for its South East region. Based in the Group's regional head office in Byfleet, he joins Churchill's main Board, working closely alongside chairman and CEO Spencer McCarthy to develop the Group's strategic growth plans for this key region.

Byers is returning to the business after two years away, during which time he has built his own successful sports management business, 17 Management, representing a number of Britain's international sporting stars. Prior to that he spent 12 years as part of Churchill Retirement Living's senior management team, and has many years' experience in the specialist retirement housebuilding sector.

Byers' appointment comes during a highly successful period for Churchill Retirement Living, with a number of recent industry award wins and continued strong growth. The company now employs over 500 staff across six UK offices.

Churchill's chairman and CEO Spencer McCarthy said: "I'm delighted to welcome Ian back to the Churchill Board. His appointment comes at an unprecedented time of award wins and success for the group, but we still have plenty more to achieve. To do that we need the very best people, and I am looking forward to working with Ian to achieve our goals for the South East region in 2017."



Richard Hill

One Housing

One Housing has announced that Richard Hill will be joining the organisation as its new chief executive in September 2017. His appointment follows the departure of Mick Sweeney earlier this year.

Hill was previously chief executive of Spectrum Housing Group until its merger with Sovereign in 2016 where he has since been working alongside the chief executive to ensure successful integration of the two organisations. Before that he was deputy chief executive at the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and director of investment at the HCA's predecessor, The Housing Corporation. He also has a strong background in strategy, policy and public affairs.

Commenting on his appointment Hill said: "I'm very pleased to be joining One Housing. It's led the way in developing commercial projects to fund its social purpose and is a thriving and diverse organisation that seeks to push boundaries and help redefine housing associations for the 21st century. These are challenging times for registered providers but demand for affordable homes has never been greater. One Housing is already part of the solution and I'm looking forward to helping drive it forward to achieve even more."

Barratt

Barratt Developments has appointed Jessica White as its chief financial officer.

White is currently Barratt's group financial controller, with extensive experience in the housebuilding sector. She joined Wilson Bowden as a corporate accountant in 2005, and following Barratt's acquisition of Wilson Bowden in 2007, was appointed Barratt's head of financial accounting.

White said: "I am delighted to be appointed as Barratt's chief financial officer. In my 12 years at the company, I have seen first-hand Barratt's commitment both to the quality of its product and to its people."

Acorn

Acorn Property Group has appointed Richard Roach as design and build manager in their direct build subsidiary, AH Construction Solutions.

Roach is one of several strategic appointments by Acorn aimed at increasing its in-house team of industry experts.

Roach brings with him a wealth of knowledge in a wide range of construction techniques, sustainable design and in Passivhaus projects. His new role sees him managing the detailed construction designs, ensuring they meet all technological and statutory standards and maintain the different by design ethos of Acorn Property Group.



Clare Watson

NFB

Clare Watson, director of Preston-based construction company Bernard Watson, became chair of the National Federation of Builders (NFB) on 8 June at the NFB AGM, which was followed by a celebratory gala dinner.

The NFB's annual general meeting saw the outgoing NFB chair, Simon Girling, director of SEH French, hand the ceremonial chains of office over to Clare to mark the beginning of her 12 month term.



Adrian Green

Larkfleet

Larkfleet Homes has appointed Adrian Green as its new head of commercial.

Green has joined the team to manage the commercial department and brings with him a wealth of experience to focus on the long-term interests of the business. Green said: "I am delighted to join Larkfleet. It is an exciting time to join the business."



Brian Berry is chief executive of the Federation of Master Builders

THE NEW HOUSING MINISTER HAS TO ENSURE THAT THE MEASURES PROMISED IN THE WHITE PAPER ARE DELIVERED AND IMPLEMENTED IN FULL

THE INDUSTRY ADVOCATE

A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

A hung parliament demands a greater focus on cross-party, collaborative working to unlock housing delivery.

As the dust begins to settle after the general election, those working in construction have had an almighty challenge working out just what a hung Parliament might mean. The eighth of June was obviously another bad night for the polling industry, but what will the consequences be for the housebuilding sector?

The most immediate result was that the Minister for Housing and Planning, Gavin Barwell, lost his seat, making the appointment of a replacement a pressing priority for Theresa May. Barwell deserves credit for his role in the Government's sensible and very 'pro-SME' Housing White Paper. At a time when smaller housebuilders were crying out for some real action on increasing the availability of small sites for development, the White Paper had a pleasing focus on this area and should lead in practice to a significant increase in the opportunities available to small scale builders and developers.

Barwell's replacement, Alok Sharma MP, has a responsibility to ensure that the measures promised in the White Paper are delivered and implemented in full. Given that the Government has upped its housebuilding target to 1.5 million new homes from 2015 to 2022, Sharma has a huge task ahead of him, and he will need to hit the ground running, getting to grips with his new portfolio very quickly. He's the sixth person to hold the office in seven years. This is a high level of turnover for such a key ministerial position and the industry is hoping to see more stability in this post in the coming years.

The wider implications of a hung Parliament are harder to gauge. The precarious balance in the Commons has given rise to the idea that cross-party collaboration will now have to drive the Brexit process. Both Labour and Conservative politicians have stressed that the scale of the task at hand, in terms of exiting the EU, demands a more consensual, bipartisan approach to negotiations. If such an endeavour can be undertaken in the spirit of co-operation, then is it beyond reason to hope that the same could apply to tackling the country's chronic shortage of homes?

While he was Chancellor, George Osborne had already begun to explore the possibility of

taking big ticket spending decisions out of partisan hands through the creation of the National Infrastructure Commission, which was chaired by Labour's Lord Adonis.

While there are substantial differences between the Labour and Conservative positions on housing policy, there is a general (albeit blindingly obvious) consensus that the only real solution is to significantly increase output. In a recent House of Lords report, members of all stripes found grounds for agreement on one of the best ways to build more homes – expanding the output of smaller housebuilders.

Judging by the conversations we've had with leading politicians on all sides, there is general unanimity on many of the barriers currently preventing SME housebuilders from doing precisely that. Everyone seems to accept that there needs to be a significant improvement in the ability of smaller developers and new market entrants to access development finance.

Likewise, we've heard few objections to our argument that there needs to be a real increase in the number of small sites available to smaller scale developers. Furthermore, the announcement earlier this year that councils would be allowed to raise planning fees in order to better resource their planning departments could have just as easily been Labour policy as Conservative.

Obviously, there remain big dividing lines between the two camps, most of which revolve around the type of homes that we are building, and how active a role the Government should play in financing development. It's also possible that the principle of 'English votes for English laws' could allow a minority Government to press ahead with its housing plans, as housing is a devolved policy area and the Conservatives enjoy a comfortable majority within England.

Nevertheless, as I remarked upon last month, an interesting quirk of the general election campaign was that the Conservative manifesto started to inch towards Labour territory when it came to housing policy, and it would seem there are grounds for a real exchange of ideas on building more homes. In these extraordinary times, would it be so out of the ordinary for a real culture of collaboration to emerge?



Patrick Mooney is managing director at Mooney Thompson Consulting

WE SHOULD
ASK HOW IS
IT THAT
CLEAR
WARNING
SIGNS OVER
RECENT
YEARS WERE
MISSED

THE SOCIAL NETWORK

LESSONS MUST BE LEARNED

Patrick Mooney, managing director at Mooney Thompson Consulting, tells of the lessons that need to be learned in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy

In the immediate aftermath of the terrible fire at Grenfell Tower, among the many questions being asked are some that strike at the very heart of social housing, and what sort of future it has in a modern society.

While we will have to wait for the public inquiry to establish the full facts and identify the lessons to be learned, we should still ask ourselves how it is that clear warning signs over recent years were missed. Did a drive for cost savings take priority over safety, why were the tenants' concerns not acted upon and what is the council (their landlord) doing with so much money in its bank accounts?

Recent disclosures of warning letters sent to Government ministers about outdated and not fit for purpose fire regulations make for uncomfortable reading, but they also highlight the shortcomings in a regulatory system that is both myopic and ineffectual. Social housing has been the subject of what is called co-regulation since 2009, with landlords in England basically responsible for policing themselves.

Their regulatory body, the Homes & Communities Agency has set a series of standards for landlords to follow, but staff and Board members of the HCA are really only focusing on value for money and governance at housing associations. Local authorities and Arms Length Management Organisations (like KCTMO, the body which managed Grenfell Tower on behalf of the council) are expected to fend for themselves.

WEAK REGULATION

This 'hands off' or light-touch system was brought in by Eric Pickles and Grant Shapps, the former Communities Secretary and Housing Minister. They also abolished the Audit Commission and its Housing Inspectorate, which brought inspections of all social landlords to a crashing halt. Why publicly funded and supported housing should be exempt from this scrutiny, while other services like schools, colleges, hospitals and care homes are still subject to regulation and inspections is

anybody's guess. The cost savings have been minimal.

We cannot say with any certainty that these decisions directly led to the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, but they certainly created the climate or environment in which landlords could get a bit slack. Couple this with the need for councils to make huge cuts in their frontline services due to the savings imposed on the public sector and you can perhaps see why some poor decisions might have been made.

What we do know is that the housing inspectors brought about positive changes in landlords' approaches to gas safety and in listening to and acting upon tenants' views on service delivery and their landlords' performance.

It will be interesting to see if the public inquiry recommends a resumption of inspections or other changes to the regulatory system to improve tenants' safety. But the initial reaction from the DCLG which has asked councils and housing associations to provide information on their tower blocks, particularly those which have been recently refurbished, does suggest a change in the mood music around scrutiny and oversight.

The owner of Grenfell Tower is the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, and sadly the council's immediate response, in the days following the fire, was so chaotic that the Government was forced to step in along with London Councils and the Red Cross to ensure survivors got the help they needed.

But even then reports emerged of residents from the tower block being offered accommodation up to 200 miles away (in Preston, Lancashire), or in temporary accommodation in other parts of London, while others were forced to stay with family and friends if they wished to stay in the borough.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT CHANGES DEFERRED

Some temporary relief has been provided with the news that the planned rollout of Universal Credit into North Kensington in July has been

deferred, as DWP officials said they wanted local job centre staff to focus on supporting claimants affected by the fire.

Universal Credit pulls together six separate benefits into one monthly payment, but it has been beset by delays, implementation problems and late payments, that has seen claimants run up large rent arrears (of thousands of pounds in many cases) and reliant on food banks to feed themselves and their families.

Kensington and Chelsea was due to move to the “full service” digital-only system of universal credit on 19 July as part of the wider phasing in of UC across the UK by 2018. DWP officials correctly spotted that any disruption to benefits with the new system would cause extra difficulties for local claimants already coping with the tower blaze and its aftermath.

Just three months ago, a cross-party committee of MPs highlighted serious concerns with the operation of UC, including claimants waiting 12 weeks or more for their first payment (the standard wait is 42 days) leaving many poorer claimants destitute. The Trussell Trust food bank network reported that in areas where the full UC rollout has taken place, food bank referral rates were running at more than twice the national average.

The Work and Pensions Committee wrote to Damian Green MP in April saying the practical operation of UC must be an urgent priority for the DWP straight after the General Election. Among the issues they highlighted were:

- Vulnerable claimants struggling to adapt to receiving UC as a single monthly payment.
- The seven waiting days at the start of a claim, for which claimants receive no benefit, adding to claimants' financial difficulty.
- Poor communications between landlords, support organisations and the DWP where UC ‘full service’ is operating.
- UC inadequately supporting claimants in emergency temporary accommodation. (The last one is a particular concern for Grenfell Tower's displaced tenants.)

