



The Industry Advocate: Brian Berry takes a hard look at the effects of poor workmanship



CABE's Gavin Dunn uncovers the continued issues around the Performance Gap



Case Study: CODA brings a modern take on Victorian back-to-back housing to Sheffield

06.19

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James Parker

# FROM THE EDITOR

A recent event held by think tank Policy Exchange heralded a rarely seen thing – consensus from politicians from left and right of the spectrum. The subject? A potential means to solve the ongoing problems of land shortages when it comes to addressing the UK's housing crisis. It saw Oliver Letwin MP (and leader of the Government's review into housebuilding) suggesting that we build "millennial towns" on the green belt around London.

Labour's shadow Housing Minister Alex Cunningham agreed that such a policy was the way forward, however speakers admitted that NIMBYism remained a major challenge. He also criticised the fact that there had been a lot of encouragement for 'garden cities' from Government, with proportionally little action on the ground to back it up.

The problem for such initiatives remains where to site these new settlements, with a host of stakeholder issues and investment wrangles to contend with. Making new towns use land in the most efficient way possible, without compromising amenities for residents (ideally enhancing them), seems the best solution for all concerned.

An example of this, featured in this month's case study on page 22, sees Coda Architects working with developer Phillip Prince to provide a scheme in Waverley, a new town near Rotherham. The Sky-House project, which has sold quickly so far, follows the principle of "sensitively dense communities," and echoes Victorian back-to-back housing. What the homes sacrifice in terms of access, they gain in providing shared play space to the front for families.

The two and four-bed homes form a sandwich of three-storey terraces with sawtooth roofs that emulate past industry of the area, and as such may not appeal to those seeking an archetypal 'house' in its own plot. However, they offer a compelling combination of affordability, a sensible use of land, contemporary architecture, and sustainability. Their brick facades, combined with zinc roofs and aluminium windows, offer a sense of the familiar as well as a more modern edge – which has helped them get a warm reception so far from a range of buyers.

This is not your average scheme, and may make for food for thought for others struggling to provide the floor space in similar settings. We'd be very interested to hear from developers (particularly SMEs) looking at providing new schemes which might be outside the norm, for potential coverage in Housebuilder & Developer. Please contact me with any schemes for consideration, at [jparker@netmagmedia.co.uk](mailto:jparker@netmagmedia.co.uk)

*James Parker*

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## ON THE COVER



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**HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER**



**21ST CENTURY ART DECO IN NYC**

Rockefeller Group begins planning luxury apartments in Rose Hill, a 45-storey tower in Manhattan's NoMad district which blends 1920s style with New York attitude

Rose Hill, Rockefeller Group.  
Images courtesy of Pandiscio  
Green and Recent Spaces.  
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# UK housing sector welcomes Japan's largest housebuilder

Japan's biggest housebuilder is moving into the UK housing after striking a £90m deal with Homes England and Urban Splash to deliver thousands of new homes across England.

Sekisui House is one of the world's leading housebuilders, being a reported pioneer of modern methods of construction (MMC).

Facilitated by JLL, the deal comprises new investment totalling £55m into Urban Splash's modular 'House' development business, representing a 35 per cent stake. 'House' is expected to deliver thousands of homes across England using MMC.

The Japanese housebuilder has invested £22m of new equity, with £30m of equity and debt funding coming from the Government's Home Building Fund through Homes England.

Yoshihiro Nakai, president and representative director of Sekisui House, commented: "We are extremely pleased to be able to work together with Homes England and Urban Splash to establish our operations and help to create outstanding communities in the UK.

"Using modern methods of construction to build high quality homes with short build times is one of our company's great strengths. Our technology and know-how can help resolve pressing social issues in the UK, and I want to see us play our part effectively immediately. These operations can also help bring vitality to UK regions, and we will work to make the strongest connections with the local communities."

Tom Bloxham MBE, chairman of Urban Splash, also commented: "We believe that there is a real opportunity in the UK house-building industry. We hope to leverage our 25 years of place-making experience and our recent investments into modular housing by bringing in new partners; having looked far and wide we chose Sekisui House because of the company's unrivalled global experience in modular construction and shared values and philosophy – that we are making homes not units – and a joint belief in the need for a green future."

## Council house-building at highest level for 34 years in London

A record-breaking number of new council homes were built in London last year – the most in 34 years. This includes a record number of affordable homes with City Hall's support.

The new statistics show that 14,544 affordable homes were started in the year 2018/19 – which according to City Hall is more than in any year since the body took control of housing investment in the capital, and exceeding the target of 14,000 agreed with Government ministers.

This total reportedly includes more homes at social rent levels than ever before (3,991) and 1,916 council homes – more than in any year since 1984/85.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, commented: "These record-breaking figures show that focusing on building council and social rented homes for Londoners is the right way to tackle the capital's housing crisis."

He continued: "My Building Council Homes for Londoners programme has made huge progress already – with more council homes started than in any year since 1985. Councils are beginning to build again after decades of their hands being tied behind their backs – but national Government needs to match our ambition and determination to deliver the homes Londoners so urgently need."

## LA funding to enable 4,000 new homes

It has been confirmed that £55m has been awarded to 12 local authorities by Homes England, to deliver 4,000 homes on sites across England.

Awarded through the Government's £450m Local Authority Accelerated Construction (LAAC) Programme, the money will support local authorities in preparing sites for development, covering aspects including infrastructure and enabling works, as well as planning,

technical expertise and site remediation.

The LAAC programme is stated to prioritise the use of modern methods of construction, which is hoped will increase the pace of delivery across the developments involved by an average of 40 per cent.

Stephen Kinsella, executive director for Land at Homes England, commented: "This funding will enable local authorities to accelerate housing delivery by enabling them to prepare sites for development and bring forward the construction of new homes incorporating modern methods of construction."

The first of the developments will start on site later this year.

## New homes continue to rise, reports NHBC

More than 13,500 new homes were registered to be built in the UK in April, according to the latest figures from NHBC – an increase of 21 per cent compared to a year ago.

13,527 new homes were registered (9,972 private sector; 3,555 affordable and rental sector) compared to 11,218 a year ago (7,427 private sector; 3,791 affordable and rental sector).

Seven of the 12 UK regions saw an increase, with London seeing another considerable rise in registrations – up 61 per cent (5,475 in 2019 / 3,397 in 2018). This is reportedly being driven by growth in the numbers of larger developments and an "increased appetite in the private rental sector." In addition, NHBC believes the strong level of growth compared to April last year is partly due to the impact of the very cold weather in spring 2018.

Looked at over a rolling quarter, 38,496 new homes were registered to be built compared to 36,042 in the same February – April period last year. The private sector was up 4 per cent (27,881 in 2019 / 26,754 in 2018), with the affordable and rental sector up 14 per cent (10,615 in 2019 / 9,288 in 2018).

Commenting on the new figures, NHBC chief executive Steve Wood said: "It is great to see another strong month for new home registrations. To date, there is little evidence that Brexit uncertainties are denting developer confidence, whilst the continued flow of inward investment into the private rental sector is another good sign of resilience."

# Legal & General launches retirement sector developer



A new 'urban later living' developer and operator is being launched as part of an expansion of Legal & General.

Named Guild Living, the company plans to deliver over 3,000 new homes over the next five years, equating to a gross development value of around £2bn. The homes, aimed at the over 65s, will also focus on social and mental activation in order to combat loneliness.

Reportedly inspired by the UK's ageing population, and the fact that the world's population are continually moving towards urban areas, the new company is a partnership between Legal & General and a team of global experts in design, development and wellness.

Guild Living has launched with two sites. These are a 4.5 acre river frontage site in Bath city centre, and a 2.7 acre site in Epsom, Surrey. Hosting a 'Guild Living community,' each site includes around 200 apartments and a restaurant, plus a physiotherapy gym and pool, consultant rooms for GP surgeries, a children's nursery and retail space for local businesses – all of which will be open to the local community. In Epsom, the new scheme will include keyworker units and transitional care suites, available to the NHS as and when required.

"Phil Bayliss, CEO of Later Living at Legal & General and chairman at Guild Living, explained further: "With over three million over 60s in UK seeking to downsize their homes, we see a £100bn investment opportunity. 84 per cent of the UK population lives in urban areas and we expect retirees to continue to migrate to UK towns and cities to enjoy all the local

amenities they have to offer as well as to be closer to their loved ones and transport links.

"We are establishing the Guild to address this staggering opportunity and tackle the NHS and care crisis head on. This forms an excellent extension of Legal & General's retirement ecosystem. Nobody knows UK pensioners better; we are the largest UK manager of pension scheme assets, have over three million DC pension scheme customers and pay over one million pensioners a month. Through Guild Living and together with our existing out-of-town offering, we will now be delivering over 7,000 later living homes over the next five years."

## Housing crisis is worsening, says councillors

Local councillors feel that the housing crisis is getting worse, according to a survey of 344 planning committee members nationwide.

Newgate's Planning Committee Barometer suggested that challenging relationships within the planning system are 'stymying' the UK's ability to tackle the issue.

62 per cent of councillors surveyed think the housing crisis is getting worse – a figure that rises to 81 per cent in the North East and 73 per cent in London, and 68 per cent of councillors think housing supply is either "severely lacking" or "could do with a little more."

