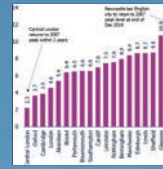




Max Halliwell of Mitsubishi Electric on why housebuilders should embrace the 'electric economy'



Patrick Mooney says something has to give to meet the UK's housing needs – and not just planning



House prices across all English cities surpass 2007 peak for first time since financial crisis

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HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

THE ROYAL TREATMENT

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CASE STUDY

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James Parker

FROM THE EDITOR

It seems somewhat difficult, even inappropriate, to try and focus on housebuilding in the surreal reality of a pandemic engulfing the world, and causing many deaths among the old and vulnerable even as we speak. However life, and work, must go on, and we need to combine absolute pragmatism in the face of this virus with a determination to not let the changes required overwhelm our work and personal lives.

By contrast, the huge challenges facing the housebuilding sector seem relatively minor. In the wake of Rishi Sunak's first (and heavily coronavirus-framed) Budget, came an announcement from Secretary of State for Housing Robert Jenrick on 'unlocking' the planning system to unleash a hoped-for wave of housebuilding. The focus might have been swept away in the alarm around COVID-19, but for the sector it has a perhaps underestimated level of importance for upping the still-low levels of delivery, which needs to remain a priority.

One of the ideas the Government is going to consult on is expanding permitted development rights to enable empty buildings to be demolished and replaced by housing without requiring planning permission. This would apply to vacant commercial buildings, industrial buildings and residential blocks, but housing developers would need to demonstrate they'd be creating "well-designed new units which meet natural light standards."

Jenrick's 'Planning for the future' document outlines a range of measures targeted at removing some of the planning barriers to housing schemes, but puts a firm emphasis on providing quality at the same time as the quantities needed to hit the 300,000 houses per year target. Planning snags have of course been long criticised by many housebuilders and industry bodies as being the chief reason that developments are not coming on stream with the rapidity many hope for. However, organisations like RIBA are now concerned about whether a removal of planning constraints on PDR schemes could lead to poor-quality developments getting through.

Jenrick said the plans were a move back to a "first principles" rethink of the planning system: "We must think boldly and creatively about the planning system to make it fit for the future." There will soon be what the Ministry is claiming to be an "ambitious" white paper on reforming the planning system – pegged to come out in 'spring,' although we'll see what coronavirus has to say about that. The Government has also set a deadline of December 2023 for all councils to produce up to date local plans (many of them are woefully behind on this), and is threatening to intervene if they fail to do so.

As so often, the intent behind all this is apparently good, it's the means of delivering it that must be questioned. Part of going back to 'first principles' must surely mean that only practical, industry-focused approaches should be at the forefront, and what we don't need is more well-wishing.

This means that if we want "tree-lined streets," (a central part of Jenrick's team's ideas), we will have to train enough people to plant them. And if, as our local authority expert columnist Patrick Mooney suggests on page 8, failure to deliver the required numbers is not the fault of planning departments, the Government and industry needs to take an honest look at where the fault does, in reality, lie.

James Parker

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ON THE COVER



Image courtesy of Northacre, go to page 18

UK house prices now exceed pre-crisis levels

House prices across all English cities have surpassed the 2007 peak for the first time since the financial crisis, according to Zoopla UK.

Its latest Cities House Price Index has revealed that the annual rate of house price growth across all UK cities is close to a three-year high (33 months), with price growth “pegging level” at 3.9 per cent from December 2019 to January 2020.

A pick-up in the headline rate of growth was reportedly bolstered by increased growth across southern cities, following a period of broadly flat price performance over 2019.

All cities except for Aberdeen (which stands at -4.3 per cent) recorded annual house price inflation of at least 2 per cent per annum, for the first time since February 2017. City growth is led by highs of +5.9 per cent in Edinburgh, and +5.3 per cent in Nottingham and Leicester.

Central London was the first market where prices surpassed 2007 levels, with average values reaching their pre-crisis peak in two and a half years. Zoopla argues that prices were buoyed by overseas buyers entering the market, attracted by a drop in the value of sterling. London's return to form was closely followed by southern cities, which returned to pre-crisis levels within seven years, boosted by rising demand and employment growth.

Zoopla's data also shows how demand

is outstripping supply. The stock of homes for sale is shown to have risen by an average of 2.6 per cent year on year in January 2020. This contrasts with a bounce in demand, which was up by 26 per cent over the same period, and is reflected in data for mortgage approvals which shows demand up 5 per cent in December 2019 compared to a year earlier.

Despite the apparent upsurge in supply at a national level, stock levels in nine cities are reportedly tracking lower than a year ago by as much as 6 per cent.

Commenting on the latest report, Richard Donnell, research and insight director at Zoopla, said: “It has taken 12 years for house prices in all English cities to return to their previous pre-crisis levels. Some cities returned to 2007 levels within four years, as the economy and job growth rebounded. In others, it has taken much longer as the mismatch between demand and supply has been less pronounced.”

He continued: “The Budget is a prime opportunity for the new Chancellor to address some of the factors affecting the housing market. Any review of stamp duty charges to help the movement of homeowners up and down the property ladder should be made to boost transaction levels, but the extent and nature of any reform, which must be balanced against political exigencies, remains to be seen.”

2020 Budget confirms new money for housebuilding



New Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak has delivered his first Budget in the midst of the coronavirus outbreak, featuring an extension of the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) and a £1bn fund to remove “unsafe cladding.”

£12bn will be released with the new AHP settlement, which reportedly represents a rise of £3bn on the previous plans.

A £1bn Building Safety Fund was also announced, intended to ensure that “all unsafe cladding is removed from every building over 18 metres.”

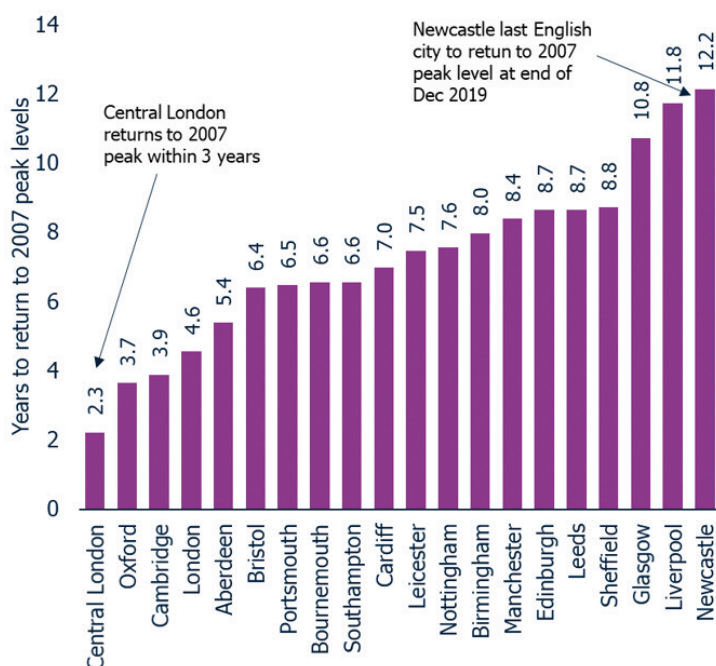
Alongside these measures, the Chancellor spoke of a £400m fund for “ambitious mayors” for use in brownfield sites, and a nearly £1.1bn allocation for the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

For councils, the Government revealed it is set to cut interest rates on lending for social housing by 1 per cent, and that £650m will be spent tackling rough sleeping.

For the wider economy, the Chancellor predicted it will grow 1.1 per cent this year, not taking into account the impact of coronavirus, with an inflation forecast of 1.4 per cent this year, increasing to 1.8 per cent in 2021-2022.

In terms of environmental measures, a plastic packaging tax is reportedly set to come into force from April 2022, with which manufacturers and importers whose products have less than 30 per cent recyclable material will be charged £200 per tonne.

He also announced £120m for communities affected the recent flooding, £200m for flood resilience, and that the total investment in flood defences will be doubled to £5.2bn over the next five years.



Interior designers re-think Stewart Milne show homes' look and feel



In an effort to produce show homes that are more closely aligned to buyers' wants and needs, Scotland-based housebuilder Stewart Milne has appointed two interior designers to create spaces that they would live in themselves.