Senior members of the cabinet have been indicating that the age of austerity is over. Whether this leads to further changes in the roll-out of UC and how it operates remains to be seen. For me, it's a question of wait and see. What happens with the planned and recently made welfare benefit cuts will be an important early test for the new minority Government. But reversing or postponing the welfare cuts are big ticket items that will cost billions of pounds each year.

WEALTH GAP

The borough where the fire took place is the richest in Britain with a mean household yearly income of over £120,000, but it also contains some of the country's poorest and most deprived wards. It is this contrast between the rich of Notting Hill and South Kensington and the poor of North Kensington that makes the events at Grenfell Tower so poignant and difficult to accept.

While it has been revealed the council recently had reserves as high as £300m and invested several million pounds in setting up an opera company, it was also looking for savings in the cost of the tower block's refurbishment completed last year at a cost of around £10m. It would appear that by spending an extra few thousand pounds on the external cladding, panels with effective fire retardant qualities could have been installed.

Retrofitting a sprinkler system would probably have cost in excess of £100,000 but that must look a cheap price in comparison to the cost in lives and property that has been destroyed in the blaze. Not all councils with tower blocks will have this money sitting in their reserves, so this will be an early challenge to the Government's resolve and whether it makes the necessary funding available for checks and fire safety works to be completed.

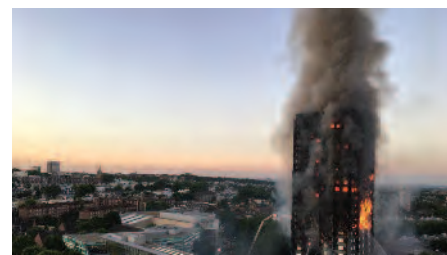
The fire happened shortly after Prime Minister Theresa May announced that Alok Sharma MP would be the latest Minister to hold the housing portfolio. This was unfortunate timing and it makes the new minister's job no easier.

Sharma has inherited the unenviable task of leading the campaign to fix the country's broken housing market. Without a Parliamentary majority of any substance this could be a very difficult brief unless he works to develop cross party support for the measures outlined in the Housing White Paper and manages to extract more resources from his former political masters at the Treasury.

UNCOMFORTABLE QUESTIONS

But at least Sharma will not have to face any questions over why he sat on recommendations to update and simplify the fire safety regulations, as recommended by the coroner at the inquests into the six victims of the Lakanal House fire in Southwark, south east London in 2009. BBC One's Panorama has been shown copies of letters sent by the All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety and Rescue Group, to at least four Government ministers in recent years. These warned the Government it “could not afford to wait for another tragedy”.

Ronnie King, a former chief fire officer



Courtesy of Natalie Oxford

who sits on the group, says the Government has ignored repeated warnings about tower block safety. “We have spent four years saying ‘Listen, we have got the evidence, we’ve provided you with the evidence, there is clear public opinion towards this, you ought to move on this’,” said King.

DCLG promised a review in 2013, but it was soon delayed. In March 2014, the parliamentary group wrote: “Surely... when you already have credible evidence to justify updating... the guidance... which will lead to saving of lives, you don't need to wait another three years in addition to the two already spent since the research findings were updated, in order to take action? As there are estimated to be another 4,000 older tower blocks in the UK without automatic sprinkler protection, can we really afford to wait for another tragedy to occur before we amend this weakness?”

“As a consequence the group wishes to point out that should a major fire tragedy, with loss of life, occur between now and 2017 in, for example, a residential care facility or a purpose built block of flats, where the matters which had been raised here, were found to be contributory to the outcome, then the group would be bound to bring this to others' attention.”

The last of the four ministers in DCLG to receive a letter was Gavin Barwell, who has since moved on to become Theresa May's chief of staff at Number 10. He received his letter from the parliamentary group in September 2016. In November last year and then in April this year, Mr Barwell said his department had been looking at the regulations, and would make a statement “in due course”. The fire safety group pointed out that it had been “given a similar response by three successive ministers since 2010” and it “is now time to listen to what the Fire Sector is saying”.

As the most recent Housing Minister to not produce updated guidance, Barwell may soon face some very difficult questions about why the overdue fire safety guidance and new building regulations was not published on his watch. This will be determined by the judge leading the Grenfell Tower public inquiry, and this time we must ensure that any recommendations are implemented as quickly as possible, and without any further delay.



Mike Lomax is marketing communications manager at Tarmac Cement, and chair of the Chartered Institute of Marketing's Construction Industry Group (CIMCIG)

REFRESHING CONSTRUCTION

Mike Lomax, explains why the construction industry needs to modernise its image and how a new industry initiative should help to improve marketing to the next generation.

Last month, I hosted a debate event at the House of Lords with a number of key players from across the construction sector. It was organised by the Chartered Institute of Marketing's Construction Industry Group (CIMCIG), an organisation which I chair and which has the specific purpose of raising the status of the marketing profession within construction.

The event focused on CIMCIG's stance on the current state of industry – primarily that we need to be looking for new ways to attract the next generation of construction professionals. Part of that is to work on the image of construction to widen its appeal to a broader range of young people.

As the organisation has argued, activity in the industry is strong at present and with so many building starts taking place, we are going to need that new talent coming in in order to maintain momentum. Mark Farmer, the author of a government report released last year, estimates that 700,000 people need to be recruited over the next five years.

So, where does CIMCIG come in?

One of the initiatives currently underway is the Chartered Institute of Marketing's first ever specific marketing qualification for the construction industry. This dedicated programme, which has been developed in close collaboration with CIMCIG, has been designed to equip a new generation of young marketers to tackle the unique demands of our complex sector.

The course combines CIM training material

with construction-specific insight, case studies and practical knowledge, and includes student mentoring by established industry experts. With so many junior marketers leaning towards FMCG industries, our goal with this programme is to attract that talent back to the B2B sector.

The new programme will provide a solid foundation both for junior marketers and for those in a marketing support role within the industry, and will give them practical skills and knowledge which they can apply immediately to make a positive impact on their business and industry.

Alongside this qualifications drive, CIMCIG is also strongly in favour of more apprenticeships.

Other factors involved include moves towards greater diversity in the sector. Construction is commonly associated with older men and not without reason – of all those working in the industry today, 45 per cent are older than 45 and 89 per cent are men. One of our speakers at the event, Jane Nelson, group executive director at the Mears Group, is currently leading a joint project with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to encourage more women into the trades.

We have been arguing for years for a new approach, and these developments are heartening to see. But they're just the start. Now is the time for us to come together as an industry and to look for ways to make it an attractive career destination for young people.

Construction still employs 10 per cent of the UK workforce and has a rich and prestigious history. Let's make sure it has a bright future.

THE NEW PROGRAMME WILL GIVE THEM PRACTICAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE WHICH THEY CAN APPLY IMMEDIATELY





Ian Graves is a legal director in the planning team at law firm Shakespeare Martineau

RELEASING THE GREEN BELT

Ian Graves of Shakespeare Martineau explains why he believes green belt release shouldn't be off-limits

There is a housing crisis in the UK. For years, supply has failed to keep up with demand, pushing up prices to unsustainable levels and frustrating the ambitions of millions of would-be homeowners.

There aren't enough homes being built, and they're being built in the wrong places. So why are large swathes of land in some of the country's most sustainable locations off-limits for development? Done right, the strategic release of green belt land for housing development could go a long way towards solving the problem.

Firstly, there are two myths which need to be dealt with. Many wrongly equate the green belt with open countryside. The reality in many cases couldn't be further from the truth, as much green belt land is of limited environmental value. The quality of the land in environmental terms is actually irrelevant to green belt designation: by definition, the only criterion for inclusion in a Green Belt is proximity to an urban area.

There is also a widespread, but mistaken, belief that the UK is a small, crowded island. In fact, according to the Department of Communities and Local Government, just 9 per cent of land in England is developed, whereas more than a third has a restrictive designation such as green belt, national park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Nor is development in the UK particularly intensive by European standards. Evidence consistently shows that the general public significantly overestimates how much land is built on, probably because the population is concentrated mainly in a few areas of the country. Ironically, the policy priority given to brownfield development within urban areas probably increases this perception.

Green belt designations are a major constraint on development, restricting the supply of housing and increasing its cost. That high cost disproportionately affects lower and middle

income groups, and the young. Green belts also encourage the 'leap-frogging' of development further away from urban areas, leading to longer commutes and greater environmental impacts. Building at high density on brownfield land means that many of the homes that are built are smaller than buyers desire. All of this results in expensive homes, of the wrong type, in the wrong places.

These are real costs that should be weighed against the benefits of preserving the green belt, and often the public is unaware of the hidden trade-off that is being made. The benefits of the green belt are felt mainly by those who own homes in or near them. Unsurprisingly, they are usually its staunchest defenders, and their views hold great sway politically. The voices of those who don't yet own a home, or live in a smaller home than they need, or that's in the wrong place, aren't being heard. Planning policy needs to cater for the needs of everyone, not just existing homeowners.

Even limited development of the green belt could put a large dent in the housing shortfall. Green belt locations are generally sustainable, being on the edges of large urban areas. In London alone, one study showed that almost a million homes could be built on green belt land within 10 minutes walk of a train station. There are real opportunities to build large numbers of homes in the places people want to live, without harming the environment.

So, it's time to re-think the green belt. To be clear, this does not mean allowing unrestricted development or concreting over the countryside. What it does mean is moving away from mechanistic policy designations and giving real thought to what should be protected and why.

The targeted release of green belt land in the most sustainable locations could help solve the housing crisis, while bringing overall environmental benefits. That, however, will require real political courage, something that's been in very short supply over recent years.

THERE IS A WIDESPREAD, ALTHOUGH MISTAKEN, BELIEF THAT THE UK IS A SMALL, CROWDED ISLAND



NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Work starts on £12m mixed-use scheme in Kent

Developer Investin has started work on a new build development in Ashford, Kent. Designed by Holder Mathias Architects, the 'Vista' residential scheme will be built on either side of the former Charter House, completing the 352-unit mixed use development, and transforming unused areas of the site into apartments.

The scheme will comprise two buildings of four and six storeys, and include 109 one and two bedroom apartments. Communal roof gardens will be provided for the residents and most of the flats will include a private balcony, terrace or ground level garden. All flats will be finished to high quality specification and feature contemporary fixtures and fittings.

Holder Mathias' concept responded to a complex project brief to maximise available space on a constrained island site, achieving large scale development while reacting sensitively to the height



and scale of the surrounding buildings. The design was subsequently adapted to integrate Ashford Borough Council Residential Space Standards without detriment.

In preparing for construction, innovations in modern methods of construction and off-site manufacture proposed by the contractor and their consultants have been investigated and adopted to provide for thermal efficiency and a simpler, faster construction programme.

Chris Hall, director at Holder Mathias, said the Vista development will "transform an under-utilised central site to provide quality homes for the area."

Construction has already started on site, with completion expected January 2019.

Planning awarded for 170-home Becontree Heath development

Countryside has been granted planning permission for a new neighbourhood renewal scheme in the London borough of Barking and Dagenham, subject to a Section 106 agreement being finalised.

The site in Dagenham, known as Becontree Heath, covers three parcels of land on Wood Lane, near the Grade II listed Art Deco Dagenham Civic Centre.

It will comprise 170 homes, alongside a replacement bus terminus and retail space for a local pharmacy. The regeneration project is providing the local area with a mix of both market and shared ownership homes.

