

Patrick Mooney on why the UK's failure to deliver the housing numbers can't be put on the back burner



Brian Berry gives the lowdown on why the Government's post-Brexit immigration strategy won't work



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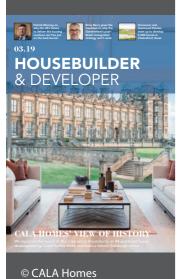
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James Parker

ONTHE COVER



FROM THE EDITOR

Did you attend Futurebuild at ExCel? The new 'Ecobuild' has a much more appropriately generic title (some might say the brand name change was long overdue), but what of the show itself, in the context of our troubled economic outlook?

After little fanfare about the renaming of what has arguably held the title as the industry's key stand-alone trade show for several years, we attended and witnessed it continuing to attract big name suppliers, as well as keen visitors. The organisers called it the "evolution" of Ecobuild, rather than a major rebranding, and some exhibitors – this year at least – were continuing to call it by that name.

However, brand name aside, was what has undoubtedly evolved into a broad-based event enough to justify specifiers spending time out of their office, at this challenging pre-Brexit watershed moment?

Anecdotal evidence picked up from speaking to a few exhibitors gathered a fairly wide spectrum of views. One exclaimed that they had an "exceptional" day on their stand on day one, another was complaining of spending most of their time being "sold to" on their own stands, rather than taking advantage of selling opportunities!

The show had a clearly delineated set of 'features' and topical 'exhibition hubs', from Buildings to Energy, to Waste (in an attempt to provide that 'niche' content which played so well for Ecobuild in its early days). These showed the organisers are trying hard to give the industry what it wants.

All trade shows (both more niche and generalist) are facing big challenges going forward, against a tighter economic backdrop, and purses tighten. These days exhibitors have a range of ways they can measure the amount of people they see, but the optimism they will show in re-book without a clear return on the (often significant) investment they make at shows, cannot be limitless.

Facing tough pressures to deliver huge numbers of homes on time, housebuilders are not likely to go to events unless they can provide them with some genuinely compelling content, or access to contacts in the supply chain which they will struggle to meet in an easier format. If a trip to a show is not logistically difficult, the timing works, and they can talk to the people they need to, it's likely they will come.

As more and more business communication is relegated to email and even automated interactions, perhaps it is more essential than ever to remember the importance of face to face dealings, for simply understanding the person you are dealing with. Sometimes, trade shows can be invaluable opportunities to do this. Who knows whether in future, possibly tougher economic climates, they might become yet more crucial.

James Parker

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NHBC says registrations were up 9pc year-on-year in January



Figures have revealed that a total of 12,677 new homes were registered by UK housebuilders and developers at the start of 2019, an increase of 9 per cent compared to January 2018.

As reported by the NHBC, 8,931 were registered in the private sector (9,214 in 2018), with 3,746 homes registered in the affordable sector (2,469 in 2018).

For the "rolling quarter" between November and January, 38,611 new homes were registered compared to 37,990 a year ago – an increase of 2 per cent. During this period there were 26,668 new homes registered in the private sector (28,509 in 2017/18: down 6 per cent) and 11,943 in the affordable sector (9,481 in 2017/18: up 26 per cent).

Seven out of the 12 UK regions reportedly experienced growth in registrations during this period – notably Northern Ireland (up 65 per cent), Wales (up 20 per cent) and the South East (up 19 per cent).

Commenting on the company's first new home figures of 2019, NHBC chief executive Steve Wood said: "As a standalone month, the January figures show some solid growth, with a particularly good uplift in the affordable sector.

"However, it is clear that Brexit uncertainties are affecting the private sector, and this will impact the months ahead. NHBC will continue to work to help the industry face these challenges and to keep the focus on the quality of new homes."

Government pressed for major work at height review

A major review of "work at height culture" has been called for in a new report published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), pressing Government to expand enhanced reporting, and introduce reporting on near misses.

The report, 'Staying Alive: Preventing Serious Injury and Fatalities while Working at Height,' is the result of a 12 month inquiry from the APPG, exploring why the 18 per cent of people who die at work do so as a result of a fall from height, and considering the steps that could be taken by Government and the industry to prevent incidents for the 10 million people in the UK that work at height.

Four primary recommendations to reduce the overall number of falls were noted in the report:

- The introduction of an enhanced reporting system through RIDDOR
- The appointment of an independent body that allows confidential, enhanced and digital reporting of all near misses to be shared with Government and industry to inform health and safety policy
- The extension of Working Well Together - Working Well at Height safety campaigns
- An equivalent system to Scotland's Fatal Accident Inquiry process

Alison Thewliss, chair of the APPG on Working at Height and MP for Glasgow Central, commented: "Every fall from height can have life-altering consequences for workers and their families. There is an urgent need to improve work at height culture, yet this issue is sadly not at the top of decision-makers' agenda. A lack of empirical data prevents us from understanding the root causes of falls from height. This is compounded by a cultural obstacle when it comes to supporting people to report unsafe practices.'

She added: "We have made comprehensive recommendations to government, but the APPG's work does not stop here. Our report must be the first step in a wider process of systematic and cultural change."

The APPG is now calling for a further period of consultation and a major review of work at height culture, including how to engage with difficult to reach sectors, the suitability of financial penalties, and the role of digital technologies.

'Urgent' call for new UK rural strategy

A group of rural services providers and community organisations across England have urged the Government to produce a new rural strategy guide for developments ahead of Brexit.

The Rural Services Network's call is the result of concerns that "deep-seated challenges to the sustainability of rural communities and service delivery in rural areas" have been "inadequately addressed by those in power for too long.'

In acknowledgement of the numerous challenges faced by rural areas, the Network has produced a report identifying several priority areas for a new Government Rural Strategy and the issues they must address. These include:

- EU support and funding
- · Broadband connectivity
- The 'brain drain' of people from rural areas to urban-based jobs
- House prices
- Transport
- Healthcare

The group said: "After years of an inadequate rural policy framework exacerbated by public sector austerity, the Government must produce a new strategy for rural areas which ensures existing mainstream policies work for these towns and villages, addresses the 'brain drain,' improves infrastructure and transport links, and raises the opportunities and challenges facing rural areas up the political agenda ahead of the next spending review."

It states that 17 per cent (9.4 million) of England's population live in rural areas more people than in Greater London - but receive less grant funding per head than urban areas, despite the fact that it costs more to provide their services. In 2018/19, for example, urban authorities will reportedly receive 49.43 per cent (£123) per head in Settlement Funding Assessment grant more than their rural counterparts.

Rural Services Network chief executive, Graham Biggs, commented: "Rural Communities are frequently overlooked in a policy environment dominated by urban thinking and policy concerns. This often means communities either miss out on the benefits or experience unintended consequences from policies which are poorly thought-through from a rural perspective.

"It is time for this 'rural mainstreaming' to stop. People living in our towns and villages simply cannot afford to wait any longer."



Offsite consortium aims to modernise construction

A \$6.5m collaborative R&D project on offsite solutions to the housing crisis has been awarded funding under the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, administered by Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation.

Labelled Advanced Industrialised Methods for the Construction of Homes (AIMCH), the project is a joint venture between Stewart Milne Group, Barratt Developments, London & Quadrant Housing Trust, Tarmac Trading, the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC), the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre (CSIC) and Forster Roofing Services in the role of the 'SME partner,' and the project will be managed by Limberger Associates.

The three-year AIMCH project aims to tackle the challenges of the UK's housing shortage, and become "a major player in the housing sector" by identifying and developing the industrialised offsite solutions it believes are necessary to meet current and future housebuilding demands. These solutions will be trialled on live housing projects, with the intention that successful new methods will be commercialised and brought to market in volume.

It is hoped that AIMCH will result in new digital design tools, manufacturing advancements, "improved near-to-market offsite systems," and lean site processes. The goal of the project is to deliver homes at the same or less cost than "traditional craft" methods, 30 per cent more quickly, and with a 50 per cent reduction in defects.

The group believes this project has the

potential to see 35,000 homes being delivered by AIMCH partners across the UK each year.

Stewart Dalgarno, AIMCH project director and director of product development at Stewart Milne Group, said: "We need tens of thousands of new homes across the UK every year, but it's also vital that these new homes are of a higher quality, leading to increased customer satisfaction and improved building performance. Digital working and industrialised offsite construction methods can be part of the solution, but they have not yet broken through as viable mainstream alternatives to traditional methods of building homes.

"AIMCH's ambition is to use industrialisation to transform how we build our homes in the UK, leading to more homes that can be built quickly and viably. We believe it will be the catalyst the housing sector needs to move towards advanced digital integrated manufacturing, whilst overcoming the challenges that stand between the sector today and where it needs to go in the future."

Partnership set to unlock MoD land

A new partnership with the potential to deliver over 10,000 homes across seven sites released by the Ministry of Defence has been announced by Homes England and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

The partnership aims to combine the DIO's in-house expertise with the skills, people and finance of Homes England to help "unlock constraints, create greater certainty and speed up the construction of homes."

Throughout the project, the land will remain in the ownership of the MoD, while Homes England prepares a site for development through planning and investment, with governance from DIO.

The first seven sites under the new partnering agreement have now been announced. These are: Claro & Deverell Barracks in Ripon, North Yorkshire; RAF Henlow in Bedfordshire; MOD Site 4 in Stafford; MDPGA Wethersfield in Braintree, Essex; Swynnerton Training Camp in Stone, Staffordshire; Prince William of Gloucester Barracks in Grantham, Lincolnshire; and Chetwynd Barracks in Chilwell, Nottinghamshire.

Nick Walkley, chief executive at Homes

England, and Graham Dalton, chief executive of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, have sealed the partnership by singing a Memorandum of Understanding. Through the signing, Nick Walkley says the partnership "will be able to work with local authorities and communities to progress schemes faster and more efficiently providing homes where they are needed."

Help to Buy uptake figures published



Almost half a million completions have taken place since 2013 using one or more of the Government's Help to Buy schemes, new figures show.

The quarterly Help to Buy statistics report that 494,108 completions have taken place using one or more Help to Buy schemes, over 93 per cent of which took place outside of London. 430,000 of these completions were made by first time buyers, who receive a \$3,000 Government top up, opening 1.4 million Help to Buy ISAs. The average house price purchased through the schemes was reported to be \$202,815.

The most completions using the Help to Buy ISA were recorded in the North West and Yorkshire & the Humber regions. In total, 194,379 completions have taken place across the UK since its launch in December 2015.

The London Help to Buy scheme - which provides an equity loan of up to 40 per cent for buyers in the capital with a 5 per cent deposit – has helped fund 15,056 buyers across 33 boroughs between February 2016 and September 2018.

Philip Hammond, Chancellor of the Exchequer, commented: "This Government supports those who dream of owning their own home, and wants to help them take the first step onto the property ladder. That's why we've cut stamp duty and extended the Help to Buy equity loan scheme to run until March 2023, supporting half a million more home purchases."





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A minimum of 45,000 new homes could be delivered by converting existing vacant space in UK town and city centres, according to a new report.

The findings, in 'Making Sense of Mixed-Use Town Centres,' published by planning and development consultancy Turley, states that town centres need to embrace mixed-use development to thrive in the future – and that there is currently eight million square metres of unused floorspace across the UK's urban centres.

As part of a mixed-use strategy that would see 35 per cent of vacant space apportioned to residential development, the report says more than 45,000 homes could be delivered.

These figures are reportedly conservative, as they assume new homes would not be built above the level of existing buildings. The firm argues that significantly more homes could be delivered through "modest" increases in height in town and city centres, and tall buildings could extend this opportunity even further.

The report also argues the death of the high street is a "myth," and that retail has a key role to play in the regeneration of failing town and city centres. According to the consultancy, fears over the future of high street retail have been exaggerated, and it has an important part to play in the future, with new residential development having a key role in supporting its footfall and revenue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the report, Turley has called for resistance to "blanket top-down national measures," stating that "careful understanding of places is needed so that individually tailored solutions can be provided to secure successful regeneration."

