



MHCLG releases response to the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 report – explaining what it's done so far



Is sustainability an ethical or economical issue? Jack Wooler reports from a recent construction seminar



David Sheridan of Ilke Homes gives the lowdown on the economic realities of moving to offsite

02.20

HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

THE LUXURY OF INDEPENDENCE

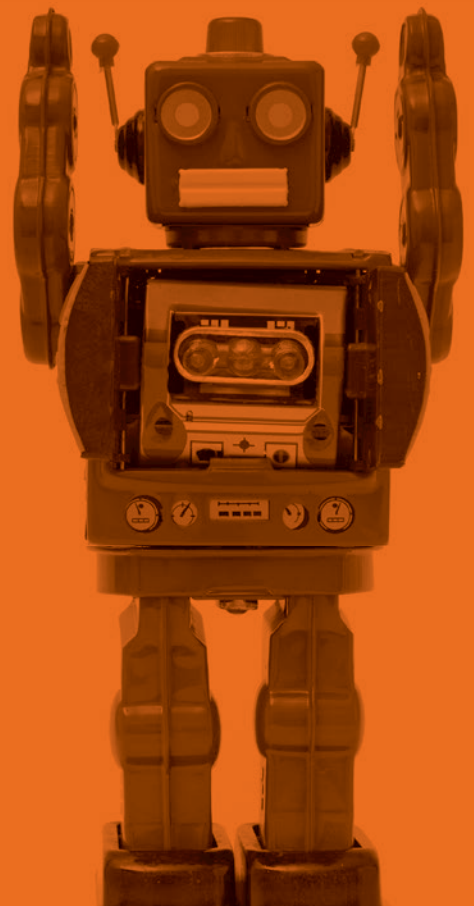
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Jack Wooler, deputy editor

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THE LUXURY OF INDEPENDENCE
 London's first luxury retirement community offers retirees independent living alongside hotel-inspired amenities, all within sight of Albert Bridge in Battersea.

Battersea Place,
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FROM THE EDITOR

Though of course the real changes are yet to come, the 31 January Brexit date seemed to come and go with little fanfare. There is however no shortage of other barriers facing housebuilders and developers to keep them busy as we speed through 2020. Eager to show progress on these pressing issues for the sector, the Government has released a flurry of statements early on in the year.

From Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick's release about 'beautiful homes,' looking to reform planning by fast-tracking more attractive sites, to the details released on the Government's First Homes scheme aimed at cutting the costs of getting on the ladder – this administration appears to be applying a more hands-on approach to the sector's challenges.

Alongside these new pushes, its response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report has also been released (see page 5), laying out its plans to act on chair Sir Martin Moore-Bick's recommendations. This response provided a little more detail on the much-discussed ban of combustible materials on new high-rise blocks of flats for example, alongside information on the upcoming Fire Safety Bill.

While any step towards preventing another event as devastating as Grenfell must be positive, many may perhaps cry 'too little too late,' arguing that too few steps have been taken, and that the response includes too many 'actions in progress.'

In the midst of all this, despite 1.4 million new homes being registered in the 2010s decade (see page 6), the industry continues to struggle to meet housing targets, with planning and skills still proving to be some of the main barriers. And, to some, even the housing shortage appears to be but a backdrop to the fact that our climate is creeping further and further towards the '1.5 degrees increase' red line that no one wants to cross, with the built environment causing 40 per cent of global CO₂ emissions.

As discussed in a recent Climate in Construction event I attended (see page 10), questions are beginning to be raised as to whether, in 2020, the matter is now a financial issue, or an ethical one. While in the long-run the situation could be life and death for humanity, as one audience member rightly pointed out, housebuilders and developers cannot ignore their bottom line.

A few cost-effective solutions were put forward at the event, including the use of engineered timber frame as a more carbon-friendly material than traditional steel frame – though timber has been under attack in the recent cladding ban over certain heights – as well as the Dutch-led Energiesprong model as a way to fix our ageing, leaky housing stock. As Caterina Brandmayr of the Green Alliance argued, "80 per cent of the buildings that will exist in 2050 have already been built; retrofit is key."

With all this finger-pointing, political shuffling (including yet another Housing Minister), and overhanging threats of climatic doom, it can be hard to make heads or tails of what's ahead in the coming months. As I hope you will find explained in this month's issue, whatever the forecast may be, the weather is changing.

Jack Wooler

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MHCLG announces actions on Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1

The Government has released its response to the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 report, which sets out the actions it is taking to address chairman Sir Martin Moore-Bick's recommendations – including the controversial ban of combustible materials on new high-rise blocks, and details of the upcoming Fire Safety Bill.

While it reportedly “accepted in principle” all the recommendations at the time of its publication (October 2019), the response is intended to make it clear what the Government has already done, and is planning to do in the wake of the disaster, ranging from interim safety measures to full changes in law.

COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS

The response leads with the use of combustible materials, arguing that the report “makes it clear” that the use of Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) rainscreen cladding and combustible insulation on the exterior of the tower “was the defining factor in the rapid and all-consuming spread of the fire.”

Since the Grenfell Tower fire the Government has reportedly identified over 400 high-rise buildings with unsafe ACM cladding, and ensured “appropriate interim safety measures are in place,” as well as making £600m of funding available for its replacement in the social and private sectors.

The MHCLG response then points out that it banned the use of combustible materials on new high-rise blocks of flats in December 2018, and in January, announced the launch of a consultation to review the current ban, including proposals to lower the 18 metre height threshold to at least 11 metres – causing controversy for some in the sector, with products such as structural timber being affected by this (and which are argued to offer safety and ecology benefits over some still-legal alternatives – as seen on page 10).

FIRE SAFETY BILL

The response then goes on to discuss The Home Office's upcoming Fire Safety Bill, which will “put beyond doubt” that building owners or managers of multi-occupied residential buildings of any height are required “to consider fully and mitigate the fire safety risks of any external wall systems and front doors to individual flats.”

The Government believes this will

create a “firm foundation” to deliver on the further legislative recommendations in Phase 1 of the report, with the Home Office planning to consult on these proposals in Spring 2020.

It also advises those responsible under the Fire Safety order “to assess the risk of external wall structures if they have not done so, and take the necessary measures as a result of that assessment,” warning that if they do not do so, “the legislation will affirm that enforcing authorities have the powers they need to take action.”

FIRE DOORS

After discussing the ‘stay put’ policy and evacuation procedures – which the Government has created a steering group to develop national guidelines for, and has “sought views on proposals to improve way finding signage within blocks of flats,” the response then moves on to the installation and specification of fire doors.

The MHCLG says it is “committed to ensuring that all fire doors meet and exceed minimum standards,” and it is notifying National Trading Standards to “stop production and sale of affected door blanks immediately” after its investigation.

Since then, it has reportedly continued to work with the Association of Composite Door Manufacturers to raise standards across the market, with the remediation of Glass Reinforced Plastic composite fire doors “being led by the fire door industry.”

The MHCLG has recommended that all fire doors, including closers, should be “routinely checked or inspected by a suitably qualified professional,” and has issued advice through its ‘Expert Panel’ asking landlords or building owners “to communicate with residents to ensure that they are aware of the importance of maintaining the self-closing devices on all fire doors.”

Alongside this, following the conclusion of the fire door testing programme, the Independent Expert Advisory Panel have reviewed the advice made available to building owners, and will be publishing updated advice on fire doors as part of the consolidated Expert Panel advice note.

CERTIFICATION & REGULATION

The MHCLG response also recognises the importance of the testing and certification of materials, which it said will be “considered by Sir Martin in more detail



during the course of Phase 2.”

The MHCLG is however reportedly progressing with “key policies” in this area – with the Construction Products Standards Committee due to make recommendations on construction products and system standards, and advise on how the testing regime can be improved.

In addition, it says a technical review of the guidance to the Building Regulations with regard to fire safety (Approved Document B) is “well underway.”

The response also argues that the Government “did not wait for Sir Martin’s findings” where evidence is well established, and, while Phase 1 of the Inquiry did not examine the impact sprinklers may have had at Grenfell Tower, MHCLG has “listened to concerns on sprinklers from residents and building owners” and set out proposals accordingly.

NEXT STEPS

After detailing suggestions for all Fire and Rescue Services, the report then lists some of the next steps that MHCLG will take – noting that the response will “rightly” be scrutinised by Members of Parliament first.

As Phase 1 “examined what happened on the night of the fire,” it continues, “Phase 2 will investigate the wider context.”

This will reportedly include the nature and application of Building Regulations, the way in which local and central Government responded to the fire, and the handling of concerns raised by tenants over many years – but, being “complex,” MHCLG says this will “inevitably take time.”

The report concludes: “Our promise as a Government is to work together to ensure that swift and decisive action continues to be taken to address the Inquiry’s recommendations, so that no such tragedy can ever be allowed to happen again. We are committed to ensuring all residents are safe in their homes, and feel safe, now and in the future.”

1.4 million new homes registered in 2010s

The number of new homes registered to be built per year in the UK has risen by more than 80 per cent over the last decade, according to the NHBC's annual new homes statistics, although completions in London and the south west didn't follow this trend – being down 7 per cent over the same period.

Over the decade (2010 – 2019), a total of 1.4m new homes (1,405,771) were registered to be built across the UK. These figures reportedly represent the first complete decade since the financial crash of 2007/08.

In 2019, 161,022 homes were registered with NHBC – an 81 per cent increase on the 88,849 homes registered a decade ago (2009), making 2019 the strongest year for NHBC new home registrations since 2007. Over the same period,

the West Midlands (169 per cent) and North West (148 per cent) have seen the highest percentage increase of new homes registered.

Compared to the previous year, the number of homes registered in 2019 was up 1 per cent (2019:161,022 v 2018:158,878). Growth was driven by London, said NHBC, where new home registrations increased by 37 per cent, with both the capital's affordable and rental (+42 per cent) and private housing markets (+33 per cent) performing strongly.

The Build to Rent sector also had another positive year, with registrations up 57 per cent in 2019 compared to 2018. New home completions in 2019 of 150,436 were also marginally up on the previous year (149,702).

Commenting on its new home registra-



tion statistics for 2019, NHBC chief executive Steve Wood said: "It is great to see the resilience of housebuilders over the 2019 year. This momentum needs to be maintained as we enter a new decade, with the industry ever-more focused on quality and fire safety.

"At NHBC we remain committed to our purpose of giving homeowners confidence in the quality of the nation's new homes and working with house builders as the industry faces into the skills, supply chain and environmental challenges in front of us."

Upfront cost makes MMC a 'challenging environment'

The setup costs of the offsite construction of homes makes undertaking a move to modular a challenging proposition for housebuilders, according to a leading new entrant in the affordable homes sector.

Dave Sheridan, executive chairman of modular startup Ilke Homes, told a meeting staged by NHBC in London to present recent housebuilding data, that upfront costs are "a real barrier," adding that "unless you've got deep pockets, this is a challenging environment to get into, and it's certainly something you've got to come into with your eyes wide open."

Sheridan told the meeting that while Ilke is looking to construct 1000 homes from its new factory in Flaxby, near Harrogate from the middle of 2020, "we're bringing people on board when demand on the order book is probably 200 homes, so you've got to build the capacity."

He added: "You've got a lot of sunk costs before you start to see returns. It's certainly something we have learned in the last 12 months; the need to educate the market that a loss isn't necessarily a bad thing, it's possibly a good thing because it's showing the level of investment that's being made by the funds, Homes England and Places for People; investing in the future." Ilke Homes received £30m of support from Homes England in 2019.



Sheridan concluded: "This isn't a cheap ticket." Despite this however, he said that build cost was often competitive, and will be cheaper over time because of savings on "prelims," adding that "the unit economics will drop the more efficient you get at producing homes."

Planning was another barrier cited by Sheridan: "We have hit some challenges around regional variations on space standards, and on what looks beautiful and what doesn't." He mentioned the example of Ilke's thwarted attempts to introduce a low-pitch 12.5 degree roof, which would fit under bridges but which had received little favour from planners. "If we could get a planning authority to move, for every unit we provide we could save £12,000." He

added: "We thought because of the cost factor and need for more homes, we thought people would buy it, but still the high pitched roof is taking 80 per cent of our orders."

Sheridan told the audience that Ilke was building its volumetric homes for a mix of tenures, at roughly £850-£1000 per square metre, which was "competitive in the south, but challenging in the north" – in the north east the build cost of a traditional home is typically around £650/m². Of the 210 the firm is due to build this year, half will be open market sale via developer Keepmoat (where Sheridan was previously chief executive), and half to housing association and rental.