With support from the Greater London Authority (GLA) for the project, Countryside submitted a plan for 124 privately owned homes (comprising 82 apartments and 42 houses) and 46 shared ownership apartments.

With a mix of one, two and three-bed apartments and three-bedroom houses, the development is intended to attract a variety of London buyers.

Andy Fancy, operations director at Countryside Partnerships, said: "We have had an excellent response and great cooperation from the local community and London Borough of Barking and Dagenham during the consultation on this development.

"We believe that our plans for Becontree Heath will transform the area, while providing much needed homes to the region and supporting new and existing communities."

The successful application included connecting the entire development to the borough's district heat network. The scheme will deliver heat from an energy centre directly to the end user, and captures power that may ordinarily be lost, in turn lowering costs and reducing the scheme's carbon footprint.

After consultation with the community, improved pedestrian links, landscaping that includes play areas and parking provision are also part of the submission.



CASE STUDY

BRE-backed £150k temporary home arrives



Koda, a sustainable factory-made modular home has been launched in partnership with the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to provide a new solution to the UK's housing crisis.

The 'Koda' house has been launched in the UK, a 25m² sustainable modular structure that can be erected in a day.

Already in use across Holland and Estonia, Koda addresses the need for temporary housing on disused sites across the country, providing fast and economical homes.

An individual Koda house can be built for £150,000, including construction, planning costs, delivery, installation and connections to basic necessities like water, electricity and sewage.

The structure doesn't need foundations, and can be moved on the back of a lorry, creating an effective solution for under-utilised land before it is permanently developed. Koda has been designed by Estonian developer Kodasema to allow stacking, with multi-storey modules scheduled for release in 2018.

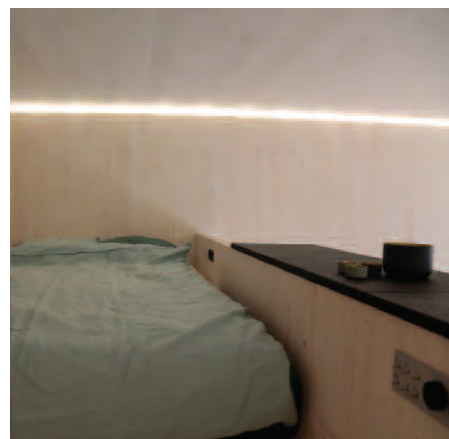
This is not the first time modular micro-homes have been introduced to the UK, with companies such as ISO Spaces

creating moveable and re-usable short-term accommodation in Ealing, London, using re-purposed shipping containers.

Kodasema however intends for its home to 'shake up' the UK property market, providing a multi-purpose self-build structure that the company believes can be used as a city centre home, a lakeside summer house, a cafe, an office, workshop, studio, or even a classroom.

Open plan living dominates the design, with a full-height quadruple-glazed window at the front, providing acoustic and thermal insulation, while filling the interiors with natural light. The bathroom and mezzanine bedroom are located at the back of the building, with a living and dining space and terrace at the front.

John O'Brien, associate director for Construction Innovation at the BRE, believes the "simple, yet effective" design could help "alleviate the pressures of the housing crisis," and offers the potential to supply "relatively cheap" temporary homes.



INSTALLATION DOES NOT REQUIRE EXTENSIVE DIGGING OR FOUNDATIONS, AND SO CAN TAKE LESS THAN A WORKING DAY TO ASSEMBLE ON SITE

He comments: "This trend of short-term use of derelict land, which can be left untouched for years, even during the planning stages, is becoming more common, especially in London."

"Koda would provide a cost-effective option to house those on the waiting list for affordable accommodation, or offer temporary rental apartments for young professionals, students, and those looking to downsize."

"On a wider point," continues O'Brien, "it could also be the perfect housing solution for those that move regularly for their jobs, and require medium term tenancies in cities across the UK."

"You could pack your suitcase and move from Koda to Koda, and be in familiar environment in another town or city, with all the usual amenities."

FEATURES

As part of the homes' energy efficiency, Koda features photovoltaic panels to generate energy and reduce its carbon footprint. Accompanying these are thin, vacuum-insulated concrete walls, keeping the building cool in the summer and warm in the winter, as well as providing noise insulation.

The homes come with smart home systems, including alarms, an entry system door lock, programmable mood lighting and climate control. Installation does not require extensive digging or foundations, and so can take less than a working day to assemble on site, with materials able to be disassembled reused easily.

The concept was initially unveiled last year, but the first Koda home has now been installed in the BRE's Innovation Park in Watford, a research facility displaying full-scale prototype homes, demonstrating innovative approaches to low-carbon and energy-efficient housing.

Kodasema is a recent winner of WAN Urban Challenge 2017, a global ideas competition with a focus on London's housing crisis. The Koda house is due for release in 2018.

Aggregate industries employee celebrates 40 years



Paul Marley, an Internal Sales Representative for the Building Products division of **Aggregate Industries**, is celebrating 40 years with one of the leading construction materials supplier, having started with the company in 1977.

To commemorate his 40th anniversary, Paul was presented with a Long Service Award by Building Products Sales Director, Jeremy Lee.

Paul comments: "I can't quite believe it's been 40 years. I thoroughly enjoy what I do and where I work, which is what has kept me here for so long. 40 years is a long time and things have certainly changed during my time. I look forward to many more years with the company."

01285 646900 www.aggregate.com

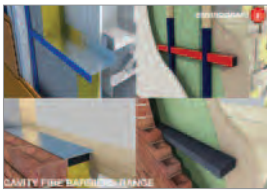
Designer Contracts is recycling winner again



Designer Contracts has been named 'Take Back Partner of the Year' by Carpet Recycling UK for the third time. The company initially trialled a recycling scheme, in conjunction with CRUK. The scheme works by diverting 90 per cent of its fitters' unfitted carpet into felt underlay. What isn't turned into underlay is used in the equestrian sector for arena flooring. This innovative scheme saves a staggering 250 tonnes of waste going to landfill every year. The company has recently invested £40,000 in a baling machine that helps to recycle 70 tonnes of cardboard and 20 tonnes of plastic every year.

01246 854577 www.designercontracts.com

Cavity Barriers protect against fire spread



According to Document B of the UK Building Regulations fire barriers must be installed in cavity areas that are vulnerable to the spread of fire. Using the correct passive fire cavity protection system within a building is crucial, in the event of a fire, intumescent

fire barriers activate and seal holes, penetrations and cavities, preventing the spread of fire. Two storey buildings and above require cavity barriers to stop fire from spreading through walls, floors and cavities. The **Envirograf**® Cavity Barrier range fully satisfies the requirements stated in Document B of the Building Regulations.

01304 842 555 www.envirograf.com

Fantastic FIT Show for The VEKA UK Group



As FIT Show drew to a close, it would be hard to describe it as anything other than another success for **The VEKA UK Group**. With a footfall of over 13,000 people across three days, the event was the perfect opportunity to demonstrate a selection of new products with visitors spoilt for choice

when it came to the latest in PVC-U door and window innovations. Guests were treated to the first look at new innovations such as the SmartFold Door, SmartFold Window and the PVC Residential Door and Side Panel Combination. More highlights included the M70, FlushSash Slim Sightline Window, VEKA Screen, Vertical Slider and Lift & Slide Patio Door.

01282 716611 www.vekauk.com

EGGER Protects from the weather for longer



New research and rigorous testing of **EGGER's** flagship flooring product, EGGER Protect, has shown that the structural board can remain exposed to the elements for 60 days. This gives UK house builders peace of mind when dealing with unforeseen delays. EGGER Protect is manufactured from

the company's P5 flooring grade particleboard with a weather resistant surface layer applied to both sides. The board has a hard-wearing, anti-slip surface, is quick to install, and can be used with underfloor heating systems and tiles.

0845 602 4444 www.egger.com/building

Specflue celebrates silver anniversary



As Specflue celebrates its 25th year in business, the company's guiding principles remain the same – a deep commitment to the highest possible quality, pioneering innovation, and a passionate belief in offering outstanding customer service. It is these values that have driven Specflue to become one of the UK's foremost suppliers of flue, chimney, wood

burning fire and renewable heating products. But Specflue's expertise is not confined to product supply. It also runs a state-of-the-art training centre comprising a mix of classrooms and practical areas to educate and raise standards within the solid fuel and renewables sectors.

0800 902 0220 www.specflue.com

LG embedded wi-fi wall mounted air con units



LG has launched a new range of wall mounted air conditioning units with a plethora of new features including embedded wi-fi, and compatibility with its multi-split range. In addition, the 10-year compressor warranty that already applies to its single split wall mount units is now extended to include

the multi split range. All three new units feature Embedded wi-fi so you can easily access your air conditioners by using smart internet devices such as Android or iOS based mobile phones – wherever you are and however many air conditioners you may have.

HVAC.marketing@lge.com partner.lge.com/uk

Omnie MVHR Systems specified for eco-homes



Following the example of the German PassivHaus standard and Canadian Super-E systems, the consultants designing a development of highly energy efficient homes in Suffolk have opted to incorporate **Omnie** mechanical heat recovery ventilation systems. The eco-houses are being fitted with MVHR units by local plumbing/heating specialist. The warm air extracted from the kitchen and other wet rooms will pass through each unit's high efficiency heat exchanger to temper the incoming fresh air. The

MVHR's 75 mm diameter semi-rigid ducts are connected back through a manifold and to the low wattage fans, then to the external terminals.

01392 363605 www.omnie.co.uk

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* source: BEAMA, of 122 homes surveyed

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FAST RECOVERY

Martin Passingham of Daikin UK explores how a 960 mm parapet wall nearly ruined air conditioning plans for a listed five-storey house in Hyde Park, London.

Balancing comfort requirements against the practical and logistical realities of installing an air conditioning unit can be a major dilemma. This is especially true in urban areas where both outdoor space and available floor space is restricted, and often comes with a premium price.

This results in the units being installed on the roof of buildings or requires the installer to find a discrete alcove or corner to hide them. However, with inner city planning regulations protecting unique lines of sight, tall air conditioning units are frequently installed in basements – meaning valuable usable space is lost.

Finding a solution that meets both the demands of the urban environment and planning restrictions can therefore present several challenges for both installers and developers. This was recently seen during an installation in London's Hyde Park.

Following a multi-million pound redevelopment of a listed five-storey house, a 960 mm parapet wall nearly scuppered plans to air condition the plush apartments.

Planning constraints meant the heat recovery condensing units originally specified for the second, third and fourth

floor apartments were too tall to go on the roof behind the parapet wall.

Leading the installation was London-based contractor Hoveair. With air conditioning a key specification for the luxury apartments' bedrooms and living areas, the installers recommended a new equipment manufacturer.

Hoveair project director, David Collins, says: "We were awarded this project on our innovative design solution to overcome the difficulties of renovating a listed building in a prestige area of London."

The choice of low height mini-VRV heat pumps, which stand 918 mm tall after being mounted on 95 mm rubber bearers, satisfied building control and the air conditioning solution subsequently gained planning permission.

Made especially for urban environments with high-density residential properties, compact units like the product used are designed to have an especially low profile. Ideal for projects where space is limited and within inner cities, where elevation control restrictions are in place, these systems can provide a compact solution, with some products also offering a high level of energy-efficiency.

Installed behind parapet walls or on

balconies, mini units such as the two models installed on this project are effectively 'unseen'. They are also quiet at 51 dBA and 52 dBA respectively, and at 94 kg, are easy to move into position – an added benefit when installing units on rooftops.