To combat what it calls "unclear guidance" in the National Planning Policy Framework, the report outlines a series of recommendations for realising "successful mixed-use centres," such as ensuring data is gathered on retail and leisure catchments, and conducting viability studies and vacancy analysis, "with the consideration of housing need assessments, social infrastructure assessments and business use assessments highlighted as an important first step." How transport and infrastructure links affect a centre's ability to perform also needs to be assessed, the report says.

Consideration should be given to the heritage of an area and the quality of public realm available. A "whole-place approach" should focus on "creating centres that attract people to them" – a key facet of successful regeneration, the report says.

Design is highlighted as having a pivotal role in successfully integrating mixed-use development, enhancing connectivity and accessibility, and encouraging sustainable travel opportunities. Principles for the provision of more accessible community and social infrastructure needed to support the numbers of homes in town centres and ensure they are "liveable" are also suggested.

Speaking about the report's findings, one of the report's co-authors, and director in Turley's planning team, Paul Keywood, said: "Our urban centres offer a delicate balance of uses and services that rely on each other to drive footfall and survive economically. We believe that for these centres to continue to succeed and serve the needs of their communities they need to embrace a mixed-use future where the balance of uses shifts from what we have traditionally seen."

He added: "A whole-place but bespoke approach to each centre, that considers what is needed to make these places attractive and useful for communities and businesses, is essential.

"Adopting this approach can deliver much needed housing, help turn around the fortunes of places that are currently struggling and ensure successful urban centres continue to perform. Contrary to popular belief, high street retail has a crucial part to play in shaping this future."

Community-led housing projects receive funding boost

A further \$4.5m for community-led homes has been invested by independent charity Power to Change, via two separate funds.

The trust is launching Homes in Community Hands, a £4.2m fund to support "capacity building" and pre-development costs for community-led schemes, while providing grants to the Community Land Trust (CLT) Fund to support a blended funding programme with CAF Venturesome.

Administered by Community Led Homes, the Homes in Community Hands programme will award grants averaging \$50,000 to community led housing groups, including community land trusts, cohousing groups, and housing co-operatives for new build and refurbishment projects.

The grants will cover the costs of site stage feasibility work to asses the viability of a site or buildings for development, plan stage pre-development work leading to submitting a planning application (if required), and post-planning costs for work to get a project ready to start on site.

Rose Seagrief, programme manager in charge of housing at Power to Change, commented: "We are delighted to be launching these funds to support the increasing number of community groups who want to create better places to live now and in the future by delivering permanently affordable homes.

"Nationally, 5,500 community-led homes are expected to be built over the next five years but groups need help with the costs in the early stages to get these essential schemes off the ground," she said.

The Community Land Trust Fund provides pre-planning and development finance to community land trusts in the form of unsecured loans from CAF Venturesome, ranging from \$25,000 up to \$70,000 at pre-planning stage. Power to Change is providing grants – up to 50 per cent of the loan value – to sit alongside these pre-development loans to help CLTs buy in additional capacity and professional support, and in some cases to refinance existing loans to help to kick start stalled projects.







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Almost half of buyers would not purchase home again

Over two-fifths of British homeowners would not buy their home again if given the chance, a new study has highlighted.

According to the study of 2,000 UK-homeowners, carried out by interiors company Hillarys, the main reasons behind this were practical issues with their home such as plumbing and heating.

All respondents were initially asked if they would buy their current home again if they had to go back and do it all over again. 56 per cent said they would, but the remaining 44 per cent admitted that they would not.

When asked why, the top five responses were:

- 1. Issues with the house e.g. heating, plumbing, etc. 59 per cent
- 2. The size of the house 43 per cent
- 3. Having troublesome neighbours 34 per cent
- 4. I don't like the area 29 per cent
- 5. Would prefer to live closer to friends and family 25 per cent.

The results showed that those who lived in terraced homes were most likely to not want to buy their home again (39 per cent), with semi-detached (29 per cent), detached (25 per cent) and a bungalow (13 per cent) following respectively.

Unhappy homeowners were found to have lived in their current home for between three and five years, on average, with 37 per cent of those surveyed revealing that they were already looking for another house. The top reasons for not looking were that they "can't afford to move" (34 per cent), and that they were "waiting to see how Brexit affects the housing market" (20 per cent).

First project announced via local authority fund is 670 Welwyn homes

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has confirmed that it has been awarded £10.6m for the first project agreed through the £450m Local Authority Accelerated Construction fund.

The council is to use the funding to prepare three sites for up to 670 new homes in Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, South Hertfordshire, and plans to incorporate the use of modern methods of construction to minimise onsite disruption in the town centre areas and speed up the delivery of the new homes.

Work is due to start on the first site at Hatfield Town Centre in June 2019, with each development including a target of 30 per cent affordable housing.

Stephen Kinsella, executive director for land at Homes England, commented: "I'm delighted to see this first accelerated construction grant agreement being signed. The funding will enable Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council to develop their ambitious proposals for these three sites, and will help to deliver new homes for local people.

"The plans will prioritise the use of modern methods of construction including panelised and hybrid construction, which will reduce time on site and minimise the impact on the local community, whilst delivering precision-engineered high quality homes."

JV launches two new projects in Olympic Park

More than 1,500 homes, spanning two new neighbourhoods, are set to be constructed at London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Developed as a joint venture between Balfour Beatty Investments and Places For People, on land owned by the London Agency Development Corporation (LLDC), the project has been enabled in part by a £78m loan from Homes England to fund the first four phases of the scheme, as part of the Home Building Fund.

The development will include 450 affordable homes across the two communities, named East Wick and Sweetwater. Schools and green spaces, as well as business, creative, leisure and community facilities will also be developed at the two sites.

Work has already begun on phase one of the site, which will include 130 new affordable homes and 105 for private rent, as well as more than 33,000 ft² of business and creative space.

It is anticipated that the first phase of the development will be completed in summer 2021, with work at East Wick and Sweetwater to be fully completed by 2028.

Airspace developments backed by City Hall



A £10m loan to help roll out 'airspace developments' in the capital – offsite constructed homes built above existing buildings – has been received by Apex Airspace from City Hall.

The funding, which has been granted through the Mayor's Innovation Fund for affordable housing projects, is intended to enable Apex to forge a wider range of partnerships with London's councils, housing associations and private market freeholders to scale new opportunities in both inner and outer boroughs, and deliver more housing.

According to Arshad Bhatti, founder and chief executive of Apex Airspace, the company's research shows "there is potential for up to 180,000 properties in London alone."

"This would represent 42 per cent of the need identified by the London plan, up to 2025," he continued.

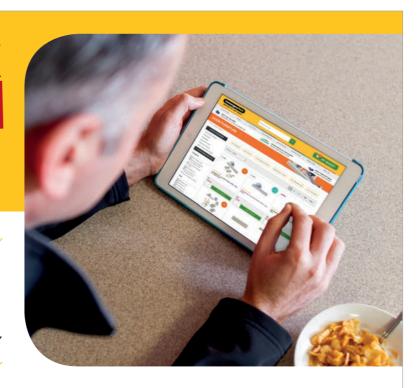
Apex's model, which has delivered pilot schemes in Camden and West Hampstead, uses modern methods of construction, with new homes constructed in factories. They arrive on site 95 per cent complete and are then craned onto roofs for installation.

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Brexit uncertainty continues to constrain UK construction output

The UK's "extreme reliance" on EU workers and materials is continuing to hinder construction output, according to Barry Mortimer, London director of the Federation of Master Builders (FMB).

Mortimer expressed his concerns to delegates at the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)'s Total Housing conference, held in Brighton on 6 March. During his talk he discussed the effect Brexit has already had on the industry, highlighting the "sharp decline in EU migration" that the Office for National Statistics (ONS)' recent migration figures had revealed.

He explained how "extremely reliant" the UK is on EU labour, particularly in housebuilding, where he said 49 per cent of labour comes from the EU. Mortimer also pointed out that it is "often overlooked" how many "excellent companies" in the sector are owned and run by eastern Europeans.

Mortimer blamed the exchange rate for contributing to the shortage of EU construction workers, meaning that wages are now not worth as much as they were to workers from overseas. He also said the general feeling of being "unwelcome" is also to blame for the decline in worker numbers from the EU. "We're pulling up the drawbridge on allowing people into the country," he told delegates at Total Housing.

He went onto explain that while it is possible to recruit workers from elsewhere, the construction industry has an "image problem" that's making it largely unappealing to young people, in particular women. He added that the

proposed Tier 2 system for recruiting migrant workers from outside the European Economic Area is "very time-consuming and overly bureaucratic," especially for SME housebuilders.

Mortimer also made reference to the latest UK construction output figures, which showed a decline in activity for the first time in 11 months. Anecdotal evidence from the survey, he said, points to Brexit, and this is primarily "people delaying decisions to build." Mortimer pointed out that while housebuilding figures were as a whole "not too bad," he commented that they are being "propped up" by building in the north east, while London and the south east are lagging behind.

He went on to explain that the one area where construction activity is increasing is warehousing, which he credited to the stockpiling of materials in preparation for Brexit. He said that of the 25 per cent of materials that come from overseas, 62 per cent are imported from the EU. "We're seeing very sudden and sharp hikes in material prices," he said.

In response, he urged people to "have sympathy" with builders when they're quoting for projects as, due to skills shortages, rising wages and increases in material costs, "it's a really volatile market."

Despite the relatively negative outlook overall, Mortimer remains positive that things will improve in time. "On skills and immigration, the Government will, if it wants to hit its housing targets, end up having to be pragmatic," he concluded.

More work needed in social housing sector to drive offsite methods

There are a number of barriers holding housing associations back from utilising modern methods of construction (MMC), a leading construction consultant recently told an audience of social housing professionals.

John Milner, partner at Baily Garner told an audience at the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Total Housing conference in Brighton that prefab still had a "tainted image." Despite the many established benefits such as time savings, he said a misunderstanding of the sector was stopping housing associations from getting more involved. "Housing associations by their very nature are quite risk averse,"



Milner told the audience.

However the biggest barrier, he said, was system selection. He blamed "poor products" and "too many choices" for putting housing associations off, making it too difficult to know which methods or manufacturers to pick.

Milner told Total Housing delegates that housing associations need to work in collaboration on designing "off-the-shelf" products that suit everyone's needs, and which therefore will be more cost-effective than bespoke designs.

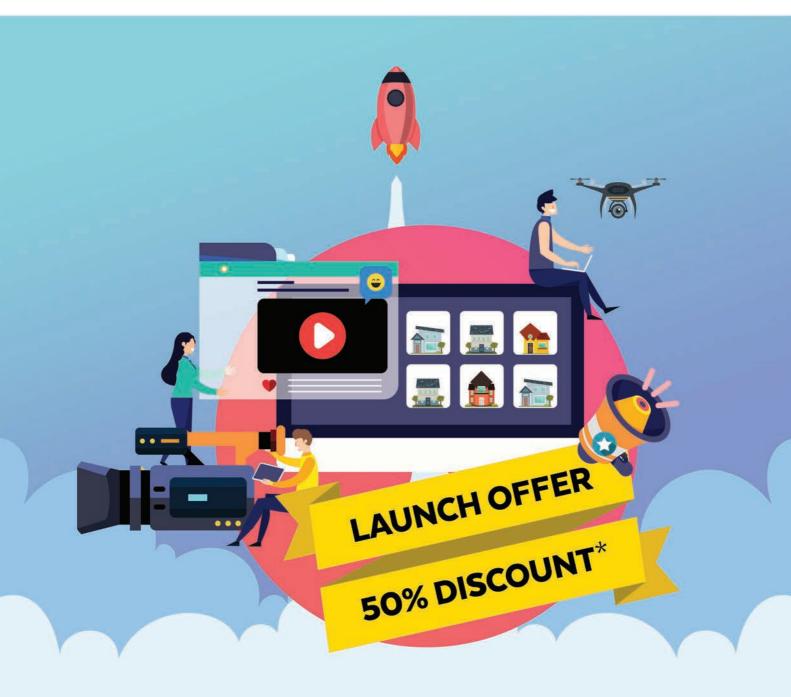
He spoke on a platform with Trowers & Hamlins partner Katherine Saunders, who also highlighted cost as a problem for housing associations. "The private residential sector has more flexibility and less constraints over funding," she said. Saunders added that the Government needs to do more to help the public residential sector invest in MMC. "We want to see MHCLG and Homes England give more backing," she told delegates.