Ilke aims to move to a rate of 2000 homes from its factory by March 2021, employing 600 people plus 200 on site doing installation and groundworks. NHBC has accepted Ilke's method as one of 44 systems for MMC it's endorsing.

Sheridan added that with major demographic challenges facing the industry, it needed to communicate the benefits brought by MMC to attract younger entrants: "We're not recruiting new talent, there's still a misconception about people working in trenches and laying bricks. We have to move on from the debate around 1950s and 60s prefabs, it's a totally different unit."

He concluded that "working with the public sector to bring things forward to a common goal" would be "much better than some of the ways that we currently engage with public land and local authorities."

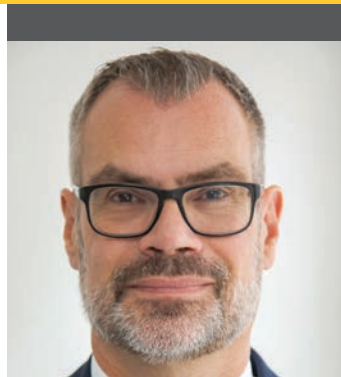
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Brian Berry, chief executive of the Federation of Master Builders

THE INDUSTRY ADVOCATE

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2020

Brian Berry of the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) takes a look at what he believes will be the key issues for SME builders in 2020.

Now that much of the noise around Brexit has died down, the Government's attention has turned to domestic issues such as housing. There have been many different policy ideas bandied around, but what changes are we likely to see which will impact SME developers, for better or for worse? Here are some of the key things to look out for in 2020.

GREEN BUILDING

With the Government having legislated for net zero last year, and the COP Climate Conference taking place in Glasgow later this year, we should expect to see lots of announcements and policy changes related to the environment and cutting carbon emissions.

The built environment contributes around 40 per cent of all carbon emissions, so it is not surprising this will be an area of focus for the Government.

The consultation on changes to Part L (energy efficiency) and Part F (ventilation) of the Building Regulations took place this year, and an initial uplift in the regulations is due to take place later this year. If the Government's preferred option is chosen this will see a reduction of 31 per cent in CO₂ compared with 2013 regulations, which will require PV to be installed or low carbon heating such as an air source heat pump. Similar regulations are planned for Wales too.

While ensuring our new build housing stock is low carbon, the Government shouldn't lose sight of the 27 million homes that have already been built that will need retrofitting, and we hope to see some more strategic thinking on this.

PLANNING REFORM

Reform of the planning system will be a major focus for this Government. This will be welcome news to many SME housebuilders who have suffered from delays in the system. We know from our House Builders Survey that for 42 per cent of SMEs planning is a major barrier. The main reason for delay is cited as poor resourcing of planning departments by the majority of

SMEs, with many local authorities struggling to recruit and retain good planning officers, and therefore being unable to deliver a quick and effective service. While fees were increased in 2018, only 3 per cent of our members have seen an improved delivery.

At the time of writing, the Government is planning to publish a planning White Paper, which is set to outline some radical policies to speed up the planning system. We hope this White Paper will address some of the difficult decisions and trade-offs that will need to be made to ensure our planning system works well not just for large housebuilders, but for SMEs too.

SKILL SHORTAGES EXPECTED TO INTENSIFY

While construction skill shortages eased slightly in 2019 due to a slowdown in the market, as activity picks up in 2020 it will become harder to find good quality trades. According to the recent FMB housebuilders survey, a shortage of skilled staff is expected to be the third major barrier to housebuilders building new homes over the next three years. Bricklayers are the highest trade in demand with 54 per cent of SMEs struggling to recruit, followed by carpenters at 52 per cent and site managers at 41 per cent. This is expected to be exacerbated by the new Points Based Immigration system being introduced in January 2021, which will limit "low skill" migration.

SME builders should therefore plan ahead and take advantage of apprenticeship "co-investment" funds that cover 95 per cent of training costs for SMEs to train up new talent. There are now a number of 'trailblazer' apprenticeship standards in construction for all different types of trades such as those developed by FMB (bricklaying and construction).

SMEs will need to stay on top of a flurry of policy changes over the coming years. Some regulations will be challenging, but others will hopefully make things easier. We at the FMB will continue to make the case for boosting the SME housebuilding sector and will work with the Government to find solutions.

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Carbon in construction: ethics or economics?

Staged to look at the question of whether action on climate change in the built environment is an ethical or economical issue, a recent event was held in Hove, East Sussex, that saw panellists from across the sector discuss which was the best way for the industry to approach solutions. *Housebuilder & Developer's* Jack Wooler attended to find out.

Held in the seaside city of Brighton & Hove, the recent event titled Brighton Chamber, 'Construction Voice, ethics or economics: making the case for action on climate change in the built environment' asked the question – is carbon in construction an ethical or a financial issue?

A panel of industry experts are gathered together at co-working space PLATF9RM in Hove Town Hall to discuss this key question in front of an audience of local business leaders in the sector.

The panel, consisting of Tom Westwood, senior associate at Waugh Thistleton Architects, Caterina Brandmayr, senior policy analyst at Green Alliance, Alasdair Donn, who is head of building performance at event sponsor Willmott Dixon Construction, and chair Ed Allison-Wright from Haydon Consulting, revealed how they are each pursuing their own distinct, but altogether positive outlook on the ways the industry can tackle the growing threat of climate change.

SOLUTIONS THAT GROW ON TREES

With the audience gathered on seating

that doubles as stairs in the modern auditorium-style space, Ed Allison-Wright of Haydon Consulting introduced the “very hot topic.”

Before handing over the mic over to Tom of Waugh Thistleton – a practice which Ed noted has long been heavily carbon focused – he lauded its Dalston Works CLT project in London.

According to Tom, the practice “got the bug” for engineered timber after realising its many benefits, and working out that you could engineer even buildings of 10 stories (as in Dalston Works) out of the material.

He listed many of these benefits to the audience, and said he wanted to “show them off to the world.” Ed agreeing that the “much faster programme” offered particularly by prefabricated timber is one that many of the assembled professionals in the room could gain from.

One particular benefit they found at Dalston Works was that the design could have far shallower foundations – timber structures being lighter than concrete. This not only meant that the build was cheaper, but that they could add further floors where the foundations might have been – with Crossrail dictating their maximum depth.

The architect also argued that far fewer elements are necessary when building with prefabricated timber as opposed to steel gauge – one such example being that timber is an insulant in itself, reducing the insulation necessary.

Most of all, however, the “embodied carbon is the most exciting thing about timber,” said Westwood.

He proposed that if timber were some

new material that had suddenly emerged, no one would believe it. “It literally grows on trees,” said the architect, “it’s a magical material.”

A few questions around timber were raised from the chair and audience. One was in regard to the limits of supply, which Tom simply responded to as: “The timber is out there – and if you build more, people will plant more.”

The chair then raised the much contested fire-risk issues in the wake of Grenfell, to which Westwood provided the caveat: “Timber burns, we’re not going to sit here and pretend it doesn’t,” but, in fact, he said that timber has “many benefits” in terms of fire risk. The main ones he lists are that timber is “massive and slow burning,” and its burning properties are well known, and easily modelled and planned for.

Moving on from this, the architect discussed how building larger buildings in timber is being talked about as if it is a new idea, but that in reality it has been used in North America and even Scotland for some time. He believed that “culture” is the main reason we don’t use it more – alluding to the UK’s love of brick and block.

One audience member asked about the longevity of timber builds, to which Westwood gave the example of temples in the Far East built entirely from timber, which are still standing today hundreds of years after their conception.

Another asked if outside influence was necessary to encourage such builds, he told the audience: “If there’s one thing we’d love to see from central Government, “it’s embodied carbon regulation.”

Finally, he lamented that since the ban on combustible elements in buildings’ facades post-Grenfell (recently widened to potentially include all new resi buildings over four stories), “we couldn’t have built Dalston Lane today, which is a great shame.”

“TIMBER IS MASSIVE AND SLOW-BURNING, AND THE MATERIAL’S BURNING PROPERTIES ARE WELL KNOWN, AND EASILY MODELLED AND PLANNED FOR” – TIM WESTWOOD, WAUGH THISTLETON ARCHITECTS



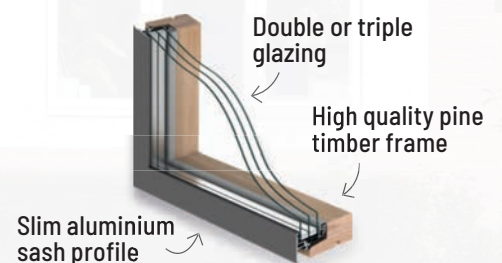
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RUNNING OUT OF TIME

Taking the microphone, Caterina Brandmayr of the Green Alliance opened with a stark warning: “We have only until the next decade to change our trajectory on climate.”

She then highlighted the variety of technologies that are now available to do so, using power from renewable sources to fuel electricity-powered heating systems, as well as promoting offsite technologies, and other options.

Prompted by the chair, she outlined the Green Alliance’s ‘Reinventing retrofit’ report which, among other suggestions, advocates the use of ‘Energiesprong,’ a Dutch method for transforming existing housing into ‘net zero energy’ homes.

This is done by the use of technologies such as prefabricated facades, smart heating and cooling installations, and insulated rooftops equipped with solar panels – and people “don’t even need to leave their homes,” with installations completed within a week, said Brandmayr. The team behind it even claims that this can be costed through the energy produced and lowered bills.

This proves a good argument in the much rehearsed ‘retrofit vs new-build’ debate. The chair asked the audience to vote, in the context of carbon reduction potential, and most deciding that building (new Passivhaus properties) was a better idea than retrofit, despite the compelling case put forward by Caterina.

Ed asked a member of the council in the audience if they could adopt the kind of retrofit techniques used by Energiesprong in the UK, or if they’d need Government aid. The audience member says they would certainly like to, but also noted that there is a lot they can, and already are, doing to their existing stock, citing the fuel benefits of doing so as a great driver alone.

Caterina Brandmayr agreed that councils are already taking the issue into their own hands, saying that 65 per cent of local authorities (LAs) have “already

declared a climate emergency.”

She argued that the industry needs to look more into embodied carbon, as well as noting that people often forget how much carbon is produced through long supply chains, not just from construction and occupancy phases.

She said that technology such as AI can have a huge role in this area for bodies such as LAs, able to create significant profit and energy efficiency benefits. And being “relatively cheap,” they are able to offset their costs in as little as a few months.

One big issue that she says is standing in the way of LAs however is the current Future Homes Standard plans, which will reportedly not allow them to set more ambitious standards than the standard sets out if they so wish. A member of the audience mused that perhaps the Government are too involved here, and that councils taking more control over their own stock could be the best option.

CARROT ON A STICK

The final panellist was Alisdair Donn of Willmott Dixon. He said that while thinking about all of these issues, it is vital to “focus on people,” and not simply the carbon challenges, despite their importance.

An audience member interjected to ask if Willmott Dixon is still using gas boilers – he answered that for new build residential properties “there’s no reason we can’t be using electrical technologies,” (such as heat pumps) “without huge, or any cost pressures.” However retrofit was “a whole different matter,” he added.

Alisdair said that buyers are already reacting very favourably to such tech – possibly due to them being more educated on the environmental benefits than they are on the benefits of a timber build. He discussed solar power as an example, saying “PV works.”

Alisdair argued that there is “a huge opportunity for solar generation” in the

housing sector, and says that both commercial and residential designers and developers should be factoring it into their architecture now.

Roofs and flat surfaces can now have more than one function, he continued, and the costs of solar PV panels are getting lower and lower – “so there’s no excuse.”

When the chair, Ed Allison-Wright asked him about the extent to which Government should intervene, Donn said the industry is likely to need the “carrot on a stick” the chair described, but that it shouldn’t slow down on creative new solutions.

The audience then presented the panel with a range of concerns – including that of mortgage evaluations not reflecting the costs of a sustainable build, and that (as more than one person said) above all developers and builders are going to, and have to, look at their return first and foremost.

Another audience member raised what he called the “damp squib” of the Green Deal, arguing that energy efficient products have been around for a long time, but that policies have never managed to get it right.

The idea of efficient new-builds vs upgrading existing stock was also raised once more, with Brandmayr firmly asserting: “80 per cent of the buildings that will exist in 2050 have already been built; retrofit is key.”

CARBON GLASSES

Ed concluded by asking each panel member two questions: is their ‘glass half full’ or ‘half empty’ on improving the situation, and will the UK meet its 2050 carbon targets?

Alisdair Donn said he was very much glass half full, saying the built environment has a lot of opportunities to show changes in that time scale. Tom Westwood was similarly positive, celebrating the turnout in Hove keen to explore the issues.

Caterina Brandmayr too was ‘half full’ – though underscoring it with caution, saying: “I don’t think there is an alternative to the 2050 targets.”