David Collins added: "Selection of this equipment has enabled us to provide heating and cooling in each of the apartments in an energy efficient manner. It also enabled us to overcome the urban limitations by having a significantly smaller footprint, lower profile and limited noise, the mini-VRV unit helps ensure compliance with the stringent planning conditions for this project."

"We will definitely consider this solution for future residential projects," he continued. "Heat recovery systems were originally specified to give future residents the flexibility to use cooling and heating

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URBAN ENVIRONMENTS
WITH HIGH-DENSITY
RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES**



simultaneously, if needed. The mini-VRV heat pump systems provide either heating or cooling, but we have kept the flexibility by providing each of the upper apartments with two systems, one for each living area and one for the bedrooms.

“The large apartment beneath is air conditioned with a conventional heat recovery system served by a 16 hp condensing unit discreetly positioned at the rear of the building.”

The apartments have a mix of discreet, concealed fan coil units – including wall mounted vertical chassis units and medium static ceiling units – meaning the air conditioning is almost as invisible indoors as it is outdoors.

For high-density urban areas, where space is an expensive commodity and planning restrictions aim to reduce the visual impact of air conditioning units, knowledge of the latest climate control system innovations is key.

By incorporating climate control systems designed specifically for urban residential properties, a comfortable indoor climate can be achieved without compromising valuable free space, while complying with planning regulations.

Martin Passingham is product manager at Daikin UK.



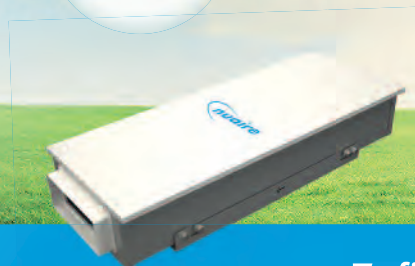
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Vortice wins new contract



Ventilation systems supplier **Vortice** has been awarded the contract to supply intermittent ventilation fans to Midlands-based housebuilder William Davis. The first site to be completed is Mill Fields, set in the Leicestershire village of Broughton Astley.

Vortice Specification Manager, Ken

Johnson, said, "After discussions with William Davis it was clear that the quality of the products specified was of the utmost importance. The fans chosen are stylish and discreet, making them the ideal choice for bathrooms, utility rooms and kitchens. We are delighted William Davis has chosen Vortice products for these beautiful homes."

01283 492949 www.vortice.ltd.uk

New anti-slip shower trays from Roman



International shower designer and manufacturer, **Roman**, has launched a new range of Shower Trays, which are anti-slip. Roman has added this dedicated range of Anti-Slip Shower Trays to their existing collection of Solid Surface Trays. They are available in matt white or matt grey and they are

internationally approved for their Anti-Slip properties. These Shower Trays present a stylish finish with a domed aluminium waste cover. Roman can accommodate a variety of colour finishes and sizes to your specification, including stone effect finishes to coordinate your bathroom design.

01325 311318 www.roman-showers.com

Stylish solution to assist supported living

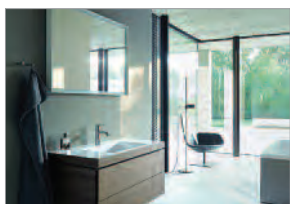


One of Britain's brand leader in helpful toileting solutions has developed a stylish solution to help developers of assisted and supported living communities future-proof the homes. **Clos-o-Mat**, has introduced a new range, designed to enable elderly and disabled people have a stylish bathroom

that can be easily adapted, evolved to meet immediate, and future, needs. The Vita range of bidet toilets looks like, and can be used as, conventional WCs. All have built-in douching and drying, so, if required/preferred, the user is hygienically and consistently cleaned afterwards without they – or their carer having to clean with toilet tissue.

0161 969 1199 www.clos-o-mat.com

Vero Air



The new Vero Air collection from **Duravit** retains the iconic, rectangular character of the Vero washbasins while introducing new technical distinctions. Through the recent additions of rimless toilets, a new range of bathtubs and various pieces of furniture, Vero Air has become a complete bathroom range

while retaining its strong, design-focused identity. The straight interior surface and precise edges of the Vero Air washbasins reflect the collection's linear charm. The use of patented c-bonded technology sees the washbasin and vanity unit combined to form a minimalist masterpiece.

01908 286 680 www.duravit.co.uk

CCL Wetrooms launch the new Frameless Grill



CCL Wetrooms, one of the UK's leading Wetroom Specialist have launched the latest development in Wetroom drainage – the new Frameless Grill – incorporating the minimalistic beauty of a Stone-Infill Grill, but without the border of a metal frame. The new

Frameless Grill, which only has a 5mm

shadow gap visible around the perimeter of the drain and no visible frame, has been designed to complement all brassware finishes and sanitary ware designs, including the latest in luxury boutique trends such as brushed nickel, copper and rose gold.

0844 327 6002 www.ccl-wetrooms.co.uk

Roman Innov8



International shower designer and manufacturer, **Roman**, has launched a new collection of frameless pivoting Shower Enclosures. This innovative collection encompasses elegantly minimalist frameless Pivot Door Enclosures with a full length pivoting tube. These frameless Enclosures

lead the way in inclusive and stylish design trends, presenting a modern collection. Innov8's outstanding differential is the low threshold, allowing level entry access into the Shower Enclosure. Finishing touches include the subtle silver frame and stylish chromed brass ergonomic feature handle.

01325 311318 www.roman-showers.com

Hoisting compliance with lifetime homes



With the continuing emphasis on giving people the ability to remain in their own homes for as long as possible, housing providers are being offered a new resource to create lifetime homes. To help architects, social housing providers and builders get it right from the outset, **Clos-o-Mat** has

produced a new white paper – *Design Guidance & Considerations for a Domestic Accessible Toilet/Wetroom*. The white paper covers everything from adequate space to manoeuvre a wheelchair through the role of colour and texture to the structural considerations to accommodate personal care assistive technology.

0161 969 1199 www.clos-o-mat.com

Miena: fine-edged washbasin bowls



Kaldewei has produced yet another iconic bathroom design with the new Miena washbasin bowls. The washbasin bowls, designed by Anke Salomon, are made of superior single layer of steel enamel combining the highest standards of minimalist design with a unique fine-edged quality. The Miena washbasin

bowls are round or rectangular and come in two different sizes. What is completely new is the diversity of colour: customers can choose from the exclusive Coordinated Colours Collection, such as Oyster Grey and Lava Black allowing for greater individuality.

01480 498053 www.kaldewei.co.uk



Studor shows the way to health and hygiene in the bathroom

While unpleasant, a bad smell in the bathroom is not in itself dangerous. However, it may well be indicative of a more serious and potentially life-threatening issue. The smell can indicate that the water trap seal, has been lost, potentially posing serious health risks. Water trap seals started being fitted on bathroom and kitchen fixtures after the 1854 cholera outbreak in London, in which hundreds of people died. Today, cholera is not a risk in the UK, but within all our drainage systems sewer gases and pathogens such as SARS, legionnaires, norovirus and others are always present. For the last 40 years, drainage ventilation expert **Studor** has been solely focused on developing products that maintain the water trap seals in our buildings. Studor's Trap-Vent solution, the combination of a water trap and Air Admittance Valve (AAV), can easily be retrofitted to an existing bathroom, and is also ideal for small group venting in, for example, hotels, care homes and hospitals. It protects the water trap seal between the drainage system and the room, stopping bad odours and pathogens escaping from empty traps. The Studor Trap-Vent is a combined trap with a 50mm water seal and an integral AAV. It reduces the need for secondary ventilating in small fixture groups and replaces conventional S traps and P traps.

info@studor.net



Hudson Reed offer a unique range of space saving storage

Hudson Reed has expanded their bathroom furniture collection to include some stylish, space saving storage solutions for the smaller bathroom.

The furniture range offers simplicity, value and quality and has been designed with flexibility in mind. Storage is key to the collection and this versatile range includes Stand Alone, 1000mm, 1100mm, 1200mm or 1500mm wide furniture combinations.

Featured with a selection of slimline and L Shaped polymarble basins. The slimline basins are perfect for the smaller bathroom such as ensuite or cloakrooms.

Available in four stylish finishes, all with fully co-ordinating cabinets and accessories: Gloss White, Driftwood, Grey Avola and the latest on-trend colour Hacienda Black.

All furniture is supplied pre-constructed as standard, making it quicker and easier to install, with integrated soft close as standard. Reassurance of quality is essential, so for added peace of mind we offer a five year guarantee on our combination furniture against manufacturing defects.

01422 417099 www.hudsonreed.co.uk



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Stuart Turner gain WRAS approval



Flomate iBoost, the ultimate solution to low mains water pressure from **Stuart Turner** is now WRAS Approved! Water boosting pump manufacturer Stuart Turner designed and developed Flomate iBoost to boost the mains supply to larger properties with multiple bathrooms using high flow combination boilers or an unvented cylinder system, where higher pressure and flow are required. Flomate iBoost is the latest edition to Stuart Turner's range of mains boost

pumps. The system is simple to install, with an ingenious access aperture designed within this engineered appliance and yet is compact enough to sit within any standard 600mm kitchen larder cupboard.

01491 572655 www.stuart-turner.co.uk

Thermostatic shower range



MX Group's impressive 'one stop shop' range of shower and bathroom products continues to be welcomed by those looking for high quality, reliable products for new developments and refurbishment projects up and down the country. In particular, the range of

thermostatic shower options has caught the imagination. MX has added a significant number of new options to this range, with options available for every application. From stylish and modern to the more traditional single lever options, they are all fully thermostatically controlled and suitable for both high and low pressure systems.

01684 29331 www.mx-group.com

TAPPING INTO THE MARKET

Chris Tranter of Bristan explains how focusing on homeowners' needs when it comes to bathroom products can help towards a house purchase.

A new home isn't just a financial investment for consumers – it can be a huge emotional attachment too. Homes are a place to build a life and express an individual sense of style.

With prospective homeowners believing that it takes eight years to save enough money for a deposit, the decision to buy is rarely taken lightly, and many buyers won't settle for anything less than their perfect home.

When it comes to a successful build, it's often the subtler details which make all the difference. With this in mind, it's important to carefully consider the overall design concept, whether it's a starter home, city-centre apartment or a large family household.

A recent survey by GoCompare found that 25 per cent of homebuyers are put off buying if the house has an outdated kitchen or bathroom. In light of this, it's crucial that a housebuilder's choice of taps and showers matches the lifestyle aspirations of the house-hunters they are looking to attract.

While the inclination may be to just invest on the 'big ticket' items, the smaller touches are equally important, able to add a subtle, but striking design distinction which enhances the overall design.

BATHROOM TAPS

In line with customer expectations, housebuilders are expected to deliver ever more stylish homes. Beyond being purely functional, taps can help create

bathrooms that are distinctive and on trend, providing that 'something extra' that so many buyers hunt for.

For small apartments targeted towards those looking for style and sophistication, taps featuring a wide spout and a luxurious water cascade effect are the perfect choice, creating an eye-catching focal point for the room.

In residences like these where space is at

a premium, the use of trough sinks offers a practical, deep ledge for accessories such as soap dishes. By combining this with chunky yet petite taps, it's easy to provide a contemporary design without taking up unnecessary space.

When catering to modern households, specifiers need to consider a variety of needs. According to the Intergenerational Foundation think tank, over 500,000 households have at least three generations living under one roof, and that number is expected to rise to 556,000 by 2019, with a significant increase in the number of people aged 85 or over.