Both Milner and Saunders believed that current methods of procurement "are not fit for purpose," Milner said: "The standard model that most use to deliver new housing is not capable of delivering MMC." Saunders added that the industry needs to "redefine" the roles of main contractors, "The traditional way of getting quotes in is not really where you need to be going," she said.

Saunders stressed the importance of better collaboration between manufacturers and main contractors, including engaging with manufacturers much earlier on in the process. Milner said the industry needs a "large player" with a branded product that's "trusted" and can be "digitally configured, designed and dropped in." He concluded: "If the industry does not pull its socks up on this, there is going to be some serious market disruption."



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Patrick Mooney, editor of Housing, Management & Maintenance

IN THE SOCIAL
SECTOR OVERCROWDING
HAS RISEN TO
ITS HIGHEST
RECORDED
LEVEL WITH
MORE THAN
300,000
HOUSEHOLDS
SQUEEZED
INTO TOO
FEW ROOMS

THE SOCIAL NETWORK

THERE WILL BE TROUBLE AHEAD

Patrick Mooney, housing consultant and news editor of Housing, Management & Maintenance, explains the evidence pointing towards huge difficulties ahead for the industry in meeting the growing demand for housing.

arnings of the difficulties faced in building the number of houses we badly need have been around for a long time, and it often feels like we are simply repeating ourselves time and time again. But a number of recently published reports have really hit home and underlined the need for stronger and urgent action from both central and local government.

The scale of the supply problem was graphically revealed in a report from Civitas, a respected think-tank, whose analysis of data from the Office for National Statistics showed that one million more young adults (aged 20 to 34) are living with their parents than was the case 20 years ago. The number has risen from 2.4 million in 1997 to 3.4 million in 2017.

This has profound implications for both the young people and their parents. It has also led to a sharp fall in 'single living' among young adults, as the number of people aged 25 to 44 living alone in the UK has fallen from 1.8 million in 2002 to 1.3 million in 2017. "The data is bearing out what we feel anecdotally to be the case," said Daniel Bentley, the editorial director of Civitas. "Younger people are beginning to live with their parents for longer and are finding it more difficult to move out. If they do move out, they're often living with larger groups of people."

Latest results from the English Housing Survey reveal overcrowding in the social housing sector has risen to its highest recorded level with more than 300,000 households squeezed into too few rooms. There are also more than 250,000 households in the private rented sector living in overcrowded homes.

Added together, they show at least one million people are crammed into overcrowded properties, with overcrowding rates now eight times higher in social housing and six times higher in private rented accommodation than among owner-occupiers' homes. It should come as no surprise that Shelter's Housing Commission has recommended 3.1 million extra social homes are built in the next 20 years, based on current and future demand trends.

IS HOUSEBUILDING REALLY A TOP PRIORITY?

The release of the Civitas report coincided with a report from the National Audit Office warning us in stark terms that targets for the building of new homes are likely to be missed in at least half of the country. This puts a huge question mark over the Government's ability to deliver 300,000 new homes a year by the mid 2020s even though Ministers say housebuilding is a top policy priority.

The NAO point out that between 2005/06 and 2017/18 we built an average of 177,000 new homes a year and the number has never exceeded 224,000. While the number of new builds has increased every year since 2012/13, for the Government to meet its target it will need to oversee a 69 per cent increase in the average number of new homes built since 2005/06. The chances of this happening do not look particularly good despite the very welcome measures taken recently to increase new house-building by councils and housing associations.

It is hoped that Whitehall will use this year's Spending Review to provide a further boost to the money available for new social housing. But money is not the only problem that requires fixing. Shortages of skilled labour across all construction trades and the actions of volume builders in carefully managing the release of new homes onto the housing market are both enormous limiting factors on the supply side. And there is even more going wrong than this.

The NAO concluded that the planning system in England is "not working well" and councils are struggling to negotiate successfully with developers, leaving large parts of the country vulnerable to either housing shortages or situations where the wrong homes are built in the wrong places. This could have serious long-term consequences, which is why it needs addressing now.

THE REAL IMPACT OF SPENDING CUTS

Since the beginning of austerity in 2009/10, there has been an almost 40 per cent cut in spending on planners and planning functions in



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councils and only 44 per cent of authorities currently have up-to-date Local Plans (less than five years old) setting out how they can meet the need for new homes in their areas for the next five years. This is almost certainly a direct consequence of failing to recruit enough new staff and not replacing experienced planners who have retired or left their jobs as a result of burn out.

Planning has been a Cinderella service for too long and we are feeling the direct effects of this now. Many councils face a worrying shortage of planners and this is not a tap we can simply turn back on and expect immediate results. Overall there was a 15 per cent drop in the number of local authority planners employed between 2006 and 2016. Anecdotal evidence from discussions with council officers and developers suggests the decline has continued in the past two years.

The NAO report used research from Lichfields, a planning and development consultancy, who found that in 2020 about 50 per cent of local authorities are likely to fail the test for building enough homes and could face penalties, including giving developers in those areas greater freedoms regarding where they can build. As of November 2018, the Housing Secretary James Brokenshire had only challenged 15 councils over their lack of an up-to-date plan. A mix of firmer and more supportive intervention is required from Whitehall, including housebuilders also being pushed to help more.

Government figures show the average contributions agreed with developers for public infrastructure projects such as schools, health centres, roads and social housing remained steady at about £19,000 per new home between 2012 and 2017. During the same period, average house prices increased by 31 per cent and the average operating profit margin of the biggest five developers rose from about 12 to 21 per cent. Some redistribution of

resources from developers to councils looks well overdue.

PREVENTING A FREE FOR ALL

Responding to the NAO report, Councillor Martin Tett, the Local Government Association's Housing spokesman, said: "Council planning departments are doing an incredible job with extremely limited resources, approving nine out of 10 applications, with the majority processed quickly." His claim is borne out by performance indicators showing that councils are processing the majority of major residential planning applications within prescribed time limits.

Councillor Tett claims councils are committed to ensuring homes are built where they are needed, are affordable, of a high-quality and supported by adequate infrastructure and services. He emphasised the importance of councils having an oversight of local developments, ensuring accountability and scrutiny. He also wants the resources required to deliver more housing.

"We remain clear that the Government's housing needs formula does not take into account the complexity and unique needs of local housing markets, which vary significantly from place to place, and imposes unfair and undeliverable targets on communities. This risks leading to a housebuilding 'free-for-all', which will bypass the needs of local communities and could damage public trust in the planning system.

"With hundreds of thousands of homes in England with planning permission but yet to be built, councils need powers to make sure developers build out approved homes in a timely fashion." He urged the Government to use this year's Spending Review to properly fund planning departments and allow councils to set planning fees locally so they can recover the true cost of processing planning applications.

DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES

The NAO reported only 47 per cent of councils have so far implemented a community infrastructure levy, which can be used to raise money from developers. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government told the NAO that town halls may not have the commercial and negotiating skills needed to deal with developers' arguments on viability and that some were unable to negotiate effectively.

If a local authority does not show it has a five-year supply of land for housing, it gives developers greater freedoms to build where they want, and a local authority has less control over the location of development. This limited local authority control risks ill-suited developments being built. Clearly it is a gap that needs urgent plugging, although short-staffed planning teams are doing their best to deliver their core functions.

Kit Malthouse, the current Housing Minister, said he recognised the challenges identified by the NAO and that governments of all political colours had built too few homes in the previous 30 years. He said this government was looking more thoroughly at how the problem could be solved.

This is not an issue we can afford to put on the back burner. As recently as 2017 the Local Government Association warned the Government that because of relatively low building rates, the average new home being built in England would have to last 2,000 years.

That cannot be allowed to continue, and we need central and local government to do all in their power to provide the homes that the country needs, of the right type and in the right places. Shelter's Housing Commission provided a decent blueprint for delivering this, but it needs courage and conviction from our politicians for them to deliver this.





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Brian Berry, chief executive of the Federation of Master Builders

THE INDUSTRY ADVOCATE

WHY THE 'SKILLS' DEFINITION CUTS OUT KEY TRADES

Brian Berry of the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), critiques the Government's current post-Brexit immigration policies, explaining how they could damage the construction industry.



t is now well established that the house-building industry is facing a skills shortage. The 2018 FMB House Builders' Survey of small and medium-sized (SME) housebuilders found that 44 per cent of firms are citing a shortage of skilled workers as a constraint to building more homes. When asked to look ahead over the next three years, this concern overtook access to finance for the first time.

While it is critical that the industry 'ups its game' in terms of training and apprenticeships, and modern methods of construction are starting to reduce the need for labour, realistically it is unlikely the industry will be able to build the Government's ambitious housing numbers without an immigration system that works for the sector.

The Immigration Bill that is currently passing through Parliament will put an end to freedom of movement, and this will be replaced by a new global skills-based immigration system. This was set out in the Government's Immigration White Paper, published just before Christmas, and the Home Office has said it will engage with different sectors over the next year before it finalises any

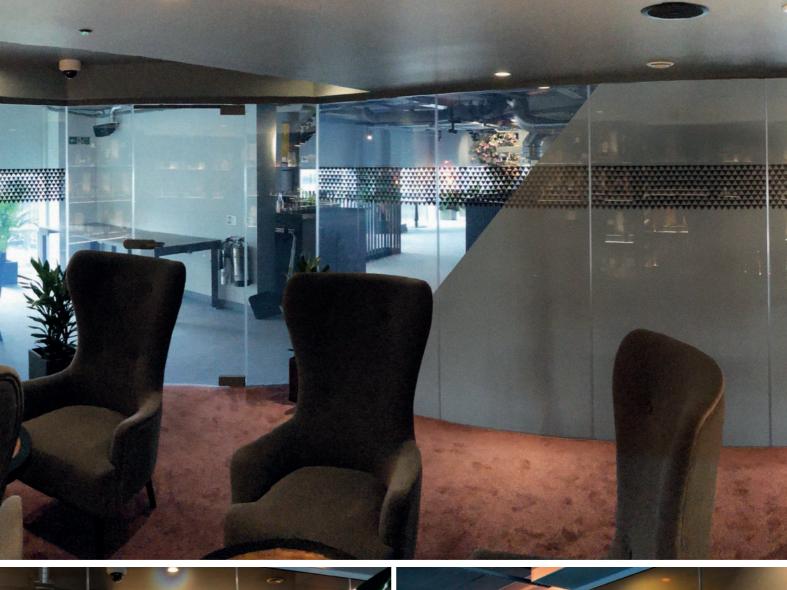
new rules. The construction industry was one of the first sectors to engage with the Home Office as part of this process when industry bodies jointly hosted a Parliamentary round table at which officials from the MHCLG and BEIS, and a number of MPs from the relevant select committees, were present. A number of concerns were raised about the proposals.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DEFINITION OF 'SKILL'

The White Paper makes clear that the new immigration system will prioritise 'high skilled' roles over 'low skilled' and that salary will be used as a proxy for skill. Currently, to apply for a skilled visa if you are from outside the EU, you need to be earning at least £30,000 and the Government has said it is their intent to extend this to EU nationals. However, after much political pressure, Ministers have said this will now be subject to a consultation process.

The Government has also said skilled visas will only be available for roles at a qualification level of 3 or above, which is equivalent to an A-Level. The combination of the salary and skill









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requirement would exclude a number of key roles in the construction industry that are in short supply such as labourers, bricklayers and carpenters.

NO CLEAR MIGRANT ROUTE FOR THE SELF-EMPLOYED

One key missing piece in the White Paper was any route for self-employed migrants to enter the UK. According to the Migration Advisory Committee, 40 per cent of self-employed EU migrants can be found in just three sectors – construction of buildings, specialised construction activities and services to building and landscapes. For particular trades such as bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, self-employment is the norm. This point was made clear to the Home Office at our recent meeting, and the industry will be working closely with them over the next year to find a solution.