Natasha Marshall and Rachel Harford-Cross aim to create "well thought-out, design-led, unique tranquil spaces" for residents, and to that end, a spokesperson from Stewart Milne said they are "keeping abreast with the trends, while ensuring that they have created a home that will grow in character as you live there."

When working on Stewart Milne's Castelwellan project in particular, Natasha and Rachel were keen that the interiors worked "as an extension of the architecture at Countesswells."

Set on the outskirts of Aberdeen, the new houses at Countesswells have are located on the edge of the city's western woodland.

As such, there are immediate connections to surrounding country parks, extensive landscaped grounds, play parks, a community orchard, woodland trails, and cycle paths.

Stewart Milne Homes therefore wanted to promote the lifestyle opportunities that such a location offers, and Natasha and Rachel sought to reinforce this with their interiors.

This has been reflected in the choice of materials (tweeds, linens and sisal rugs), a soft colour palette and the attention to the details (framed linen maps of the local area, picnic rugs and baskets, wellies and dog baskets).

In the absence of a specific client, Natasha and Rachel asked Stewart Milne Homes to think about who a potential end user might be; "perhaps a young couple looking to move from the city to the countryside, expecting their first baby." This helped to inform the interior aesthetic – "a fresh and light touch design with a Scottish flavour."

The designers reportedly tried to make the home feel "contextual" using work from local artists such as Hetty Haxworth, and introducing tweed rugs and curtains. There are also "humorous touches" (e.g. a 'character' door mat) which seek to appeal to a young audience.

The spokesperson said: "The aim was to make a visitor feel immediately at home with lots of pieces bought from familiar high street shops such as Ikea, Habitat, Dunelm and John Lewis as well as introducing some old pieces of furniture, which the designers felt was a key factor in making the house feel rich and layered."

"At a time when many interiors are heavily staged and often driven by trends for an Instagram image," they continued, "this Castelwellan invites a full three-dimensional experience, an interior which can actually be visited. The result is not a typical showhome, but more akin to someone's real home, where visitors feel comfortable and can immediately relate their lifestyle to the surroundings. The Castelwellan is a home with a timeless quality, a place you could live and be very happy!"

Spitfire's Foster describes her career as a woman in the property sector

In recognition of International Women's Day, Spitfire Bespoke Homes' planning director Emma Foster has described what it is like to have a career in the housebuilding industry – in light of recent reports that women are expected to make up 46.8 per cent of the construction industry by 2022.

Joining the company in 2014, Emma works from its headquarters in Solihull. Planning has dominated Emma's career since she left school, and after studying an undergraduate degree at UCE – now the University of Birmingham – in Geography and Environmental Planning, she went on to complete a Masters in Property Development.

Then, after some work experience at a planning consultancy in the private sector, Emma was offered a job at the firm, "starting as an assistant planner and working my way up to senior planning level."

"When the opportunity arose to join Spitfire, I jumped at the chance to head up the planning team" Emma explained. "I started as a planning manager, working closely with the land team. Since then, we have expanded significantly as a company, and I have been able to develop and grow the team."

In her role, Emma said that she liaises with many different stakeholders, ensuring that no day is ever the same as the last: "Engaging with local planning authorities, members of the public, key stakeholders and on-site teams is a huge part of my job. A lot of the time, it involves educating a range of people on our brand, company ethos and ultimately, what we always strive to achieve."

"In the planning team, we look at a range of new and upcoming sites as well as assisting on live sites, which we see all the way through from start to finish. I love being able to witness a project come to life and the nature of Spitfire's product makes me really proud."

Emma added: "Ultimately, communication is key and everyone at Spitfire works together to strive towards the same end goal."

The firm's planning director concluded: "I would definitely recommend a career in the housebuilding industry to younger girls."

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Patrick Mooney, editor of
Housing, Management &
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THE LGA
SAYS THE
BACKLOG OF
UNBUILT
HOMES
SHOWS THE
PLANNING
SYSTEM IS
NOT A
BARRIER TO
BUILDING

THE SOCIAL NETWORK

OVER A MILLION HOMES WITH PLANNING REMAIN UNBUILT

Patrick Mooney, housing consultant and news editor of Housing, Management & Maintenance, says that the level of unbuilt homes with planning permission suggests that planners aren't the barrier to housebuilding, and explores the other possible causes of the problem.

Local authority planners are well used to being blamed for shortages in the supply of new homes, with their critics claiming that planners are bound by red tape and too much bureaucracy for them to react quickly to changes in the housing market.

I have often felt these criticisms are unjust, partly because planners have to work within rules laid down by politicians, but also because as public servants they are expected to keep their heads down, their mouths shut, and to get on with their work. But now their bosses at the Local Government Association have come out vocally in their support.

The LGA has analysed official figures for planning approvals and new house completions over the past 10 years and says these show there are well over a million homes with planning permission that are yet to be built.

Since 2009/10, councils have granted permission for 2,564,600 new homes to be built, but over the same period only 1,530,680 have been completed. Similarly, the number of planning permissions granted for new homes has almost doubled since 2012/13, with councils approving nine in 10 of the applications submitted.

While in some cases there will be a time lag between permission being granted and homes being built, new build completions have only increased by half as much in the past decade. Encouragingly, completions at 213,860 last year were the highest in any single year in the past 10 years.

The LGA says the backlog of unbuilt homes shows the planning system is not a barrier to housebuilding. Instead, it is calling on the Government to use its forthcoming planning

white paper to give councils powers to take action on unbuilt land which has planning permission for new houses.

This includes making it easier to compulsory purchase land where homes remain unbuilt, and to be able to charge developers full council tax for every unbuilt development from the point that the original planning permission expires.

Interestingly, the gap between the permissions and completions figures is very similar to the gap of 1.2 million homes, which Heriot Watt University estimates is the number of homes needed now, to ensure that everyone has a 'decent' (i.e. of a good, liveable standard) home. Their forecasts also show around four million extra homes will be needed by 2035, due to estimated population growth and the rate of housing completions.

NOT A BLAME GAME

But before we turn our fire on the housebuilders and demand they end their practice of landbanking and only releasing new homes when it's convenient to their balance sheets, there are a couple of huge problems we need to resolve as a nation. These have been thrown into sharp relief by events in recent weeks and months.

This winter we have been absolutely battered by some savage weather patterns. Storms Ciara and Dennis in particular have brought flooding to thousands of homes across wide parts of the country from Dorset to Cumbria.

Towns such as Shrewsbury and Ironbridge are finding themselves in the spotlight as rivers like the Severn burst their banks and

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overwhelm local flood barriers and drainage systems.

Understandably people are demanding that improvements are made to flood defences to protect their homes, but they are also calling for new homes to be built in safer places, away from flood plains and low-lying coastal areas.

The Guardian recently revealed that more than 11,000 homes are currently planned to be built in areas that the Government considers a high flood risk. This is on top of the almost 20,000 houses which were built on land at high risk of flooding in 2017/18, according to official figures.

The Government defines high risk areas as having a one per cent or greater chance of flooding in any year. It is thought that as many as one in 10 of all new homes built since 2013 are on high risk flood sites. And places like Fishlake in South Yorkshire have recently been flooded for the second time in just over three months, while plans exist to build nearly 4,000 homes on flood zones in the surrounding area.

SAFETY AWARENESS HEIGHTENED

While we try to get our heads around how we can produce a more sustainable plan for building homes in places where they are unlikely to be flooded in the next 30 years or so, we also need to come up with a solution for how we urgently make safe the housing of up to half a million people living in unsafe tower blocks.

This is the number of people estimated to be living in apartment blocks covered in combustible cladding. The initial focus after the Grenfell Tower fire was on removing aluminium composite cladding panels from 450 tower blocks, but subsequent tests and surveys have shown that as many as another 1,400 residential buildings are at risk, due to their wood and high-pressure laminate cladding also being found to be highly combustible.

Removing and replacing the combustible cladding panels has proven to be a costly, complicated and very time consuming process. The social housing sector has responded more quickly to the crisis and has almost completed the task of removing all ACM panels, assisted by £400m of extra funds from Whitehall.