Alongside this, 40 per cent of respondents had voted against officers' recommendations 3-5 times in the past 12 months.

75 per cent of respondents reported that they believe viability assessments are being used by developers to avoid planning obligations, rising from 60 per cent last year, while 65 per cent of councillors blamed slow build-out rates on developers – an increase of 14 per cent from 2018.

Reportedly a significant shift from last year, the number of respondents who cited strength of community opposition as a challenge to delivery more than doubled (18 per cent in 2018, 41 per cent in 2019).

Meanwhile, in what Newgate believes is a sign that council attitudes to green belt development could be softening, only 14 per cent of respondents saw preserving the green belt as a priority, down 4 per cent from last year. However, there was no change in support for a review of the green belt (43 per cent this year and last).

Discussing the findings, Perry Miller,

partner at Newgate Communications, said:

"It's concerning that the blame game is growing at a time when we need to be building such a significant number of homes. There's a disconnect between councillors and housebuilders and it would be no surprise to find these results mirroring each other if you asked the private sector for their opinions on local planning authorities.

"The housing crisis must be tackled together: communication, mutual understanding and trust are vital in delivering schemes that work for everyone – not least, local communities."

## Discounted homes receive Government support



Thousands of discounted homes are to be delivered though an £8.5m support package launched by Housing Minister Kit Malthouse.

Volunteer groups will be able to apply for between £10,000 and £50,000 to help identify suitable sites for discounted homes – properties built for people to buy at affordable rates – as well as get planning permission for them and to provide technical support.

The Government will be making the money available as a three year pilot project, which it hopes will help to provide cut-price homes for younger people and families in need of housing through locally-led neighbourhood plans.

Minister of State for Housing, Kit Malthouse, commented on the announcement: "Supporting volunteers who are passionate about building more of the homes we need in their communities is something I'm fully behind, and I want to see far more people getting involved across England.

"This funding is on top of the £26m already available to help get neighbourhood plans over the line, which act as powerful tools for communities to be involved in the planning of their local area – providing different housing types for those who need new homes."



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# Contract values down in April, review finds



The value of all construction contract awards in April 2019 was £5.2bn, a decrease of 2.1 per cent year on year, according to Barbour ABI's latest edition of the

Economic & Construction Market Review.

The Review did find however that the number of contract awards increased by 26 per cent in April, which indicates the

volume of projects awarded must be at a lower value than March.

The north west had the largest share of contract awards in April at 15.7 per cent, which was closely followed by London with a 15.2 per cent share. The only other region to obtain more than a 10 per cent share of contract awards in April was the south east, with 14 per cent.

Following the trend for the quarter, the residential sector had a 55.6 per cent share of all construction contract awards. This meant that all remaining sectors accounted for a significantly smaller share of contract awards this in April, with infrastructure the second largest sector with a 14.3 per cent share. The third largest sector was industrial, with a 12.6 per cent share.

Commenting on the figures, Tom Hall, chief economist at Barbour ABI, said: "Despite a fall in value of contracts awarded in April, it is encouraging to see a significant increase in number of projects awarded. Annual comparisons show that the number of contract awards for April 2019 is at the same level as April 2018. So far, 2019 has seen contract awards maintain a somewhat steady level between £5.2bn and £5.4bn, demonstrating the potential for steady underlying output growth for the rest of the year."

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# Springfield is first UK housebuilder to use road made from recycled plastic



What is thought to be the first road built by a UK housebuilder using waste plastic has been completed by Springfield Properties.

The new road is an initiative to introduce a more environmentally friendly asphalt product on its projects, and it will be used initially on a section of road at the company's Linkwood Steadings development in Elgin, Scotland.

The product reduces the amount of bitumen needed in the asphalt mix. For every tonne of bitumen replaced, the road surfacing carbon footprint is reduced by a tonne of carbon dioxide. The new surface looks like a traditional road, however, and thanks to the flexible properties of plastic, it benefits from increased durability and longevity.

The 'landmark' installation marks Springfield out as the first housebuilder in the UK to use recycled materials for its roads. To achieve this, Springfield teamed up with MacRebur, who have developed and patented a way to use waste plastic in roads, alongside asphalt producer Pat Munro. MacRebur uses plastic waste that would otherwise have gone to landfill or incineration. It turns this into granules which are then mixed with a special activator, reducing the amount of fossil fuel required in asphalt production.

It is hoped the progressive measure will act as a catalyst to introducing the product more widely on Springfield developments, as well as inspiring the wider industry to

consider switching to the environmentally friendly asphalt product. Springfield has committed to working with local authorities across Scotland to raise awareness of the benefits of using recycled plastic in roads and facilitate their introduction.

Springfield Properties' northern region managing director Dave Main commented: "Last year, Zero Waste Scotland reported that non-recycled plastic was costing Scotland £11m a year. They also stated that 20 million plastic bottles were littered around Scotland and that 120,000 tonnes of plastic waste was produced by Scottish households alone.

"The road in Elgin accounts for 20 tonnes of recycled plastic, the equivalent to 17,042 plastic bags or 6,000 plastic bottles, which would otherwise have been consigned to landfill or incineration.

"Potholes are an increasing and costly problem which plastic roads could help to address. Between 2014 and 2017, there was a 52 per cent increase in reports of potholes in Scotland alone. MacRebur's plastic roads have been through rigorous tests to meet British and European Standards and are up to 60 per cent stronger than our current roads, which should improve driving quality and reduce maintenance costs."

Springfield has implemented a number of green policies in recent years, including the introduction of cabling for electric vehicle charge points.



## CALA wins in Scotland

The winner of the Private Development Medium category in the Homes for Scotland (HFS) annual awards has been announced as CALA's The Crescent at Donaldson's.

CALA also took the top award of Homebuilder of the Year, as a result of its shortlisting for three different developments across its east and west divisions – as well as its win in the Private Development Small category for Riverside at Bothwell, Lanarkshire.

Philip Hogg, sales and marketing director with CALA Homes (East), commented: "To see The Crescent recognised at such a major event is greatly rewarding – and testament to the efforts put in by our many teams involved, from planning to construction to sales and aftercare.

"On top of this, we must thank many of our key suppliers and partners, who have been integral to the creation of the development – and a notable mention for Richard Murphy Architects who have helped us to create a truly modern take on the iconic Crescent street."

Held at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, the HFS awards aim to showcase the work, talent and innovation within the Scottish property industry.





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Dr Gavin Dunn, chief executive of the Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE)

## COMMENT

# CLOSING THE GAP ON PERFORMANCE

Dr Gavin Dunn from the Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE) says there is still a 'performance gap' between the design of buildings and how they actually perform once built, and looks at how to tackle the issue.

**T**he construction industry has long grappled with the challenges of closing the performance gap between as-designed and as-built building performance.

From energy performance, air quality, ventilation and wellbeing, how can we improve buildings and ensure we are getting the best-performing buildings both now and in the long-term?

The latest journey of improving the energy performance of new build housing began 13 years ago in 2006, when we saw a significant tightening of energy efficiency requirements within the Building Regulations with a shift to targeting carbon emissions. Subsequent step changes in both 2010 and 2013 related to the way we approach calculating and presenting energy compliance. Since then, we have clearly changed the performance of new homes — but there have been unintended consequences that we need to acknowledge, be open about and to fix before we can continue on this journey.

While air quality and overheating are unintended consequences of this, the performance gap in energy usage between building design and operation is one of the key underlying challenges of the industry. It has been a well-known issue and acknowledged by Government since 2012, but sadly we haven't seen any meaningful improvements in that time.

The UK is building more homes, but if we are going to be zero carbon and fully committed to removing traditional fossil fuel heating systems in new homes by 2025 (as per the Future Homes Standard 2025) then now is the time to fix it.

There are a few elements to the performance gap, in terms of compliance predictions and modelling, and the actual operational building use. There are the 'known knowns' which we understand. The energy models make various assumptions and estimations in terms of the way they work, and while there is a method in place to improve the models over time, to a greater extent these calculations do not appear to be a fundamental area of concern because they are well understood, and because within the regulatory process we only ever compare results to other modelled results calculated in

the same way. Any inaccuracies will therefore cancel each other out.

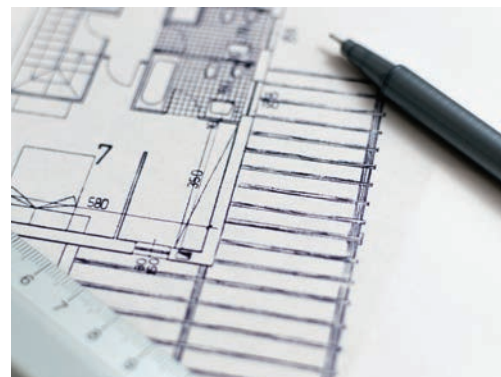
The 'known unknowns' – or rather, the unregulated unknowns – are the differences between what we design and the reality. These are the standard occupancy patterns and assumptions made about how a building will be operated and used, which inevitably differ from how each individual building is actually used by real people (i.e. people all operate their houses differently). This is similar to the 'standardised driving' conditions used in MPG tests on cars. There are also known gaps for which we should not be overly concerned with as we cannot do anything about the fact that people will always use buildings differently.