Brighton, with the only Green MP in the country – may not be the best measure for the whole sector’s interest in actively progressing solutions actively to low carbon construction matter. However it is clear that from this sample of local business people in this seaside city there is a keenness to adopt practical means to drive them to a greener future – as long, of course, as it can be costed correctly.

Tom challenged the delegates in summing up: “If you didn’t believe we could all do it, why are you even here?”

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CASE STUDY

State of independence



London's first luxury retirement community offers retirees independent living alongside hotel-inspired amenities, all within sight of Battersea's Albert Bridge. Lara Haddock of Battersea Place walks Jack Wooler around the development.

Just across the road from Battersea Park, within sight of Albert Bridge, the capital's first luxury retirement community hosts 103 one, two and three-bedroom luxury apartments and penthouses, as well as a wide range of onsite amenities and services, and 24-hour care.

Approaching from the outside, the exterior brickwork complements the red brick Victorian houses and mansion flats which characterise Battersea, while floor-to-ceiling windows reflect the parkland opposite and facilitate long and interesting sight-lines for residents. The new building is orientated to maximise views outdoors and bring daylight in.

When I first walk into the reception to meet Lara Haddock, head of sales at Battersea Place (which is developed and run by LifeCare Residences) I am immediately presented with one of the many advantages of retirement living. Attending the front desk, which if I didn't know better could have been that of any upmarket hotel, I am just behind a resident who sadly was to attend a funeral that afternoon.

The ease and speed at which the staff organise his travel arrangements is certainly impressive – they book him a car immediately, and make sure he's got his return journey sorted, checking that his family are on hand at the other end.

Soon after, Lara arrives to greet me, explaining that such a level of service is just one of many benefits of this style of retirement living.

"Battersea Place was built to be fully accessible in every sense," she says as we head out of the reception.

"The development is designed to fill the gap between independent and assisted living; the challenge was how to sensitively integrate a high-end London residence with onsite amenities and a discreet, state-of-art care capability."

BUILT-IN COMMUNITY

Leading me into the central hub of the development, Lara begins by giving a tour of the building and its various amenities.

This hub bridges the lounge, library and meeting areas, and connects the two residential wings on either side.

"All communal facilities are on the ground floor," says Lara, "enabling both easy accessibility and fostering relations between the residents."

She continues: "When residents enter the building, they walk past the lounge which encourages them to stop and converse with friends and neighbours; the lounge also opens onto a courtyard garden, creating a social environment for every season."

We take a moment here to look through the open glazing of the lounge through to the central courtyard – in which "every effort was made to landscape the area to create a sanctuary where residents can relax, and provide a focal point at the development's core."

Lara now leads me back to the corridor, and to the nearby bar and restaurant – which, as the reception, could be mistaken for that of any upmarket hotel's – illuminated with green directional lighting that reduces any sense of harshness, and produces a certain ambience in the space.

A glance at the 'a la carte' menu reveals many tempting options such as roast guinea fowl or pan fried sea bass.

Continuing, we view complementary communal facilities located close by. The onsite cinema is one such impressive example, enabling residents to enjoy refreshments while participating in other activities such as enjoying movies or the opera, or perhaps enjoying a game in the billiards room.

"EVERY EFFORT WAS MADE TO LANDSCAPE THE AREA TO CREATE A SANCTUARY WHERE RESIDENTS CAN RELAX, AND PROVIDE A FOCAL POINT AT THE DEVELOPMENT'S CORE" – LARA HADDOCK, BATTERSEA PLACE

The pool is also located nearby; “unlike many indoor pools,” Lara tells me, “it is flooded with light from windows above and to the side.” A gym, featuring specialist Helsinki University Research (HUR) equipment is also located here, adjacent to the pool.

Lastly, before she shows me one of the few unoccupied homes in the facility, we take the lift down to the attached nursing home located on a lower floor, providing “reassurance of care (if required),” while domiciliary care is also available in the retirement apartments themselves.

The care home – called The Albert Suites – is almost as deceptive as the retirement community.

While its function is necessarily more clinical than its counterpart, like the retirement home, the nursing home is bright and airy, offering both comfort and style – in its own restaurant for example – environmental quality has not been sacrificed for those in greater need.

One of the main benefits of the attached care home, says Lara, as separate as it is, is the future-proofing aspect for residents. Even without entering care, she tells me that in the retirement section, the services can grow with their needs and health, but when it comes to it, having a care home on site is a far smaller upheaval.

Lara tells me about one couple who shared a flat upstairs that found a real benefit here; one partner had to enter care, but was able to do so just downstairs from their partner, with visitation as easy as pushing a button on the lift.

PLANNING HURDLES

As we head back through these various amenities towards the show apartment, Lara tells me of the brand’s history, and how, drawing on 35 years’ experience of owning and operating international retirement communities, LifeCare Residences (LCR) founder Cliff Cook “recognised the need for high-quality retirement accommodation in London.”

The development’s head of sales continues: “In Battersea he saw the ideal location to deliver LCR’s concept of providing a rich and fulfilling quality of life admit a thriving community.”

She explains that before Battersea Place took form, the site was previously occupied by Ralph West Hall, which was a single 10-storey building providing accommodation to students at the University of Surrey.

In 2007, LCR purchased the site on Albert Bridge Road, but the project wasn’t without its barriers in its early days.

“We acquired the site with the princi-

ple of residential development having been established through earlier planning decisions,” says Lara.

“There was a huge amount of local opposition to the redevelopment of Ralph West Hall; however, at that time Wandsworth were very accommodating of our form of accommodation, recognising the benefits of providing residential properties alongside care to local people.”

With Wandsworth’s support, the team, including architect Powell Dobson, Tracy Leach of Icon Interiors, Vinci Construction for the build, and SLW undertaking project management, then achieved a C2 planning permission for the redevelopment of the site to provide a retirement community plus full onsite nursing care.

The sales director is however very clear in describing LCR’s leading role in the project: “We are in the position of both developer and long-term owner/operator of the project, and we took a very close monitoring role over everything. Vinci Construction had a design and build contract, and we also kept a close relationship with them throughout the project.”

She tells me that construction then started in 2013, the demolition of all existing structures being required before work began, and the project reached completion in 2016 – with the builder Vinci selecting a concrete frame solution with post-tensioned floor slabs on a contiguous piled retaining wall and external steel balconies fixed to the slab.

A HOME FOR LIFE

I was also able to view a show apartment, and like the rest of the building, the apartments themselves are somewhat glamorous. It is easy to forget – with the range of attention-grabbing amenities – that Battersea Place is also a permanent home to many.

As I am guided around the show flat by Lara – providing space enviable for generations beneath its target audience – she says it has been intentionally put together in a ‘multi-generational’ style, “but with the added design considerations necessary for retirees” – and this is clear; if it weren’t for the safety cord in the wetroom it would hard to separate it from any luxury inner-city flat.

According to Lara, the apartment’s interior design is also intended to “juxtapose contemporary design with classic elegance, and harness open plan living to create a fluid, versatile space,” along with the “elegant furnishings” that add to the sense of luxury.

As she puts it, the “apartments were discreetly adapted to cater to the retirement community demographic, without



compromising on specification.”

There are of course many design considerations necessary when building for the elderly. Some of the less obvious, but important features that Lara shows me include raised height ovens and appliances, wide corridors and doorways, plus a 24-hour call system.

Another benefit that Lara points out is the peace of mind for family members – when worried, they can simply call the concierge at any time of day, who will promptly send a member of staff to check on them.

She says that residents’ safety is of course paramount in all aspects of the building, which is apparent in its design, from perhaps smaller issues of mobility tackled by level thresholds created wherever possible (including into balconies and external areas generally), to more serious health issues which the onsite nursing home is well-equipped to deal with. Long or short term nursing rehabilitation and convalescence are offered where needed.

“Each resident has a personal swipe card that gives them access to the building and to their apartment,” continues Lara. “All doors and windows have wireless detectors, so the building management is fully aware of what is happening around the site,” supplemented by a CCTV system with cameras at key points around the development.

NOT JUST LIVING, BUT THRIVING

“Although independent living and wellbeing are key,” says Lara, “sociability and friendship are at the forefront of the offering at Battersea Place, with intelligently designed communal spaces to facilitate this.”

As a prime example, there is a member of staff at Battersea Place whose sole purpose at work is to provide entertainment for the residents, booking and creating events for them to keep their calendars full. These range from trips out, to the use of the many in-house amenities on site.

Lara continues: “An evolving calendar of social activity is designed to reflect residents’ passions and interests, including local excursions to the many social attractions in the capital (enabled by the services of a minibus and carpool). Friends and family are also welcome to enjoy the many benefits of Battersea Place, with a guest apartment available for their use.”

Residents might meet for an exercise session in the large onsite pool for example, with towels provided so they don’t need to bring one down with them; or they might enjoy the crafts room together – which as everything at Battersea Place, can be used with family members to keep residents’ apartments

clutter free). Or they might watch something in the cinema room, which now offers opera broadcasts too, with drinks and snacks in the intermission at the bar); or meet up for a drink in the bar’s happy hour.

According to the head of sales, the interior and exterior designs are also key to tying this overall experience together: “While underpinned by a sense of luxury, the overarching aim was to create a welcoming, homely atmosphere without feeling too corporate. Inspiration was taken from the luxury hotel industry, yet comfort was at the forefront of that vision.”

She continues: “The natural landscape of the park and the contemporary design of the building are reflected throughout the interiors, using natural motifs and materials. London’s status as an international destination is also present in the design, with iconic artwork of the city throughout (designed to appeal to the well-travelled, cosmopolitan residents of Battersea Place).”

RETIRING IN STYLE

Throughout what is clearly a highly successful development, you see happy, smiling faces – both residents and staff – and couples having a quiet drink,

people sipping a coffee, having their nails done, or quietly reading in the library.

Looking out of a window, I am suddenly reminded of the building’s location – it is easy to forget that on top of all these amenities, it’s in a prime spot just across the road from Battersea Park, Chelsea just moments away over the bridge, South Kensington five minutes away by car. There are of course extensive transport links, as well as the private transport services that the facility itself offers – at a fittingly high-end cost.

“As London’s first luxury retirement community,” says Lara, as we head back through the reception, “Battersea Place is a pioneering development, providing a new lifestyle choice for the over-70s.”

She concludes: “Residents frequently comment that Battersea Place has ‘changed their life for the better’ and that ‘they wished they had moved sooner.’ She says their advocacy of Battersea Place is one of the key drivers of sales enquiries (with word of mouth outperforming any other marketing channel).

Families, too, comment on how good the move has been for their loved ones, while also feeling reassured that their needs are exceeded, “enabling them to enjoy the best retirement has to offer.”



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Minibems appoints IoT specialist Nigel Pugh as CTO

Minibems is delighted to announce the appointment of Nigel Pugh as CTO, who brings a wealth of expertise and experience to the role including the development of the Hive home platform. Nigel is a specialist in IoT solutions for the smart home sector and a welcome addition to the rapidly expanding Minibems team. Nigel has over 20 years' experience in the software industry, which he brings to the Minibems role, leading development teams for UBS, Betfair & Canonical. Leading the hardware and software development functions, he has responsibility for delivering the technology road map and ensuring the Minibems platform offers class-leading customer experience, security, reliability and energy savings. Nigel brings real computing and software DNA combined with a sharp commercial brain to the role. Nigel commented: "Joining Minibems is the sort of opportunity and challenge I relish." This appointment further strengthens the growing team at Minibems, who are at the cutting edge of applying IoT technology to building performance, delivering a unique and comprehensive heat network management service that enables clients to save energy, reduce carbon emissions and alleviate fuel poverty. With innovation and efficiency at the heart of everything we, Minibems is advancing heat networks.

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CONSORT CLAUDGEN NBS National BIM Library

Consort launches new electric heating brochure plus updates to BIM library

Consort Claudgen have launched their latest Heat brochure which includes a host of new heaters and heating controls in their product range. The 48-page brochure features motion-activated and waterproof run-back time controllers, new heaters in the electronic 7-day timer range and advanced wireless controllers which are now compatible with Consort's RX and SL heaters. All of these are detailed in the brochure along with the established panel and fan heaters, convectors, LST heaters, air curtains, downflows and towel rails.

Consort have also added new BIM objects of low surface temperature heaters to their BIM library which consists of panel and fan heaters, recessed ceiling heaters and air curtains. All of these objects are available to download from Consort Claudgen's website or the NBS National BIM Library. The BIM objects featured in the NBS National BIM Library include technical details such as dimensions, ratings, insulation standard classes and electrical specifications to aid architects and specifiers in their design process.

www.consortepl.com www.consortepl.com/bim-modelling

Mapei's Ultralite Range has been shortlisted for a TTS Award

Mapei is pleased to announce that the Ultralite range has been shortlisted as a top 20 finalist in the Tomorrow's Tile & Stone Awards 2020. The awards look to celebrate the best products and innovations in the tiling industry.