This has an inevitable effect on lifestyles, and the bathroom is arguably the place in the home where this can have the greatest impact. In such multi-generational households taps with long handle controls are ideal, as young children and the older generations can use them easily and safely. Equally, crosshead taps are especially well-suited for elderly members as they are a more familiar style, and are therefore easier to use for those with memory issues.



**A RECENT SURVEY BY
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25 PER CENT OF
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BATHROOM**

SHOWERS

A powerful shower can be a big plus for attracting potential homebuyers looking for speed and practicality during the working week, plus a little extra luxury at the weekend.

When it comes to specifying a shower, electric options are the natural choice. Water is heated on demand rather than being drawn from a hot water tank, which means electric showers are a highly economical and efficient choice. This makes them great for ensuite bathrooms, where occupiers can enjoy a piping hot shower, however busy the main bathroom is, and no matter how much hot water the rest of the family uses.

With the many advanced features available on electric showers, including warm up modes to bring water up to a pre-set temperature and anti-limescale technology to prolong shower life, housebuilders can choose a model which is both impressive to the consumer, and also cost-effective.

For households including elderly members, electric showers are available that have been specifically designed with ease of use in mind. Features can include large, easy to move dials, raised markings and an audible click when settings are adjusted. Some manufacturers even offer



WHEN IT COMES TO SPECIFYING A SHOWER, ELECTRIC OPTIONS ARE THE NATURAL CHOICE

an illuminated stop/start button with an LED digital display.

In modern builds, it is important that products are both affordable and still include digital elements, able to suit even the most tech-savvy customer profile.

When buying a new property, the bathroom is often the most important room to consider. It is therefore important for housebuilders to stay up-to-date on

the latest products which suit the needs of the various households that could inhabit it.

By choosing the right products, housebuilders can be assured that the overall design of their development will be enhanced, offering style and functionality for potential homeowners.

Chris Tranter is specification product manager at Brisan

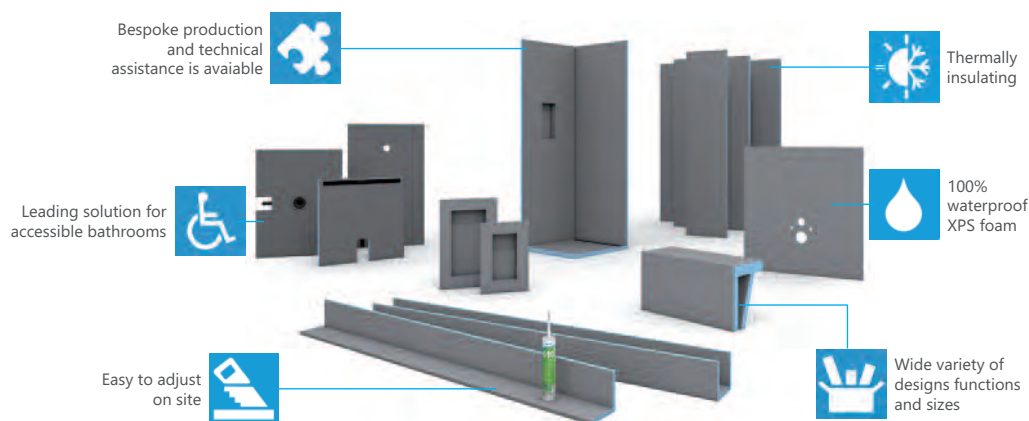
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Why would you take the risk of installing products, which can't offer the same assurances for the whole floor to wall system?

Amongst the wedi walk-in-shower elements you find special elements for renovation projects such as the Fundo Plano Linea with integrated linear drainage, the new Fundo Integro with integrated point drainage and 50mm water trap height or the Fundo Ligno floor element especially designed for use in existing and new builds with wooden floors.

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Aggregate extends Lafarge Cement offering



Aggregate Industries has extended its packed products offering with the introduction of six new products to the Lafarge Cement range. Products in the portfolio include Concrete Mix and Postmix, both premixed ready to use applications. Mortar Mix, also premixed and ready to use. Other additions include Super White Cement, which provides natural looking concrete.

Sulfate Resistant Portland fly ash cement has a high sulfate resistance and is recommended for use in below ground applications. The final addition is Hydrated Lime, a high calcium, non-hydraulic, hydrated lime.

01285 646900 www.lafargecement.co.uk

Norcros Pro-Gyp Base Fast Track Sealer



Norcros Adhesives, manufacturer of tiling adhesives, grouts and surface preparation products, speeds up tiling on to green screeds with its latest system solution. Pro Gyp-Base Fast Track Sealer greatly reduces the minimum drying times. The new product comprises a three-stage preparation

system for fixing ceramic and porcelain tiles on to screeded surfaces. It is sold as a kit containing all the elements necessary to achieve a successful bond, including a primer, moisture suppressant and gritted primer. Used together, the system allows for fast track tile installation.

01782 524140 www.norcros-adhesives.com

Expand your range with Constructa-Pro



The expanding foam range from Everbuild – A Sika Company is growing once again with the addition of Constructa-Pro; a high strength adhesive foam designed for use in a multitude of applications. Developed to be fast curing, Constructa-Pro is ideal for small jobs which require a quick fix as well as large applications including fixing plasterboard and insulations board, fixing skirting boards or as a mortar substitute for building rough garden walls. Once cured, it is also rot-proof and moisture and temperature resistant from -40°C to +80°C.

Gun applied and available in 750ml tins, Constructa-Pro can be used on stone, brick, concrete blocks, wood, plasterboard, metal and much more making it a truly multi-purpose adhesive foam for the trade.

0113 240 2424 www.everbuild.co.uk

LITEWork Working Clothes for Summer



A change of season means a change of focus on what you wear on site. That's why Snickers LITEWork garments can help you keep your cool when the heat is on. The newest LITEWork Trousers, Shirts, Shorts, T-shirts and Jackets are working clothes that have all the features and functionality of Snickers' other Next Generation working clothes, but without the heavier weight fabrics. Just like high performance sportswear, they are super-light, quick-drying garments – with Mechanical Air Flow™ and moisture transport features – that keep you looking good and feeling cool wherever you are on site in warm weather. The unique 37.5° Technology fabric is interwoven in all these garments.

info@snickersworkwear.co.uk

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All bases covered

One of the leading construction connector manufacturer's **Simpson Strong-Tie** has expanded its range of post bases to include additional solutions for new and retrofit applications.

The range includes concealed post bases; bases with site-adjustable heights from 100 – 150mm; bases which can be adjusted even after the columns have been installed; and options to cast into concrete or to fix down using studs.

A brochure is available for download, which includes installation advice, performance characteristics and safe working loads.

Sales Director Jon Head explains: "With the off-site construction footprint increasing all the time, we've seen a growing demand for post base and column support solutions, prompting us to not only make more options available 'off the shelf' but not expand our 'made to order' service to cope with ever more interesting and unique house design." Request or download a copy of Connectors for Timber and Masonry Construction from Simpson Strong-Tie's website.

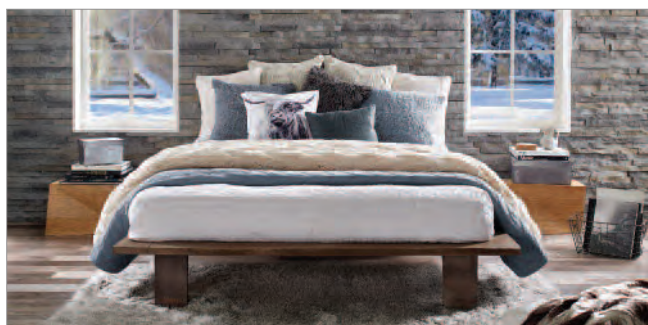
01827 255600 www.strongtie.co.uk



Everyone's going grey!

Freefoam Building Products are delighted to showcase this recent installation using their complete range of grey PVC roofline and cladding products. The property in Leicestershire originally featured a render finish to the entire upper level. It had become patchy and discoloured and either needed replacing or covering. Likewise the white fascia and black guttering were also in need of updating. The homeowner was introduced to the Freefoam range by local supplier Tru Plastics Ltd. Fitting PVC cladding to the exterior gave the property an instant facelift. The homeowner chose Fortex Pro, a Double Shiplap style board, in Slate Grey. Adding a woodgrain foil finish fascia and soffit in Anthracite Grey and a gutter system in the same shade created an attractive co-ordinated look. Russell Skellett from Tru Plastics explained "Being able to offer homeowners a complete suite of products in coordinating and matching colours is a major USP for our company. Our customers are asking more and more for colour and the Freefoam range gives us the perfect solution." Freefoam is the colour specialist. Manufacturing fascia and soffit in eight stunning shades and eight woodgrain finishes alongside cladding products in ten beautiful contemporary shades gives customers a really wide choice.

01604 591110 www.freefoam.com



Specialists in stone cladding

Contact us for specialist services and advice by calling **01869 220 050**. Alternatively you can email us on info@century-stone.co.uk or visit the website www.century-stone.co.uk



Cembrit offers new choice for weatherboard



Cembrit, is entering the UK market with a brand-new fibre cement weatherboard – Cembrit Plank. Extremely versatile, low in maintenance, and rot, rust, warp, crack, sun, heat, rain and fire resistant, this board is an excellent alternative to timber and plastic based alternatives. The overlapping plank is designed to look like painted timber, but will retain its attractive appearance long after alternatives have started to age. Furthermore, Cembrit Plank does not require toxic preservative treatments in the way

timber weatherboarding does. The range includes a comprehensive set of colour matched accessories, including the roofline trims.

sales@cembrit.co.uk

Schueco gain Q Mark Certification



Schueco UK, has announced that as a system supplier two more of its popular sliding door systems – the Schueco ASS 70.HI lift/slide door and the Schueco ASS 70 FD folding/sliding door – have been awarded Q Mark Product Certification by Exova BM Trada. Both systems are widely specified right across the UK, being

suitable for both commercial projects and the domestic market. Q Mark Product Certification covers a wide range of characteristics including weather performance, mechanical strength, operating forces, corrosion resistance of fittings and PAS 24 security. In addition, the tests certify the doors' opening and closing performance over 50,000 operating cycles.

01908 282111 www.schueco.co.uk

New VEKA Imagine door lifts expectations



Debuted at the FIT Show 2017, **VEKA Group's** new Imagine Lift & Slide Patio Door is the latest addition to its luxurious, innovative and technically advanced Imagine suite of doors. Designed to 'let nature into your living space', the system can incorporate between two and four sashes; any and

all of which can be configured to 'lift and slide'. Thanks to its safe and secure construction – utilising extra large steel reinforcements within the profile – the Imagine Lift & Slide Patio Door is strong enough to easily handle both residential and commercial applications.

01282 716 611 www.vekauk.com

Opening doors to superb style



Offering more than 200 door designs, **JB Kind's** 2017 Door Collection brochure has innovative, inspiring and classic door designs to suit every type of project. Introducing the exceptionally durable and weather-resistant External Extreme doors made with MEDITE® TRICOYA® EXTREME, a UK first, supplied prefinished in white with the benefit of a 10 year guarantee. Exclusive new Laminate internal doors, available in two cool contemporary colours (grey and ivory) with a textured timber grained effect, plus much, much more.

www.jbkind.com

Designer Contracts invests in designer shades



Designer Contracts has invested in specialist blind making machinery to manufacture blinds through the new arm of the business – designer shades. The machinery to produce Venetian and roller blinds is now set up and in operation at the company's national distribution facility in Kettering. Peter Kelsey,

MD of Designer Contracts said: "This investment further enhances our central curtain making facility which enables us to manage the production process from start to finish. It means that we keep our costs as low as possible to the benefit of all our customers, underpinning our promise of supplying our range of products at the most competitive price."