Delays in getting work commissioned and started in the private sector has led to demands for urgent action and up to £2bn in funds from central Government to help pay for the works and ease the pressure on individual flat owners. Arguments over ownership and legal liability have further complicated an already complex situation.

But thousands of individual flat owners are saying they feel so unsafe that they



simply want to move out. Where they could go to is anyone's guess, as we simply do not have thousands of good quality, empty homes lying around just waiting for people to move into them. If we did, we would not have the homelessness crisis that we are also grappling with.

Returning to the LGA analysis, councils claim they recognise the problems caused by a shortage of housing and the need to build more homes. With the right powers and funding, the LGA says councils can play a leading role in helping the Government to tackle our national housing shortage.

As part of its submission to the Treasury ahead of the Budget, the LGA is calling on the Government to reform the Right to Buy policy, allowing councils to keep all of the receipts of homes sold under the RTB in order to replace them and to have the flexibility to set discounts locally.



FRESH APPROACH REQUIRED

Councillor David Renard, the LGA's housing spokesman, said: "The planning system is not a barrier to housebuilding. The number of homes granted planning permission has far outpaced the number of homes being built. No-one can live in a planning permission, or a half-built house where work on a site has begun but not been completed.

"Councils need powers to tackle our housing backlog and step in where a site with planning permission lies dormant

and housebuilding has stalled. If we are to solve our housing shortage, councils need to be able to get building again and resume their role as major builders of affordable homes.

"It is also vital that the planning process is protected, so that councils and communities can ensure we realise the Government's ambition of building beautiful homes, which includes the necessary infrastructure and affordable housing."

A spokesman for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said: "Local authorities have a responsibility to assess the number of homes their communities need, and our planning policy is clear that housing should be located in the areas at the least risk of flooding. Where development in a risk area is absolutely necessary, sufficient measures should be taken to make sure homes are safe, resilient and protected from flooding."

Getting all sides working together on solving this problem is obviously a key concern. Government needs to ensure the national planning framework sets the correct guidance for planners and builders, while local councillors bring their knowledge to bear in representing community interests. This might require housing targets for councils to be revisited, so flood plains can be mostly or wholly avoided. Bigger and better flood defences will be needed just to protect our current stock of housing, let alone the new housing that is needed.

But it probably also means that rules prohibiting the building of new homes in places like the Green Belt or in national parks have to be re-examined. If we are serious about building four million more homes by 2035, then something has got to give. The alternative is continuing as we are now and building ever more homes in places that we know are prone to flooding.



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Brian Berry, chief executive of the Federation of Master Builders

THE INDUSTRY ADVOCATE

BUILDERS ARE STARTING TO FEEL THE HEAT

Brian Berry discusses how the industry can realistically address the Government's demanding 2050 carbon target.

The country is only now starting to come to terms with the radical implications of the Government's decision, last summer, to legislate for the UK to have net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

While the UK had already committed to reducing CO₂ levels by 80 per cent, the extra 20 per cent reduction will require urgent and widespread changes not just to the way we live, but also to how we build. The built environment is responsible for an alarming 40 per cent of all CO₂ emissions, of which housing, both new and old, make up about half of this.

The Government has consulted on initial ideas for a 'Future Homes Standard' which will aim to reduce the amount of CO₂ emitted from new build properties by 75-80 per cent from 2025. It has also proposed a series of transitional measures on energy efficiency and the ventilation of homes.

It's welcome news that the Government is taking leadership on this and providing a clear long-term direction of travel. This is the best way to make changes in this area, in order to allow industry time to prepare. However, treading carefully is key. We must avoid knee-jerk reactions that could lead to unintended consequences such as over-heating, poor indoor air quality or reduced housing supply. The need to rectify problems in the future – or hitting SME housebuilders with disproportionate costs – are unacceptable outcomes. They would compromise the SME building sector's support for measures that it accepts must be taken if we are to tackle the climate emergency.

The Government's preferred option of 31 per cent reduction in CO₂ this year is too far too fast. Instead, a 20 per cent reduction this year with incentives for housebuilders to go further, such as via stamp duty relief on the most energy efficient properties, is a more sensible step forward.

Energy efficiency measures should focus on improvements that are integral to the structure of a house, for example better insulation and

tighter glazing. This is the sustainable approach, and cheaper for the homeowner in the long run. We agree with the Committee for Climate Change that a reliance on technology-based solutions such as installing solar panels at the expense of these other measures risks undermining the Government's ability to reach its demanding net-zero target.

Moving to low carbon heat sources for our homes must also be part of the picture. However, it would be premature to assume that this is possible on a mass scale this year. Currently, only around 20,000 air source heat pumps are installed each year; to expect the market to be able to deliver 10 times this in the space of 12 months is unrealistic. There will need to be significant upskilling of heat engineers. A lower immediate carbon reduction target would allow time for alternative heat markets to develop to replace gas, and for builders to prepare.

While it is important we focus on reducing the carbon footprint of our new homes, it is important not to neglect the 27 million homes that have already been built. The vast majority of these will still be standing in 2050, and are some of the leakiest in the whole of Europe. While energy use per household fell by 21 per cent between 1990 and 2014 there has been no progress since.

SME builders will support the Government in making existing homes more energy efficiency. But it's currently uncertain how their targets will be reached. Today, only 29 per cent of homes currently meet the required EPC standard.

The FMB have been calling for a national retrofit strategy to map out how we will ensure that the UK's homes are fit the future, as well as how to motivate homeowners to commission this work.

We hope to work with the Government ahead of the COP26 climate change conference being held in the UK in November this year, to help them develop such a strategy that's fit for the future. We're ready to work together, sensibly, to turn down the heat.

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THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE

Why green electricity makes economic and environmental sense

As the construction industry struggles to lower its carbon-dependency, Max Halliwell of Mitsubishi Electric explains to Jack Wooler why 'green electricity' – with a particular focus on heat pumps – will prove to be the most efficient and secure energy source for the foreseeable future.

The UK construction industry, both domestic and non-domestic, are responsible for a very large percentage of UK CO₂ emissions – the heating of our homes alone reportedly being responsible for 13 per cent of the UK's greenhouse gas output.

While this has not gone altogether unnoticed by the Government, many in and outside the industry have questioned the likelihood of meeting its carbon targets, and how much the housebuilding sector in particular has so far done to meet them.

"We know the Government has very ambitious plans to get the country to net zero by 2050," says Max Halliwell, communications manager at Mitsubishi Electric, a strong proponent of an electricity-first approach to decarbonisation. But, he points out, the construction industry remains a "very large" polluter.

Max argues, as the Government has been pushing, that "we should not be burning fossil fuels in buildings in the long term."

He believes instead that we must now move towards a low-carbon electric grid if we are going to address this issue, and that it is vital that the industry moves towards alternatives products such as heat pumps that can utilise this clean energy, the technology "being able to massively reduce building emissions."

THE ELECTRIC ECONOMY

According to Halliwell, the grid is in fact already decarbonising at a fast rate – "which is great news," he notes – but there is still much work to be done.

"We are hoping that the future homes

consultation, which includes part L of the Building Regulations, is not diluted," he says, in regard to one way in which Government is set to step in. "The targets outlined in the consultation can all be achieved using technology that exists today."

In his opinion, this existing technology revolves around electricity, which we are well placed to utilise: "The electric economy makes so much sense to the UK – we are an island which has access to a huge wind power resource as well as other renewables and low-carbon forms of electricity."

He explains that by utilising such sources, the country could make its economy not only low-carbon, but shake its reliance on other "potentially unstable" sources of fossil fuels.

"No matter your view on climate change," Max says, "everyone agrees with the strategy of a secure energy supply."

LOW ENERGY HOUSING

When discussing what steps the house-

building industry as a whole needs to take next, he argued that it must embrace this "fact that the UK needs to move to low-energy sustainable housing."

He continues: "If anything, Part L of the building regulations and the decarbonisation of the UK housing stock timetable should be accelerated if we have a chance of hitting our net zero targets."

Many developers are however already embracing fully electric homes, and according to Max, social housing providers are even further ahead: "They recognise the need to lower the carbon footprint of their stock and build low carbon cheap to heat properties for their often vulnerable tenants."