Mapei's range of Ultralite adhesives offers innovative, lightweight cementitious adhesives that are unique in their kind. The adhesives are ideal for bonding all types of ceramic, mosaic and natural stone, as well as thin porcelain tiles. They are particularly versatile with characteristics that make the work of installers simpler and quicker; providing more coverage per unit leads to faster installations and less mixing times.

Due to their special formulation, installation becomes less tiring – this is due to the glass micro-spheres or natural aggregates contained in the adhesive that help make trowelling easier. Supplied in lighter bags (15kg) with a practical hand grip for easier handling, Ultralite adhesives provide up to 80 per cent higher yield compared to other adhesives with the same classification.

Also part of the range, Ultralite D2 is a ready to use and water resistant adhesive with high yield for ceramic wall tiling; it boasts excellent



coverage, and is very easy to apply.

Voting for the Awards are now open, and the readers of Tomorrow's Tile & Stone have until March 13th to select their winner via the website.

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Aquarian Cladding seals partnership with industry leaders to distribute MechSlip

Specialist external cladding supplier Aquarian Cladding Systems has announced an agreement with Ash and Lacy and Ibstock Kevington to distribute MechSlip.

The innovative brick cladding system will uniquely allow architects and developers the creative freedom to design robust and versatile brick facades using any natural clay brick cut into slips. The slips can be mechanically fixed to any substrate, at any height, via an engineered metal support system.

MechSlip will be added to Aquarian Cladding's product portfolio, alongside the B-rated Gebrik insulating brick cladding system and A1-rated Terreal terracotta rainscreen system, as a non-combustible A1-rated cladding solution, suitable for use on buildings over 18m.

For Aquarian Cladding, it means an exciting start to 2020 after another successful year in 2019. The South West-based company has seen continual growth since forming 12 years ago and Julian Venus, Aquarian's Sales Director said: "We are delighted to be partnering with not one but two market-leading, innovative manufacturers. The opportunity to work together with Ash and Lacy and Ibstock



Kevington is hugely exciting for all of us.

"We have had sustained success for over 12 years as experts providing technical, sales, distribution and installation support to specifiers and end-users of brick cladding. This agreement shows our commitment to providing the best cladding solutions for architects, contractors and developers."

MechSlip will be introduced to Aquarian's unique Approved Installer Network and the company will work with its 60-strong approved installation companies to add the unique brick cladding system string to their bow.

The development of MechSlip has been carried out as a joint venture between UK-based

industry innovators Ash and Lacy, who have designed the mechanical metal support system, and Ibstock Kevington, the UK's largest brickwork special shape and masonry fabrication company, who cut the brick slips that go onto it.

MechSlip has been fire tested and meets Euroclass A1 in accordance with EN13501-1:2007 +A1:2009. It has also been tested for weathertightness in accordance with 'Standard for systemised building envelopes CWCT, 2006' and is currently registered for BBA certification, which is expected in 2020.

Founded in 1857, Ash and Lacy has been at the forefront of technical performance, product innovation and high standards of engineering for over 140 years and manufactures a diverse range of engineered facade and roofing systems for the construction sector.

Founded in 1987, Ibstock Kevington has a successful history of developing innovative brick detailing solutions to traditionally complex construction problems and is part of Ibstock Brick, the UK's largest brick manufacturer.

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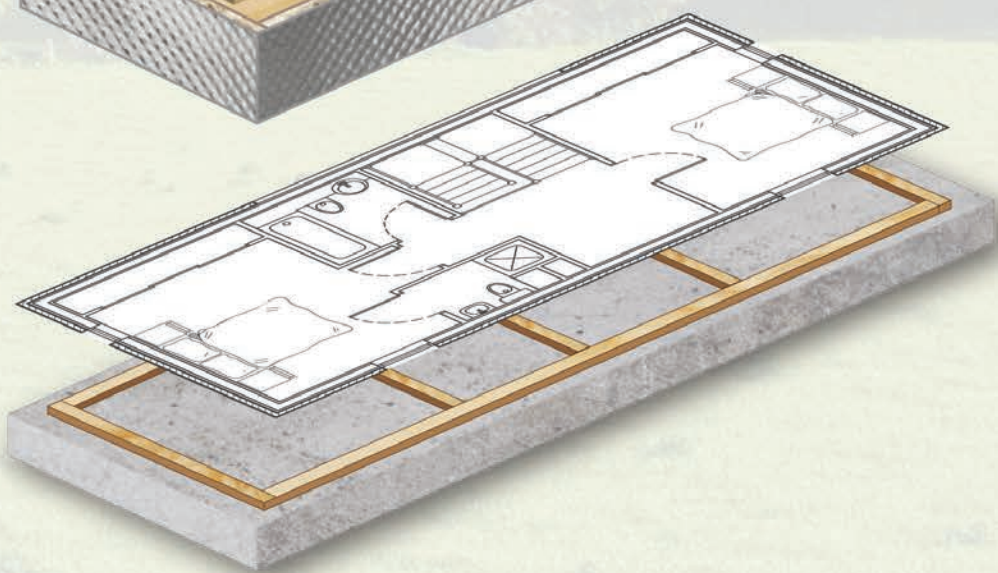
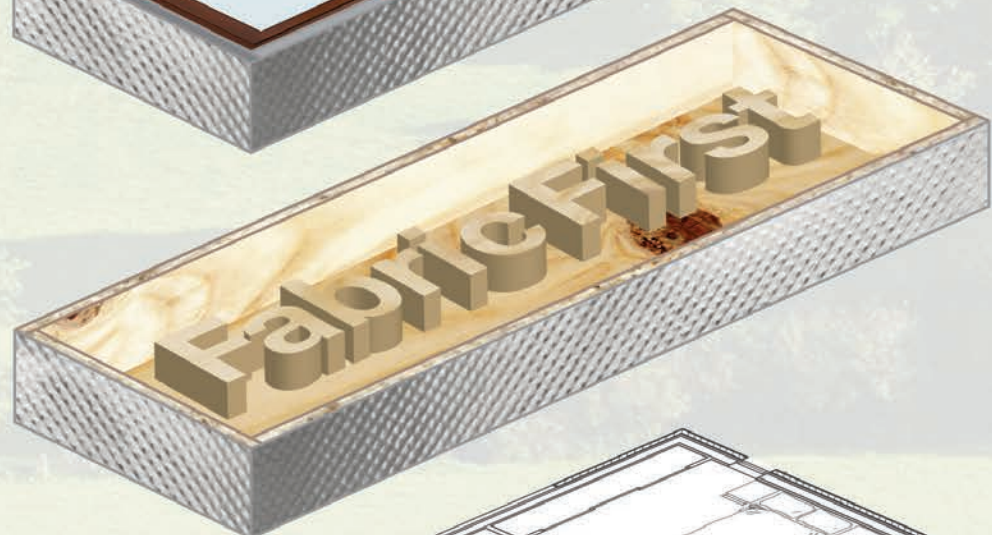
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VORTICE UK sales team starts the year in Italy



January began with the **VORTICE UK** sales team’s visit to the company’s Italian headquarters where they previewed some of the brand’s exciting new product development plans, with the environment being a key consideration. 2020 begins with the roll-out of the Vort Avel HR450D

Passive House accredited ventilation system which was launched at the end of 2019. The Technical team at VORTICE will always be happy to work with architects, specifiers, developers and contractors in order to ensure that optimum energy efficiency and good indoor air quality is planned in at an early at the design stage of a project.

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New year, new name

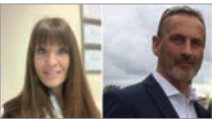


Polypipe Civils & Infrastructure has changed its name to **Polypipe Civils & Green Urbanisation**. The name change reflects a shift in focus towards a holistic approach to

water retention, re-use and management. Green Urbanisation introduces a new generation of techniques that optimises urban green assets through an extended and fully integrated sustainable water management network. Under a campaign name of *From the Ground Up*, Polypipe Civils & Green Urbanisation will be spreading the word about its new approach – and encouraging more dialogue and debate about our future city landscapes.

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Designer Contracts senior promotions



Designer Contracts has announced two senior promotions within the business. Stacey Brereton who joined the company nine years ago, has been promoted from HR and health and safety manager to HR and health and safety director. Brian Flynn, with the business for three years, has been promoted from area manager to regional manager within the company’s Southern region. Said Peter Kelsey, Designer Contracts md: “We are delighted to have promoted two exceptional colleagues who have worked hard within the business. It’s people like Stacey and Brian who contribute towards our company’s success and our continued growth during what has been an uncertain time for many – congratulations to them both!”

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This must be just like living in Paradise!



A £52 million student accommodation development in Coventry is using smoke and heat exhaust ventilation (SHEV) systems from SE Controls to enhance fire safety by providing smoke free escape routes for almost 1000 students living at Paradise Student Village.

Located on Paradise Street and managed by student accommodation provider, AXO Student Living, the development includes studio rooms and study bedrooms, arranged in clusters, as well as a cafe bar, cinema and gym.

Designed by Fraser Brown Mackenna Architects and constructed by Galliford Try, the new building incorporates three towers with 10, 12 and 14 storeys respectively, together with an extensive 3 storey town house structure that is arranged in a 'wall' below the towers and adjacent to the city's ring road.

To meet fire safety and smoke ventilation requirements, the buildings are separated into six individual fire zones with dedicated smoke control solutions from SE Controls serving each zone, which protects stairwells and corridors by keeping escape routes clear of smoke if a fire should occur.

The town house is separated into three zones with the 'cluster corridor' in each being protected by a mechanical smoke ventilation system, using duty and stand-by SHEVTEC® fans, with replacement air supplied by automatic opening lobby dampers connected to a natural air inlet shaft.

In addition, two of the town house zones also have a stair lobby, each of which is protected by an automatic louvre vent at the head of the stairs. Once triggered by a fire alarm signal, the corridor dampers on the fire floor open, together with the stair louvre, allowing smoke to be extracted from the building. Also, Manual Control Points (MCP) are located throughout the town house zones, which enable the system to be managed and reset by fire service personnel.

The three high-rise blocks also use SE Controls mechanical smoke extraction, but in a duplex push-pull system that enables smoke to be removed from corridors through one of two smoke shafts, depending on the location of the fire, to keep escape routes clear.

Each of the main stair cores in the tower blocks are also protected with roof mounted automatic louvre vents, which allow smoke and heat to be vented, keeping them clear of smoke and hot gases to aid escape.

The system is designed so that every tower incorporates two smoke shafts, each of which is connected to a duty and stand-by SHEVTEC smoke extraction fan set capable of running in either direction. In the event of a fire, both duty fans will start with one shaft extracting the smoke, while the other fan runs in the opposite direction, which helps purge smoke by pressurising the other shaft and corridor.

A key advantage of this approach is that the direction of operation is dependent on the location of the fire so that the extract fan shaft is

always closest to the source of a fire and the pressurised replacement air is supplied by the farthest shaft for more rapid and effective smoke removal.

Each corridor incorporates a SHEVTEC lobby damper at each end as well as an automatic smoke door by the lift lobby, which open when a signal is received from the building's alarm system.

The control of the complete smoke ventilation and extraction system is handled by 12 SE Controls OS2 SHEVTEC controllers with integral failsafe battery backup, which are linked to a series of OSLoop Coordinators throughout each of the six fire zones. OS2 MCPs and tamperproof MCPs are also installed to allow the fire service to manage the system's operation and reset it after any fire event.

SE Controls Project Manager, Regie Gadayan, explained: "This is an ideal example of how we combine our technical expertise, immense experience and innovative products to develop a highly effective solution for this flagship residential project."

He added: "The Paradise Student Village is an innovative development itself and is providing much needed high quality accommodation for students attending the city's university and I'm delighted that we have been able to play a key role in their safety."



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Designer Contracts supports ChildLine



Designer Contracts, one of the UK's largest flooring contractors, has sponsored the services of leading children's charity, **ChildLine** for one day. It is the second time the company has supported the charity, which needs £30,000 each day to operate its counselling services, helping thousands of young people up to the age of 19 throughout the UK. Said Designer Contracts md, Peter Kelsey: "We were delighted to offer our support for the second year running. There are around 800 young people calling in to the charity in any one day, desperately seeking advice and assistance, so the generosity of the public is essential for it to operate effectively."