01246 854577 www.designercontracts.com

New brochure showcases Aztec's Collection



Halo fabricator Aztec Windows is boosting awareness of its 'timber alternative' Prestige Collection® of windows and composite doors with an impressive new brochure, designed entirely in-house and delivered in its own wax-sealed envelope! Neil Evans, Sales

Director for **The VEKA UK Group** commented, "The Prestige Collection® has helped Aztec Windows create a niche with homeowners who crave that timeless timber-inspired style. This beautiful brochure is testament to their hard work, the quality of their offering, and using Halo products to the fullest. It certainly gets our seal of approval!"

01282 716611 www.vekauk.com



SafeGuard successfully delivers

When Peterborough based Ashwood Homes was looking for a local supplier of quality windows and doors for its Crowland Development, **SafeGuard**, the major supplier of glass related products and services across the UK, ticked all the boxes. Commercial Manager at Ashwood Homes Adam Murfet, explains: "The Crowland Development consists of 50 plots of two and three bedroom homes, 10 of which are affordable units for Axiom Housing Association. As the first new build development in Crowland for many years, we were looking to source a local supplier who could deliver on quality and we certainly found that in SafeGuard. The site sold off plan extremely quickly and all plots were sold prior to completion, which is testament to the build quality. Ashwood Homes handpicks contractors very carefully in order to ensure our reputation for quality is upheld and SafeGuard didn't disappoint. We would definitely recommend them and invite them to tender on future projects."

01780 751442 www.safe-guard.co.uk

PLASTIC: NOT JUST A PIPE DREAM

Richard Eddy of Polypipe offers advice on the best way to specify and use plastic-based systems on brownfield development sites.

This year, the housing crisis has been high on the news agenda, following the release of the Government's highly anticipated Housing White Paper, and with housebuilding being a key issue in the recent elections. One of the Government's key recent initiatives has been to propose a Brownfield Register, so developers can secure 'planning permission in principle' on previously used sites from local authorities.

While brownfield sites have been pushed for over 20 years by various governments and departments, progress has been slow, with issues such as land remediation costs and design issues hampering developments. But, every year that passes with usable plots of land lying dormant, the pressure to get building increases as the demand for new houses creeps up. As reported in 2014 by Building Consultancy Daniel Watney, there are 10,000 hectares of brownfield land suitable for housing around England alone, which would support 467,000 homes.

Many developers are reluctant to take a risk on brownfield sites unless there is the opportunity to dictate more favourable terms at the outset of building, such as allowing higher density developments to increase the viability of a project. Often, the existing infrastructure in and around the site needs to be upgraded and developed to provide new modern access to

previously used sites, which adds to the outlay of any project.

One of the biggest issues facing developers at the outset of a brownfield site development is getting the drainage system right, in order for new housing units to be able to connect into existing sewerage networks.

Brownfield sites can cause headaches for designers and contractors alike, but using materials such as plastic piping can produce quicker installation times, onsite design flexibility and long term durability, offering developers the peace of mind to push ahead. Using plastic systems can also help to mitigate the prohibitive costs associated with building on brownfield

sites, and can offer practical solutions to complex design challenges.

Assessing the ground conditions across a brownfield site is, unsurprisingly, a crucial place to start. It is important that the topography of the ground is fully evaluated and that damaging chemical elements such as petroleum residues and tar deposits are removed during remediation.

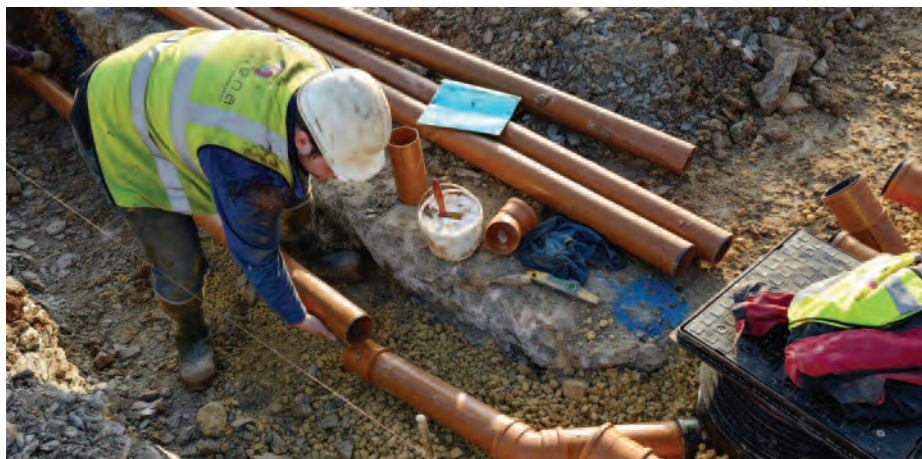
By using products that hold the correct approvals, the risk of chemical degradation to the product is vastly mitigated. Plastic-based foul and surface water drainage pipes are designed to accommodate normal ground movement, and are tried and tested in all conditions to meet the required industry standards.

Importantly for brownfield sites, many plastic products are fully adaptable and compatible with existing drainage and sewer systems that may be encountered within brownfield sites, and are designed with a wide range of easy to use fittings and ancillaries. In addition, using plastic piping is ideal on sites where developers need to rely more on components manufactured offsite. Due to the often restrictive space of brownfield sites, transporting ready-made sections of a system to be installed directly onsite can make a big difference.

Plastic is inherently lightweight, helping to reduce the costs of major plant equipment required on site, which also

WITH THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR BRACING ITSELF FOR A SKILLS SHORTAGE OVER THE COMING YEARS, PLASTIC BASED SOLUTIONS WILL BE INVALUABLE TO ENSURE A SMALLER WORKFORCE CAN KEEP A PROJECT ON TRACK





performance, which has seen it become the preferred material choice for today's building projects.

Polybutylene has excellent resistance to freezing temperatures, which helps it to maintain durability in heating and water applications. This means that in the rare instance that water freezes within the pipe, the risk of a burst is greatly reduced. One further advantage is the high corrosion resistance of plastic piping, meaning that the use of hard or soft water, depending on your location, will not cause a long-term issue.

As more people want to move to major towns and the Government continues to push developers to find solutions to use brownfield sites more regularly, supply chain manufacturers will continue to promote time saving, cost saving systems that can make life onsite easier for contractors. Ensuring that a drainage system is correctly installed on site is one of the key components of getting a brownfield site development off the ground. Using materials such as plastic offers greater flexibility and adaptability to conditions on the ground, without the risk of product and system failure.

Richard Eddy is below ground drainage product manager at Polypipe.

helps to improve health and safety conditions for contractors.

Once the below ground system is installed, the resulting housing units will benefit from the huge variety of above ground drainage options plastic piping can provide. Whether in an individual house unit, or in a high rise building project, the advantage of plastic plumbing is that its use can ensure the development can continue at speed.

For hot, cold and heating applications, plastic plumbing is incredibly versatile. Almost all eventualities of a building design can be accommodated using plastic

piping, offering longer pipe lengths and coils with trusted fittings technology that reduce the need for more complex jointing techniques and hot works associated with traditional materials such as copper. With the construction sector bracing itself for a skills shortage over the coming years, plastic-based solutions will be invaluable to ensure a smaller workforce can keep a project on track.

Polybutylene pipe provides users with many benefits, and greater flexibility. It is ideal for most domestic hot and cold water plumbing and heating systems, offering exceptional durability and long-term




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Global by DRU brings gas fire luxury to all households

DRU is a designer and producer of contemporary gas fires. It is best known for its high-end gas fires with unique features. These include the Dynamic Burner system for high, dense flames; the Eco Wave app that enables the fires to be controlled from a smartphone or tablet and the PowerVent® extended, motorised flue system that enables gas fires to be installed in the most unlikely locations.

Many people would love to own a DRU gas fire, as they are the pinnacle of design and luxury.

Installed with or without a chimney

In response to this demand, DRU has developed its Global gas fire range. This includes balanced flue gas fires that can be installed with or without a chimney and conventional flue gas fires, which are compatible with all standard UK chimneys.

They are fires that are beautifully designed, with all the hallmarks of quality DRU products, but at prices that are affordable for all households and available from approved fireplace retailers throughout the UK.

Large selection of shapes and sizes

There are classic letterbox-shaped fires, such as the Global 90 and 100. There are insert gas fires for chimney installation, including the 22" Global 55 in landscape or portrait versions. There is also a selection of 2-sided and 3-sided models and even a freestanding gas stove – the Global Beau.

Global gas fires by DRU can be enjoyed as simple, frameless fires that don't detract from the quality of the flame picture. They can also be combined with some attractive, tailor-made fire surrounds. Good examples of this are the Global 55XT with the Jessica surround and the more expansive Global 70XT, which offers a choice of Carla or Grace surrounds.



DRU Global 100 Triple

Choice of interior finishes

To fully appreciate DRU Global gas fires, you need to consider the range of interior finishes that are available, each transforming the character of the fires in very subtle ways. For example, you can have a smooth black finish for a contemporary feel, a classic brick finish for a more rustic feel and even a mirrored Ceraglass finish, which gives the flames a dramatic infinity effect.

All DRU Global gas fires are operated by electronic remote control and can be run on natural gas or LPG, so they are suitable for urban or rural properties.

It all adds up to an enticing selection of modern gas fires that represent excellent value for money.

For more information and to find your nearest Global by DRU dealer, visit the website.

0161 793 8700 www.drufire.com



DRU Global Beau gas stove



DRU Global 55



DRU Global 70XT CF with Grace surround

PRODUCT FOCUS



Gerflor

In January, the Government unlocked £7 billion in a dramatic expansion of the government's affordable housing programme to meet the diverse housing needs of the UK. It's a burgeoning sector where international flooring and interiors specialist Gerflor have devised a stunning range of social housing refurbishment and new build luxury vinyl flooring solutions to meet the exacting standards that will be required to fulfil the forthcoming demand. In 2016 Gerflor won the CFJ/CFA product of the year category with their Taralay Impression Control range. This safety flooring collection is perfect for both refurbishments and new builds.



Nuaire

Nuaire has introduced a new range of in-line carbon filters that remove the highest levels of Nitrogen Dioxide from the air, as verified by the BRE. IAQ-BOX remove up to 99.5 per cent of NO₂, and up to 80 per cent of harmful Particulate Matter, the main by-products of traffic fumes and industrial pollution. IAQ-BOX introduces an industry first in its double-width carbon filter – IAQ-BOX-D. Designed for larger properties, its wider surface area lowers air resistance for a quieter-running MVHR system and better flow-rates. Its filters have a four year lifespan. Both the double and single models measure just 170mm in depth, giving designers valuable space savings.



Pineland Furniture

Pineland Furniture is a family owned business which mainly designs and manufactures bespoke high quality kitchen furniture. Pineland also makes freestanding and built in furniture for bedrooms, living rooms etc. Pineland uses traditional methods and materials to craft its products. The company feels that too many kitchens today look synthetic and uniform in design – more like a science laboratory than the "engine room" of the home. Over the years, Pineland has established a satisfied customer base stretching UK wide, from London and the South East, throughout Wales to Scotland.