TEMPORARY VISA WILL BE UNAPPEALING

One of the surprises in the White Paper was a new 'temporary worker visa' that would allow migrants to come to the UK for a 12 month period, and to work in any job or sector, at any skill level. There would be no ability to switch to a skilled visa, and there would be a 12 month cooling off period before they could re-apply to come to the UK. While this may seem like a potential solution to the two concerns



raised above, it is hard to see how such a visa would be attractive to prospective migrants, and how it would benefit employers in the long term. It would be a big improvement if this visa was extended to 24 months to reflect the average length of a project. It should also allow such workers to move to a skilled visa if they reached the skill and salary requirements.

These proposals won't come into force until January 2021, but in the meantime we

must all ensure we encourage our EU nationals who are currently here to stay, by applying for settled status, which is now free of charge.

While industry can and will do its bit in terms of supporting EU nationals to stay, and train up more domestic workers, we hope that the Home Office will listen to the sector's concerns and understand the impact these proposals could have on the Government's house building targets.



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Joint venture to bring 5,000 new homes to Essex

new partnership to deliver around 5,000 homes on a site east of Chelmsford, Essex has been announced by Grosvenor Britain & Ireland.

Working with the landowner Hammonds Estates acting as a master developer, Grosvenor will promote the 1,160 acre site as a new "distinctive community," featuring a mix of residential tenures and supported by amenities and community facilities such as education, leisure and health spaces.

According the developer, Hammonds Estates has "a real desire and commitment" to bring its knowledge to bear to build future communities. With a "track record of time and investment in education projects," the company seeks to apply this knowledge to embed a sense of community in the development.

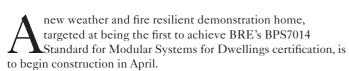
The partners have committed to enabling social mobility and better life outcomes through design, placemaking innovations and long-term stewardship. In particular, the plans seek to deliver a physical environment that is attractive, connected and safe to support the health and wellbeing of all residents, workers and visitors.

In partnership with local authorities, corporate and private landowners and investors, Grosvenor's model is to take sites through the planning system, "take control of the design and build out process, and "deliver the infrastructure required to bring forward homes faster, maintaining control over design quality." Through the expansion, Grosvenor hopes to establish itself as "the market leader in delivering sustainable communities that are progressive in their design, sensitive to local communities and to the environment."

Alex Robinson, director of development, strategic land, Grosvenor Britain & Ireland, said: "This new partnership exemplifies our target model for our Strategic Land business. Working with Hammonds Estates – as with our existing partners on our other schemes – we will focus both on delivering new homes at pace, and creating exceptional communities that create a positive legacy for residents and landowners alike."

In 2018, Grosvenor outlined plans to triple the size of its Strategic Land business, targeting a portfolio of at least 30,000 homes within the next five years. The new partnership aligns with Grosvenor's focus on sites capable of hosting 2,000-5,000+ homes, principally in areas of economic growth where housing need is most acute. With the addition of Hammonds Farm, Grosvenor's pipeline stands at around 15,000 homes, up from 2,100 in summer 2017.

Project Etopia aims to be first to meet new BRE offsite standard



The building, developed by Project Etopia, hopes to be a leading example of how modular housing can embrace eco-technology to create high-quality, greener homes that significantly reduce electricity bills for consumers. It will also have its ability to withstand hurricanes, fires and floods put to the test.

It is believed that the cost of the 108 m² three-bedroom detached unit will come in at around 20 per cent less than a conventional home. This would be around £1,200 per square metre for a smart home, with the provider stating that traditional bricks and mortar build costs are around £1,500 m².

The new homes panellised walls are also said to possess a 0.13 U-value, compared with a U-value in excess of 0.16 for a typical, well-insulated wall in a new build brick property.



It is claimed that all of the exterior wall superstructure will be constructed in an on-site time of 20 hours (16 for walls, four hours for scaffolding), compared with as much as three weeks for a traditional home, without the weather restrictions which do not affect the modular homes.

Project Etopia's smart home will feature its own solar cladding, in conjunction with Great British Voltaic (GBV) solar and tiles, triple glazing, as well as a Daikin Atherma Heating and Cooling System. It will also incorporate E-Smart's plug-and-play smart home system with Samsung smart appliances.

David Kelly, Innovation Park director of BRE, commented: "The BPS7014 standard for Modular Systems for Dwellings will be launched by BRE this summer. It will assure all parties – occupiers, insurers, lenders, asset owners and developers alike – of the quality, durability and integrity of modular construction, by demonstrating that they have been subjected to a rigorous independent review, testing and certification process."

Details of the certification will be unveiled by BRE this summer.

CASE STUDY

A lesson in luxury



A luxury development of apartments and duplexes by CALA Homes in the grounds of a historic school has provided Edinburgh with some of its most desirable new homes yet seen in the city. Housebuilder & Developer reports.



he Crescent at Donaldson's is a new 84-apartment luxury development in the heart of the Scottish capital. Developed by CALA Homes, the new crescent stands facing one of Edinburgh's most recognisable buildings, the former Donaldson's School, which is also being refurbished into apartments.

Set among 18 acres of the grounds, the development offers residents easy access to the city's cultural delights, while providing a sense of seclusion in one of the most sought-after postcodes in Edinburgh. Comprising a collection of luxury residences, including penthouses, garden apartments and duplexes, the Crescent comprises one, two and three bedroom homes, offering residents spacious and high-spec living spaces with floor areas of up to 2,700 ft².

Considered to be the most upmarket in Scotland's recent history, and worth more than \$90m, the now-completed development has been described by CALA as "feasibly the most ambitious residential development built in Edinburgh for many a generation."

THE HISTORY

Centrally located in the city's Haymarket area, a short distance from both the Old Town and New Town (which together constitute a UNESCO World Heritage site), the development offers an enviable location. The area displays a range of architectural styles throughout its weaving streets, wide avenues and green spaces, but is perhaps most well-known for its Georgian architecture.

The new development is nestled discreetly into the rear of the iconic Donaldson's Estate. The turreted school building is one of the most lauded in Edinburgh, a grand Victorian edifice informed by the Tudor and Gothic styles. Founded in 1851, and designed by architect William Henry Playfair with a famous quadrangle, Donaldson's previously served as a children's hospital as well as school.

Home to the Donaldson's School for the Deaf, its construction was paid for by Sir James Donaldson. The school occupied the building for over 150 years, but the trust



eventually declared it unfit for purpose, with many of the rooms no longer in use and the school struggling to maintain the building.

In 2003, it was put up for sale, CALA subsequently picking up the site for £22m. It was mothballed during the economic downturn, but in the meantime, plans to restore the building and transform the wider location were drawn up, including extensive consultation with the local community and heritage groups.

In 2015, heritage restoration specialists City and Country partnered with CALA to submit plans to develop the hospital building and the East and West gatehouses into luxury residential accommodation, a process which started in 2016. CALA then started construction on its part of the development in 2017, the new crescent of luxury homes that stand today on the rear of the site.

CONSTRUCTION WORKS

Preparatory work on the Crescent project started in May, involving a significant excavation to create the underground parking, designed to keep the site as vehicle-free as possible once completed and landscaped, and providing each property with a private parking space.

BAM Construction secured the £30m shell and core contract, with CALA's own team conducting the homes' fit out.

Construction began on the westernmost half of the split crescent, creating a glassfronted building which takes its height and other design cues in part from the neighbouring New Town.

The crescent form had to be carefully considered in order for it to connect with its setting. The prominent curve reflects Georgian architecture, while having an interplay with the Playfair building.

Gillian Tait, planning and design director at CALA Homes (East), explained further: "As Edinburgh's New Town began to

evolve, crescents as well as beautiful communal gardens were designed to add a level of separation and privacy from the existing urban grid.

"We believed this to be of particular importance, as The Crescent was designed from the outset to not be just 'worthy' of its place on this World Heritage site, but to enhance it."

OLD & NEW

The design by Richard Murphy Architects looks to strike a balance between a contemporary, modern building, and historical grandeur. Directly inspired by the location, the classical shape is paired with large amounts of glazing.

The apartments have also been designed to provide the "impressive and functional features of traditional Edinburgh homes, while offering a sleek and ultra-modern reimagining," said CALA Homes. An example is how the building is set back from the road, with separation created by a lower garden, duplicating the basements of the nearby Moray Place.

Each apartment is divided by "vertical expressions," said CALA, "creating a colonnade effect along the crescent itself, much like the individual addresses of the New Town's Georgian streets." And, emulating the stone steps that feature throughout the city, entranceways have an elevated door to provide a grand sense of entrance.

In order to reduce the building's scale at street level, the uppermost floor is set back; this also increases the privacy of the vaulted-ceiling penthouses located on the top of the crescent.

Gillian commented: "It is incredible to see the extent to which Richard Murphy and his team have drawn inspiration and features from the amazing architecture of Edinburgh's New Town.

"This relates The Crescent to its historical precedents, but it does it in a way that ensures it is not trying to copy history or THIS RELATES THE
CRESCENT TO ITS
HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS,
BUT IT DOES IT IN A WAY
THAT ENSURES IT IS NOT
TRYING TO COPY HISTORY



create a mock-Georgian home – it's taking a design classic and applying the best of modern design."

THE APARTMENTS

Now completed, the homes welcome residents with granite footpaths and patio areas leading to the gently curved, natural buff sandstone walls and copious glazing. Each entry way accesses only two apartments; the penthouses can be accessed from a further private staircase or lift, revealing a 180-degree glass entrance.

Every apartment offers "dynamic" interior spaces, said CALA, which have been designed to offer a "blank canvas" for residents. Great consideration has been paid to interior design, to make the most effective and creative use of the spaces, and provide practical as well aesthetically pleasing living areas.

The apartments are dual aspect to the front and rear, offering contrasting views. Full-height glazing looking towards the Playfair building also offers extensive daylighting, and on the other side there are panoramic south-facing views towards the site's gardens and the landscape beyond.

Solar control glass and aluminium accents further push the contemporary edge given by the extensive glazing. The tall windows give grandeur but also ensure privacy is maintained, being reflective.

The apartments are generously high, in part intended to reflect the grandeur of its neighbour. Though each home is designed to provide a unique outlook, a common theme of each is the inclusion of multilevel, interconnecting living areas, with enhanced-height spaces to their rear.

LUXURY LIVING

As well as the many cultural amenities provided by the city, the site offers a wealth of communal and private open spaces. There are expansive outdoor areas, as well as rear gardens and patio areas which offer more private spaces to some of the homes. Woodlands extend further down towards the Water of Leith.

The homes, which are priced from \$950,000 to \$1,925,000, offer an interesting blend of luxury living, containing both historical heritage and modern design, as well as combining a sense of seclusion with a central location. While the project may have been inspired by the iconic designs of its neighbourhood, CALA hopes to provide homes that also point towards the future, and offer residents the opportunity to take part in a new stage in Edinburgh's everchanging architectural timeline.

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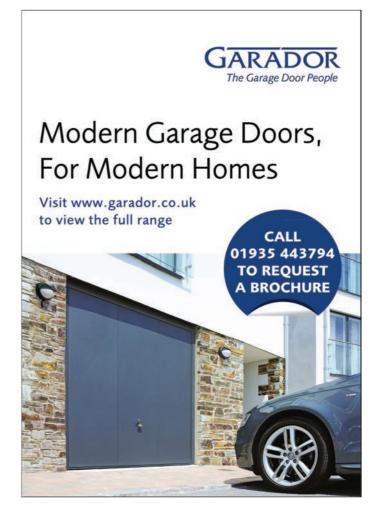
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Build 2019

olt-on cantilevered steel balconies are an architectural feature which are becoming increasingly popular in both the construction of new apartments and houses, as they provide visual interest and signify a quality development to prospective buyers. Balconies offer homeowners an outdoor living space, and are seen as a desirable addition to a dwelling, thereby adding value to a development, and providing an incentive for house buyers to purchase off-plan.