He believes that the area which needs to be replaced "as a matter of urgency" is those people who heat their homes with the highest carbon fuels – "oil and LPG."

ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

For housebuilders and developers, it is in the specification process that some of the easiest and most effective changes can be made.





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In Max's view, heat pumps are an ideal step forward here: "Heat pump technology has been around for over 50 years – it is a technology we already all use; the fridge we have in our homes is a heat pump, and there is nothing different from how a domestic heat pump works."

"In terms of benefits," he continues,

"we are able to heat homes efficiently, and just as importantly, provide a very comfortable environment to live in."

He tells me that Mitsubishi has already installed over 100,000 heat pumps across the UK, and that, along with other manufacturers, are "probably talking about hundreds of thousands of units in

total installed; and the benefits are clear."

"We are now past the point of proof of concept," Max asserts, "all you need to do is look at Europe, where they have millions installed." He adds: "Heat pumps working alongside a low-carbon grid are the future for low-carbon homes, and this has been recognised by our Government's UK heating strategy."



EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

While he believes heat pumps to be an ideal, and readily available option for housebuilders, Max makes the point that any technology that can work to help to reduce the carbon emissions from the UK housing industry should "of course" be considered.

"The future will be a combination of low carbon and renewable technologies," he added. "We do need to think carefully about our primary energy use, however."

There is much discussion and excitement about the use of hydrogen or example, he tells me, but there are reportedly many questions over how we can produce hydrogen in a sustainable, low carbon way that are yet to be answered.

Max concludes: "We are a prudent nation, and will only embrace technology with proof of concept, which heat pumps already have."

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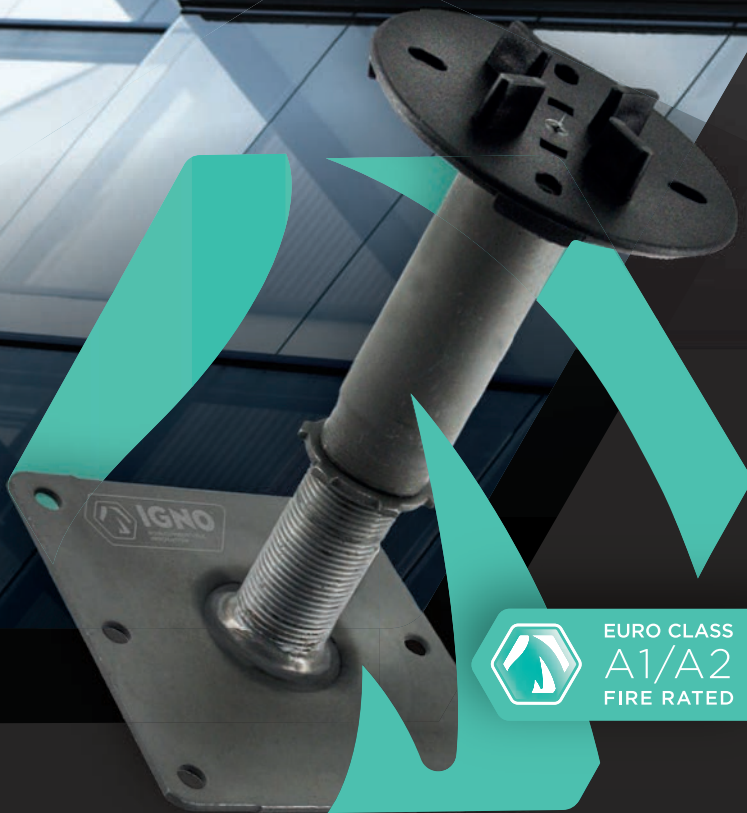
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CASE STUDY

A royal welcome

A 72-home heritage project is in the works, offering those with the money the opportunity to live adjacent to Buckingham Palace. Northacre's CEO, Niccolò Barattieri di San Pietro, and its construction director, Robert Gibson, take Jack Wooler through what is arguably one of London's most complex projects.

No.1 Palace Street is currently taking form in the centre of London – offering high-end buyers the opportunity to live in the only residential development with views of Buckingham Palace Gardens.

In its 300,000 ft² of gross area, the project is amalgamating five structures into a single building. This involved the retention of four historic facades, the creation of a new entrance on the remaining one, and a complete rebuild of the structure in between them.

Led by architect-founded developer Northacre, each apartment is intended to be unique in design and layout. These apartments are split between one to five bedrooms, ranging in size from 679 ft² to 5,343 ft² – and will be fit out in the luxurious materials befitting its location and price point.

Alongside the apartments, the project has also seen the addition of the amenities now all-but necessitated in such schemes, including a pool, gym and 3,500 ft² of entertainment space.

UNIQUE COLLECTION

While Northacre has long been developing restoration works in central London, its construction director, Robert Gibson, tells me that No.1 Palace Street is “one of the company's most ambitious projects to date.”

He explains that the development is a “unique collection” of buildings, with the revitalising designs intended to represent a blend of the traditional and contemporary, and encompassing five distinct architectural styles for each segment.

These styles range from 1860s Grade II Listed Italian Renaissance, 1880s French Renaissance, 1880s French Beaux-Arts, 1890s Queen Anne, and modern design by architects Squire + Partners.

According to Robert, the project is also unique in its construction method, “probably being the only current construction project in London covering retained facades, a Grade II listed building, four-level basement using top-down construction and internal fit-out of the highest quality, all on an island site.”

To realise such a challenging project, the construction director tells me that the team is working with “best-in-class” suppliers and contributors, including contractor Balfour Beatty, architects Squire + Partners, and JLL and Clifton Property Partners handling the sales of the remaining apartments.

A ROYAL WELCOME

After introducing the project, the construction director walked me through some of the site's rich history. Set within a historic conservation area, one building of the original five has had a particularly interesting past, with a long-standing affiliation with British Royalty.

Robert says that Buckingham Gate, the Grade II listed wing of the development, was a “major landmark” called The Palace Hotel, and once hosted guests of Queen Victoria before the third wing of the Palace itself was built.

When the opportunity arose to purchase this property, as well as four other buildings surrounding it, says Robert, the company's CEO, Niccolò Barattieri di San reportedly asked himself: “How many more opportunities could you come across to buy a whole block of five different architectural styles in one building next to Buckingham Palace?”

“The reality is,” Robert responds, “that there will be none.” He continues: “Despite the many complications that we face when working on a retention project of this scale, these buildings have enabled us to create a phenomenally unique and beautiful product, and very importantly, generate additional value as well.”

BEHIND THE FACADE

To sketch in some more background about the site when he first saw it – before Robert joined the project – CEO Niccolò joins the conversation, telling me that “the whole site had been redeveloped in the 1980s, which wasn't a great era for construction.”

During this process, he says that the building was turned into an office for the

“THESE BUILDINGS HAVE ENABLED US TO CREATE A PHENOMENALLY UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL PRODUCT, AND VERY IMPORTANTLY, GENERATE ADDITIONAL VALUE AS WELL”



Government, “and you can probably imagine that it was as far from what you would want it to be in order to turn it into a residential site.”

“So,” Niccolò continues, “the tasks ahead were huge, especially because we had facades of merit over a vast perimeter of the site, and a Grade II listed building in between.”

He knew from the start that the team would have to completely alter the Grade II listed building, and add some mezzanine floors in order to create the spaces they desired.

To do so, they would have to demolish the remaining structure of the site, keeping only the facades, and then build a completely new frame from the ground up.

“As with most restoration projects,” he adds, “we expected to run into some unforeseen complications during the development process, but also felt prepared to solve whatever might come up at any given time.”

BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

Northacre ultimately decided to take the plunge and buy the site, which came with an already-existing full planning consent for a residential development. This however, was reportedly unsatisfactory for the developer’s end goals.

“We did not feel that the site had been properly conceived, and that the scheme really met the needs of high-end users in terms of the arrival sequence, the parking, the layout of the apartments and the aspects of the apartments – as well as the percentage of dual aspect apartments, and so on,” says Niccolò.

So, the developer went back to the drawing board and “dramatically changed” the plans.

In the end, among the changes that the extended planning permission allowed for were the mezzanine floors the developer desired. These enabled the repositioning of the windows in the rear facade, which was also secured by restoring some heritage objects that were lost in the previous redevelopment.