The most significant area of concern is what I refer to as the 'unknown-unknowns'. Research suggests that even when we account for the 'known knowns' and 'known unknowns' there is still a significant gap between what we design in the models and how buildings actually perform once built. This excess energy use can only be as a result of product substitution on site, poor detailing, and build quality.

## FABRIC FIRST

It would appear that in new UK housing a major factor is the building fabric, particularly as we start to move away from certain fuel types such as natural gas and other fossil fuels which have a very high carbon impact. The decarbonisation of domestic heating and the progressive shift to electric heating will present its own set of

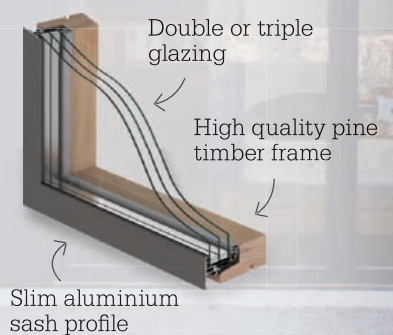
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challenges. It is both relatively expensive as a fuel, and the grid is unlikely to have the capacity for peak heating demand in all UK homes, if we continue to build homes as we currently do.

Therefore, the solution will be to build homes which have a dramatically reduced thermal heat loss through much higher fabric performance than current practice. This is why any additional heat losses through a fabric performance gap will be a huge concern, because if we can't get it right when building to current standards, how much worse is it likely to get when in

the near future we have to start building to even higher thermal standards.

Research shows that on average UK homes are losing 60 per cent more heat through their fabric than would be expected. There are some design, measurement and calculation issues, but the major concern is product substitution and, put simply, we are not consistently building what we design, or we are not detailing the right products in the right places. There are also issues with site skills and workmanship; when you don't build correctly it undermines the good work

carried out in the first place.

As an industry, we have the skills and knowledge to deal with the performance gap, but first we must see a change in the culture onsite and a change in the behaviour of builders with regard to product substitution and paying attention to getting the thermal details built right. There also needs to be significant improvements in how we accurately, and cheaply, measure energy performance.

If the technology was developed that could compare heat loss from homes in a way that is directly comparable to what has been designed, in a way that was accurate, cost-effective and at scale, then this would make housebuilders be aware of the consequences. But also, more importantly, it would be able to tell them if there is a major problem and discover where that problem lies so that they are armed with the information necessary to build homes that actually perform to high standards.

It's critical that we create drivers for this to be taken seriously, and adopt a culture change across the industry. Only then will we end up having homes with low heating demand, which can be driven by small electric heating sources, and stand any chance of meeting both our future housing needs and our national carbon targets.



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Brian Berry, chief executive of the Federation of Master Builders

## THE INDUSTRY ADVOCATE

# TAKING POOR WORKMANSHIP SERIOUSLY

Brian Berry of the Federation of Master Builders discusses how a mandatory licensing scheme has the potential to tackle the rising trend of homeowners reporting serious defects in new-builds.

There is no doubt that the housebuilding sector is under the spotlight. There isn't a week that goes by without coverage of a disappointed new homeowner reporting serious defects in what was supposed to be their dream home. It is also a hot topic for politicians, with many MPs reporting that their postbags are full of complaints from constituents about snagging issues in new builds.

Unfortunately, as we all know, this focus is not unwarranted. According to the Home Builders Federation's and NHBC's 2019 National New Home Survey, 99 per cent of new homeowners reported problems with their new builds including snags and defects (up from 91 per cent in 2012) and 70 per cent of these had over 5 problems, and a quarter had over 16 problems.

It is not surprising then that the Government has made the quality of new builds and consumer redress a key priority, with the announcement of a New Homes Ombudsman and a new single Code of Practice for housebuilders. These are things the FMB supports and believes are a step in the right direction. However, while such steps will help address problems after they have occurred, they will not address the underlying issue of poor workmanship.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Excellence in the Built Environment's report from 2016, 'More Homes, Fewer Complaints' makes clear that the responsibility for the construction of a defect-free house should rest with the housebuilder and not with the regulatory inspectors. The report calls on housebuilders to put consumers at the heart of what they do by creating new mechanisms and a fresh culture at every step of the process. A key ask in this report was for a way of holding developers to account.

The FMB is working with the Government and industry to develop a mandatory licensing scheme for the UK construction industry. While the drive for this came out of the domestic and

repair sector, where rogue traders are rife, we believe that the housebuilding sector would also stand to benefit from such a scheme, and would help address many of the issues raised in the APPG's report.

A mandatory licensing scheme would act as a legally understood signal, a legal minimum that all consumers and businesses would expect. It is not surprising that this has widespread support among consumers with 78 per cent backing it, but construction SMEs do too, with 77 per cent supporting such a scheme according to a survey of FMB members as part of our report 'License to build' issued last year.

A licensing scheme would not only provide a mechanism for housebuilders to demonstrate their own quality and professionalism but would also allow them to quality control their sub-contractors. There would be a publicly assessable database of all licensed construction companies so it would be easy for any housebuilder to check to ensure their sub-contractors have been vetted. If a housebuilder finds that one of its sub-contractors is not up to scratch, and doesn't meet the licensing standards on competency or health and safety, the company could report them to the relevant authority.

Finally, there would be a requirement to renew the license every three years, and this could be used to promote upskilling and continued professional development in areas such as technical competence, regulatory understanding and customer service. It could have the potential to drive a transformation in the culture and professionalism of the construction industry.

If the housebuilding sector were to embrace mandatory licensing, it would send a clear signal to the Government and the general public that housebuilders are taking issues around poor workmanship seriously, and want to create a new mechanism to prevent this happening in the first place. What this would look like in practice we don't yet know, but we are looking at establishing a Licensing Task Force to develop this proposal further.

THE FMB IS WORKING WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP A MANDATORY LICENSING SCHEME





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## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

# The Rockefeller Group builds new Art Deco-style tower for NYC



**R**ose Hill, a luxury residential tower in the NoMad neighbourhood in Manhattan, New York, is commencing sales to customers.

The project is being developed by the Rockefeller Group, which was founded more than 90 years ago to develop the famous Rockefeller Center, and today is an owner and developer of premier properties across various asset types.

Currently under construction at 30 East 29th Street and rising over 600 feet, the new 45-storey full service condominium building looks to offer potential residents classic Art Deco architecture with sophisticated homes, and a full suite of amenities.

In a historic neighbourhood that was once known as Rose Hill (after the 130-acre Rose Hill Farm estate that covered what is now popularly known as NoMad), the building will feature 123 residences starting from \$1.195m, and ranging from

studios to four-bedroom apartments.

Many of the residences will feature substantial private outdoor space, with a collection of penthouses crowning the top floors of the building. The layouts of the homes will include a selection of “unique” floor plans, claim the developers, with inventive “flex” room spaces that can be customised based on the residents’ needs, and altered as their needs change.

With architecture and interior design by CetraRuddy, the project is intended to pay homage to the history of skyscraper architecture, while being created for contemporary urban living. The building is clad in a ‘bronze-tone’ facade, accented by intricate detailing that frames expansive glass windows. Inspired by the Rockefeller Group’s landmark developments, decorative lighting will illuminate the tower’s base and crown.

## INTERIORS

Inside, finishes such as “rusticated” hardwood floors and bronze finished hardware run throughout the residences, and are accompanied by high ceiling heights, with some exceeding 13 feet. Homes have “cinematic” views of New York City and the Manhattan skyline.

Kitchens feature “ultra matte” dark charcoal cabinetry with metal-framed glass upper cabinets and Calacatta Razzi marble countertops. The master bathrooms will offer a “spa-like aesthetic” with Greek Dolomite stonewalls with accent shower walls, and dark marble radiant heated floors. Custom walnut and bronze vanities with marble countertops are combined with aged brass fixtures, and penthouse residences have large soaking tubs.

Providing a sense of openness while also creating privacy, the flex room homes within Rose Hill feature texturised sliding glass doors. Creating the opportunity for residents to customise their home and make a personal imprint, buyers will be able to utilise the space to their liking.

A large selection of amenities will “embrace a communal atmosphere” for residents. This includes a comprehensive health and wellness club, with a 50-foot indoor pool and dry heat wellness sauna, pet salon with grooming tub and table, and resident storage. There is a fully equipped fitness centre plus a professional grade squash court, and on the ground floor is a bike room with an in-house bike repair workshop.

Within the lobby level, residents will have access to an exclusive lobby bar named The Blue Room, which encompasses a hotel-like private lounge and eight-foot-high marble fireplace clad with a bronze finished ornamental screen, as well as a curated library, landscaped garden courtyard, and package and mail room with cold storage.

Additionally, the entire 37th floor of Rose Hill will be home to a private residents club, where residents and their guests can enjoy “penthouse-like” views from the observatory, library, private dining room and various indoor and outdoor landscaped entertaining spaces. A private guest suite will also be available to residents to reserve in advance for friends or family.

The building is located within a short distance to celebrated green spaces such as Madison Square Park and Union Square Park, as well as fine dining establishments. Alongside this, the building is close to a wide variety of subway lines.