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Trade professionals can face a multitude of challenges on a job, from stubborn stains to difficult surfaces and problems such as mould and mildew, but now thanks to leading paint brand **Crown Trade**, all the solutions can be found inside just one tin.

Crown Trade's new high performance all-purpose PX primer range has been specifically developed to achieve excellent opacity and adhesion on even tricky surfaces such as tiles and ceramics, as well as helping to block stains and offer protection from alkaline attack. The new range offers a choice between the traditional solvent-based stain-blocking PX3 primer and the new water-based PX4, which also features the added advantage of a quick-drying and low-odour finish.

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Aluminium curtain walling sets new standards in house building

Curtain walling is still not commonly associated with house building. Nonetheless, it has positive benefits in terms of installation speed and cost. Though PVCu is still used extensively it has drawbacks in terms of expansion and contraction. Aluminium is highly stable and offers a far longer design life, its inherent strength and light weight enabling systems to be installed in spans of up to ten panels, each a metre wide. On bi-folding sliding doors, slimmer frames provide a sleek appearance with an unobstructed glazing area. Thermal performance is a commonly cited reason for aluminium's use. Add to this its recyclability and low environmental impact and it has a high sustainability rating. Modern powder coating techniques and **Kestrel Aluminium's** ability to produce any RAL shade and dual colours provide total design flexibility. CALA Homes' development of five and six bedroom houses on the Coton House Estate near Rugby has a Kestrel Aluminium 100mm box and plate curtain walling system incorporating 60mm casement windows. The dramatic frontages provide high thermal efficiency through use of polyamide thermal breaks and low U-value double glazing units.

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A COMPELLING CASE: GABLE WALL SPANDREL PANELS

In light of the Government's 300,000 homes a year target and its recent push for higher quality in housing, Tim Tasker of Pasquill puts the case for why gable wall spandrel panels should be found on every building site across the UK.

Thanks to their particular aesthetic, gable walls are increasingly becoming more popular with house-builders and developers.

Gable wall spandrel panels – precisely manufactured offsite with timber and craned onto timber framed or masonry support walls – are a simple, more efficient and safer way to build, providing an alternative to the traditional inner leaf of an exterior masonry gable wall.

With that in mind, here are the top five reasons why gable wall spandrel panels outbox bricks and mortar every time:

1. COMPLIANCE

Providing the panels have been installed with careful detailing of the connection to the head masonry wall, they can provide excellent thermal performance.

An investigation into performance found that scenarios during thermal testing were compliant with the minimum surface temperatures/fRsi requirements of BR 497:2016, and the associated heat loss (y/Psi-value) for use in SAP calculations.

2. HEALTH AND SAFETY

We all know health and safety is the priority on any site, and thankfully gable wall spandrel panels can significantly reduce risks when compared to their traditional counterparts. This is in part because they significantly reduce the amount of time spent working from height, but also because they are usually stringently manufactured in line with regulations.

Manufacturers can engineer the gable wall spandrel panels to meet specifiers' exacting requirements, and should ensure they withstand design loads, wind loads and the acceptable permitted deflection limit of the outer leaf of masonry.

Ultimately, any steps that can be taken to improve health and safety are a must.

3. SPEEDING UP THE PROCESS

As with all offsite manufacturing solutions, gable end spandrel panels can be expertly prefabricated in a factory and delivered just at the right time. Not only does this have



practical benefits, such as saving space and reducing waste, but it also allows a quicker build as there's no need for the mortar to cure. One study even suggested that time savings of 50-60 per cent can be found when large elements can be fabricated.

Traditional brick and block gable ends and party walls are open to the elements during construction and curing and cannot be erected during certain weather conditions. With gable wall spandrel panels, you only need to monitor wind speeds when craning spandrels into position – the hard work's already been done off-site, helping you to get the job done on time.

4. TIME IS MONEY

If something saves time, it's almost certainly going to save money too. Because they're manufactured offsite, gable wall spandrel panels can save on-site build time compared to traditional brick and block.

Gable wall spandrel panels also allow continuity of work during installation, allowing the rest of the site work to continue as normal.

5. REASSURING STRENGTH

There's a misconception that bricks and mortar are stronger than timber frame solutions, but engineered products can possess the same properties and strengths associated with steel or concrete.

Units designed in line with the NHBC Technical Guidance on spandrel panels mean that such panels must resist wind loads acting on the gable end walls, and any loads imposed by the outer layers of cladding.

A POPULAR ROOFING OPTION

Gable wall spandrel panels are a revolution in roofing, and provide a wide range of benefits for architects, builders, health and safety officers and ultimately homeowners.

If you think the panels are right for your project, consult an expert. Specialist manufacturers have the knowledge and expertise to ensure safety, compliance and cost-efficiency with each spandrel they design and produce.

Tim Tasker is technical manager at Pasquill

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Smithy Cottage, an unusual, cruciform shaped new-build property in Warrington, has recently been constructed using **CUPA PIZARRAS'** CUPA 2 natural slates. Selected for uniformity, longevity and aesthetics which is in-keeping with the surrounding properties, the CUPA 2 slates were used for the roof of the property which unusually incorporated atrium glazing and inlaid solar panels. As with all CUPA PIZARRAS

slates, it is available in a selection of formats, sizes and thicknesses ranging from 3.5mm to 7.5mm.

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DIGITISING CONSTRUCTION: A CRITICAL MISSION

Adrian Wild of Integro Construction Software explains why every housebuilding business should be using the software now available to maximise profits.

In 2020 there are plenty of property developers and construction firms who still haven't properly embraced digital construction – no wonder the CITB has launched an initiative to train up to 2,000 construction industry leaders in digital skills.

Not too long ago, there wasn't a single software product on the market that came close to meeting most builders' construction needs. But for many, software can provide the cost control firms often lack.

Software can manage users' workload, secure profit, and make sure nothing is missed. This transformational power of software can have a huge impact on a company's bottom line.

SOFTWARE HAS COME A LONG WAY

Here we are in the third decade of the 21st century, and forward-thinking businesses large and small are beginning

to recognise the value of integrated design and estimating software.

Before, people had to do it the hard way. Today, software has truly evolved into something sophisticated yet accessible. Combining CAD with live pricing in an integrated solution was unimaginable two decades ago, but today it's a reality, and an opportunity that ought to be snapped up by building firms, architects and property developers.

Builders now have all the construction software tools they need to succeed. If they choose the right kit, there's no excuse. But there's still more to do, and awareness of digital construction's potential should certainly be higher.

The 'Partners launch' of 'Digital Transformation through leaders' was recently held in Glasgow. The CITB is funding a 'Digital Construction Skills' programme to offer, in some cases free,

training and consultancy to companies in support of their digital journey. This could take the form of in-house training, eLearning, online tools, research, workshops, and so on. It is vital that software firms play their part to make sure no company is left behind.

IT ALL STARTS WITH ACCURATE COSTS

Who doesn't want to know the accurate cost of a housebuilding project? You want to evaluate feasibility and profitability. You want to know whether the sausage machine is going to churn out profit once all the keys are handed over.

Back in the day, this was no easy task. Now, as you design a project, you can be served the regularly updated prices for intelligent BIM products to produce an instant cost; you can easily scrutinise labour productivity, usage factors, wastage; the list goes on.

PLANNING APPLICATION SETBACKS

Then of course, once you arrive at your figures, it all goes out the window when the local authority requests a different roof pitch, or maybe a hip, a different render, and so on. It's money down the drain when your data has to be reworked multiple times.

Thankfully now, depending on your software, as every alteration is made, the effect of the change will cascade across the entire project. So you can quickly review the design, swap products and rates in and out of the project, and see how energy performance will differ. In no time, you can ascertain whether the job is still viable.

So much of housebuilding is about customising house styles and repurposing for the local market. Not all software offers high quality BIM objects.

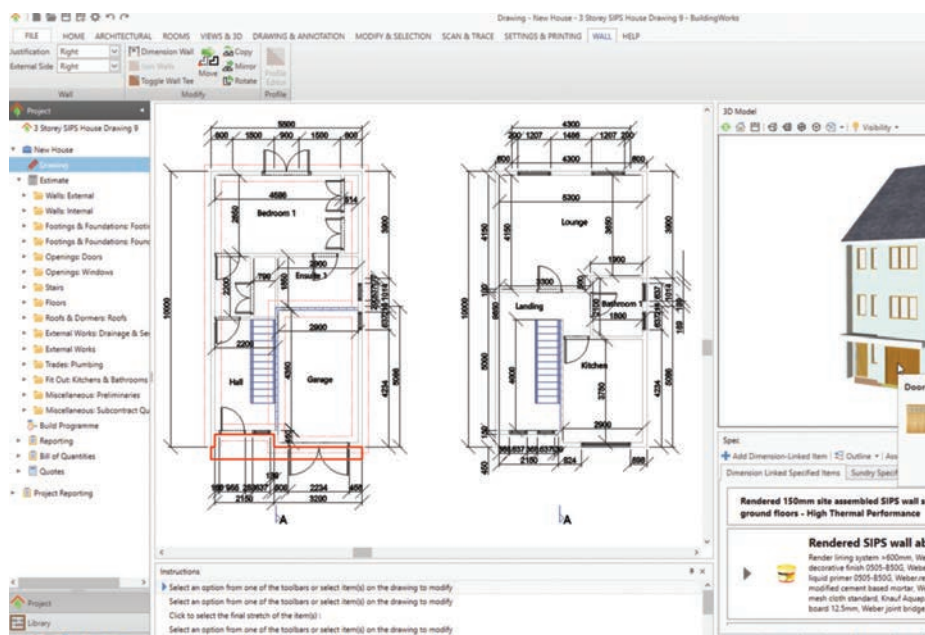
But, find the right software product with clever CAD functionality, and you can revise designs with an instant project cost update, rather than start all over again every time. It's a real game changer.

MANAGING THE ENTIRE PROJECT

It's never been more important to have an efficient process that ensures you sustain your business and maintain a decent profit. Software that provides a single source of truth, employing joined up thinking, gives your business a fighting chance.

So if you're currently producing your project designs and costings separately, then think again. Software has come a long way – it's time to properly digitise your business.

Adrian Wild is the founder of Integro Construction Software





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“Freefoam value our new build customers as much as we do”

General Building Plastics (GBP) is a leading independent supplier of PVC building products to the building and home improvement trade. GBP also specialise in supply to local and national housebuilders. Working closely with **Freefoam** as sole supplier of PVC fascia, soffit and gutter since 1994 GBP have found that Freefoam’s support to the new build market to be particularly invaluable. The relationship has grown and developed over the years and to the mutual benefit of both. Courtney Robertson, Area Sales Manager, explains: “It would be easy to say we chose Freefoam as a supplier because of the quality of their products and the consistency of supply, and that’s why we continue to buy from Freefoam... but the reason why we started the relationship in the first place and the reason why the relationship continues today is the way they value our customers as much as we do.” GBP find that Freefoam’s wide range of styles, sizes and colours of fascia and soffit are particularly suitable for the new build market. The variety enables housebuilders to source high quality, long lasting, low maintenance materials suitable for any style of home, but still allows them to remain competitive in the market place. You can watch a video about General Building Plastics at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYMLHYdFUw&t=1s

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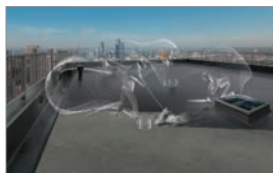


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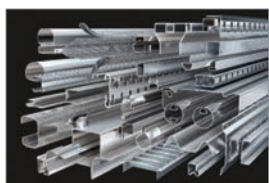


BMI UK & Ireland has revised and enhanced its portfolio of flat roofing technologies with the introduction of BMI Sealoflex. BMI Sealoflex is a liquid applied waterproofing range which offers building owners, designers and contractors a great choice of high-performance system

solutions for a host of requirements and applications. To provide ultimate specification and installation peace of mind, the three systems in the range – Sealoflex Ultima, Sealoflex Prima and Sealoflex Endura – are all backed by the company's market-leading guarantees and six-step specification service to meet customer design and technical needs.

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Hadley Group returning to Futurebuild 2020



Hadley Group, the cold-rolled steel manufacturer, looks forward to returning to Futurebuild 2020 as an Innovation Partner of the show, with a stand on the new Innovation Trail and a Hadley Group Bar. New for 2020 is Futurebuild's Innovation Trail, demonstrating the

event's commitment to driving positive change and development in the industry through its Innovation Partnership programme. The innovation trail will run across the length of the venue and is set to feature an array of products and developments from across the construction sector, all contributing to transforming the future face of the industry.

www.hadleygroup.com www.hadleysteelframing.com

Futurebuild stand no E50

Holistic future water management



Changing weather patterns of too much or too little rain has meant that certain areas in the UK are officially in drought while others are experiencing flooding. In the future, the changing rainfall may mean this imbalance may happen in the same areas at different times of the year. Usually these problems are looked at as two different issues but to plan for the future there should be a viable holistic approach.