From a structural perspective, the difficulty with balconies, and for that matter any architectural feature located outside of a building's insulation envelope, is how to support the balcony while avoiding a thermal bridge between the internal building structure and the balcony steel frame. This is necessary in order to comply with the Building Regulations, as well as to meet the requirements of the thermal modelling calculations for limiting thermal bridging. Thermal bridging occurs when conductive materials, such as steel or concrete, provide a path for heat energy to flow across a buildings' thermally insulated layer, resulting in heat loss and the potential for condensation to form.

One solution to this problem is to design the balcony with support posts on concrete foundations and bolt the balcony steel frame to the outer masonry leaf. This approach may avoid the thermal bridging issue, and is generally the only viable option on existing properties. However, the dwelling outer leaf may not be load-bearing, for instance consisting of lightweight cladding materials, and support posts are widely considered to be detrimental to the appearance of new build dwellings.

Fortunately for housebuilders and developers, the construction industry has addressed these issues, with companies specialising in bolt-on cantilever steel balconies offering complete balcony packages which are practical and excellent value for money. These packages comprise the balcony and structural thermally broken building connection systems.

Typically, such balcony systems are installed as a first fix, and then a second fix work item. The first fix installation commences with the building connection plate which, depending upon the floor construction, is either bolted to solid timber joists or a concrete floor slab. The essential structural thermal break component is bolted to the connection plate - ideally located within the building insulation layer, thereby minimising or eliminating the thermal bridge.

A steel stub is bolted to the structural thermal break, which is designed to project beyond the face of the external envelope and position the balcony steel frame at the correct floor level. After the first fix is installed, the contractor continues with the

BALCONIES: BRIDGE THE GAP

Lee Barber of Balcony Life explains the benefits of, and methodology behind, bolt-on cantilevered steel balconies designed to avoid thermal bridging.



wall construction so that, when completed, the stub face plates are left exposed for the second fix balconies.

The installation of the balconies usually takes place towards the end of the build programme. It is simply a matter of offering the balcony steel frame up to the stub face plates with lifting equipment and bolting them on, after which the balcony glass balustrade or metal railing balustrade and balcony decking are installed.

Balcony rainwater drainage is frequently raised as a concern for housebuilders and developers, but companies specialising in bolt-on cantilever steel balconies provide a solution here with a controlled rainwater drainage system which eliminates the need for unsightly external rainwater pipes. This also avoids taking rainwater pipes into the building, which could have the potential to leak and cause damage to the building fabric and interior.

The principle of controlled rainwater drainage is very simple, with rainwater being allowed to flow into the balcony but prevented from draining through the balcony using a soffit panel to the underside.

From within the balcony, the rainwater is discharged through discreet circular drainage holes located along the front of the balcony. Typically, all the steel used in the balcony is coated with galvanised zinc so that rainwater, particularly within the balcony, cannot erode the material, thereby maintaining structural integrity. Balcony specifiers should always ensure that balcony steelwork is galvanised for

this reason.

Bolt-on cantilever steel balcony packages allow the house or development designer the opportunity to include their own design preferences. In addition, vinyl transfers can be applied to the glass panels to a specified colour and design pattern, decking type and colour can be specified, as can a wide choice of RAL colours for the balcony steelwork, or a privacy screen. Bolt-on steel balconies also offer a flexibility in their size and configuration that allows the designers' intentions to be realised, or the designer can simply opt for specialist balcony manufacturers' standard balcony designs in order to achieve a cost saving.

Specialist balcony packages allow housebuilders and developers to incorporate tried and tested balcony solutions into their house designs with responsibility for balcony design, manufacture and installation resting with one sub-contractor, rather than being divided between the architectural designer, structural designer, steel fabricator and installer. As further assurance for housebuilders and developers, balcony specialists will attend consultant and site design meetings and provide free technical support throughout the design and construction process, so that the balcony package they manufacture is co-ordinated with all aspects of the building structure.

Lee Barber is architectural design manager for Balcony Life

Best advice on uPVC windows and doors



Framexpress works with developers, architects, builders and installers to offer the perfect selection of PVCu windows and doors for a full range of commercial and domestic projects. With 4-hour quotes and 48-hour delivery on all white PVCu windows, doors and Patiomaster doors, as well

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Housing development oozes charm



A multi-million pound project to create an exclusive development of 12 houses has fitted specialist aluminium glazing from award-winning fabricator AluFoldDirect. More than 200 products produced by AluFoldDirect feature in the stunning five-and-six bedroom homes. In every

property, a dozen AluK 58BW slimline flat sash window systems in anthracite grey were installed. To complement this, two or in some cases three aluminium BSF bi-fold door systems also featured and stunning sets of bespoke aluminium French doors complement the exclusive, high-end property specification.

www.alufolddirect.co.uk



Senior picked for Berry Court residential scheme

Senior Architectural Systems have been used to frame the views enjoyed by the residents of the new Berry Court private rental scheme in Bournemouth. The new development of 113 high quality apartments boasts a central location, being close to both the town centre and the beach, and has helped breathe new life into the area following the redevelopment of what was the site of a public car park. Collaboration has been an integral part of the creation of Berry Court; with the development itself delivered by Bournemouth Development Company, a joint venture between Bournemouth Borough Council and Morgan Sindall Investments Ltd. The contract to supply the fenestration package for Berry Court is also the latest to be delivered by Senior in partnership with long-term supply chain partners Soundcraft and main contractor Morgan Sindall, with whom Senior has an established trading agreement. Senior was able to demonstrate the added value it could bring to the project in terms of technical information and value-engineered solutions to assist with budgetary and time constraints. Such positive and early engagement with the main contractor was instrumental in the architect's original specification of a competitor's product range being changed to Senior's high performance aluminium fenestration systems.

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Yeoman Rainguard Perfect for Old Chapel Cottage



riginally a Methodist Chapel built in 1841, now converted to a home, The Old Chapel Cottage boasts both charming traditional local architecture and stunning views over Nidderdale, an area of outstanding beauty in North Yorkshire.

When the current owners, Mr & Mrs Simpson, moved into the property they were keen to improve certain aspects of the cottage which



included the replacement of the old discoloured and worn PVC gutters and downpipes along with the rotting timber fascia.

Wanting to replace these empathetically and in keeping with the age and location of the property, the Simpsons sourced Yeoman Rainguard's products after a visit to their stand at the Homebuilding & Renovating Show in Harrogate.

Yeoman Rainguard 130 x 100mm deep flow XL Aluminium gutters were installed on the cottage and adjoining garage to accommodate the water flow rates from the pitched roof. 75mm Dia. XL Aluminium downpipes were added topped off with attractive Motif cast aluminium rainwater hoppers.

Offering a bespoke design service Yeoman Rainguard were able to accommodate some of the more unusual off sets and projection configurations required to ensure a perfect watertight rainwater system on this project.

Finished in a durable black textured polyester powder coating, the new gutters, downpipes and accessories not only have a heritage look that complements the character of the cottage but offer a maintenance free lifecycle of 30 years

The Rotting timber fascia was replaced with Yeoman Rainguard "N Type" fascia board, manufactured from GRP- glass reinforced polyester - it's flexible and lightweight with exceptionally hard wearing, strong properties. Supplied in black to partner with the rainwater goods, this smart looking product will again give a life expectancy of 30 years plus.

"When looking to update the rainwater goods after the house purchase, we were keen to choose something that would fit the look, age & character of the building as well as be efficient & long lasting. The team at Yeoman Rainguard helped us to choose the right products & configuration for the project. We also chose Yeoman Rainguard to perform the installation and were delighted with both the installation process and the result." Helen & Mark Simpson.

0113 279 5854 www.rainguard.co.uk



WINDOW SHOPPING

Tom Swallow of Quickslide Windows & Doors discusses some of the key performance and aesthetic considerations when selecting windows.

indows are crucial to the design of a home. Not only do they take the brunt of the elements such as wind, rain, snow and ice, but they also boost the look, feel, climate and even the overall price of a home.

Choosing the right windows for a house can be difficult and there are quite a few things to take into consideration, from natural light and insulation, to the view and even the function of a room itself.

NATURAL LIGHT

Windows give you a chance to flood a room with natural light. When designing a house, you should carefully consider how the placement of the windows will affect the natural light that comes into the home. Here in the northern hemisphere, south facing homes tend to receive more sunlight overall throughout the day.

Homes built with the longest wall of the house facing south have great potential if homeowners are looking for maximum sunlight, as quite simply, you can fit more windows in! However, while windows let in a lot of light, they also let in a lot of heat. This is great during the winter, but not so desirable in the summer. For south facing windows, to maintain a happy medium, it is advisable to aim for window distribution of 5 per cent to 12 per cent of the floor area of the house. This will maximise available light, while ensuring the home is not overheated.

Boosting natural light can have many benefits for the new homeowners, helping them to be more productive, happier, healthier and calmer. Natural light has been known to reduce eye strain and increase vitamin D intake, the latter helping to regulate the immune system and body weight. And the benefits don't stop there, a brighter space is of course also more aesthetically pleasing. Natural light is often used by architects to make spaces appear larger, for example. It can illuminate interior structures and increase the perceived beauty of a space.

Additional windows aren't the only way to boost natural light, though; it might be worth considering bi-fold doors. Not only are they great at opening a kitchen space and creating a seamless connection into the garden, a high quality set of aluminium bifold doors can add 5-10 per cent to the value of a property.

TYPE OF WINDOW

There are many types of windows on the market, and it is important to consider which style best fits the aesthetics of the house, whether modern or traditional.

Casement windows are a popular choice and very versatile, being compatible with most types of property. Hinged on one side with multi-locking points, casement windows work well for a modern home.

Sliding sash windows however are a more traditional offering, one that can preserve the appearance of an old-style home the design has in fact been around for several hundred years.

Other frames such as bay, 'tilt & turn' and heritage windows are also available on the market if neither sash or casement are suitable.

Once the frame has been decided on, you should consider both the material and colour that will best match the overall aesthetic that you want to achieve. PVCu is often viewed as a low maintenance, weather resistant option, while an aluminium frame is seen as more elegant and contemporary.

Now you're set on the frame, material and colour, the glass itself needs to be suitable for purpose. Safety laminated glass is a stronger, reinforced glass that avoids chips and cracks, and is generally safer than regular glass windows - perhaps ideal for windows and doors on the bottom floor of a house to avoid chips and cracks. Tinted or frosted glass is perfect for privacy, and is perhaps best suited to bathrooms and ensuites. Insulated glass is great for energy saving, and is especially good for eco-homes.

FUNCTION OF ROOM

Something that is often overlooked when choosing window placement on a new home is how these windows can help improve the function of a room. For example, in the kitchen a homeowner will need space, light and good ventilation. Remember that kitchen windows are open more often, so it's advisable to put them in a place that makes them both easily accessible and easy to open and close.

Bedroom windows need more privacy, and unless the bedroom isn't overlooked by anybody, it is a good idea to place smaller windows slightly higher to avoid two-way viewing. When placing bedroom windows,



you should also consider the view. Is it possible to place them in a spot where the occupants can enjoy the view from the bed? If you want to add larger windows to a bedroom you should consider mirrored glass or tinted glass to increase privacy if overlooked by neighbours or people from the street

Bathroom windows should be much more private than the rest of the house. Ensure that they are placed to allow in enough natural light, but keep the view from outside away from showers, baths

Rooms like the dining room, living room and any office space there may be can accommodate larger windows as there's not too much of an issue with privacy. You may wish to compromise on a happy medium here, taking into consideration both natural light and the occupants' potential wish for keeping passers-by from seeing too far into their home.

CONSIDER THE EXTERIOR

Sometimes the position that feels right for the interior doesn't always look the best from the outside. This doesn't matter so much on exterior walls that aren't often looked at, but the front of the house should be carefully considered.

Remember, you don't have to use windows just for functionality – they can be used for design elements too. Think about incorporating round windows or bay windows to add another element of style to a home.

Tom Swallow is sales and marketing director at Quickslide Windows & Doors

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Cromar PRO GRP System is exceptionally popular as a flat roofing solution – it provides a modern look and can often be cheaper than a pitched roof as less materials are needed. There are many different coverings that can be used on flat roofs, for example torch on felt, however more choose the Cromar PRO GRP system due to the final professional finish.