Conventional and Balanced Flue Gas Stoves



Paragon branded efficient, realistic high quality gas flame technology is now available in a freestanding stove design both for conventional and balanced flue systems. The new Paragon gas stove models are manufactured with heavy-duty, seam-welded steel bodies and doors in keeping with high quality solid

fuel originals. Conventional flue models can be fitted into Class one, Class two and Pre-cast flues and come complete with an innovative closure plate system. BF models have a rear mounted "through the wall" flue system. For more information or to arrange a display please **Charlton & Jenrick**.

sales@charltonandjenrick.co.uk

Monarfloor Bridgestop ideal for uplift



Icopal's Monarfloor Bridgestop acoustic isolation system is an ideal solution for housebuilders looking to take advantage of the £1.2bn Starter Homes Land Fund and develop brownfield sites. The system offers superior acoustic performance for separating party cavity walls on raft foundations or continual slab, reducing costs by more than 18 per cent.

Monarfloor Bridgestop can be used in conjunction with raft foundations or continual slab. It isolates both masonry leaves from each other, reducing flanking transmission, and preventing an acoustic bridge by the collection of mortar at the base of the cavity.

0161 865 4444 www.monarfloor.co.uk



Clearstone's resin bound for exclusive home

Clearstone installs resin bound driveway for Apeks Developments, a company obsessed with creating homes of distinction in London. Demanding quality and reliability from their contractors, they choose Clearstone for a fuss-free installation. With Clearstone resin bound there are no joints – even on the largest areas – ensuring a smooth and uninterrupted surface. Just sleek natural beauty – the perfect complement to the contemporary, state-of-the-art homes that Apeks creates. "Clients are very positive about Clearstone's resin bound," says Adam Ramalingum, project manager for Apeks. "They are delighted with the choice of colours and the fact that it is SUDS compliant and low maintenance". Clearstone mixes only the highest quality UV-stable resins and aggregates blends, so their paving won't crack or fade and, because they formulate their own products, they offer a 10-year guarantee. "Clearstone's service is excellent: Sales Director Andy Forsey is extremely helpful and prompt at arranging to measure up. In the last development in Barnes where Clearstone laid a driveway and internal garage space, we ended up having to push the job back twice. But a couple of phone calls to Andy and he re-scheduled. Clearstone staff went out of their way to accommodate us," says Adam.

01273 358177 www.clearstonepaving.co.uk



The invisible force

When building a Passivhaus, you need to be confident your design will deliver the performance you expect. That's why leading designers choose Earthwool® DriTherm for masonry cavity Passivhaus construction. They understand better than anyone the need for real performance, and ensuring their delighted customers can feel the benefit.

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- ✓ Water repellent
- ✓ Environmentally friendly

Image of Steel Farm Passivhaus (www.leap4.it/Steel-Farm-Northumberland-Passivhaus).
Designed by Leap Architects using Knauf Insulation.

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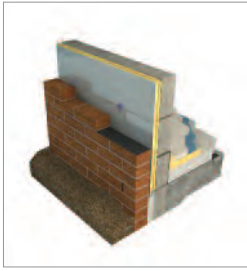


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KNAUF INSULATION



EcoTherm launches new Eco-Cavity Full Fill



EcoTherm Insulation is pleased to announce the launch of EcoTherm Eco-Cavity Full Fill. The new foil faced, rigid PIR insulation board has been designed to allow simple compliance with the energy requirements of the Building Regulation and Standards, without requiring alterations to standard wall designs. The insulation board dimensions are sized to co-ordinate with brick and block sizes, allowing them to be quickly

installed with standard wall tie methods whilst their tongue and groove edges offer a superior fit and moisture resistance.

technical@ecotherm.co.uk

Brochure app innovation from BLANCO



A new app from **BLANCO UK** makes downloading and sharing the company's kitchen sink, tap and appliances brochures easy. The free, simple-to-use app gives the trade instant access to BLANCO's extensive range of kitchen taps, kitchen sinks, induction hobs, extractor hoods and accessories. Once downloaded within the app, the product brochures provide detailed up-to-date information, specifications and inspiration, allowing additions to be made to customers' kitchens based on the latest innovations and cutting-edge design.

info@blanco.co.uk



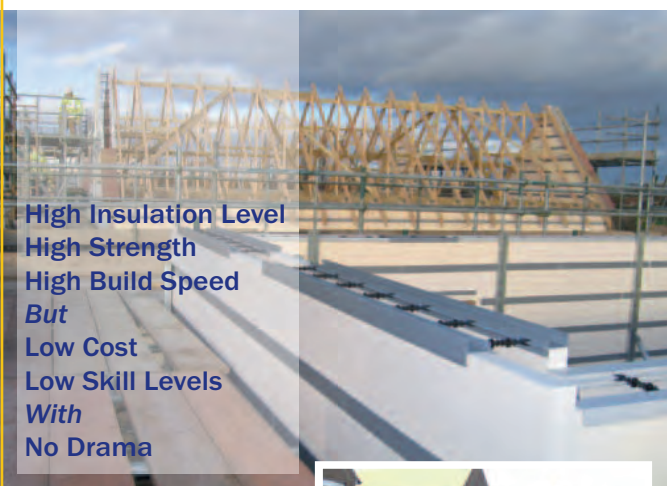
Celotex insulation installed to create energy-saving coastal property

Sue and Dick Russill were given the opportunity to create their retirement dream home – a beautiful cliff-top dwelling overlooking the Pembrokeshire coast. The couple wanted the construction to be timber-frame with high levels of thermal insulation, and for the home to be able to make the most of passive solar gain. The wall insulation comprised 70mm of rigid insulation panels using **Celotex GA4000**, along with a multifoil blanket enveloping the exterior frame. The pitched roof insulation included 120mm Celotex XR4000 boards, as well as bubble insulation membrane and mineral-wool cladding. Both Celotex GA4000 and Celotex XR4000 enabled the pitched roof and flooring throughout the property to achieve lower U-values, with the inclusion of low emissivity foil facings further enhancing thermal performance within cavity air spaces. Both certified under BBA certificate number 95/3197 and 16/5352, with low global warming potential (GWP) and zero ozone depletion potential (ODP). Celotex XR4000 and Celotex GA4000 were able to future-proof the energy performance of the Pembrokeshire property. Aside from insulation requirements, the exterior was covered in fibre-cement cladding in a grey colour that complemented the contemporary appearance of the building, whilst fitting in well with the surroundings.

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Tobermore deliver aesthetic and functional hard landscaping solution for Junnell Homes

Junnell Homes Ltd developed Salterns Reach, a luxurious housing scheme in West Sussex.

Jonathan Bingham, Construction Director at Junnell Homes, explained what his team wanted to achieve at Salterns Reach: "As with all Junnell Homes' projects, we wanted to create a boutique-style development consisting of properties with a bespoke design that would showcase real character and style."

Jonathan explained that the choice of hard landscaping materials was taken into careful consideration as the exterior of a home is so crucial when trying to appeal to home buyers. He noted: "Paving was selected as the most appropriate hard landscaping material due to the attractive and hard-wearing qualities that it offered – making it a more superior option than the likes of tarmac, concrete or gravel."

Jonathan continued: "We liaised with Tobermore's South East Sales team and Beth Moore (long-standing Landscape Designer at Tobermore), who provided various landscape design options and the most suitable products to use for each. This was a fantastic service and helped us find the best solution."



Tobermore's Hydropave Tegula Duo and Hydropave Tegula 240 was specified as these products are manufactured with an aged, antique appearance that allowed the landscape to blend beautifully with the traditional surroundings of the site.

Jonathan commented on this decision: "The aesthetics and technical capabilities of the products met our design vision; hard-wearing, suited to purpose, easily repairable and offered design flexibility."

In addition to the visual appeal of Hydropave Tegula Duo and Hydropave Tegula 240, the products provide a permeable function – a legal

requirement for new housing schemes in the UK that feature ten or more units. Tobermore's Hydropave permeable paving is designed to allow rainfall to infiltrate naturally into the ground as method of flood prevention and offers cost savings over traditional drainage method such as pipes or manholes.

The properties at Salterns Reach successfully reached completion in late 2016. Jonathan commented: "We feel the project was a success and we are very pleased with the outcome."

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Brett Landscaping has introduced Stamford Ultra, the latest edition to the hugely successful patio paving range Stamford, after seeing a sustained increase in demand from its customers. The classic Stamford economy wet-cast concrete flag paving range, with its simple riven styling,

offers exceptional value. Now for 2017 this range will now be augmented by Stamford Ultra which adds more variety than ever before. The gently rippled texture of Stamford Ultra provides a completely different aesthetic to the range giving customers a fantastic alternative to the riven surface of regular Stamford paving.

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Meeting the demands for wooden decking



Osmo UK, an eco-friendly wood and finishes expert, offers a range of decking oils to protect and maintain the beauty and quality of exterior decking. The product range provides resistance against water and dirt, while also offering an appealing satin oil-based protective finish. The eco-friendly ingredients help to regulate the wood's moisture content, reducing swelling or

shrinking, whilst enhancing the natural characteristics of the wood. The finish also prevents the wood from cracking, peeling or blistering. Available in different shades to complement and protect a number of wood species.

info@osmouk.com

NEW AGE BATHROOMS

Martin Walker of Methven UK considers the role played by technology and design in the creation of usable bathrooms for the country's ageing population.



Thanks to better healthcare and advancements in technology, the UK's population is living longer. While this is of course a positive development, it also presents bathroom manufacturers and designers of new-build social housing with a series of new challenges to address. More than 11 million people are now aged over 65, with one in three of us aged 55 and over, so it is vital that society is prepared to meet the needs of the elderly.

In a recent survey about housing options for the elderly conducted by Shelter, more than 50 per cent of respondents believed their current bathrooms required modification in order to make them more accessible and easy to use. This need for change is also supported by recent NHS statistics, which revealed that it spends £16m each year on treating elderly patients for injuries related to falls in and around baths.

The Foundation for Lifetime Homes and Neighbourhoods identified bathrooms as a key area in need of

future-proofed design, to allow for the accommodation of all ages and abilities. Along with urging the bathroom industry – including specifiers, installers and manufacturers – to support inclusive living, there is still much more to be done. To address this, members of the Bathroom Manufacturers Association (BMA) have taken the initiative and are trying to tackle the challenges facing the ageing population and aid members in making their own commercial decisions.

Manufacturers are working hard to develop products that improve safety and accessibility, and help create bathroom spaces which are usable for the duration of a person's life. Product enhancements such as longer, more ergonomically designed, or even looped lever handles, can make showers and taps easier to operate, making a positive impact on the overall bathroom experience. Similarly, new taps which feature clearer markings and instructions mean that those operating them can identify which is hot and which is cold more easily.

THE NHS SPENDS £16M EACH YEAR ON TREATING ELDERLY PATIENTS FOR INJURIES RELATED TO FALLS IN AND AROUND BATHS

While design is important, so too is the development of new technologies. Often, the needs of the ageing population are dismissed simply as mobility challenges which can be resolved by installing walk-in showers or baths. While providing some assistance, these methods fail to address many of the more serious issues the elderly face in the bathroom.

Showering, for instance, presents a much greater set of challenges. Temperature, flow and spray pattern can all impact upon an older person's showering experience, and these considerations have



helped to shape recent technological advancements in showering products. And, with the rise in multi-generational living, these considerations benefit the whole family, including small children.

So, where possible, specifiers need to be equipped with adequate information about those who will be living in the property and using the bathroom.