Niccolò gives an example: “All the chimneys on the roofs have been put back as they were in the 1870s, and we changed the front portico to what it originally was.

“We also embarked on a painstaking review of the existing timber panelling in the entrances to basically restore them as they were over 150 years ago.”

ARRIVAL SEQUENCE

Niccolò tells me that from here, as in all Northacre’s developments, the team started with the “arrival sequence” for

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their buyers.

The project team asked itself several questions: “How would we like the drop off to work? How would we like the concierge arrival to work? How many cores are needed in the different buildings? How many apartments should we have per landing in order to still feel boutique even though each individual is part of a development of 72 units?”

Niccolò continues: “One would, for example, have thought that we would put the central reception on the Buckingham Gate side, which has the grander entrance, but we decided to put this on the Palace Street side where we were able to create a porte-cochère. Because here, we’re creating a new building and thus an arrival sequence much more akin to a high-end five-star hotel.

“From there, we looked at where the leisure facilities could be and decided to make them central to our development instead of just a forgotten room in one of the corners.”

The gym for example was positioned as such, being placed equidistant between all the facades.

Particular importance was also given to

the 20 metre pool, and the sequence of moving through the building from the car park, leisure facilities, entrance and all the way to the apartments.

CONSTRUCTION & COORDINATION

With works now underway, the CEO then takes me through the current build process they are undergoing and have already undertaken, and the materials and methods they have used to accomplish this.

As discussed, past the retention of four of the building’s facades, the 1980s fifth wing and the interior structure was demolished. The developer then began the excavation of the basement and the construction of the new interior structure.

In order to start building the project more quickly, they opted for a ‘top-down’ frame construction, which allowed the basement to be formed at the same time as the above-ground structure, with the existing facades being tied in as these elements progressed.

As was foreseen previously, the construction team has faced many barriers during this complex process, however.



According to Niccolò, coordinating with the contractor, with 20 different consultants, and all while making sure that 600 people show up on the site every day, “is in itself a huge challenge.”

He explains another complication, but one that is significantly speeding build times: “We have numerous consolidation centres for materials to be stored in. These are then called in on a ‘just in time’ method and positioned in the apartment ready for installation.”

The CEO argues that the revival of architecturally significant buildings into residential developments is also “technically more difficult than a new build scheme,” but that it is worth it, however, as it is “extremely rewarding in terms of the final product.”

“What we’re focusing on is creating legacy developments that become an important part of the London landscape – and we’re proud to be London’s leading developer in this regard,” he adds.

SUPERLATIVE HERITAGE

When discussing the designs behind these elements new and old, Robert rejoins the conversation, describing the varied architecture across the site.

He begins: “The architects Squire + Partners have created a contemporary

design for the facade of the fifth wing and they are also behind the interior architecture across all five facades, where exceptionally engineered designs combine the finest materials in a wealth of different finishes.”

Robert tells me that this design is intended to stay true to every individual building’s heritage, ensuring that the exterior of each and every building “translates into the interior in a holistic way.”

In terms of the materials that are being specified as part of these designs, Niccolò says that Northacre are trying to bring back as much heritage as possible from the various buildings: “To do this, we researched the different features of each of the sections of the site and how they would have looked in the periods they were built.

“As an example, the Buckingham Gate element has much more ornate cornering, which is then slightly more pared back, ‘Queen Anne’-style in our Stafford Place building, and certainly different from the shadow gaps that we’re putting in the Palace Street building (the complete new build that sits above the porte-cochère).”

From then, the team have gone on to research the various aspects of the wood flooring, with the idea being that



Top: Northacre CEO Niccolò Barattieri di San; bottom: the developer's construction director Robert Gibson

residents will cross from the “extreme of Versailles flooring” in Buckingham Gate to long, straight wooden planks in Palace Street, “which along with the shadow gaps completes the modern look.”

According to the CEO, the fit-out of the entire project “will be second to none in London, with no expenses spared, and the choice of marble and the architectural interior design is of the highest possible grade.”

Robert adds: “We have gone to great lengths to make sure everything is superlative; from the ceiling heights measuring up to five metres in selected apartments to sourcing the best Statuario marble from Carrara in Italy and timber from Turin.

“We are also working closely with prestigious kitchen makers Obumex in Belgium and combining complementary fixtures and fittings such as copper, bronze or brushed steel amongst other features.”

A COMPLETE PACKAGE

While still very much in the construction stage when I visited, No.1 Palace Street is coming up fast, with completion expected in late 2020, early 2021. This will also be a full launch – with no phasing programme, the building will open as “a

complete package.”

Being complete in this demographic of course means the inclusion of the amenities and features that such a high-end development requires.

These amenities will include over 10,000 ft² of leisure facilities, comprising a 6,500 ft² “haven of wellbeing” including a gym, personal training suites, treatment rooms, a 20 metre pool, and 3,500 ft² entertainment space with flexible space for residents to host private meetings or dinners, a fourteen-seat state-of-the-art cinema, and a fully-serviced private lounge.

As well as the spaces, location, and onsite features to meet its luxury demands, the apartments themselves will also offer home automation systems providing remote control of lighting, heating and security, energy-efficient and eco-friendly features including LED lighting and adjustable controls, among other in-house amenities to support the demands of modern-day living.


Of course, all this – and the chance to live opposite the Queen – comes at a price, with the apartments ranging in price from £2.55m to ‘POA.’ For those with the resources however, No.1 Palace Street, among its many charms, will offer a view that no other residential property in the world can.

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SE Controls adds comfort and safety at prestigious Manchester residential development

An integrated smoke control and environmental ventilation solution from SE Controls is helping keep residents safe and comfortable at a prestigious 11-storey residential development in Manchester, which also incorporates the company's intelligent temperature monitoring and control system, SE Evello.

Designed by SimpsonHaugh architects, Burlington House comprises 91 luxury private rental apartments with one; two or three bedrooms and is located in the historic Piccadilly Basin area adjacent to the Rochdale Canal and a number of heritage buildings including the Grade II listed Jacksons warehouse.

The building's three-layered design combines the use of brickwork on its six lower levels with aluminium cladding and a glazed facade system on the upper two geometric structures to reflect the historic surroundings while creating a modern residential space.

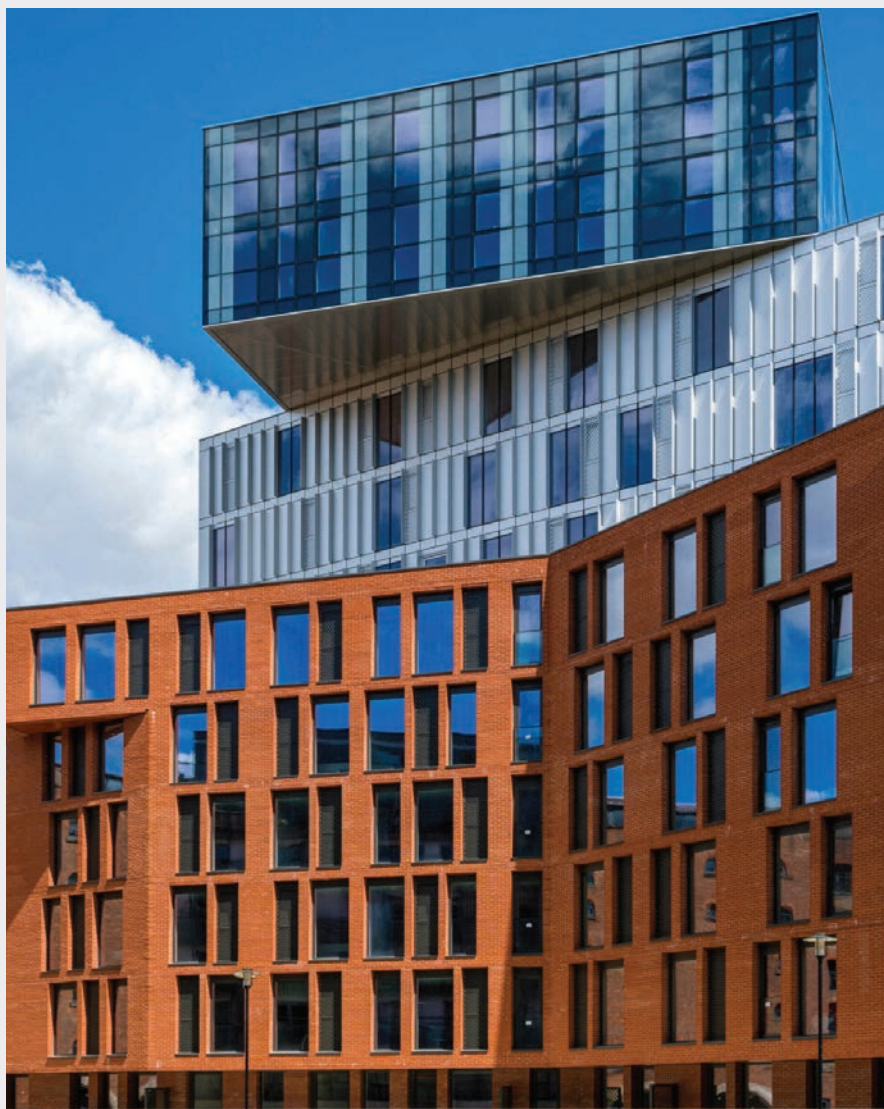
As regulations dictate that residential buildings higher than three storeys require a smoke control system to be installed, SE Controls was approached to design an effective solution that ensured escape routes are kept clear of smoke if a fire should occur.