RainActiv, from **Rainwater Harvesting Ltd** combines the benefits of rainwater harvesting and also a controlled and measured SuDS solution to prevent flooding. Rainwater Harvesting Ltd have a working system at their base in Peterborough which they are happy to demonstrate.

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Rolec EV's range of charge points



Did you know that homebuilders are offering prospective house buyers the option to furnish their homes with EV charging points, ready for the future of electric vehicles? With the ban on petrol and diesel motors to take effect from 2035

(five years ahead of the initial target), now is the time to futureproof your housing developments with EV charging points. Whether you require communal or individual EV charging for your next project, **Rolec EV's** vast range of charge points are suitable and cost effective for all future proofing plans. For more on how Rolec EV, please contact Home Developer & Construction Partnerships BDM, Agnese Emsina: agnese@rolecserv.co.uk.

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futurebuild
03-05 March 2020 / ExCeL, London

SHOW PREVIEW

BE THE CATALYST FOR CHANGE

FutureBuild is again heading to ExCeL in March, this time aiming to unite construction professionals across the sector to create real change in addressing the climate crisis

From recent demonstrations to Government declarations, according to event organisers at Futurebuild 2020, the message is clear – the industry needs to work together if it is to succeed against the climate change challenges we all face.

Against this backdrop, Futurebuild 2020 (3-5 March, ExCeL London) aims to inspire housebuilders and developers to join fellow industry leaders and innovators to be the catalyst for change, and deliver a more sustainable built environment.

SETTING THE AGENDA

The Futurebuild conference returns, and will follow a three-day progression for 2020. With a central theme of responding to the climate and ecological crisis, the Arena will host debate and discussion led by politicians, academics and ‘industry shapers.’

Some of the sessions highlighted by the organisers include: ‘The future is regenerative’ chaired by Peter Murray, chair of New London Architecture (3 March), which will “explore how design and construction needs a circular rethink.” On day two (4 March), London

Mayoral candidate Rory Stewart will sit on a panel looking at ‘Carbon neutral cities of the future,’ and “examine the pathway to healthier, more resilient cities.”

While conference discussions will focus on the biggest issues facing the built environment at a macro level, the six Keynote Stages will look at the specific challenges impacting Buildings, Offsite, Energy, Interiors, Resourceful Materials and Critical Infrastructure. This programme of solution-driven sessions will “share the latest thinking and research, to educate, inform and inspire visitors to make a positive change.”

Each day, the six stages will host a focused keynote presentation by a recognised expert in their field. This and other sessions will look at tangible solutions and approaches which will “make a real difference to practice and performance,” say the organisers.

The Buildings Keynote stage will focus on the latest thinking and initiatives in building quality and performance, key sessions include ‘The Future Homes Standard 2025 – when, what, how?’ The session taking place on the show’s third day (5 March) will be chaired by Lynne



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Sullivan, co-founding partner of design firm sustainableBYdesign.

BEYOND THE STAGES

Around each Keynote Stage will be an exhibition of brands offering solutions to the challenges discussed in the event's 'knowledge programme.' It will reportedly feature some of the largest "headline brands" in the sector, alongside SMEs and start-up organisations, creating a dedicated platform to connect these companies with forward-thinking specifiers and buyers.

Brands and organisations that are leading the charge when it comes to innovation will be recognised through a dedicated Innovation Trail. A 'guided route' has been designed to enable visitors to learn more about the latest thinking from Futurebuild's Innovation Partners, including ACO Technologies, Smart Systems, Cemex, Steico and Hadley Group.

The Buildings section has also been expanded to include two new showcases. The Whole House Retrofit Zone and the Digital Impact Zone will host industry-leading brands.

THE GAME CHANGERS ARE BACK

Futurebuild 2020 will see the return of the Big Innovation Pitch. Hosted in conjunction with technical partner BRE, the competition will identify and celebrate novel new approaches to some of the biggest challenges facing us all.

Entrants will present their ideas on each of the six Keynote Stages on day one, before shortlisted entries go head-to-head in the Arena on day two. A panel of judges will determine the overall winning idea, which will be incorporated into BRE Academy Training and showcased in the BRE Innovation Park.

Martin Hurn, event director of Futurebuild, commented on the 2020 event's agenda: "The responsibility for tackling the climate emergency lies in all of our hands and we must collaborate in order to find solutions to secure our future. Futurebuild 2020 provides the perfect platform for forward-thinking decision makers across the built environment to come together and play a key part in driving positive change.

"We understand that taking time out of work to attend events can be a challenge, which is why we will make sure that visitors can really get involved across a number of levels, from the world class knowledge programme in the Arena and on the Keynote Stages, to the showcase

A 'GUIDED ROUTE' HAS BEEN DESIGNED WITHIN THE EVENT TO ENABLE VISITORS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE LATEST THINKING FROM FUTUREBUILD'S INNOVATION PARTNERS

of the latest innovations across the exhibition. Innovation to us is more than just futuristic concepts, it's about sharing the latest thinking and ideas, processes and solutions, products and materials. All of these things coming together under one roof at Futurebuild 2020 will inspire people to do things differently and create real change."

For more information about Futurebuild 2020, the home of innovation, visit

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Futurebuild stand no B120

Offsite Solutions pod technology at Futurebuild



Offsite Solutions, one of the UK's leading bathroom pod manufacturers, will be launching a major new development in pod technology at Futurebuild 2020 – its new range of MEP utility pods. Offsite Solutions will be bringing a utility pod to Futurebuild as well as steel-framed and GRP composite bathroom pods, giving visitors the opportunity to experience the quality of offsite manufacturing at first hand and the scope of solutions now available. Offsite Solutions is the leading and longest established bathroom pod manufacturer in the UK, supplying over 10,000 pod units every year to major main contractors and developers. It offers the UK's largest range of bathroom pods to suit different building types and applications.

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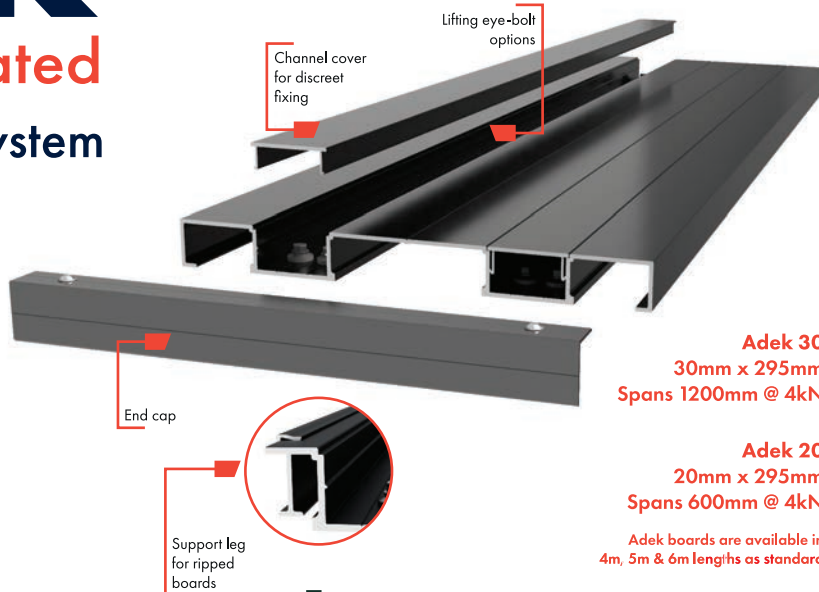
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MINIMISING WASTE IN WATER TREATMENT

With new regulations governing the use of septic tanks in force, David Stagg of Graf UK talks housebuilders and developers through their options for compliance.

Housebuilders and developers building properties off the mains sewage network need to be aware of a recent change – a bid by the Environment Agency to reduce the level of pollution from sewage in the nation's watercourses.

Under the General Binding Rules, anyone with a septic tank discharging into a watercourse must have plans in place to replace it or upgrade the foul water solution within a reasonable timescale, typically 12 months, or sooner if the property is sold before this date.

The rules are as follows:

- Use the correct treatment system – a septic tank or small sewage treatment plant – so the Environment Agency can assess the risk of using it in the location
- The treatment plant must meet British Standard BS EN 12566
- The treatment plant must be installed correctly and have enough capacity
- The treatment system must be regularly emptied and maintained
- If the property is sold, the new owner must be informed about the sewage treatment system
- If use of the treatment system ceases, it must be properly decommissioned.

How can existing septic tanks be upgraded? There are four options available to specifiers:

- If a main sewer has become available, connect to it
- If space is available, install a drainage field so the septic tank discharges into the ground
- Replace the septic tank with a small sewage treatment plant
- In exceptional circumstances, a permit can be applied for to allow discharge to surface water.

To establish what you should do to ensure a sewage treatment system meets the “new” rules, consider the following.

If the existing septic tank discharges to a drainage field that is correctly sized for the tank, then it is compliant, but if it is not, then the correct size needs clarifying, and equipment modified to



meet the requirement.

If the existing septic tank discharges to a soakaway, watercourse, river or stream and there is space for a drainage field, clarify the size of drainage field required and install it as the discharge point from the septic tank.

If there is not enough space for a drainage field, then the septic tank must be upgraded to a sewage treatment plant. If the sewage treatment plant cannot discharge into a local watercourse then a permit needs to be applied for it to discharge to a soakaway.

So, what is all this going to cost? Well, the lowest cost long-term is most likely to be to connect to a mains sewer if one has become available.

The next best cost option is to install a new sewage treatment plant, which is likely to start at somewhere around £2,000, based on British guidelines that a three-bedroom house would need a minimum of a five-person treatment plant. Installation would be on top of this and varies greatly but could add a further £5,000 to £10,000.

A higher cost would be to install a drainage field if the land required is available and the soil conditions are suitable. However, depending on its size, this may be similar to the cost of a new sewage treatment plant as many metres

of perforated pipe might be needed, which can mean a significant area of land has to be excavated.

It is difficult to put a sum on this as it depends on the percolation rate of the soil, but it is not likely to be a small area to dig up, and therefore the labour and plant hire alone is likely to cost more than some of the earlier options. Infiltration tunnels are a great alternative to traditional slotted pipe (that takes up a great deal of land space), but these will require a permit from the Environment Agency.

Last but not least is the question of what to look for in a sewage treatment plant. Specify one which controls effluent quality discharge, while being efficient on energy consumption through the use of a sequence batch reactor process. Look for one which can automatically adapt to a system becoming under or over-charged so performance is kept to a high standard and energy efficiency is not compromised.

In addition, choose one with a treatment process that results in a high-quality effluent discharge that far exceeds current regulations and is future-proofed for any regulation tightening (the British Standard of 20 mg/l for biochemical oxygen demand, 30 mg/l for suspended solids and 20 mg/l for ammonia nitrogen). This means that under normal circumstances effluent can be discharged directly into a flowing watercourse – although special environments, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, may require a higher quality of treatment.

Find one with discreet manhole covers, that does not require concrete backfill, and has no electrical components within the tank as well as a long sludge storage period.

Then, not only will your clients be compliant, they will also be certain of a cost-effective, low-maintenance future in wastewater treatment.

David Stagg is technical product specialist for Graf UK

Faster foundations for your development



Abbey Pynford’s foundation systems are up to 70 per cent faster than traditional methods. By replacing the need for traditional strip foundations or pile and beam, we can cut weeks from your programme. This is achieved through reduced preparatory works, no piling mat (on 95 per cent of projects), greatly reduced spoil removal and eliminating the need for the associated brickwork and subflooring. As well as being faster, we can also offer you more cost certainty. By reducing the programme, prelims and eradicating the elements above, we can offer cost assurance for your project.

01442 212112 www.abbeypynford.co.uk

Good indoor air quality with HPV



If you build homes which are super-insulated with superior air-tightness, then good indoor air quality with no formal heating system can be achieved with Heat Pump Ventilation. It provides energy efficient heating, cooling, hot water and heat recovery ventilation all in one system. Shortlisted in 2018 for a Build It Award, the HPV Series is PassivHaus Certified and great for off-gas properties. It was featured in

2019’s GRAND DESIGNS: The Street series and has also been chosen for the Build It Education House at Graven Hill in Bicester. Make an appointment to visit **Total Home Environment’s** showrooms in Moreton in Marsh.