THANKS TO BETTER HEALTHCARE AND ADVANCEMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY, THE UK'S POPULATION IS LIVING LONGER

When specifying products for the elderly, safety is of paramount importance, as hot water can cause serious injury within seconds. In fact, severe scalding is the second most common cause of household injuries, with 570 serious bath water scald injuries, and more than 20 related deaths, in the UK every year.

Thermostatically controlled products can help here, as they accurately control the temperature of water for showering, bathing and hand-washing. These products contain valves that maintain a pre-set temperature even if the water pressure varies when other appliances are used. Once installed and maintained correctly, they can significantly reduce the risk of scalding in the home.

Complementing this, elderly customers can also benefit from 'cool-to-touch' shower bar technology which ensures that

the temperature of the valve never exceeds that of the mixed water. Being safe and comfortable to touch, users can rest assured that they won't scald themselves if they accidentally touch the shower body, especially where shower space is limited.

When specifying for the older customer, installers will find it helpful to refer to products conforming to BuildCert's TMV scheme, which aims to minimise the risk of scalding.

Elderly users often have sensitive skin as well, so showers with a softer flow can be helpful. Unlike conventional showers that sometimes produce an uncomfortable needle-like spray, specialist products can create an optimum water droplet size, providing greater warmth and coverage and an immersive, full body experience.

The overarching message when looking at the future of bathrooms is that inclusivity and versatility are imperative. Installed products should address the needs of the ageing population without alienating users from a design perspective. The bathroom should be a user friendly, relaxing and, most importantly, safe place to be.

Martin Walker is CEO of Methven UK.

Keeping cosy with Kooltherm



Kingspan Kooltherm K5 External Wall Board has been specified as part of an innovative, large-scale whole building retrofit system installed on a social housing development in Solihull, dramatically reducing its energy

requirements. The all-in-one retrofit solution was installed around the existing building to create a highly-insulated envelope, limiting thermal bridges. Kingspan Kooltherm K5 External Wall Board was selected as a key component of the system due to its ability to deliver premium thermal performance relative to its thickness. Kingspan Kooltherm K5 External Wall Board features a fibre-free core and is manufactured with a blowing agent.

01544 387 384 www.kingspaninsulation.co.uk

Affordable homes benefit from acoustic floor



Profloor Levelling System from the A. Proctor Group has once again been specified to enable a level finished floor to be installed on uneven concrete floors. The Lincoln Court development consists of 22 new affordable homes available.

Developed to allow a level finished floor to be installed on a cambered, stepped, or uneven sub-floor, Profloor Levelling System is typically used to take out the irregularities in mortar screeded floors. The floor is levelled by inserting packers in each levelling base to adjust the level of the timber battens, and create a level finished floor with no need for wet trades in the process.

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When asked in what type of house you would usually find a basement, the average person would think of a multi-storey property, probably terraced, and built in the Victorian era, perhaps slightly later.

The picture many have in their minds when it comes to basements is a damp area, illuminated by a solitary light bulb.

Because of this, basements are often considered a relic from times gone by, a dank place where a rickety old boiler rattles away in an effort to keep the house warm, or where all those old photographs are kept – the dumping ground for worn-out cardboard boxes.

While many perceive basements as serving little or no use, there is a strong argument to include basement areas on new-build developments, the most prominent being the ability to increase usable living space.

Land that might once have been ignored, seen as unsuitable for construction, is now 'in the frame'. With developers currently pushing through as many properties as possible onto a plot, the negative effect of smaller and more compact housing is being seen across the country, and is particularly acute in London.

In situations such as these, creating extra space without a detrimental effect on the ecology of a dwelling will always be of benefit to the homeowner. In larger, more exclusive sites, a basement can be the ideal place for a 'granny annex', wine cellar, gymnasium, home cinema, or play area for kids and grown-ups alike.

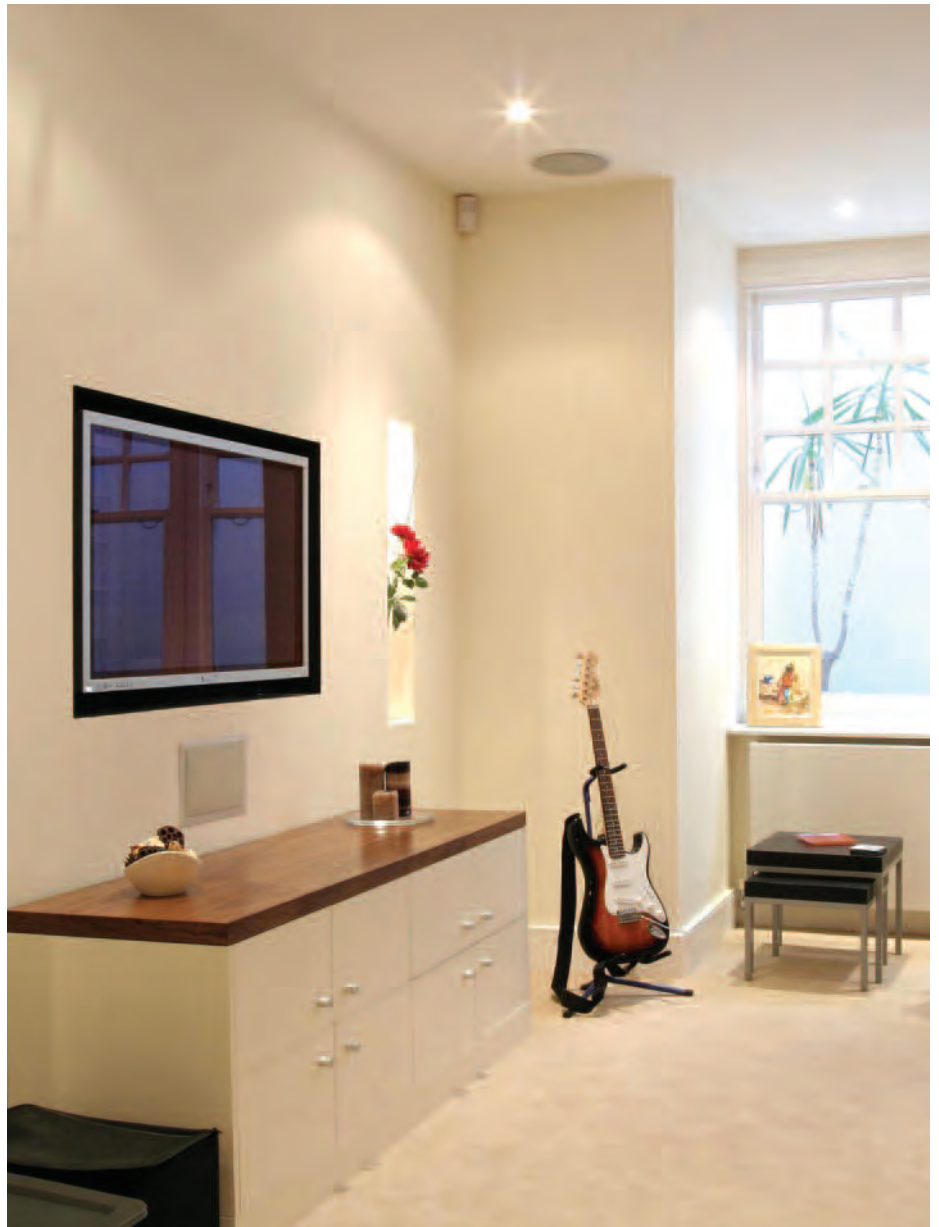
When it comes to construction, instinctively the thought process is to ensure moisture from the outside is prevented from ingressing into the building, but that need not be the case. The most common solution for below ground construction would be tanking, the application of a layer of cementitious waterproof render on the walls, likened to a waterproof screed on the floor. This can also be achieved by using a sheet membrane, asphalt or other liquid-applied waterproofing material.

Hydrostatic pressure, the external water pressure around the basement, is another critical factor. It is crucial that the tanking be securely fixed to the substrate, as the pressure from the water table around the basement can be significant. Hydrostatic pressure will force water through tiny gaps very quickly, so great care should be taken at this stage to ensure that the waterproofing meets the demands made of it.

Many argue that rather than doing your utmost to prevent water entering the building, with a real possibility of failure, it would be more beneficial to deal with the water once it has entered the building. This

ON ANOTHER LEVEL

Brian Davison of Delta Membrane Systems delves into the benefits of including a basement in a property, and advises on how to prevent water damage.



MANY ARGUE THAT RATHER THAN DOING YOUR UTMOST TO PREVENT WATER ENTERING THE BUILDING, WITH A REAL POSSIBILITY OF FAILURE, IT WOULD BE MORE BENEFICIAL TO DEAL WITH THE WATER ONCE IT HAS ENTERED THE BUILDING



is how the problem is often dealt with in refurbishment situations. Cavity membranes with a studded profile are used on the internal face of the walls and concrete floors to form a waterproof structure. The studded side is placed against the wall and the floor to create an

area that allows water to flow down to the floor and into a drainage channel to a sump. It is then pumped out to a suitable drainage outlet.

Compared to the tanking options, this is a relatively straightforward and cost-effective solution to dealing with the

water that seems to inevitably find its way into a building. The method has been used on countless properties, domestic and commercial, in both new build and refurbishment applications.

There is no escaping the fact that a well-built and finished basement area has the potential to bring much more usable space to a property, and there is no need whatsoever for this space to quickly become redundant.

The extra space a basement brings, all within the footprint of the land parcel, can be invaluable, and is one way of bringing added value that will remain with a property for decades to come. Basements might have been a thing of the past, but they also have a real future in the modern housing market.

Advice on all aspects of basements is offered by the Basement Information Centre, particularly in its publication 'Guidance Document - Basements for Dwellings'. This is an essential read for those new to this type of work, as it provides practical guidance on meeting the relevant requirements in Schedule 1 of the Building Regulations.

Brian Davison is managing director of Delta Membrane Systems.

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Felmoor Park receives premium protection



The Scandinavian log cabins and lodges at the picturesque Felmoor Park in Northumberland have been given a striking new finish thanks to Remmers wood coatings. Remmers HK Stain was selected to provide not only effective weather protection but protection against blue stain, rot and insects. HK Stain is a "2 in 1" product which eliminates the need for an additional

wood preservative primer and is perfect for both soft and hardwoods. The product penetrates deeply into the wood while leaving it fully breathable and it doesn't flake or peel.

sales@remmers.co.uk

Fawcetts Yard taps into rich seam of Neaco style



Neaco's glass balustrade and aluminium decking systems have added contemporary style to balconies at Fawcetts Yard, a development of luxury homes in Harrogate designed by Bramhall Blenkarn and built by HACS Construction. Ric Blenkarn of Bramhall Blenkarn said: "I'm more than happy with the service and products supplied by Neaco – their combi-

nation of decking and balustrade has been excellent choice for this development. I'm familiar with the products, having used them on a number of other projects as well as my own home."

sales@neaco.co.uk

Remmers Sets Sail at Red Wharf Bay



Red Wharf Bay Sailing & Watersports Club is set in an area of outstanding beauty at Traeth Bychan on the Isle of Anglesey, North Wales. The member's clubhouse has been sited here for over 50 years due to its suitable sailing waters. The members of the committee

decided that the exterior of the building was looking a little tired and a refresh was needed before the new season started at Easter. Remmers Compact Opaque PU topcoat was selected for the job due to its performance characteristics and suitability to coastal locations. Over two weekends of good weather, the clubhouse was transformed and the new colour gave the clubhouse the refreshed look it deserved.

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