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# £3.7m Manchester scheme to tackle homelessness in city



A new £3.7m housing development to prevent homelessness is being launched by Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham and Salford City Mayor Paul Dennett.

The pair will cut the first sod at the new housing development delivered by ForHousing in Salford, which could see up to 39 new homes built for people at risk of becoming homeless.

The homes are being built by landlord ForHousing, and will be let at a low cost 'sub-social' rent, inclusive of all associated utility bills and service charges.

Designed by JDA Architects and to be constructed by Bridgestone Construction, the one-bedroom self-contained apartments are intended to transform three former garage sites in Eccles that had reportedly become hotspots for anti-social behaviour.

Planning approval has been secured at one of the sites, Haddon Road, where work is now underway. Two other sites on Vicars Street and Somerset Road are awaiting approval.

Salford City Mayor Paul Dennett commented: "There is a huge shortage of affordable housing, in particular one-bedroom properties which are so desperately needed.

"These new homes will go a long way to helping people get a roof over their heads. Providing more affordable homes for people to live in continues to be one of my top priorities."

The first site of the development is scheduled for completion in spring 2020, with the other two sites completing in summer 2020.

# Leith development offers modern take on Edinburgh 'colonies'



A style of home that is now part of the fabric of the Scottish capital has been given a modern twist at the new CALA Homes (East) development on Leith's waterfront.

First built in 1850, and widely recognised as a defining feature of Edinburgh's architectural history, colony houses in areas such as Stockbridge and Haymarket are some of the most sought-after homes in the capital.

The upcoming Waterfront Plaza development takes inspiration from this traditional design. The homes at Waterfront Plaza will offer a contemporary approach however, with open plan living areas and large windows creating bright and inviting spaces.

The ground floor comprises a three-bed apartment, with the second and third floors of that apartment's footprint split between two duplex two-bedroom properties. The 'colony' layout and external staircase means that each apartment has its own front door.

A private top floor terrace will be provided for the owners of the upper homes. Many of the colonies will also benefit from a south-facing outlook and views that extend over Leith's famous dockyards.

Due to launch in summer 2019, the new homes will benefit from nearby Michelin-starred restaurants and vibrant bars situated along The Shore, as well as a host of independent shops and boutiques.

Regular bus services and nearby cycle paths provide convenient access to Edinburgh's city centre, and the city bypass is in easy reach, proving access to the M8 and M9, as well as the A90.



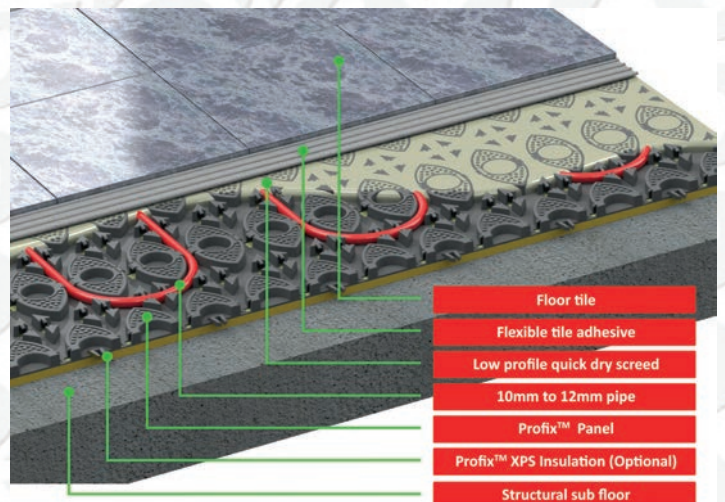


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## CASE STUDY

# Back to the future

A housing development is currently underway in the new town of Waverley, Rotherham, which provides an affordable modern take on Victorian back-to-back housing for first time buyers and families. Jack Wooler spoke to David Cross of Coda Architects, the practice behind the 'Sky-House' concept.

**S**ky-House is a 44-home development in Waverley, a design concept now coming to fruition as a new residential community of 're-imagined' Victorian terraced homes. It is the first of four phases expected to deliver up to 200 starter homes in the area, equidistant between Rotherham, Sheffield and Meadowhall.

The project focuses on combining the light, space and specification of higher-end properties, with the affordable design that allows them to be sold for starter prices.

Named for the private roof gardens that feature on each property, the Sky-House homes will each have their own balcony and courtyard parking. The community will also be centred around a 'pocket park,' providing further outdoor space.

Philip Prince is the developer for the scheme, and Coda are the architects as well as the creators of the new concept. Also taking a supporting role in selecting the development's location was site owner, Harworth Estates, while Redbrik Estate Agents are marketing the properties.

The new concept involves the main tenets of sensitively dense communities, shared play spaces, public, private a semi-private space, roof gardens, floor to ceiling windows, and quality, robust materials —





all while forming affordable community homes.

#### GETTING STARTED

David Cross, co-founder of Coda Architects, explored the concept's origin: "Sky-House was born about 10 years ago as an idea to recreate sensitive density and urban communities."

David said it took "several years of detailed negotiation" with site owners Harworth Estates, who he said "have been amazing in their support to select the right location for us to deliver this unique contemporary development."

Planning permission was granted for the scheme in October 2017. He told Housebuilder & Developer that it has been a long process getting up to this point, taking "five years to get the idea approved by councils and banks, and then five years to buy the site!"

Rotherham did however pass the application in seven weeks, with David adding: "Rotherham Council, Harworth Group and Homes England have been amazing and supported us as a start-up SME developer."

Construction began in spring 2018, with the development process being split into two phases of 22 homes – the first having been delivered in early June this year. Phase 2 is planned for the end of December, and then Site 2, comprising another 44 homes, is set to undergo construction in January 2020.

#### FINDING THE SITE

The project is based in Waverley, a 740-acre development site owned by the Harworth Group. This new town is intended to

deliver mixed-use development in partnership with housebuilders, manufacturers and developers, with over 200 acres of the site dedicated to the public realm, including woodlands, two large lakes and play areas.

The new community is formed from the old Orgreave Colliery coal mine in the Sheffield City Region, and is already host to property for Boeing, McLaren and the University of Sheffield on the Advanced Manufacturing Park, alongside more than 3,000 new homes.

The Sky-House concept is well-suited to this focus on open spaces, both in terms of the homes' interiors and gardens, as well as the shared public play space in between them.

With much of the Victorian back-to-back housing being demolished more than 60 years, the new homes are a far cry from their ancestors in terms of the usable and open spaces, but will however follow their tenet of affordability.

By the time the project had secured the brownfield land Sky-House is to inhabit, the team had reportedly been "shuffled around Waverley" – this in fact being the third site. The architect commented that it was a "bare, remediated site," but that it inspired the team's hopes "to continue and deliver six more phases and over 350 Sky-House homes in various iterations" throughout the eventual development plan.

David reinforced the message that the site is a fitting choice, which he said is because of its close proximity to the new school and new town centre, and as such is "ideal for our brand ethos."

#### THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The back-to-back housing concept that the

**THE NEW HOMES ARE A FAR CRY FROM THEIR ANCESTORS IN TERMS OF THE USABLE AND OPEN SPACES, BUT WILL HOWEVER FOLLOW THEIR TENET OF AFFORDABILITY**



**“WE WANTED  
CONTEMPORARY  
ARCHITECTURE TO BE  
AVAILABLE TO THE FIRST-  
TIME BUYER AND NOT JUST  
THE WEALTHY ELITE!” –  
DAVID CROSS, CODA  
ARCHITECTS**

architects are aiming to re-imagine what was originally conceived in 1838 as a cost-friendly solution designed for homes for workers. In practice, however, the project team have designed a more contemporary take, which David said will “fill the gap between the apartment market and the national housebuilders.”

The first project is made up of 40 two-bed Sky-Houses, and four four-bed end ‘specials,’ all of which include roof terraces. These will all be freehold, though a self-managed management company will look after the communal grounds.

There are four blocks of eleven homes in plan, separated by a small parking courtyard and the pocket park. The homes’ layout are linear and ‘stringing’ in terms of their design, taking reference from the region’s industrial past with locally inspired saw-tooth roofs.

There is small ground floor patio leading off the open plan living area, first floor balcony off the master bedroom, and a rooftop garden off the fourth floor study.

The homes are being traditionally built of brick and mortar, and will include aluminium windows and zinc roofs. The architect added: “These are top quality materials, and not bog standard house-builder specification!”

They will also be highly insulated, both in terms of their air tightness and acoustic treatments, as well as being “naturally low energy by design.”

David explained: “They are low-tech, but low-energy – airtight, with low E appliances and bulbs throughout, and bags of natural light. We didn’t want the houses to be like an aircraft control system to run.”

It is also hoped that the houses will weather over time, “like the timeless classic that is the Victorian Terrace,” said Coda.

#### **HOMES & INTERIORS**

On the inside, also designed by the architects, the homes are designed to be flexible and low-maintenance, “for the busy urban-ite,” as the firm put it.

The ground floors will be open plan, and each home will include a double bed and a bathroom, which David Cross said will be “ideal for families, sharers, downsizers or anyone wanting their own architect-designed ‘Grand Design.’”