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The full PRO GRP systems includes Resin, Top Coat, Hardener, Acetone, trims, fillets and joints, trim adhesive, matting, brushes and rollers etc.

Cromar also offers a 25 year performance warranty with PRO GRP, when applied by a full trained and approved contractor.

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lidevale, one of the specialist building products and ventilation solutions providers, offers a comprehensive range of slate and tile ventilators, with over 450 choices of tile or slate profile available. As one of the market leaders in tile vent manufacture in the UK, Glidevale's range has been collated for over 30 years and includes hundreds of dedicated profiled tile ventilators matching almost any tile available on the market. In addition to current and newly introduced tiles, the company can create vents for tiles which are no longer made by tile manufacturers, making Glidevale tile vents suitable for new build and retrofit schemes.

Alongside its profile matching service, Glidevale can colour match to the exact blend of colours required. When profile matched and colour blended with neighbouring slates, tiles and ridges, the ventilators are almost indiscernible once installed.

In addition to profile matched tile and slate ventilators, Glidevale offers a range of universal ventilators which fit a large number of tile profiles. Where tile matching is unnecessary and a single solution is required for a number of roofs, the compact universal range can be



utilised. This includes the Glidevale
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Flat Interlocking In-Line® Tile, which has a
guaranteed ventilation area of 10,000mm² and
can be used with a range of tile profiles
including Marley Modern, Redland Mini
Stonewold, Sandtoft Calderdale and Russell
Grampian, amongst many others. Tile vents are

offered in seven UV-stable colours and can be easily installed as part of the normal tiling process.

The compact universal tile and slate vents range is typically available ex stock. Profile and colour matched tile and slate ventilators are made to order and can be on site within a few days from manufacture. For more information, please email sales@glidevale.com.

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roviding a continuous, impermeable protective barrier against ground gases including methane, radon, carbon dioxide and hydrocarbons, Protect GDB10 Plus membrane is suitable for Amber 1 and 2 applications as defined by NHBC. The product is compliant with BS 8485:2015 and has also been independently assessed and certified by **BM TRADA**

As required by BS 8485, both the membrane and the joint integrity have been tested for methane resistance. Furthermore, Protect GDB10 Plus is one of the only products on the market that has been independently methane permeability tested to BS ISO 15105-1 for joints. This provides peace of mind to contractors and

Glidevale offers a range of purpose designed, pre-formed accessories to ensure reliable and continuous protection.





housebuilders that the product will create a fully sealed system.

Using the membrane on site has clear benefits including high tensile strength which means there will be no damage to the membrane when being installed. In addition, the membrane is not supplied folded, therefore will not have creases when laid out. This ensures the concrete can be poured easily and effectively on site.

The company supplies a range of purpose designed, pre-formed accessories to maintain protection at wall cavities, corners, and services to remove the need to form difficult shapes on site. A range of underfloor and cavity wall ventilation accessories removes gases and moisture vapour where required, enabling regulatory requirements for ventilation to be met. 150mm wide gas jointing tape is needed to seal the overlaps, providing a simpler fixing solution to save time on site. For more information, please email sales@glidevale.com.

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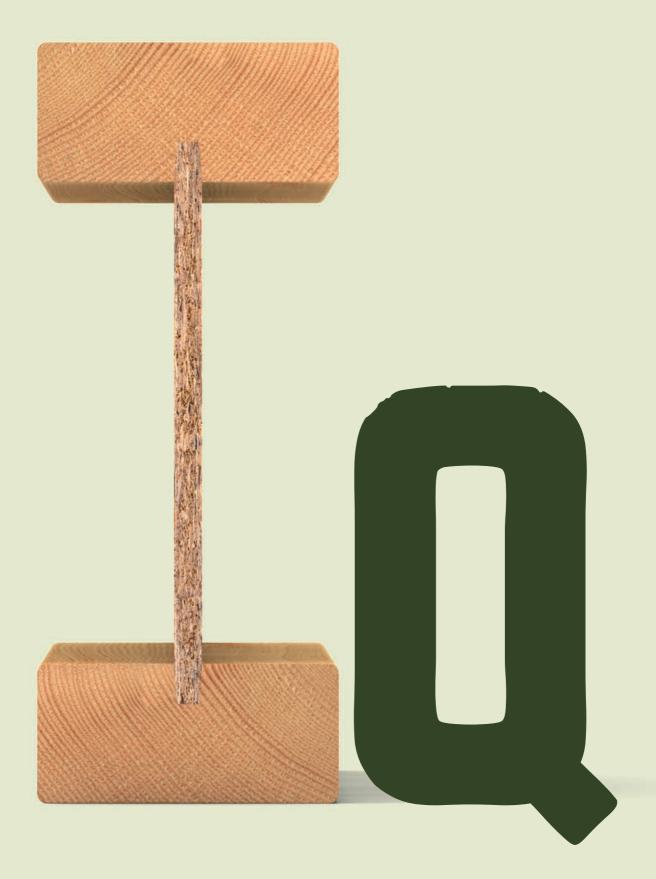
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New commercial heat recovery unit from Vortice



Vortice has launched the Vort HRI Phantom, a brand new, slimline, void mounted heat recovery unit ideal for commercial applications. There are two models available with performances ranging from 206m³/hr to 350 m³/hr. Fresh air is 100 per

cent fully filtered even in bypass mode improving the indoor air quality within the room. The quality of the air can be further advanced by using the new Vortice NOX filters. The centralised ventilation units each have a high efficiency counter cross flow heat exchanger with frost protection and easily accessible filters. The units come complete with a wired remote control unit with LCD allowing initial configuration and commissioning, speed selection, display of the time, room temperature and filter status.

01283 492949 www.vortice.ltd.uk

The hidden costs of 'cheap' insulation



New research has shown that by using premium performance phenolic insulation over cheaper, thicker mineral fibre insulation, developers can reduce construction thicknesses and actually save on total upfront costs. The analysis, carried out by an experi-

enced quantity surveyor, considered several variables including the cost of the insulation materials, length of wall ties, area of roof and wall layers and the foundation width. The results showed that by using the Kingspan Kooltherm K106 Cavity Board specification, overall construction costs were reduced by £161 and £420 in the large and small detached houses respectively. Full details on the research can be viewed at: www.kingspan.com/ gb/en-gb/products/insulation/kingspan-insight/avoidable-costs

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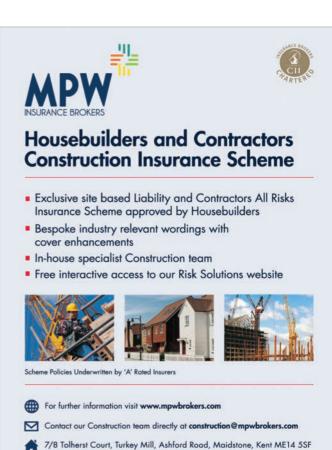
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The name behind the perfect shower



Tissino's new range of Giorgio shower trays and wall panels combines Italian-inspired good looks with exceptional, long-lasting performance. There's the Giorgio2 tray with its natural slate finish, is designed for comfort under foot and will deliver many years of outstanding

performance. Joining the Giorgio 2 tray is the new Giorgio Lux shower tray. Instead of a traditional visible grate, the Giorgio Lux channels the water discreetly and efficiently, whisking it away via a concealed maxi-flow outlet. Complementing the shower trays is the new selection of Giorgio wall panels which are a stunning alternative to traditional tiling. Their natural slate effect finish in black, grey or white matches the shower trays perfectly, and also works beautifully with other bathroom styles across the Tissino range.

0345 582 8000 www.tissino.co.uk

Unique wetroom drainage solution



The highly flexible Fast Track Wall to Wall Grill Service from CCL Wetrooms allows house builders to order a bespoke wetroom grill up to 2,000mm in length, using their 2-3 day manufacturing service. Thanks to the quick turnaround, it is the ideal vehicle for ordering a stunning wall

to wall grill, once the wetroom tiling has been completed on site. The Fast Track Bespoke Grill Service complements CCL Wetrooms' standard range of grills which has grown from nine to fifteen standard lengths and offers customers an increased choice of finishing touches for their wetroom. For full details on CCL Wetrooms' range of wetroom drainage systems and waterproofing membranes, please contact the company.

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



New range of Pocket Door Hardware from P C Henderson

P C Henderson is pleased to announce the launch of its new Pocket Door Pro range of sliding door hardware. Available in standard, soft close, self-close, fire rated and automated variants – the new system is set to be one of the most flexible and versatile pocket door hardware systems on the market. The new 120kg capacity system has been designed using a high quality, robust aluminium frame making it ideal for new builds and areas of heavy use such as educational buildings, hospitals, hotels, office blocks and disability access areas. Designed with ease and speed of installation at the forefront of the product development process, the product comes with pre-assembled components and a push together frame. Pocket Door Pro Fire Rated is also part of the new range which is a fully certified pocket door system to FD30 or FD60 standards. The kit contains all the benefits of the standard system with the addition of a specially adapted FSC Redwood liner kit complete and intumescent seals. The process of finger jointing reduces any issues with twist, bow and cupping, making it ideal for this type of application. The system is available in seven different kit variants (catering for doors up to 2315mm x 930mm), 120mm or 125mm finished wall thickness as well as a variety of functionality options – including soft close, self-close and automated.

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Break the mould with Crown Trade



The mild, wet autumnal weather can provide the ideal conditions for mould and mildew to thrive but thanks to Crown Trade's range of Clean Extreme Mould Inhibiting paints, the outlook has just got brighter. Ideally suited for damp-prone areas such as bathrooms and kitchens where condensation can build, Crown Trade's Clean

Extreme Mould Inhibiting paint range offers long lasting protection from unsightly and unhygienic mould. By helping walls and ceilings retain a cleaner, fresher appearance for longer, Crown Trade's Clean Extreme Mould Inhibiting range provides the perfect solution for damp and dirty surfaces and can help reduce maintenance cycles and redecoration costs.

www.crownpaintspec.co.uk

New wardrobes for the developer market



A new range of contract wardrobes has been developed by Pantera Wardrobes that are ideal for the developer market. Pantera's Operations Director, Tony Mills said: "We developed Urbanmobili to bridge the gap between quality and affordability. These

wardrobes are manufactured in the UK but have been designed with the specification and style of Italian furniture. As a front-frame system, they can be tailored to fit any wall openings, providing a contemporary look and generous storage space for a competitive price." The full height hinged or sliding doors are available in a range of modular sizes and are available in a choice of finish, colour and handles.

www.panterawardrobes.com

Deanestor expands into high end kitchens



Deanestor has announced its expansion into kitchens for the premium build-to-rent and market sale housing sectors. Following its success in the manufacture and installation of high-quality kitchen furniture across a range of sectors for the last two decades, Deanestor has launched a new service to provide bespoke contemporary kitchens to developers and main contractors for

studio and apartment projects for both rent and market sale. Deanestor has been awarded contracts for the supply of PRS kitchens which include a project worth in excess of £4m to manufacture and install around 700 kitchens for a private residential scheme in central Manchester and 700 studio kitchens in Canary Wharf.

www.deanestor.co.uk/kitchens

How a kitchen can be transformed in one day



Don't start over; makeover. That is the message from Granite & TREND Transformations. The new website offers all the homeowner or landlord needs to know about a hassle-free, money-, time- and planet-saving new look in the kitchen or

bathroom. Whether it is a new worktop; or appliances; or doors; or sink space; or tiles and splashbacks, Granite & TREND Transformations will make design dreams come true with a wide range of materials, colours and finishes to choose from. For inspiration, the super-slick website houses a gallery showcasing the kitchen and bathroom ranges, and associated products; along with before-and-after shots of real-life transformations.

granitetransformations.co.uk

Click LVT Collections from Designer Contracts



As the trend for stylish, hard flooring options continues to grow, Designer Contracts, one of the UK's largest flooring contractors, has added two new collections of Click LVT flooring from big name brands Amtico and Pergo. Suitable for commercial and residential installations, Amtico's

Click Smart collection features 12 authentic wood and stone effect designs that can be fitted straight on to a solid and smooth subfloor. The glue-less installation includes the latest rigid board technology and has a robust locking mechanism, making it quicker and easier to install. Pergo Premium Click LVT is suitable for domestic and light commercial installations and includes realistic stone and wood-look designs.