Also, as the building's energy efficient design and use of large glazed areas has the potential for temperatures in corridors and circulation spaces to become elevated during summer months, SE Controls engineered the system to provide integral environmental ventilation and ensure temperatures are maintained at comfortable levels for residents.

To achieve this, the SE Controls solution utilises the system's smoke shafts and two dedicated environmental fans to provide day-to-day corridor and stairwell ventilation, which alleviates any issues with building overheating while preventing the build up of stale air.

The SE Evello system not only monitors the temperature, but also controls devices such as the ventilation fans and smoke shaft vents with a self-adapting control algorithm, which targets ventilation to the warmest corridors or areas of the building, where the heat increase is greatest, while also reducing ventilation to more temperate zones.

Developed using a combination of extensive building studies, CFD modelling and data derived from live test sites, SE Evello's algorithms constantly monitor temperature levels and provides predictive control over the opening of corridor ventilation louvres and the extract fan speed to ensure temperatures never reach excessive levels. The other main benefit is that stale air and odours that can build up in static air spaces are removed and replaced with fresh air.



While the environmental system improves comfort, it is the smoke control system that makes it possible. Burlington House uses two mechanical smoke extraction shafts and one air inlet shaft for make-up air for the lower six floors, while a single smoke shaft is used in the upper five levels with the addition of pressure sensors to prevent over-pressure on the escape door.

Two roof mounted duty and standby SHEVTEC fan sets serve the smoke shafts, which are actuated as soon as smoke is detected within the building. The smoke control system operates on a floor-by-floor basis to provide protection for corridors and lobbies adjacent to the escape stairs and ensure smoke is removed from the 'fire-floor'.

Once smoke or fire is detected, the environmental ventilation system is over-ridden automatically and smoke is extracted from the activated floor with all other automatic opening vents (AOV) locked out to maintain

compartmentalisation. Additional smoke vents at the head of the stairwell and roof remain open until they have been reset by fire-service personnel using the relevant tamperproof manual control point (MCP), which are located on every floor.

In addition to the wide range of specialised equipment installed on the project, including smoke control dampers, SHEVTEC grilles, MCPs and temperature sensors, the system is controlled by three OS2 SHEVTEC controllers with battery back up.

The system also uses SECloudlink™ to provide round-the-clock smoke control system status information and reporting to enable monitoring and system adjustments to be made remotely, as well as enabling preventive and corrective maintenance to be performed by maintenance teams.

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Timber Frame Fire Safety In Use Guidance



With an objective to enhance quality and drive product innovation through technical guidance and research, the Structural Timber Association (STA), as part of their continual development programme, has been collaborating with the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre (CSIC), the University of Edinburgh and BRE to produce fire safety in use guidance for timber frame buildings.

Timber frame construction is a traditional method of building with a proven track record of mainstream compliance and longevity. It is widely recognised as the offsite construction system of choice, offering many benefits, including low carbon, cost effective, quality, speed and regulatory compliance.

Fire safety in use affects all forms of construction. All buildings must be designed to comply with the functional protocols of the Building Regulations for fire safety requirements, as a minimum standard. The STA has invested in an industry leading fire in use research project to test and prove commonly used timber frame wall, floor and roof make ups used in the UK marketplace.

The output of this research, a pattern book of EN tested systems, is believed to be the first of its kind in the UK timber frame sector. The

EN tested systems and best practice recommendations provide a comprehensive package of information, for the design, specification and construction of timber frame buildings. This research now forms part of the STA's library of fire in use best practice guidance. The STA library of documentation provides comprehensive guidance, information and recommendations on system specifications and good practice principles when using timber frame construction.

The project was organised into four distinct, but connected work packages, running in parallel to gather the relevant data required for the pattern book.

- The first stage was the completion of research into various aspects of timber fire safety and testing
- The second stage was the completion of a large programme of full-scale fire EN fire resistance testing, including collaboration with the Irish Timber Frame Manufacturers' Association (ITFMA), Engineered Wood Products Committee (EWPC) and Trussed Rafter Association (TRA) testing programmes
- The third stage was the collation of all research and test information, for analysis, peer review and validation by BRE, and the subsequent endorsement by verifiers and regulators

- The final stage was the creation of the pattern book.

In addition to the extensive fire in use research of timber frame systems, it has been identified by the STA that the installation of fire stops and cavity barriers are of equal importance when it comes to building safety, an issue which prevails regardless of the building methodology. The STA have responded by developing a new guidance document on cavity barriers to complement the existing information.

This research, which has been supported by Swedish Wood and the Scottish Forestry, has been endorsed by several industry and government stakeholders. The pattern book of systems provides a unique reference library of information for clients, specifiers and STA members to use with confidence.

The information will be regularly reviewed and updated by the STA Technical Committee and Board and the pattern book and guidance on fire stops and cavity barriers are free to download from the Structural Timber Association's document library which can be found by visiting: www.structuraltimber.co.uk/links/research-documents

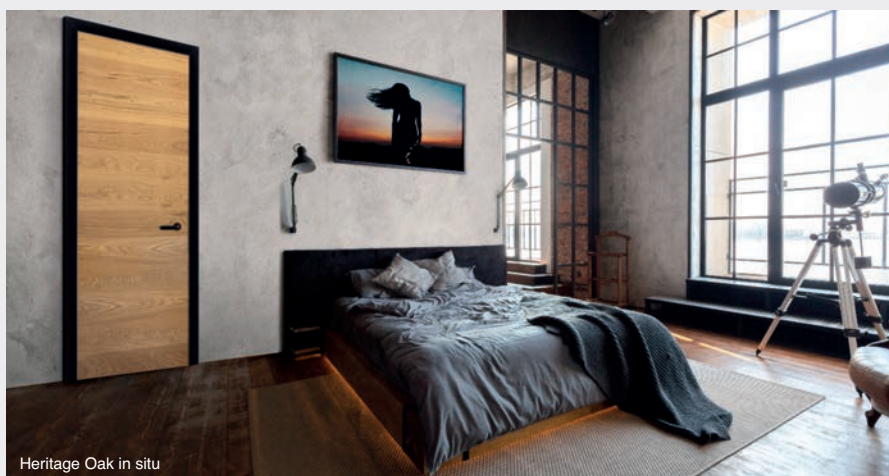
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Taking a leaf out of nature's book

Figurative knots and distinctive woodgrain configurations are both authentic and much loved wood characteristics, that are admired and sought after by specifiers everywhere. This desire for irregularity and a closer affinity with nature, has led leading interior timber door manufacturer, Vicaima to introduce the new Naturdor® Heritage Oak finish. With its open grain and randomly mixed real Oak veneer, it takes a leaf out of nature's book.