With the houses being stacked one room and one bathroom per floor, the architects have created a sense of vertical living, which utilises space efficiently, so families can make the most of the homes.

The interiors will have a modern minimalist feel throughout, and will contain over 840 foot squared of living space each. High gloss white and grey interiors will fill these areas, with storage space considered a priority, including optional fitted wardrobes.

#### **OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS**

Explaining the practice’s ethos when designing the project, David explained: “We wanted contemporary architecture to be available to the first-time buyer and not just the wealthy elite!”

“We have had nothing but good feedback,” he continued, including from “national news, regional news, and approaches from all over the UK to bring Sky-House to their communities.”

The process has been seen to break new ground in development, and as such David commented on the barriers the team have overcome to achieve this: “Five years R&D with banks, valuers and local planners. We’ve ripped up the rulebook to create a totally new market – we wanted to create naturally affordable, beautiful and sustainable homes.”

The architect concluded: “Sky-House has been one of Coda’s most talked about and applauded concepts and one that we feel will fit in perfectly with the Waverley development plan.”

Complete with Help to Buy available, the new Sky-Houses will provide a great opportunity for first time buyers and young families alike, and continues a new trend in the up and coming community of Waverley.



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T R Freeman set to work on contemporary housing development



Roofing and Cladding specialists **T R Freeman** are delighted to have started work on houses at the brand-new 60 home development – Milestones in Poringland, Norfolk. Awarded the contract by house-builder Bennett Homes which has just been named House Builder of the Year for the fifth time in its history, T R Freeman will be installing 0.7mm Falzinc roofing and cladding to the distinguished two, three and four bedroom homes. The contemporary development, which has been architect-designed with a superior specification includes the latest energy efficiency features and spacious open plan living spaces. The use of the Falzinc roofing and cladding gives the development a distinctive appearance – setting it apart from other new homes. The development which is being built by Bennett Homes – an award-winning family-run company which has been creating high quality homes in East Anglia for more than 70 years' – will bring much-needed housing to the area. Located just four miles from the Centre of Norwich, Poringland is home to a host of amenities such as restaurants, supermarkets, schools and medical centres – making it the ideal family location. T R Freeman has completed the first batch of houses on site and will be looking to complete the development by late 2019.

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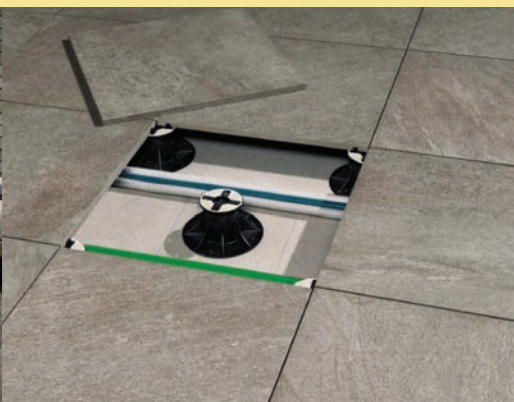


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**I**ncreasingly, window manufacturers are being asked by developers and specifiers about the acoustic performance of windows and doors. All glass has some acoustic ability – even 4 mm single glazed windows reduce noise by about 25 decibels. For optimal performance, specialist acoustic glass is the preferred choice, but housebuilders and developers must decide if it is really necessary, and whether the increased cost is worth it.

## EFFICIENCY & NECESSITY

Mass is the best way to absorb sound, which means that the thicker the glass, the more sound that is absorbed. Windows and doors generally perform less well than walls and roofs, and sound travels through any place where there is air leakage, which means that a window that performs well in an air test also performs well in an acoustic test. Having said this, the same window, poorly fitted, will not perform as well if there is space between the window and the wall.

When it comes to the glass, double and triple glazing provide effective sound-proofing, and argon is preferable to air in the cavity because it is a denser gas. The optimal gas is krypton, but the difference in acoustic performance is marginal.

Very often, the standard annealed glass is sufficient for most purposes, but the best performance is offered by acoustic laminated glass. However, the way in which different frequencies perform is very complicated. An acoustic sound engineer is often employed by housebuilders and developers to advise on this. Acoustic laminated glass takes two layers of annealed glass and laminates them with a special acoustically absorbent plastic (PVB, polyvinyl Butyral) layer in between to give the appearance of a single pane of glass. Thicknesses of acoustic glass can range from 6.8 mm to 16.8 mm with a dB rating of between 35 and 42. Bearing in mind that a reduction of 10 decibels (dB) will halve the perceived sound intensity, the thickest acoustic glass is highly effective, but also only really necessary in the most extreme cases such as when building near an airport runway.

When selecting a window product, it is important to ensure that the whole window has been tested and not just the glass unit. Pricewise, thicker glass is more expensive, as is triple glazing and acoustic laminated glass. Developers should also be wary of suppliers over-engineering products, which can be a fairly common problem for those specifiers that lack the in-depth knowledge and data required for an informed recommendation.

## LEVELS & LOCATION

World Health Organisation guidelines state that a maximum of 40 dB is recommended at night, which corresponds to the sound from a quiet street in a residential area. People exposed to higher levels (55 dB) – similar to the noise from a busy street – over the long term can trigger elevated blood pressure and heart attacks. Acceptable levels in reception rooms and other general living areas are below 50 dB.

Even in a fairly noisy environment in a domestic setting, it may not be necessary to incorporate acoustic glass into every room. The bedrooms which need to be quieter than the kitchen and living areas may be the only rooms that really need it.

Developers do need to consider the location of the development and the specification they are aiming to achieve, however. Low cost housing developments will naturally specify the lowest level of acoustic performance possible to satisfy planning and Part E Building Regulations. A luxury development in the centre of a city or town however might want to provide a higher performance solution.

If there is a measured noise outside of 70 dB and a bedroom inside with a required level of 30 dB, the reduction would be 40 dB. It would require a very high performing window to reduce it by that much. Conversely, if there is a measured sound outside of 55 dB and a living room inside with a required level of 50 dB the reduction of 5 dB could easily be achieved by a single glazed window.

In addition to the sound reduction, acoustic glass has other benefits including impact safety, creating a safe and secure barrier, and UV protection, helping to

reduce fading and the ageing effects of the sun.

## DBA, RW & RW+CTR

dBA is an 'A-weighted decibel,' which means it is an expression of the relative loudness of sounds in air as perceived by the human ear. In the A-weighted system, the decibel values of sounds at low frequencies are reduced compared with unweighted decibels as the ear is less sensitive to low audio frequencies.

Rw is the weighted sound reduction index in decibels, and describes the airborne insulating power of a building element. It can apply to ceilings, walls, doors and windows. The higher the Rw rating the better the sound insulation. Increasing the Rw by one translates to a reduction of about 1 dB in noise level.

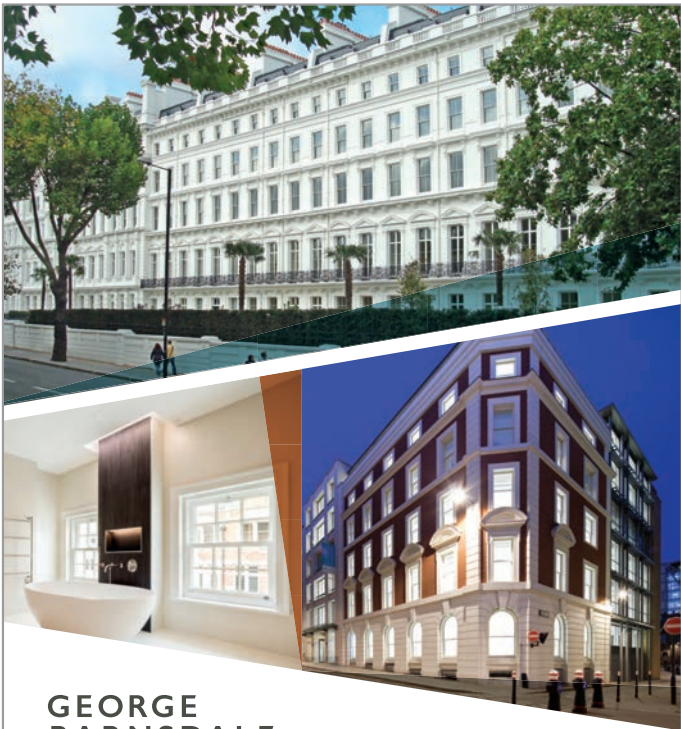
Rw+CTR is an adjustment factor which is used to account for low frequency noise, typically the biggest problem with sound insulation. Rw+Ctr is always a negative number so the Rw+Ctr will in practical terms always be less than the Rw value. For windows in an urban area where there is traffic noise this is the most realistic measure.

## DON'T FORGET LOOKS

It is also important to consider the aesthetic impact of using some of the thickest laminated glass solutions, especially where there is a conservation requirement. Conservation windows and acoustics can be a challenging match!