0345 260 0123 www.totalhome.co.uk

Vent-Axia supports landmark report



Ventilation manufacturer **Vent-Axia** welcomes the latest joint report by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and the Royal College of Physicians on the health impact of indoor air quality (IAQ) on children and young people. “At Vent-Axia we are committed to improving indoor air quality and so public health”

explains Jenny Smith, Head of Marketing at Vent-Axia. Since 1936 Vent-Axia has been working hard to provide ventilation solutions to improve IAQ for households. Vent-Axia’s Sentinel Kinetic mechanical ventilation with heat recovery system boasts an impressive 94 per cent heat recovery.

0844 856 0590 www.vent-axia.com

Domus Ventilation the choice for London homes



Domus Ventilation’s HRXE Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) systems are being installed in to the new Abbey Wharf residential development in Alperston, London. To provide the new homes with adequate ventilation and to achieve BREEAM status, Domus Ventilation HRXE MVHR systems with Domus ducting are being installed by Grant Walker Engineering in every apartment. Designed specifically for small to medium size residential properties, the HRXE MVHR systems combine

supply and extract ventilation in one system. They efficiently recover up to 90 per cent of the heat typically lost in waste, stale air and use it to temper the fresh air drawn into the apartment via an advanced heat exchanger.

www.domusventilation.co.uk

Monobloc Therna V R32 AHP from LG



LG Electronics has added its Therna V air-to-water heat pump to its popular range, operating on the low GWP R32 refrigerant and available in 5kW to 16kW 1Ø and 12kW to 16kW 3Ø, in a wide operating range of between 10-135Hz and water temperatures up to 65°C without an electric heater.

It comes with an energy label rating of A+++ . To find out more about LG’s new Therna V R32 AHP, visit the LG website.

uk.aircon@lge.com partner.lge.com/uk

New Domus Ventilation CPD course



Domus Ventilation, part of the Polypipe group, has announced a new CPD accredited course on “Residential Ventilation Principles and Best Practice”. The CIBSE accredited course focuses on the importance of ventilation in the residential new build industry, in line with

Part F of the Building Regulations. Topics covered include why ventilation is necessary; the types of ventilation available, along with supporting ductwork and installation practices; and the pertinent regulations/ directives. Participants will come away with an understanding of what needs to be considered when specifying a ventilation system at the appropriate project stage. To book a course, contact Shane Leather.

07970 676623 shane.leather@domusventilation.co.uk



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The Vanguard+ electric radiator with WiFi and Voice Control

Using wireless technology, **Electrorads Vanguard+** with WiFi also has voice control compatibility with market-leading Amazon Alexa.

Its wireless connection via a gateway and App, enables complete control of the heating system, making it one of the smartest ranges in the marketplace. Whether it's to turn up or reduce the temperature, the radiator can be controlled simply by speaking to Alexa.

The Vanguard+ offers outputs of 750w, 1000w, 1500w and 2000w, and being Lot 20 compliant, it features a number of energy saving controls that include Open Window Sensors which stop the radiator heating when a draft is felt and restarts when the draft stops and Adaptive Start Control which helps the radiators to "learn" when to switch on in order to achieve optimum household comfort.

Unlike some other equivalents, they also have an inbuilt RF chip with a signal that can 'hop' up to five times to reach remotely-sited radiators and the clever Geo-Location option automatically reacts based on the homeowners' proximity to or from the house ensuring you never return to a cold home! Now that's smart heating!

0113 2746799 www.electrorad.co.uk



A sound solution from Carl F Groupco

Carl F Groupco has supplied AEROPAC ventilators to Dyer Mackay Developments Ltd for a new housing scheme in Thaxted, Essex. Having successfully trialled the AEROPAC, the powered ventilators have been installed into the development which is called 'Maypole View' and comprises nine terraced houses, each with three bedrooms. The recommendation for the AEROPAC, which offers excellent sound insulation and air flow, was provided by a consultant specialising in noise and acoustics. With enhanced acoustics for virtually silent running the AEROPAC is capable of moving large volumes of fresh, draught-free air using minimum energy. Carl F Groupco advises that other key features of the AEROPAC, manufactured by Siegenia, include optional filters to protect against pollen / fine dust and an active carbon filter to keep out exhaust fume odours. The powered ventilator is popular across a number of sectors and has particular appeal for properties located near busy roads, train lines and on flight paths. Security is also enhanced, particularly overnight, as ventilation can be achieved without the need to leave windows open. Ventilators are supplied by Carl F Groupco as part of the company's comprehensive range of over 7,000 window and door hardware products.

01733 393 330 www.carlfgroupco.co.uk

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Woodburning and pellet burning stove supplier **Specflue** has announced an exciting new extension to its range. The company has joined forces with American brand, Solo Stove, to become the UK distributor of its innovative fire pits, plus the full range of accessories. The Solo Stove range adds a third dimension to Specflue's strategy as a leading enabler of environmentally responsible heating. All of its wood burning and pellet burning products already comply with Ecodesign 2022 regulations, and it is a leading advocate for pellet burning technologies as an alternative to their much-loved wood burner collections; with both options offering different benefits to different types of user. The inclusion of Solo Stoves in their range extends this strategy to encompass Outdoor Living.

0333 999 7974 sales@specflue.com

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Norcros strengthens floor preparation range



Norcros Adhesives is strengthening its range of paint-on floor preparation products with the launch of Norcros Pro DPM. The product is a solvent-free epoxy-based surface DPM and moisture vapour suppressant, designed for use on concrete or sand: cement screed floors, to which it has excellent adhesion. It is particularly suitable for

fast-track building projects, since it allows for the early laying of floor coverings. Norcros Pro DPM joins the existing line-up of other paint-on solutions including Key Bond, Pro-Gyp Base and Pro Moisture Suppressant.

01782 524140 www.norcros-adhesives.com

Osmo UK enhances existing TopOil range



Osmo UK, the eco-friendly wood and finishes specialist, has enhanced its TopOil product offering with the introduction of three new finishes; White, Terra and Graphite. The TopOil product range now features seven colours, including clear matt, satin matt, natural matt and acacia matt. The three new shades allow Osmo UK to provide its customers with a colour option to match all current interior design trends. An ideal

choice to accentuate the natural beauty of wooden surfaces, TopOil consists of natural plant oils and waxes. The finish works by penetrating the surface of the wood to enhance the existing characteristics and grain.

www.osmouk.com

Housebuilder & Developer website



The Housebuilder & Developer (HBD) website is an online provider of past and present products and news items for the housebuilder and developer. hbdonline.co.uk is a one-stop source for all the latest press releases providing any visitor with access to information about products and services that they may require. From the website, you can find links to digital issues that have live

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www.hbdonline.co.uk

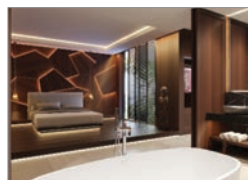
Reginox showcases best-selling Genesis



Brushed nickel is a timeless design choice within the kitchen and **Reginox** has added the finish to its best-selling Genesis range of taps. Genesis brushed nickel is a modern monobloc mixer tap that will look great in any style of kitchen. Its minimalist design features a tall swivel swan neck spout, making it ideal for both 1.5 bowl and double bowl sinks, coupled with an elegant circular base and twin-level handles. Fitted with ¼ turn ceramic disc technology for ease of use and durability, Genesis is suitable for both low and high pressure systems and comes with a five-year guarantee. Reginox's Genesis tap collection is also available in plain chrome or in chrome with white or black handles as well as a brushed steel option.

01260 280033 www.reginox.co.uk

Häfele to showcase design innovations



Global manufacturer and distributor, **Häfele**, is set to have one of its biggest kbb shows yet as it celebrates its 40th anniversary in the UK and unveils some of its latest innovations, trends and services for architects, designers and specifiers. Loox, a plug and play lighting system from Häfele,

will take centre stage at the show in Birmingham and will include a wealth of new extensions to the range. Wireless wall switches, pre-programmable lighting scenes for different colours and concentrations, and a black version of the ribbon lighting are just some of the enhancements that will be showcased in March.

0800 171 2909 www.hafele.co.uk

kbb Birmingham stand no S90

Sandtex transforms Glasgow Green apartments



A residential block on Glasgow Green has been transformed as part of the city's Homes for the Future project, using Sandtex Trade Fine Textured Masonry paint. Approximately 2,500 litres of Sandtex Trade Fine Textured Masonry paint in Pure Brilliant White was supplied. The product's flexible coating won't peel, crack or flake, and is resistant to dirt and mould – meaning it will maintain its aesthetic appeal for longer. Jane Anderson, merchant sales manager for **Crown Paints** said: "We pride ourselves on working closely

with merchants to ensure the best products for the job are supplied, so it's fantastic to hear that all parties are pleased with the result."

info@crownpaintspec.co.uk

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Königstone's debut at KBB 2020



KBB 2020 is **Königstone's** trade show debut and this will certainly be a welcome opportunity for the inspirational team to showcase the high quality, elegant Quartz kitchen surfaces and the innovative new Königsink. Königstone will be found at stand N123 and the impressive range of 27 Königquartz colours will be on display for visitors to the stand

to enjoy. These will include brand new colours while demonstrating Königstone's flexible approach to providing solutions to any kitchen scheme. Königstone is looking forward to an exciting year in 2020 and is particularly enthusiastic to have the brand and products proudly displayed to the existing customer base, as well as potential future customers.

info@konigstone.co.uk

kbb Birmingham stand no N123

BLANCO set to shine at KBB 2020



BLANCO UK will be shining brightly at KBB 2020 on stand i100, Hall 17. Expect to enjoy a taste of the impressive depth of BLANCO's ranges with a focus on technological and design developments in the key kitchen sink and tap portfolios. Initiatives in 2020 will continue to focus on the discerning consumer

as well as the retailer customer so that the demands of today's sophisticated market are answered with top quality, clever solutions. The stunning new SILGRANIT® colours and finishes will be displayed, alongside the ever-popular scratch and stain tests, as well as the innovative Smart Tap collection which includes the award-winning EVOL-S Volume measurement tap and the specification-beating TAMPERA Hot boiling water tap and system.

www.blanco.co.uk

kbb Birmingham stand no i100



Salice set to stand out from the crowd at KBB 2020

Salice will be exhibiting their range of furniture fittings for kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms at the KBB show, held at the NEC from 1st – 4th March 2020. Salice will be located in Hall 17, Stand O100/ N104 where their show-stopping stand with plush carpets, greenery and beautiful displayed cabinetry, will enable visitors to view, and see in operation, their ever expanding selection of products, ranging from their award winning hinges, sliding systems, lift systems, runners and drawers, and accessories for furniture including stylish storage and discreet waste management solutions. Visitors can also experience Salice's Exedra – the updated version of its industry-standard pocket door system. The new version incorporates a linear magnetic damper that gently controls the movement of the door as it moves smoothly and silently into and out of its recess. In addition, a Smove piston cushions the door as it closes onto the cabinet. Salice's pioneering hinges will of course be on the stand too, including their Silentia+ range. Designed to offer the most advanced deceleration system, Silentia+ delivers a consistently perfect closing action across a range of hinges for doors of all sizes, weights and applications. To experience the Salice product range please visit Hall 17, Stand O100/N104.

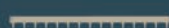
www.saliceuk.co.uk

kbb Birmingham stand no O100/N104



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SHOW PREVIEW

2020 – THE YEAR IT GETS PERSONAL

kbb returns to the NEC with a focus on helping housebuilders and developers tap into the big trend of personalisation.

What's thought to be Europe's largest dedicated kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms exhibition, kbb Birmingham, returns to the NEC for 2020 from 1-4 March. The event is aimed at industry professionals who want to learn more about emerging trends and cutting-edge products in the sector, as well as hold new business conversations and find key networking opportunities between both exhibitors and attendees.

"This year there is a huge emphasis on personalisation and individuality," explains Mark Gordon, director of kbb Birmingham. "To reflect this trend, we want to provide retailers, architects, designers and developers with the knowledge they need to be able to give their clients exactly what they want. Our exhibitors will be showcasing their own takes on this trend and we look forward to seeing what they have in store for attendees in 2020."

The 2020 event has been designed to offer "several layers of inspiration," say the organisers, from tips on creating a functional space that reflects its intended use, to ideas and materials that represent an individual's personal beliefs. Manufacturers want to be able to offer clients unique products and services, and buyers are often looking to create a space that feels personal. They will base their interior design choices on brands that can align with their brief.

Every room has a function, and whether designing for a residential or commercial space, functionality should always be a key consideration. In residential spaces, this is often when homeowners are looking to maximise the space available. At kbb 2020, a range of exhibitors will showcase their storage solutions to help enhance the functionality of a space.

The look and feel of a room are of great importance to the consumer, and it can have a huge impact on the way the room is perceived. In order to design spaces that stand the test of



time, many specifiers are looking for timeless pieces that reflect a specific design aesthetic, which can really make a room feel personal to buyers. Brands will be showcasing a wide range of products to achieve this.