As a leading exponent in the use of trend-setting designs and with over 60 years' experience in the manufacture of real veneered products, Vicaima's Heritage Oak doors present figured oak veneer that entices the senses of true rustic wood lovers. This new wood veneer treatment has been inspired by authentic influences of nature and reflects a more recent market trend towards wooden doors that embody materials made from more genuine and under refined materials.

Naturdor® Heritage Oak reflects the unexpected harmony of nature, with veneer mixed randomly in a choice of either vertical or horizontal designs. These can have either a matt or standard sheen surface depending on taste. Heritage Oak can be enhanced yet further by the potential collaboration of decorative face



Heritage Oak in situ

grooves, or the option of deep texturing. Introduced for 2020, Deep textured allows real veneer to take on a more rustic feel for an even greater tactile experience. Other combinations are afforded by a choice of available frame finishes, ranging from Naturdor® Oak and Stained Ash to Dekordor® foil or Laccor paint, creating a unique style to the whole door assembly. This fusion between a rustic oak veneer appearance, optional face grooves and choice of frame finishes, allows Heritage Oak to blend in and accentuate modern living and

working space for a multitude of applications.

Emphasizing its commitment to the planet and to the sustainable use of natural resources, Vicaima Heritage Oak is covered by FSC® certification. Where performance criteria are demanded, Heritage Oak is also available in fire, acoustic and security solutions. In addition to door only and door and frame assemblies, matching wardrobes and wall panels can also be provided.

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locking via a mechanical latch in the boom to prevent forced entry. The GaraMatic 10 and GaraMatic 20 include an integrated Bluetooth receiver and HCP-bus connection, a new feature which enables the user to control the operator using the Garador app on their smartphone or connect to external smart home systems such as Amazon Alexa or Google Home Hub.

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SPW501 aluminium commercial doors, which were fabricated and installed by supply-chain partner Aire Valley Architectural Aluminium. Ideally suited to high-traffic applications, Senior's robust SPW501 aluminium commercial doors provide safe and secure access to the retail and community buildings, with the slim sightlines afforded by Senior's popular SF52 aluminium curtain wall system helping to maximise the use of daylighting.

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STAND OUT WITH A CANOPY

Phil Nash from Scotts of Thrapston discusses the many different styles and materials available for porch canopies, and the benefits they can bring

Porch canopies come in many different styles and materials, are easy to install, and can add both practical and aesthetic qualities to a home.

Firstly, there is kerb appeal; a porch canopy is one of the first things that a visitor sees when arriving at a property. Everyone knows that an attractive house is a desirable house, and the addition of a porch canopy can greatly improve any home's appearance. This in turn can improve saleability in a competitive housing market.

The use of door canopies is also a cost-effective way for housebuilders and developers to add real character to a development. They are especially useful in turning a row of modern terrace homes into properties with personality.

STYLE

Alternating the styles of the canopies can improve the appearance of the street and, more importantly, bring a certain individuality to the properties and the development itself.

Canopies come in a vast array of designs and are a quick way of evoking a period style. With current trends encompassing retro and vintage, new build house designs are frequently looking at times gone by, and the addition of a porch canopy is a quick and easy way to evoke a certain period in history, including Georgian and Victorian.

In addition, colour can play a part. Traditionally porch canopies are finished in a natural wood or with a white paint finish. However, they can be painted to match the front door for a more striking and distinctive look, and create a real focal point.

PRACTICALITY

The British weather is notoriously damp and wet, and there's nothing worse than standing outside a front door, getting soaked while fumbling in a handbag or coat pockets for the keys.

A well-designed porch canopy is a functional way of providing shelter from the elements, both rain and sunshine, while also protecting the front door and door furniture, helping to improve their longevity.

Porches can prove to be a particularly welcome feature on a new build property, especially if the house design has a small entrance hall or there is direct access from outside into the living area.

However, it is worth noting that a badly designed porch can also ruin the look of a property as well. One style guide is to use the roof design of the property as a starting point. For example, if it is a hip roof, then a canopy that has a hip design may complement.

MATERIALITY

Equally, the quality and materials used to produce the product are of great importance. Porch canopies are available in all different sizes, shapes and finishes and, in general, are quick and easy to install.

They can be made from various materials such as Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP), stone and timber, including Redwood, Whitewood, Oak, Douglas Fir and Accoya.

GRP canopies tend to be delivered as a single unit, while sturdy, sustainably sourced, timber porch canopies can be delivered as kits, to include structural joinery timbers, plywood, gallows brackets, porch posts and post bases, which can be quickly assembled on site.

A key advantage of timber porch canopies is the ability to design and manufacture bespoke porches / projects rather than having to settle for an off-the-shelf GRP style with set dimensions. Furthermore, timber porches offer structural performance, allowing for all tile solutions to be fitted.

MANUFACTURERS

It is wise to appoint manufacturers who have a reputable experience in working with and supplying to housebuilders, developers and contractors, whether the projects are small or large.

Working with manufacturers who can deliver just-in time scheduling means that prompt deliveries can be made to the development site when needed, making planning easier for site managers and helping project management timings stay on track.

Working with a reliable and experienced manufacturer also means that they can handle varying orders, from a volume



order of standard porches to bespoke feature canopies for luxury properties.

While a volume builder will iron out design features for a development as part of its planning permission and reserved matters, an individual builder, working on a renovation project, probably will not need planning permission to add a door canopy, unless the property is listed, in which case advice needs to be sought.

STANDING OUT

Ticking the boxes for looks and practicality means that door porches are an excellent feature for new build homes and developments – helping to make properties stand out from the crowd while also giving customers a feature that provides a real benefit to them.

Phil Nash is sales manager at Scotts of Thrapston

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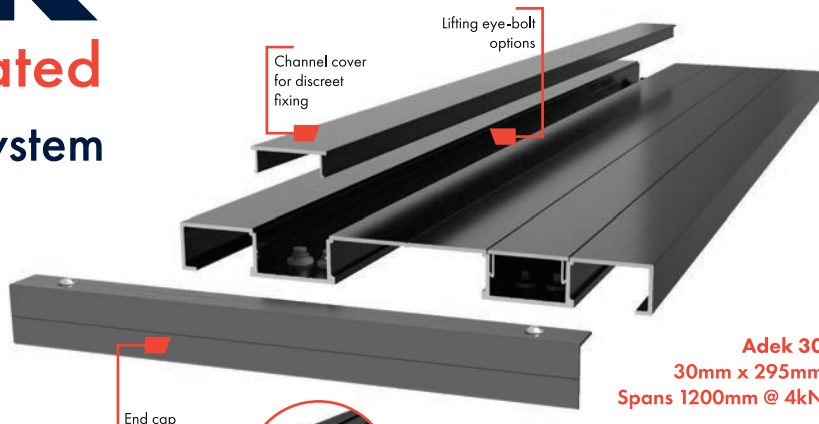


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FIRE COMPLIANCE FOR BALCONIES EXPLAINED

Nick Haughton of Sapphire explores the key fire compliance considerations when specifying balconies for housebuilding projects.

Balconies are a cost-effective way to add square footage to apartments and give residents coveted private outdoor access. Studies have shown that access to outdoor space is highly beneficial for residents' mental health and overall wellbeing. This makes balconies a selling point to prospective residents as they can provide private outdoor space even in bustling cityscapes, where it's often lacking.

In recent years, balcony fires and fires in high-rise residential buildings have been at the forefront of many in the industry's minds. As we collectively try to adjust to building regulation changes, many are left behind. In fact, research shows that just 15 per cent of architects said they had a good understanding of the post-Grenfell regulations. This understanding gap leaves many in the industry concerned about maintaining compliance in their buildings while managing the other demands of a project.