Tom Wright is managing director at George Barnsdale





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Cromar Flexiglass System has fast become a popular product within the Cromar range as the solution for revitalising an existing roof. The Flexiglass system was in development for a number of years, with the Cromar team working to resolve the time-consuming issue faced by many roofers of having to strip back roofs before applying a liquid system. This new styrene free system can be applied onto roofing felt, asphalt, single ply membranes, metals and existing liquid applied systems – saving time and money. Flexiglass also comes with a multitude of benefits including being UV stable, storm proof, frost proof, impact resistant and foot trafficable. The Flexiglass resin is manufactured using recycled plastics, a great benefit to the environment.

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When an existing building is extended, a key element of the success of any construction project is often based on whether a seamless match in terms of tiling solutions for the roofing space can be found. Marley pulled out the stops recently to help a customer overcome this challenge and complete a roofing project, which included the supply of its brand new classic red smooth acme double camber tile before it had even launched. The Acme Double Camber tiles add a subtle texture to the roof and can assist housebuilders who are striving to create a more rustic aesthetic on new properties, or who want to match in with existing tiles on extensions or refurbishment projects.

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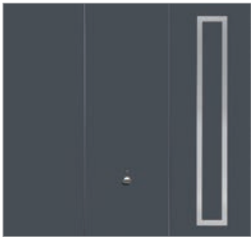
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Ulla Green is a former RAF officers' residence, transformed using bespoke glazing solutions from Express Bi-folding Doors.

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# LENDING IS FIT AND WELL – HOW ARE YOU?

Stephen O'Brien of Wolsey explores the role of SME housebuilders in meeting the Government's housing targets, and how specialist lenders can aid this process.

**M**ore homes were delivered to the market last year than in all but one of the past 30 years, according to Government figures. But, at the same time the proportional contribution from SME housebuilders has been falling – down from 25 per cent of new builds in 1988 to just 12 per cent in 2018 – and consequentially, the number of operators in the market has greatly diminished.

The last decade in particular has been a battering time for small to medium sized housebuilders looking to secure both the opportunity and the equity for development. For fit and lean operators working through those tough market conditions there is a market for specialist residential lending.

The opportunity remains excellent for SMEs, and the reason is simple. The essential driver for the industry is as strong as ever – demand. Shortfall in housing remains one of the key challenges for the UK economy as Government initiatives on housing demonstrate.

It is clear how vital the role that small to medium sized developers have to play in closing the gap between supply and demand is – in both the short and medium term.

While a good scheme with sensible cost and income assumptions supported by a skilled housebuilder will secure funding from specialist lenders, in current market conditions developers need to demonstrate a scheme is robust in terms of build capability and that they have the marketing framework in place to achieve timely sales.

Lenders need to see that the target purchasers are identified, the promotional programme (e.g. Help to Buy) is in place to attract interest and viewings, and, just as importantly, that the housebuilder can close a deal that converts interest into a healthy flow of sales.

## STIMULATING GROWTH

The lending market knows the UK housebuilding sector offers attractive returns for the right scheme. While lenders will look at specific development opportunities with an experienced and specialist lending eye, the

broader questions have to be asked – what could Government be doing more of to stimulate the growth and contribution of SME housebuilders to the flow of new homes coming onto the market? Where could Government support and reinvigorate this segment of the industry and help create the big 'nationals' of tomorrow?

A key issue is the ability to raise equity at sensible returns for SME housebuilders, and it is an area that the Government should consider taking more positive steps to support.

One well-advocated idea is the widening of tax break initiatives such as enterprise investment schemes (given these structures are already in place) – to specifically target and encourage investment in new sites or residential developers, and assist existing housebuilders to grow their businesses.

The tax breaks can easily be aligned to Government policy (e.g. only available to Help to Buy qualifying schemes), limited to SMEs, and be allowed for a defined period to ensure the tax breaks deliver on the policy objectives of the Government and the needs of the UK economy.

This would be a huge boost to the housebuilding industry by bringing in new capital, allowing sites that are currently too awkward, difficult and marginal in profitability to become attractive opportunities for residential development.

Since 2013, the Government's Help to Buy initiative for new-build has been a significant factor in enabling sales to be achieved. The impact of the changes proposed to come into effect in 2021 – when Help to Buy will become available only to first time buyers and with regional

price caps – is unknown at present.

However, it is reasonable to expect a rush before April 2021 of non-first time buyers looking to take up Help to Buy. Post 2021, it is likely there will be a shift of mix towards possibly more schemes working within the profile of the new parameters – terraced housing and flats, for example.

## GOVERNMENT TARGETS

In 2015 the Government stated an ambition of adding one million units to the housing stock by 2020. In the first 10 months of 2018 over 360,000 planning permissions were granted in the UK, and the sector is well on the way to delivering that 2015 target.

To deliver these targets a healthy and growing sector of SME developers is required. The ability to raise equity for SMEs on acceptable terms on schemes aligned to Help to Buy will incentivise and assist the SMEs to grow and deliver more housing that meets the aims of Government policy. This would be a positive outcome for all involved.

It is extremely important for the UK that the national housing stock be substantially grown, and to do so over the medium term we need a vibrant SME sector. In order to allow those smaller to medium sized developers to achieve their potential, it is vital that there be a healthy lending market.

The Government holds many cards – let's hope it plays them well.

Stephen O'Brien is managing director at Wolsey





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# A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Vent-Axia's Jordan Lilford explains the challenges the Government's Clean Air Strategy presents for housebuilders, as well as looking at potential solutions.

Indoor air quality (IAQ) is increasingly important following a raft of research that has pointed to the potential health impact of breathing polluted air. New legislation combined with consumer awareness means that all new homes must offer solutions.

Research on air pollution and the importance of good IAQ has been building momentum over the last few years. At the end of 2017, the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) revealed that fine particulate matter is now a major health concern in our towns and cities. PM2.5 (atmospheric particulate matter with a diameter less than 2.5 micrometers) is among the air pollutants which has the greatest impact on health, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. A main contributor is diesel combustion from cars and other diesel-powered vehicles.

High exposures in early life have a major effect on lung and cognitive development throughout an individual's life, and the report calls for the Government to act. In January 2019, it launched its Clean Air Strategy, which included its aims for tackling IAQ. The document proposes a number of simple measures to reduce air pollutants in the home, including regular ventilation.

The strategy also states that in 2019 the Government will be consulting on changes to Part F of the Building Regulations, to help reduce the harmful build-up of indoor air pollutants. This could have major ramifications for the specification of ventilation in new build properties. The current regulation recommends increasing the ventilation provision for dwellings with high design airtightness, but assumes air from outside is fit as replacement, and this just isn't the case. There are currently over 700 air quality management areas (AQMA) where air pollution breaches legal limits.

In addition, NICE (National Institute of Health and Care Excellence) is working on guidance to reduce the risk to public health from indoor air pollution. The Government is also set to shortly bring forward an Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill which will include primary legislation on air quality, last updated in the historic Clean Air Act of 1993.

## THE CHALLENGE

All these measures pose significant potential changes for housebuilders. However, they are already facing changes to local construc-

tion legislation and national air quality legislation. And, with the responsibility of ensuring air to dwellings is filtered to increasingly high standards falling on developers, it's clear that the right solutions must be available to the industry that tackle the issue of outdoor pollution.

With many UK cities in breach of recommended World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for PM2.5, air pollution is already affecting planning applications. Local authorities that identify that their air quality is likely to exceed the National Air Quality Objectives (NAQOs) must designate these areas as AQMAs and draw up an Action Plan, and planning decisions must comply with this. In AQMAs in inner cities, some new homes are required to be completely air tight to prevent the pollution from entering and have filtered mechanical ventilation such as MVHR. The pressure for increasing housebuilding means that AQMAs are now being targeted for new developments, so the correct ventilation system is vital.

## THE SOLUTION

While the Government is starting to address the causes of air pollution, until air quality improves it is essential to look at ways of improving the quality of air being brought into homes. Whole house Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) is the only solution for new build properties that allows full control, filtering air coming into the dwelling, ensuring the indoor air is cleaner and healthier than the air that would come in via a window.

Inside an MVHR unit, fresh incoming air passes through a filter to remove pollen, debris and products of pollution. Filters up to ISO ePM2.5 70 per cent (F7 grade) ensure even homes in heavily urbanised areas can filter out most impurities, up to and including PM2.5 particles, for example diesel particulates. Added to this, MVHR is an efficient form of ventilation, giving developers valuable reductions in dwelling emissions rates, and it is designed with silence a key parameter.

To go one step further to improve IAQ, there are filtration units now available for areas with particularly bad traffic fumes or other air pollution. An example, the Vent-Axia Pure Air is fitted to a MVHR unit's intake airflow, and incorporates two types of filtration: enhanced activated carbon, which removes harmful gases such as



nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>); and ISO 65 per cent Coarse (G4) or ISO ePM10 and ISO ePM2.5 70 per cent (F7) particulate filters, which can remove tiny airborne contaminants such as most pollens, some bacteria, many types of industrial dust, and PM2.5 particulates, achieving even higher levels of filtration and further improving IAQ. In urban areas vehicles are responsible for approximately 99 per cent of nitrogen dioxide pollution, with high levels of NO<sub>2</sub> causing respiratory problems and increased incidences of asthma.