01246 854577 www.designercontracts.com

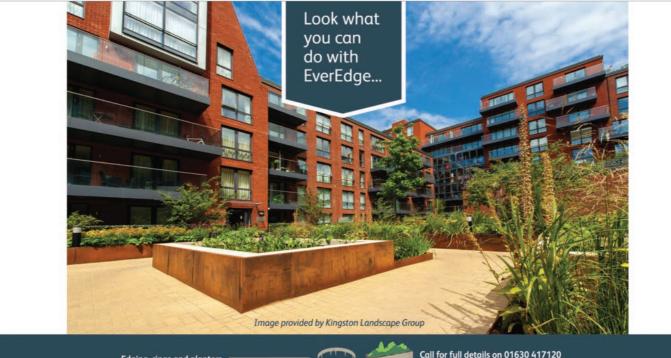
Staggering number of new products



Talasey Group has introduced a plethora of new products and services to their 2019 brochure. The company has spent the past year further diversifying its product portfolio and launching its bespoke training facility, Talasey Training Academy (TTA). Talasey Group's 2019 brochure, is a testament to their core values and commitment to the landscaping industry.

offering more landscaping materials, colours, styles and sizes, which satisfy customer demands. The Italian porcelain paving range, Vitripiazza has seen the most change, due to the recent demand for the material. Recognising this demand, Talasey Group decided to expand its product offering, with 12 new Vitripiazza ranges, a whopping 48 new SKU's!

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Snickers' NEW Street-Smart Stretch Trousers



These NEW slim-fit stretch trousers deliver extreme working comfort. Hi-tech fabrics and body-mapping designs in the NEW FlexiWork SoftShell Trousers from Snickers Workwear ensure maximum working mobility wherever you are. The brand new four-way stretch comfort fabrics integrated into these Work Trousers deliver enhanced freedom of movement as well as improved ventilation and overall comfort. With great fit and superb value for money, they also have a

slimmer tailored fit for better all-round looks and protection against snagging, plus Armortex Kevlar reinforced stretch fabric in the KneeGuard Pro System for greater flexibility, comfort and durability.

info@snickersworkwear.co.uk

The NEW Mini Pocket Spirit Levels



It's always been Hultafors Tools' vision to give professional tradesmen and women the best quality tools for optimal on-site performance. That's why these NEW Mini Pocket spirit levels have now been added to its range of best in class levelling and marking equipment. The ergonomic design includes a crush-proof vial with a +60 per cent magnifying effect and luminescent effect for easy reading in light or dark conditions. There's also a

strong protective casing and, what's more the magnetic version is ideal for accurate vertical measuring. Both new models look great and, added to all the other products in the Hultafors' range, there's something to suit every conceivable levelling requirement.

www.hultafors.co.uk



Maxtop launches next generation worktops

Unique modular quartz surface specialist, Maxtop Quartz, has revealed the next generation of its one-of-a-kind worktops, complete with a seamless finish, stylish 1.5mm bevelled edge and now including marble-effect finishes. Over the last 12 months the company has invested £2m into building a purpose-built factory in China to manufacture the new product, which is being hailed an 'extraordinary engineering feat' by those in the industry. Historically, each Maxtop surface required four separate pieces of quartz edge to be assembled around the patented honeycomb interior to create the worktop. Now, thanks to the company's significant investment in R&D, the new generation of product utilises just one solid piece of quartz to encase the lightweight centre, streamlining the manufacturing process and guaranteeing a seamless look and finish.

The 1.5mm bevelled edge is a subtle yet effective alteration, half the depth it was on the original Maxtop surfaces. As before, all Maxtop Quartz surfaces are 40mm thick and made from solid quartz. Yet, unlike heavy solid stone alternatives, the unique interior makes it much simpler to handle and install, reducing characteristics typically associated with solid surfaces, such as time, cost and order/installation time.

enquiries@maxtopquartz.co.uk www.maxtopquartz.co.uk



Freefoam launch new vinyl flooring

Freefoam Building Products are delighted to announce the launch of a Luxury Vinyl Composite Flooring system, KlicKer Flooring. The newest generation of high quality resilient luxury vinyl flooring manufactured with three layers to create a solid long lasting 5.85mm board resistant to abrasion and impact. With a base layer of 1.5mm preattached IXPE underlay, a middle layer of rigid 3.8mm Bamboo PVC Composite and top layer of protected vinyl KlicKer flooring is a product designed to withstand the rigors of today's homes and commercial properties. Designed with installers in mind KlicKer flooring is quick, easy and straightforward to fit. Expertly engineered with a Valinge style fitting system to click and lock both short and long sides of boards or tiles - meaning no glue is required. Incredibly flexible for refurbishment purposes, flooring can be fitted over existing concrete, ceramic or wood flooring. Suitable for use in a wide variety of situations KlicKer flooring comes with stability built in. Incorporating a top vinyl layer to give an extremely stable product with high resistance to drop loads, static loads, temperature fluctuation and guaranteed to be 100 per cent waterproof. Available in a choice of 610mm x 305mm tiles or 1200mm x 181mm planks KlicKer flooring comes in a wide variety of finishes including Onyx, Slate, Concrete and Wood effect.

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A quick and easy to install roof drain



Dallmer Ltd will once again be showcasing its range of Renova roof drains at the RCI Show 2019. Compatible with all types of roofing systems, the Renova drains are quick and easy to install. The drain is simply pushed into the existing pipework, with no tools needed. Rubber rings provide individual seals and guard against backflow, leakage and possible water damage. Constructed of polypropylene, the Renova

drains offer excellent durability and are resistant to UV rays and extreme weather. Come and see us on stand B7 to find out more.

01787 248244 www.dallmer.com

Artisan Panel doors for luxury homes



Door manufacturer, Ahmarra have supplied bespoke panel doors for a number of striking high-end residential properties from their Artisan Panel Door Collection. The Artisan range has been designed specifically for architects, developers and interior designers working in the

luxury residential sector and offers a wide choice of door and panel designs. Proud to fly the flag for British craftsmanship, the Artisan Panel Door Collection offers the very best quality in terms of design and materials. View the brochure or browse the online 'Panel Door Product Selector'.

02392 389 076 www.ahmarra.co.uk



FIRE DOOR HARDWARE

As important as the door

A fire door is an essential part of a building's passive fire protection system. A critical component of every fire door is the hardware on it.





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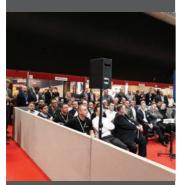
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SHOW PREVIEW

DISCOVER SOLUTIONS TO ALL RCI CHALLENGES

The RCI Show returns to the Ricoh Arena, Coventry on 27-28 March, bringing together all the latest trends, technologies, legislation and issues influencing the market.



he RCI Show is the largest UK event bringing together the entire roofing, cladding and insulation supply chain, allowing visitors to compare and source new products, learn from the experts and hear about the important issues currently impacting the market. Visitors to the show can find construction

Visitors to the show can find construction products and services, including rainwater systems, plant & tools, the latest materials, safety equipment and green roofs, plus much more. The RCI show also gives visitors the opportunity to speak to the experts, try out some products and discover how they can benefit their business. The event is free to attend, and visitors are encouraged to preregister via the website.

The RCI Show will comprise three key elements to make it easy to find the information that is most relevant for our visitors: a keynote conference programme from industry leaders, practical RIBA approved CPD seminars, and an exhibition of leading suppliers.

If visitors are keen to find out the benefits and opportunities for off-site construction? Or perhaps they want to discover the latest developments in Green Roofing? Then the new RCI conference is the place to find these answers. Vivalda Group chairman, Peter Johnson, will highlight the opportunities and benefits that off-site fabrication offers the construction industry.

Peter Johnson will discuss the challenges of successfully delivering off-site fabrication, supply chain readiness and lessons learned from other market sectors. Day two of the show kicks off with

Dusty Gedge, from the Green Infrastructure Consultancy discussing the evolution of the green roofing market. Dusty will highlight what factors are driving the market and where the innovations and opportunities lie to increase usage in the UK construction industry.

Other conference highlights include an interactive panel debate discussing how Brexit might affect your business, Willmott Dixon will look at tackling the stigma surrounding mental health in the construction industry, while ITP will look at the implications of the changes to Building Regulations in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

The RCI show's popular CPD seminars are designed to encourage professional development within the industry. Sessions can be pre-booked by all visitors and the programme includes content delivered by the BBA, Monier Redland, Marley Alutec, Surespan, and many more.

But nothing beats face-to-face discussions, so visit the RCI Show to source new supply chain partners and build new relationships. The 2019 show brings together an impressive number of suppliers, manufacturers and industry supporting organisations. Many of the exhibitors will run live demonstrations of tools and systems on their stands. Alongside the main exhibition there will be several feature exhibits to inspire and enthuse.

Online registration is open, allowing visitors to tailor their agenda to meet their own specific business requirements. Pre-registration is advised to secure a place at the conference and CPD seminars.



WHAT DOES YOUR FREE VISITOR BADGE ENTITLE YOU TO?

- Access to exhibitors covering the roofing, cladding & insulation sector
- Attendance to keynote conference sessions from industry experts
- Entry to the RIBAaccredited CPD seminars
- Free parking and free wifi at this centrally-located venue

To register for the RCI show and secure a place at the Conference and CPD seminars visit

WWW.RCISHOW.CO.UK

To keep in touch with the RCI show follow us on Twitter

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Door closer's fire credentials enhanced

Samuel Heath's commitment to ensuring that its Powermatic controlled, concealed door closers provide the ultimate assurance in quality and performance has been further underlined with the successful completion of additional full-sized fire testing on both timber and steel fire doors at renowned testing laboratory, Exova Warrington Fire. 30-minute testing in accordance with BS EN 1634-1 was undertaken on a timber fire door constructed with a Halspan core to replace Powermatic's current small-scale indicative testing for the BS476 assessment. The door set easily achieved the 30-minute test requirements, continuing until final failure occurred at 42 minutes. Significantly, where most timber door fire tests fail due to failure of the hinge/timber joint, which causes the door to drop and intumescent seal to break at the top of the door, Powermatic was actually shown to hold the door in place after the hinge/timber joint failure. This is attributed to the design, strength and location of Powermatic, which fits in a similar position to hinges, between the door and door frame. Most notably though, and in common with other fire tests including Powermatic, there was no evidence of any significant heat transfer in the vicinity where the closer was installed. The uninsulated steel door passed the four-hour test comfortably.

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The world's most advanced collated screw system just got even better!

Simpson Strong-Tie's Quik Drive auto-feed system is a significantly faster way to install screws. With a multitude of modular fittings and screws for a huge range of purposes, there is a Quik Drive kit to suit just about every application – from drywall installation to mezzanine floor construction. A perfect alternative to traditional nailing and screwing. The ergonomic design allows the installation of screws into walls, floors and ceilings without the need for bending, stretching or crouching. Which means not only can the system operate for several hours at a time – so can you. The Quik Drive system fits onto all leading dry wall drivers with just a click. The patented screw strips are designed to avoid jamming, and unlike many collated screw strips, a partially used one can be saved for reuse later – so it's cost effective too. Sales Manager, Phil Chambers, explains: "The Quik Drive system has been on my radar for some time, it's not just fast, it's really (really) simple to use. It's great to see the lights go on in peoples mind when they give it a try." In addition to Phil conducting Quik Drive demonstrations throughout the UK, an all-new catalogue now features additional Quik Drive equipment and collated screws, including some tools that can be used to install construction connectors.

01827 255600 www.strongtie.co.uk



CHANGE IS IN THE AIR

In the wake of the Hackitt review, Paul King of Vicaima explains the changing landscape around fire doors.

overnment departments are poring over technical data and preparing new directives, and trade bodies are examining every aspect of potential market implications. No, this is not another missive on Brexit, but the reality of the changing world concerning fire doors and related risk-critical products. Change is in the air, and everyone should be aware of the urgent need to specify truly compliant products that play a significant role in ensuring safety.