Rooms have the power to create a real experience to match their purpose, and great design can really alter how a space feels. If a buyer is looking for a social space, housebuilders need to consider the logistical factors to ensure that the space can cope with the demand. This year, Virtual Worlds will be exhibiting at kbb2020. This VR experience allows builders, designers and clients to visualise the space before committing to any design choices.

Individual beliefs are a design consideration that continue to influence buying choices. Potential clients may be looking for sustainable manufacturing or vegan design, so specifiers may want to invest and purchase products which have strong ethics. Water-saving is dominating the bathroom sector, and exhibitors this year will be showcasing what they can offer to meet this growing demand.

kbb Birmingham will feature over 400 exhibitors, and the event organisers expect an audience of over 16,000 across the four days. Attendees will be able to stay ahead of emerging trends, and to find out about the latest product launches from industry leaders.

For more information on kbb 2020 and to register, please visit the exhibition website:

WWW.KBB.CO.UK

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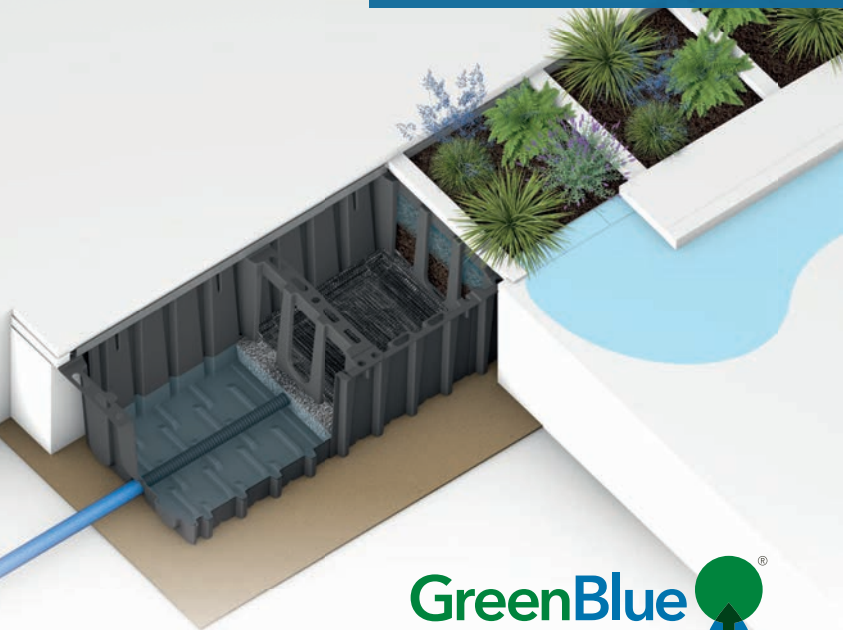


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Chris Frankland of Marshalls makes the case for early involvement between developers and manufacturers to put great-looking, premium exterior spaces back on the agenda for every development – even when budgets are tight.

As a developer, you'll know that a well-designed and carefully installed development is the best possible advertisement for your business. The housing estates you leave behind are your calling card; a very visible demonstration of the pride you take in your work. Before a customer has even walked into one of your show homes, it's highly likely that they'll have visited one of your nearby sites to see the quality of workmanship they might expect.

It's ironic, then, that the external features of housing developments are frequently right at the bottom of a developer's priority list. It's the last element to be installed, it's frequently the area where the cheapest and least skilled labour is employed, and it's the first area to be cut back on when savings need to be made.

Of course, it's easy to understand why. Customers spend the majority of their time inside their homes, and make buying decisions accordingly – so, saving a few pounds per metre on the external walling might pay for better white goods. Using a cheaper driveway surface might just save enough to cover the kind of premium bathroom that will look great in the

brochures. In an ideal world, you'd put as much resource and effort into the outside infrastructure as you do into the homes themselves, but all too often the reality of budget constraints mean that compromises have to be made. Shaving cost off the external infrastructure is all too frequently a necessary evil for modern developers.

But what if that wasn't the case? What if there was a way of maintaining the quality of the external works without compromising on the standard, quality and finish of the houses you sell? With a bit of creative thinking, it might be possible.

All of the external works (such as walls, access roads, driveways) have a function to perform. Primarily they're there to do something; to provide durable, hardwearing surfaces that will (for example) support heavy loads or withstand collisions and stay looking good for years to come. The surfacing of these features – the element you can actually see – is frequently just a small element of the structure. The majority of the cost of external infrastructure is frequently hidden beneath the surface – the

structural layers that provide the functional robustness of the installed system. Cost analysis on pavements, for example, demonstrates that the surfacing element makes up just 20 per cent of the total cost of the system.

Working out how to reduce the cost of the sub-structure will bring far greater financial gains than cutting corners on the surfacing material – understanding this is the first step to realising beautiful outside spaces. Ensure that the sub-structure at the core of your external works will serve its purpose without being over specified, and you're likely to be able to fund the kind of beautiful finish that will sell developments.

Obviously, this doesn't mean cutting corners on safety – so how do you strike the balance between functionality and cost-effectiveness?

It's at this stage that reputable suppliers can be your friend. It stands to reason that long-standing suppliers and manufacturers have more experience of (and knowledge about) their own products than anyone else. They also have a real need to ensure that their product performs as well as possible for as long as possible – perhaps even more so than you. It's likely that reputable suppliers will have invested significant resources in testing to understand how their products perform. They'll know how best to install them, and offer advice about which sub-structures to use to ensure the most robust long-term performance.

It's worth bearing in mind that sometimes this up-to-the-minute advice may contravene British Standards, which will have been created some years ago based on old experience and knowledge. Designing and constructing outside of the Standards shouldn't be considered a problem, so long as the supplier is prepared to indemnify the design against its own PI.

So, working with responsible suppliers can sometimes drive cost out of structural designs, freeing up funds to spend on premium, great looking surfacing that will help you to sell your developments quickly – and at the right price.

The following are a list of key credentials to look for in suppliers:

- long standing, reputable and financially robust company
- external accreditation for any testing (universities, independent testing houses, industry experts etc.)
- manufacturer's/supplier's design warranty
- Professional Indemnity.

Chris Frankland is marketing director at Marshalls



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GreenBlue Urban launch HydroPlanter™



GreenBlue Urban are excited to announce the launch of a new modular bioretention raingarden system, the HydroPlanter™. The latest product can be retrofitted into highways schemes and on new developments of any size.

The "Plug and Play" sustainable urban

drainage solution can attenuate and cleanse stormwater and provide amenity and biodiversity to new and existing spaces particularly suitable for highway build outs, central reservations and verges. A single modular unit would also be suitable for new housing developments tackling SuDS solutions when space is at a premium.

01580 830800 www.greenblue.com/gb/products/hydroplanter

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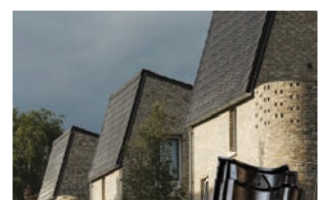
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Photographs: Tim Crocker



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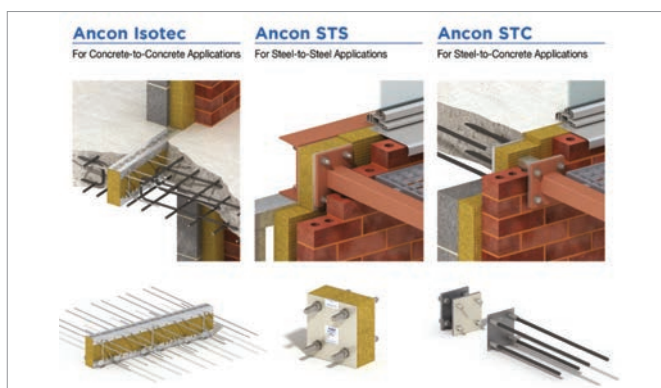


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Ancon offering enhanced non-combustible balcony connector range

Ancon is leading the way in developing solutions to meet the Government's tough new fire safety requirements for buildings, with the launch of an upgraded range of non-combustible insulated balcony connectors. The development follows news that the existing 18 metres height limit for combustible materials in high rise multi-occupancy buildings is to be further reduced to 11 metres, extending the scope of the regulations to buildings over four-storeys and affecting the vast majority of new flats, hospitals, residential care premises and student accommodation. This has again increased the focus on fire safety with contractors and developers looking to future-proof their buildings. Ancon's insulated balcony connectors have been re-engineered and now feature non-combustible mineral wool insulation and improved fire-rated thermal pads to maintain their impressive thermal insulation properties and provide the required A1/A2 reaction to fire rating.

01142755224 tech@ancon.co.uk

Mapei cements a tough bond with Mapeproof FBT

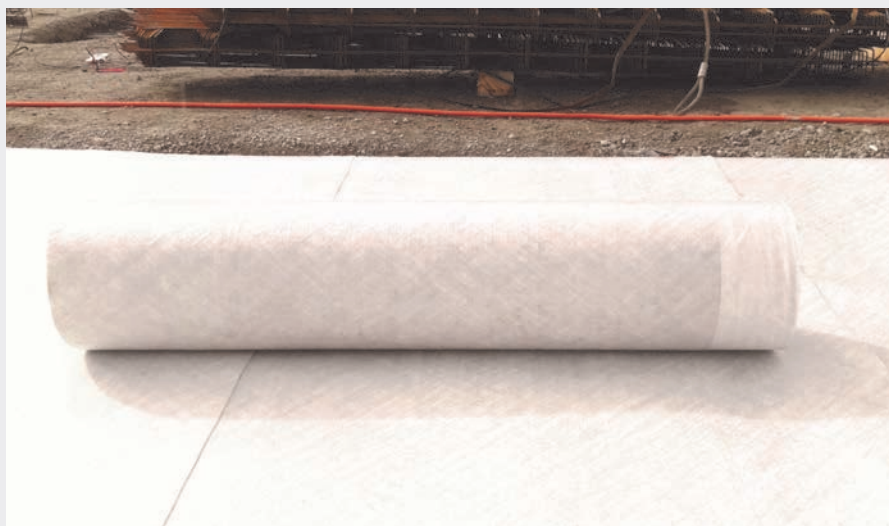
Mapeproof FBT by Mapei is a pre-applied synthetic waterproofing membrane with a non-woven fabric backing applied in full adhesion to protect structures below ground level. It is able to withstand up to 7 bars of pressure, and provides Radon and Methane protection.

Mapeproof FBT is applied underneath foundation slabs and against diaphragm, pile walls, sheet piling and other permanent retaining structures.

The waterproofing system is suitable for a range of applications including basements, garages, car parks, swimming pools, basins, storage tanks, underpasses and underground areas in general.

The fully-bonded waterproof sheet membrane system incorporates two Mapei adhesive tapes: Mapeproof FBT Tape, used to bond joints between the upper-facing side of adjacent membranes in the system, and Mapeproof SA Tape, for bonding joints between the lower-facing sides of adjacent membranes.

With extreme flexibility, Mapeproof FBT is easy to install. The waterproofing membrane is cold-applied (between +5°C and +35°C), thus no heat or naked flames are required on site. Positioned before placing the steel reinforcement and pouring of the concrete,



joints can be bonded on horizontal or vertical surfaces and shaped to follow the geometry of the substrate, ensuring a longstanding tough bond; due to its bond, Mapeproof FBT prevents water from migrating laterally between the foundation structure and the membrane, once concrete has been poured. It does not require a protective layer.

The certified Mapeproof FBT waterproofing system also consists of two double-sided

adhesive tapes. Mapeproof Fix Tape is used to hold the waterproofing membrane in place during installation. Meanwhile, Mapeproof BA Tape, a waterproof synthetic tape, is used for treating fillet joints between horizontal and vertical surfaces, as well as those between adjacent vertical surfaces.

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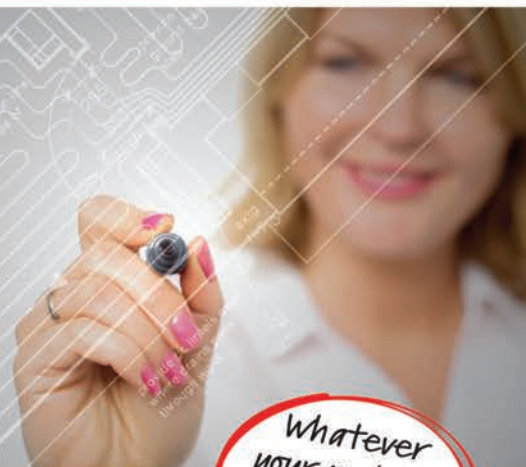
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