Once the ventilation system has been installed, it's essential not to overlook service and maintenance. Housebuilders should educate their buyers on the importance of checking filters every three to six months and having them cleaned or replaced when necessary. Some MVHR units include filter check warnings to alert households when filters need changing. The MVHR units themselves also need to be serviced to keep the unit working effectively and efficiently. Households will benefit not only from maintaining good IAQ, but also lowering their energy bills, reducing repair costs and extending the lifetime of the ventilation system.

The combination of MVHR and additional filtration coupled with regular servicing means both housebuilders and homebuyers can rest easy knowing that a healthy indoor environment has been created.

Jordan Lilford is product manager, New Build Residential, at Vent-Axia

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## Stuart Turner supplies set to restored home



Stuart Turner, a leading pump and water boosting solutions provider, has worked closely with Urban Space Plumbing to design and supply a bespoke mains water boosting solution, to meet the high water demands of a five-bathroom property in South West London. Stuart Turner provided a bespoke 978 litre one piece GRP cold water storage tank and its Aquaboot Horizontal Twin Pump Booster Set to the luxury home, after Gary Porter,

Senior Project Manager at Urban Space Plumbing, brought them into the project. Gary Porter said: "I have been installing Stuart Turner my entire career and trust in the quality of the products, which is why I always try to ensure their specification."

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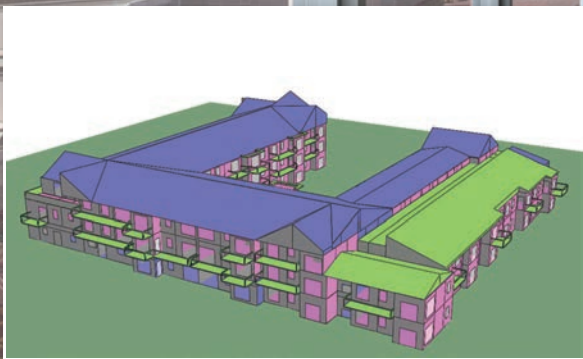


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# Limiting the effects of Overheating in Building Services Applications



Rising temperatures have highlighted issues with buildings overheating, and the contribution of building services to unwanted heat gains is coming under scrutiny.

Recent research from AECOM has suggested that the use of an enhanced specification of pipe insulation and insulated pipe supports on hot water and heating pipework can help reduce overheating in some buildings.

Kingspan offer a CIBSE Approved CPD seminar which examines the issues of overheating, including in void and corridor spaces, relating to building services insulation.

The seminar explores the benefits of going a step further than the base Building Regulation requirements, along with optimising the design and implementation of building services insulation systems.

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## Building Regulations need a breath of fresh air



There is a worrying problem with current building regulations. Minimum ventilation requirements state that the inclusion of window 'trickle vents' and extract-only fans are all you need to pass the regulations.

The problem is, in an average three-bed property the total 'free area' of these vents is equivalent to around one square foot, like having a window wide open all year round. Close the vents to stop cold draughts, odours, outdoor pollution or street noise and you stop your ventilation! But with MVHR, filtration can be incorporated to clean the supply air to stop outdoor pollutants from entering the home. Visit the [Solarcrest](http://www.solarcrest.co.uk) website for more information.

01625 423020 [www.solarcrest.co.uk](http://www.solarcrest.co.uk)

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With 28 classrooms, an additional 4 nursery playrooms plus a library, all combined in a single modern unit, the recently opened Wallyford Primary School in East Lothian is ready to meet its School of the Future billing. Safety was an important factor that was integrated into every aspect and **Grundfos Pumps** were delighted to be involved with assisting

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the potential to reduce gas consumption by up to 35 per cent when providing hot water, it has a low electrical consumption. In terms of its components the InTec GS scores highly with a stainless-steel heat exchanger and high efficiency Grundfos pump and hydroblock assembly. It uses the same connections as a standard combi so is easy to fit and comes with a five-year warranty as standard meaning peace of mind for all parties.

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## Helping solve the problems of noise pollution



Vectaire has three new models in their vertical whole house heat recovery range. The Midi, Maxi and Maxi Plus are now available with advanced acoustic attenuation. They are lined with superior sound deadening materials for really low sound levels which have been tested by BRE. Sound pressure levels are down to <5.0, <5.0 and 6.9

dBA respectively. Efficiency, performance and economy remain the same as the standard model. All these "AT-BY" models are complete with summer bypass and frost protection, and are commissioned via an integral LCD. Functions, including trickle, purge and boost speeds for each motor, boost speed over-run time, adjusting the time delay before the boost speed kicks in, holiday mode and night-time boost - all easily adjusted.

01494 522333 [www.vectaire.co.uk](http://www.vectaire.co.uk)

## LG introduces R32 Monobloc heat pumps



LG has developed a high quality air to water heat pump range under its Therma V branding. Thousands of these units have been installed up and down the country. The latest introduction to its popular range, operating on the low GWP R32 refrigerant available in 5kW to 16kW 1Ø and 12kW to 16kW 3Ø, in a wide operating range between 10-135Hz and water

temperatures up to 65° C without an electric back up heater, is the LG Therma V R32 Nonobloc range. It comes with an energy label of A+++ ready for September 2019 ERP changes. To find out more about LG's products and services visit the website.

[uk.aircon@lge.com](mailto:uk.aircon@lge.com) [partner.lge.com/uk](http://partner.lge.com/uk)



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## Discover How to Specify High Performance Media Rooms

Digital entertainment plays a huge part in the modern lifestyle and is something that can be truly astounding when experienced in the correct environment. Dedicated and convertible entertainment spaces need careful thought and professional design to perform well, and ultimately impress the homeowner.

Tailored to help residential builders and developers understand how to choose and specify dedicated entertainment spaces as well as exploring the design principles needed, CEDIA® has launched a new Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training course titled Designing Home Cinemas and Media Rooms.

"At CEDIA, training is the very core of our organisation, and Designing Home Cinemas and Media Rooms CPD is a crucial, new resource for design and build professionals," comments Matt Nimmons, Managing Director, CEDIA EMEA. "This CPD will allow you to connect with those technology integrators who are CEDIA members, and understand the importance of working together in the early stages of a project, as well as keeping an ongoing relationship long after the project is complete."

Delivering a smart home to a client requires collaboration between the design and build



professional and the technology integrator. CEDIA members are integrators who specialise in the planning, design, supply, installation, and concealment of technology systems for the modern, intelligent home. They partner directly with design professionals to maximise the lifestyle, function, aesthetic, and efficiency benefits of the connected home for their clients.

CEDIA offers a Finder Service on its website, which allows design and build professionals to locate their nearest technology integrator. Users can search CEDIA member companies by

postcode, services, and certification.

CEDIA is partnering with London-based integrator, Cornflake, to host a training event that will include the new CPD course, as well as a demonstration of Cornflakes state-of-the-art home cinema, and a guided tour of their "Smart App-artment". This event is free to attend, and you can register your interest at [cedia.org/cpd-events](http://cedia.org/cpd-events)

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# British Spirals & Castings Create Fire Escape Stairs with a Difference

Bespoke spiral staircase manufacturers - British Spirals & Castings - has helped to restore a 19<sup>th</sup> Century villa in Harrogate to its Victorian splendour with a decorative spiral staircase with matching balconies.

The three-storey house was converted into separate flats in the 1960's and a metal fire escape was installed. Whilst serving its purpose, the industrial style stairs clashed with the traditional sandstone of the building and intruded on the privacy of the lower flats.

The owners contacted British Spirals & Castings to create a piece that was more in

keeping with the architectural style in the surrounding conservation zone. The family run manufacturers produce all their cast aluminium balconies, straight and spiral staircases at their Staffordshire foundry, ensuring premium quality results. They also offer a wide range of hardwood staircases along with cast and wrought iron railings and gratings - all produced here in the UK.

To complement the age of the property, the Victorian style cast aluminium stairs and balconies were chosen. For the balustrading, the owners opted to alternate between a simple spindle and an ornamental panel. This reflects the more ornate style of the Victorian period whilst also meeting the Building Regulation requirements. Perforated gratings allow light to filter through the balcony floors to the windows below. As a final touch, fleur de lis style finials were also used to top the uppermost balcony.

To ensure a strong structure, the expanded balconies were designed with two main posts (including the central post of the spiral staircase) and decorative gallows brackets. The balcony gratings were carefully measured and manufactured to slot around the existing down pipes. A narrow diameter spiral staircase



was selected to prevent the stairs directly passing any windows — giving each homeowner privacy.

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# ONE STEP AHEAD

Lee Hunt of Canal Architectural explains how housebuilders and specifiers can get one step ahead with the latest staircase trends.

Staircase design, as with all interior design, is constantly evolving, and new design trends are continually emerging. The staircase is a centrepiece of a property, and the visual connection between levels of an interior. Sometimes curved, sometimes straight, there is nothing quite like an impressive staircase to draw attention. Staircases are making a much bigger statement than ever before as the demand for unique and personalised structures grows.

Over the past year there's been a shift towards 'urban' design and fashionable choices such as earthy tones and textures. Contemporary homes are opting for much richer, more pronounced metals with many

variations such as brass and antique bronze finishes, as well as glass panels and dark glossy wood. Traditional homes are also searching for bespoke staircase features and brave new designs to blend into their property. As well as considering bespoke, engaging design, it's important to ensure that all staircases are manufactured in line with current Building Regulations Approved Document K as well as BS5395: Part 2, 1984 (spiral and helical staircases).