Following the tragic events of the Grenfell disaster in 2017, a greater understanding began to emerge regarding the lack of a holistic approach to fire safety and the evident shortcomings of custom and practice where the cheapest option took precedence over properly certified and tested fire safe product solutions, such as fire doors and fire door assemblies.

The recently published document 'Building a Safer Future' commits the Government to a programme of reform which includes:

- the implementation of the Hackitt recommendations
- creation of a more effective regulatory and accountability framework
- the introduction of clearer standards and guidance
- a vision to create a culture change.

The result of these actions will mean tougher sanctions for those who disregard residents' safety, and more rigorous standards. In fact, the Government has committed to carrying out a full technical review of Approved Document B. This will propose potential changes to a range of technical issues within the current Approved Document.

While we await the inevitable alterations to legislation and good practice, it is encouraging to learn that Dame Judith Hackitt's independent recommendations will form a cornerstone of the changes to come, shaping future product specification, installation and ongoing use throughout the life cycle of buildings.

For housebuilders and developers struggling to evaluate fire door solutions in this changing world, especially in respect to residential high-rise and complex buildings, answers are at hand. It is important to recognise that there are existing, reputable and long-standing timber fire door manufacturers who are able to provide certified performance products with exceptional test evidence and who already incorporate key elements of Hackitt's recommendations as a matter of course. For the specifier, it is simply a matter of checking the facts and looking for evidence rather than accepting often dubious and unsubstantiated claims.

Perhaps one of the most obvious and visible routes to take is to check for third party accreditation. A key element of the Hackitt recommendations was the use of third-party accreditation, and schemes such as BWF-Certifire and BM TRADA Q-Mark ensure that independent auditing of fire doors takes place on a regular basis.

Furthermore, doors within these schemes carry clear identification marks - on every fire door and not just on the packaging. In these examples traceability is always visible, with the use of tamper evident labels and plastic plugs to provide clear understanding of fire rating and origin of manufacture. This simple but effective marking ensures that the performance rating i.e. FD30, FD60 etc. is clear to all. Of course, reputable fire door manufacturers have nothing to hide, and so you should also expect to see a detailed inkjet stamp system on the door, to identify product description, exact date of manufacture and production batch, thereby establishing complete control of products throughout their lifecycle.

The fire door in itself does not provide the complete solution; this can only be achieved with compatible and rigorously tested components, including the correct frame and ironmongery. This is why, alongside fire doors, doorset and kit solutions need to be considered. Doorsets represent a growing trend, advocated by Government and industry as the way to ensure the whole system is safe and compliant.

The specification of fire doors for housebuilders and developers often goes hand in hand with other performance characteristics such as acoustics, security, environmental factors, and design. The performance fire door manufacturer chosen should also be able to demonstrate capability with tried and tested solutions to these and other features, if the fire doors offered are to be suitable as well as safe for modern residential applications. These solutions should include:

- Secured by Design (SBD) approved products
- acoustic performance, both inherent and additional as required
- durability with DD171 and EN 1192 severe duty rating, class 4
- Part M mobility provision via glazing and dimensional flexibility
- environmentally robust credentials, such as FSC Certified.

Last, and by no means least, specifying certified and tested performance fire doors and doorsets does not equate to settling for simple painted or moulded patterns, associated with past generations. There is a wealth of well-designed fire doors to choose from in finishes such as finish foil, veneer, laminates and precision lacquered surfaces. Whether you are looking for a fashion-conscious designer product or a cost-effective answer for your next project, the variety is almost endless.

Whatever future regulatory changes lie in store for the industry, you can be assured that there are manufacturers out there who can deliver not just words, but supportable evidence. So, if you want peace of mind and a safer tomorrow, don't compromise.

Paul King is marketing director at Vicaima



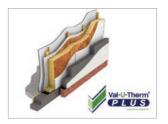
THE GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED TO CARRYING OUT A FULL TECHNICAL REVIEW OF APPROVED DOCUMENT B WHICH WILL PROPOSE CHANGES

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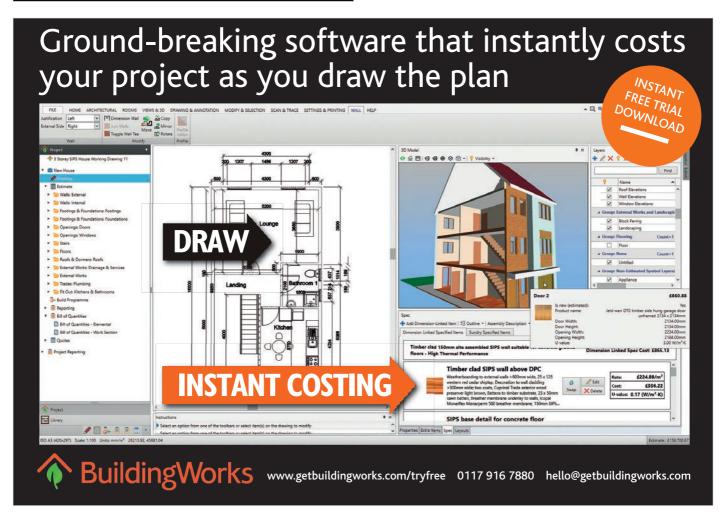
Structural solution helps cut costs



A survey and design exercise by a leading structural engineering practice has helped reduce costs and transform a disused mill into a luxurious new residential accommodation building. Greater Manchester-based Rhodes & Partners undertook the work on the Grade II

listed building in Derbyshire, and devised a solution which helped minimise the need for costly temporary work by utilising as much of the original structure as possible. Rhodes & Partners' Technical Director, Peter Graham explains: "Part of the structure had suffered a high degree of deflection, but we were able to design a detailed system of cross-bracing which stabilised the building and allowed the refurbishment to proceed."

0161 427 8388 www.rhodesandpartners.co.uk



BIM FOR ALL

Adrian Wild, founder of Integro Construction Software, looks at why smaller housebuilders and developers are missing out on practical BIM software solutions which could bring a range of benefits.

Reature-heavy CAD and Building Information Modelling software products are popular with a number of large housebuilders. Their high-end construction projects in particular merit the investment in time, money and manpower necessary to get the maximum firepower from their software solution.

But then there are the housebuilders who don't require this level of complexity. They don't require COBIE outputs or IFC linked systems, and neither do they need many of the other features on offer. For them, such a product may be impractical.

It was not so long ago that businesses were constructing new homes using half a dozen drawings and a few Spec, Building Regulation Notes, and Standard sections. Yet today, in the name of progress, they're being asked to adopt multiple software systems to run their businesses.

Paradoxically, in the short term anyway, this digital transformation is looking more time-consuming and difficult than a drawing board and a scale rule.

So what's the alternative? Where is the shopping list of 'practical BIM' solutions for housebuilders to pick and choose from – user-friendly integrated packages that will make life easier, more accurate and more profitable? Well, they are few and far between.

SLOW SOFTWARE TAKE UP

Construction is considered one of the least digitised industries in the UK, but the fault doesn't necessarily lie with housebuilders themselves. With very little choice, there's not much to motivate this huge swathe of the industry to embrace a

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digital transformation.

But then the 'BIM' acronym doesn't help the cause either. For some, it sounds high risk and expensive, especially when margins are tight anyway. 'Digital construction' better conveys the use of data-rich objects. It does what it says on the tin, describing what is essentially a less scary, more userfriendly, start-to-finish process.

WHAT HOUSEBUILDERS REALLY WANT

Most housebuilders and developers want a straightforward system that will seamlessly share one set of high-quality data throughout each stage of a build lifecycle.

'System' doesn't mean compatible software products requiring importing and exporting. The ideal practical BIM delivery model is one piece of software that literally costs a design in real-time as the user designs it. And interestingly, not even the big software names can offer that.

Housebuilders want office-based time savings. They want efficiencies in building, reduced time to build, capital cost savings, and fewer errors as the project passes between stakeholders – e.g. designer to estimator.

They also want instant results. Housebuilders can benefit enormously from integrating data-rich model and project information databases to build a virtual representation of a house type and all of its assets – in hours, not days and weeks. It would make the concept of quickly assessing the feasibility of a

scheme a reality too.

Then there's mission critical work which definitely requires agile tools. Imagine a small housing development with four house types that all need customisation to meet the requirements of the local authority – aesthetics like stone facing, specific parking rules, and so on. They need to be able to accommodate these changes quickly.

Being able to see the impact of their alterations in real-time could be a game changer. Digital construction should be all about making truly smart optioneering decisions. Analysing the effects of design and specification decisions on project cost and energy performance – as the changes are being made – is likely to be on any housebuilder's wish list.

IT STARTS HERE

So bring on the market challengers, bring on the competition. It's healthy for everyone – it encourages innovation, speeds up idea generation, and stimulates good customer service.

Ultimately, a digitally transformed sector can bring down the cost of construction – making homes more affordable and energy efficient. That's got to be worth the research and development.

And if there is already another affordable data-rich CAD estimating system in the UK, the industry will be all the better for it.

Adrian Wild is founder of Integro Construction Software's BuildingWorks, and is involved in cross-industry group Bim4Housing





SHOW PREVIEW

TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT STONE AND HARD SURFACES

The Natural Stone Show takes place at London's ExCel from 30 April – 2 May, as a dedicated UK event which is particularly relevant for the current housebuilding boom.

A ll over the country British quarries are busy supplying walling stone to housing developers and self-builders. There is no doubt people like stone houses, and they sell quickly, often at a premium.

With stone sawn, cropped and tumbled these days, so that bricklayers can use it, the extra cost of a finished building with stone walls is minimal. Even developments for social housing are using it in order to benefit from its long-term low maintenance.

Demand is unlikely to fall, either, as the industry gears up to try to deliver the 300,000 extra dwellings a year by the mid-2020s that the Government has committed to.

If you want to see British stones available for building, there are more than ever at the Natural Show, at London at ExCeL from 30 April-2 May, featuring products from Albion Stone, Lovell Stone Group, Johnston Quarry Group, Stamford Stone Company, Johnsons Wellfield Quarries, Welsh Slate, Bath Stone Group and others.

As well as high profile stones such as Portland, Purbeck and Bath, there are many others which may be less well known outside the stone industry – such as Ham Hill, Chilmark, Chicksgrove, blue and white lias from Somerset, Hurdcott Green and Crosland Hill. Some of them will be seen in the 'Stone Village' run by Stone Federation Great Britain, once again at the heart of the exhibition, where experts will be at hand to answer all your stone-related queries.

Example applications including walls, flooring,

and architectural details such as door and window frames, quoins, string courses, plinths, as well as fireplaces and hard landscaping, will be on show.

With housebuilding a leading growth area of construction, it is not just indigenous stone that benefits. Limestone floors, or perhaps slate, travertine or marble, are possible, especially with underfloor heating, and granite or quartz kitchen worktops are a common feature. Maybe there will be a stone fire surround and mantlepiece. In the bathroom, marble worktops and matching shower linings or bath surrounds (perhaps bookmatched for real impact) are the latest must-haves.

The stone industry has also expanded its repertoire with engineered stone. In recognition of this, the show is for the first time co-locating with Hard Surfaces, an exhibition for quartz, ultracompact sintered surfaces, and porcelains from companies such as CRL Stone, Caesarstone, Quartzforms, Sapienstone, Ceramiche Keope, Ceramica Fondovalle, Pyro + Echo, Infinity, Stone Italiana, Porcelain Slabs, and Nerostein. Hard Surfaces will also feature 135 of the latest innovations, curated by MaterialDistrict, a leading materials match-making platform.

There are also galleries of the award-winning projects in both the Natural Stone Awards and the Tile Awards to demonstrate just what can be achieved in natural and engineered stone. Lastly, a CPD-accredited programme associated with the exhibition contains around 50 seminars.

Find out more and keep up-to-date with all the latest show news at **WWW.STONESHOW.CO.UK** as well as at the site for co-located show **WWW.HARDSURFACES.CO.UK**Get your free ticket now at: **BIT.LY/STONESHOW2019**

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