The most current and on trend design is the cantilever floating staircase, for a contemporary and slender solution. This ingenious piece of engineering anchors at only one end allowing the protruding construction to overhang without any external bracing. The design is also applied to a wide range of staircase designs including straight, quarter turn, half turn, helical and curved designs. The design trend is popular due to its minimalist design, and ability to create more space in a property. The tasteful lines produced have become a contemporary staple for new developments as well as adding that modern twist to an aged property.

Looser, open stairs with thin bespoke handrails make for a light, refreshing take

on the modern staircase. The design world is trending towards minimal, Scandinavian styles as the open riser staircase soars in popularity. Also, the versatility of the open riser design can work with almost any style of staircase such as helical, spiral and straight. The shallow depth of materials, thin bespoke handrails and open stairs allow for a light and spacious feature.

The permanent structure is not one that's likely to change that often, and the helical staircase with its delicate, soft curve is a popular staple due to its timeless elegance. The lack of supporting column means the staircase can be freestanding or attached to the wall. Most staircases usually feature a handrail on each side, giving the specifier an opportunity to further personalise the design, using a variety of materials such as timber, stainless steel and leather handrails.

Zig zag designs are a great installation piece for properties with multiple floors or high rise buildings. The solid structure can be customised at all levels with beautiful, intricate details added for decorative features. Timber treads along with glass balustrades provide a modern, contemporary solution. In addition, the

**THE MOST CURRENT AND ON TREND DESIGN IS THE CANTILEVER FLOATING STAIRCASE FOR A CONTEMPORARY AND SLENDER SOLUTION**

Balustrades are also an important stylish feature in staircase specification, as well

Lee Hunt is sales director at Canal Architectural





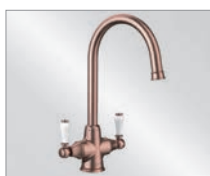
## Warm wood with a sturdy industrial touch



Keller's Washed Oak Elba model is perfect for kitchens large or small. The rustic timber effect melamine-fronted cabinetry provides symmetrical patterns which can be combined with all sorts of worktops and appliances. Whether it's a large open plan kitchen where units have been used to create an island, or a narrow kitchen where homeowners have opted for the galley-style design, they can add stylish components such as copper light fittings or an integrated extractor hood. The Elba model is available in a variety of colours to bring personality into the home. Homeowners can choose between a range of natural-looking units and carcasses, from the Comfort collection's lighter shades like Washed Oak to its darker tones of Rough Oak.

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

## Brushed Copper is the height of kitchen elegance



The new Brushed Copper VICUS® tap from **BLANCO UK** combines the elegance of a classic design with a modern edge to the traditional farmhouse. A perfect centrepiece, the tap has been introduced to reflect today's modern colour trends in kitchens and home decor generally. The VICUS® family consists of the twin

lever, the bridge twin lever and the single lever spray. An additional key feature of the VICUS single lever is the pull-out spray from the hose which can be used to clean the extended work area. All three models are available in Chrome, Pewter, Brushed Brass and now Brushed Copper with matching soap dispensers.

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

## CCL Wetrooms launch Tilesure Membrane



**CCL Wetrooms** have launched Tilesure, a new Butyl Waterproofing and Decoupling Membrane, suitable for waterproofing wetrooms on timber and solid floors. Tilesure is an evolution of the market leading RIW Tilesafe bitumen-based membrane. Tilesure is a 1.4mm self-

adhesive membrane with decoupling properties of 12mm, ensuring that any movement in the floor substrate is accommodated, preventing the grout and floor tiles from cracking. Tilesure is quick and easy to apply, is compatible with silicone sealants and creates a secure waterproof barrier that is guaranteed to remain waterproof for the life of the wetroom tiles.

0844 327 6002 [www.ccl-wetrooms.co.uk/waterproofing](http://www.ccl-wetrooms.co.uk/waterproofing)

## Product launch from Hurlingham Classics



Hurlingham Classics has recently launched its new Crane model to add to its extensive collection of cast iron radiators. This stylish four column cast iron radiators design, features a curved top and crisp lines. The Crane cast iron radiators feet are seamlessly incorporated and delicately shaped with an inner arch. These combine to give a more contemporary feel than the traditional 4 column Victorian model. With bespoke finishes available and manufacturing lead times from just 10 working

days these are available via a wide network of Hurlingham Classics stockists. Please visit the **Carron** website for further information.

0808 129 2224 [www.carron.uk.net](http://www.carron.uk.net)

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## Multi-generational living? Don't forget the toilet



One issue not generally discussed when talking about multi-generational households is the bathroom – access to, and use of. The solution is **Closomat's** range of wash/dry (shower) WCs.

Looking like – and capable of being used as – a conventional WC, the Closomat has integrated douching and drying – the best performance in each on the market. Thus, if preferred, the user does not have to wipe manually. The toilet cleans them instead, to a consistent high standard, every time. Each of Closomat's range has bespoke benefits depending on the household's needs. Full details of the Closomat range of wash/dry toilets can be found on their website alongside a raft of useful information to help choose the most appropriate WC.

0161 969 1199 [www.closomat.co.uk](http://www.closomat.co.uk)

## Dallmer unveils its Individual shower channels



In response to the growing demand for level-access showers, **Dallmer** has added two more new flush-in-floor shower channels to its DallFlex system, bringing the number of Dallmer shower channels that can be combined with a single drain body to an impressive nine! CeraFloor Individual is the elegant shower channel that boasts outstanding design. The shower channel comes in a length of 1500 mm and can be shortened to suit the specific shower area.

CeraFrame Individual is a compact, short shower channel. The only thing you can see is a discreet 300 x 50 mm rectangle. The short shower channel is the perfect frame for a minimalist cover plate.

01787 248244 [www.dallmer.com](http://www.dallmer.com)

## New improved cavity weep clearly better



**Rytons Building Products** is pleased to announce that their most popular cavity weep hole duct, the Rytons Rytweep® Clear, has been transformed to Ultra-Clear! Now totally transparent and virtually invisible, the new Ultra-Clear Rytweep® blends perfectly with any colour brickwork or mortar,

allowing every finish to use the same weeps. Saving house builders and brickwork contractors the extra time, money and waste involved when sourcing weeps in multiple colours for different house types. The improved Ultra-Clear Rytweep® is available quickly and easily from Rytons network of national merchants and independent distributors. Carrying large stocks they are able to fulfil requirements, big or small, without delay.

01536 511874 [www.vents.co.uk](http://www.vents.co.uk)

## Its time to stay cool at work



The warmer weather will bring a need for professional craftsmen and women to be cool and dry – to maintain wellbeing and working efficiency on site. That's why **Snickers'** new Topwear for the summer uses 37.5° fabric technology, which is

really good at 'wicking' moisture away from the body and keeping you dry. There's stylish new Shirts, Hoodies and Sweatshirts in a range of styles and colours that are super-light and quick-drying with advanced ventilation to keep you cool in the heat. They've all got superb, body-mapping designs for an amazing fit, outstanding functionality and long-lasting comfort – all day, every day.

[info@snickersworkwear.co.uk](mailto:info@snickersworkwear.co.uk)

## RAG features record recommendation numbers



The 2019 edition of **F. Ball's** industry-acclaimed recommended adhesives guide (RAG) now includes a record number of adhesive recommendations for over 6000 branded floorcoverings from over 200 leading international manufacturers.

Every adhesive recommendation is stringently tested and must be endorsed by each individual floorcovering manufacturer before it can be included in the RAG. Available on the F. Ball website (where it is constantly updated throughout the

year), or as a free app via the Apple and Google app stores, the RAG is also available as a printed A5 booklet.

[www.f-ball.co.uk](http://www.f-ball.co.uk)

## Exterior grade floor levelling compound



**Setcrete** has launched Setcrete Exterior, an advanced, water-mix floor levelling compound for outdoor areas such as balconies, patios, garages and walkways. When set and cured, Setcrete Exterior is unaffected by rain or frost. Used to smooth and level rough, worn or mechanically-damaged concrete or sand/cement screeds, Setcrete Exterior is particularly suited for preparing surfaces prior to the installation

of artificial grass, creating a smooth base for the installation of resin pathways, and over patio areas before laying porcelain tiles; currently popular for creating a continuous 'outside-inside' flooring solution for areas connected by bi-fold or sliding doors.

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



## Orientation mark enhances classic Ancon serrated washer design

**Ancon** has made a simple improvement to one of its smallest, but most utilised, stainless steel building components to benefit installers of its masonry support systems.

An orientation guide, in the form of two horizontal square ridges, has been incorporated into the design of the classic serrated washer that Ancon supplies with its masonry support brackets.

The square ridges, added to the back of the washer, correspond to the line of the serrations on the opposite side that faces away from the user during installation.

The new design makes it quicker and easier for installers to orientate the serrated washer correctly. Users do not need to view the serrated face before installing the washer and can quickly identify how best to correct any rotation that may occur as the fixing bolt is tightened.

0114 275 5224 [www.ancon.co.uk](http://www.ancon.co.uk)



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