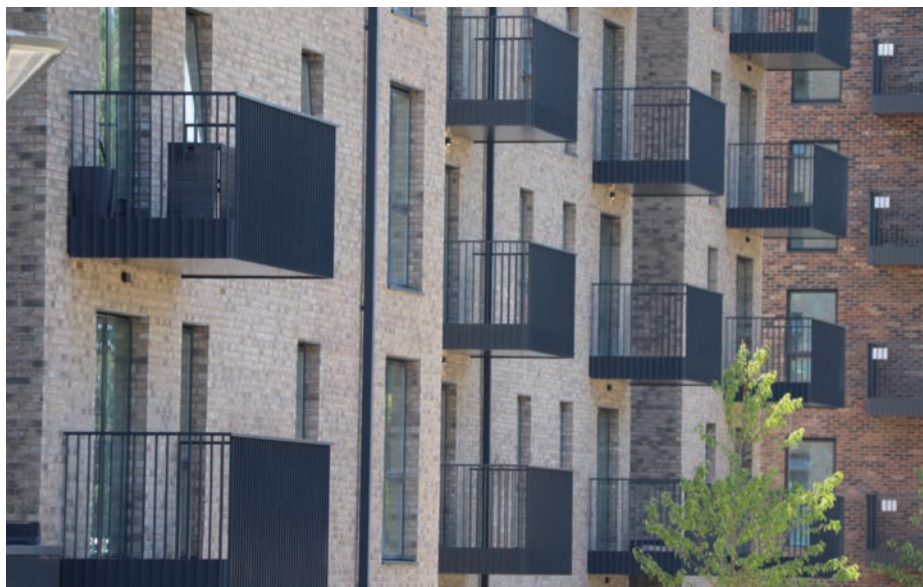
Balconies are included in the combustible cladding ban, and have been the subject of debate as certain components typically used on balconies are now noncompliant. The aim of the Hackitt report was to establish what measures are necessary for systematic change across the industry.

Róisín Ní Chatháin, director of architecture at BPTW, welcomed these changes, saying that: "As an industry this is the time to re-evaluate current procurement methods and create awareness of what needs to change to see that we are designing and building with quality construction and life safety at the fore."

The aim of the Government is, understandably, to minimise the risk of fire spread to residents. Hayley Moreton, architect at 3D Reid, affirms, "fire safety is very important when specifying."

Fire safety should be considered throughout the specifying process to not only ensure compliance with current regulations, but the safety and longevity of the project.

As such, there are many points to consider when specifying balconies on



high-rise residential buildings. Some of the key ones are listed below.

LAMINATE GLASS

Laminate glass has been hotly debated, as the interlayer – while only 1.5 mm thick – is combustible, and therefore non-compliant. However, many in the industry view laminate glass as a safer alternative to monolithic glass due to the safety risks in the case of broken panels.

While monolithic glass leaves a void and allows particles to fall from the balcony, the interlayer in laminate glass typically contains the fragments and preserves the barrier until the panel can be replaced.

WATERPROOFING CONCRETE BALCONIES

Another challenge in maintaining balcony compliance is the waterproofing membranes used on concrete balconies.

While waterproofing is essential on concrete balconies, many face the challenge of sourcing a compliant membrane for use over 18 metres. Other balcony systems drain through the decking, negating the need for waterproofing and effectively bypassing this challenge.

SOFFITS

A key consideration in balcony design regarding fire safety is the inclusion of soffits. Soffits not only provide a sleek finish to the balcony structure but also aid in limiting the spread of a balcony fire. Aluminium soffits have been shown in practice to reduce the possibility of rising or falling embers affecting balconies above and below a fire.

Balcony fires often begin as a result of accidents like overturned barbecues or cigarettes landing on combustible furniture. While such accidents can be minimised through education, the regulations require that all necessary precautions be made to limit fire spread at the design stage.

CAVITY BARRIER INTEGRITY

Cavity barriers are essential in maintaining the integrity of a building during a fire. When specifying balconies, it is important to take into consideration the penetrations required to secure the balcony, and the impact this has on the cavity barrier.

Lightweight balconies not only reduce the load on the building, they also require fewer connections to achieve and surpass



British deflection standards. Fewer connections means fewer penetrations and lower costs for thermal breaks.

The cavity barrier is also essential for fire-stopping, and this should be considered when specifying balconies. It is essential to ensure that the balcony connections do not undermine the integrity of the cavity barrier, and that

an appropriate fire-stopping solution is used.

LONDON HOUSING DESIGN GUIDE

The London Housing Design Guide was published in 2010 by the Mayor of London, and forms a common set of housing design standards across the whole of London.

The guide requires that all dwellings provide adequate private open space with a minimum of 5 m² for two people, and an additional square metre per additional occupant. The minimum width and depth for all balconies and private external spaces is 1500 mm.

The guide aims to ensure all London residents benefit from better homes and neighbourhoods to promote happiness and wellbeing.

A COMPREHENSIVE PERSPECTIVE

As Jayne Booyesen, compliance manager at Premier Estates, said: "The fire strategy needs to be considered. It is also important to consider if residents are disabled and how to evacuate. All these end-use considerations need to be taken into account. We then liaise with local authorities to tailor the fire strategy to suit the residents."

It is essential when specifying to take

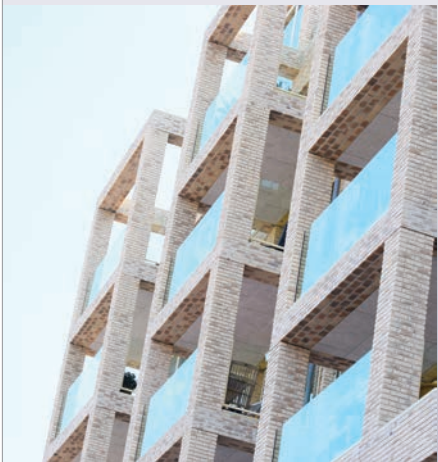


a comprehensive approach to ensure all necessary precautions are taken when specifying balconies. To guarantee compliance we must consider the use of the balcony from all aspects, where possible safeguarding residents from fire spread and ensuring every reasonable precaution is taken.



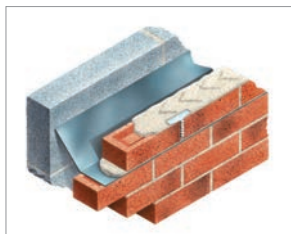
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High performance membranes



High-performance products from the **A. Proctor Group**, experts at solving condensation, airtightness and energy efficiency problems in buildings have been selected for use in the construction of a British Antarctic Survey building. Main Contractor, Mike Robinson of

Rothwell Robinson, Manchester explained: "Due to the extreme conditions, we wanted to ensure that only the highest performing products were used on the project. In light of the extreme temperatures involved, we approached the A. Proctor Group who carried out a full condensation risk analysis. Following the risk analysis, the recommendations adopted included Roofshield® for the roof and Procheck® 500 as a VCL for the walls."

01250 872261 www.proctorgroup.com



Ecodek unveils new non-combustible decking – Adek – at Futurebuild 2020

Ecodek has unveiled its new non-combustible aluminium decking system, Adek, at this year's Futurebuild, which was held at ExCel London at the beginning of March.

This engineered lightweight decking has been specifically designed in response to changing building standards to be Class A2FL-s1 rated, which is now a legal requirement for any material used in the construction or refurbishment of high-rise buildings of 18m or above. This A2 certification means Adek lends itself to several applications, from balconies and terraces to walkways, in both commercial and domestic developments.

Made from 100 per cent recycled aluminium, Adek is available in two profiles, 20mm and 30mm - which can span 600mm and 1.2m respectively - and with a point load of 4kN, both options are strong, durable and long lasting. The system is also extremely easy to install, with concealed face fixings and no need for clips, making it an ideal solution for both refurbishment projects with specific completion dates, and new builds.

Its innovative design has resulted in a smooth surface which, together with an anti-slip coating, makes Adek safe and comfortable underfoot, even for bare feet, and the perfect choice for residential structures of any height.

01978 667 840 ecodek.co.uk/adek-non-combustible-aluminium-decking-system



Tony Walsh & Aidan Harte

Freefoam announce 30 year anniversary

2020 is a significant year for **Freefoam Building Products**, with the company marking 30 years of trading. In 1990 founding Managing Director Tony Walsh set up an extrusion plant in Cork, Ireland, with one co-extrusion line. With a vision to provide the growing home improvement market with high quality, long lasting, low maintenance PVC fascia and soffit, to replace traditional timber products, the business grew into a leading manufacturer in Ireland. Since those humble beginnings Freefoam has become a broad pan-European business, with manufacturing operations in Ireland and the UK together with distribution in continental Europe. Tony Walsh, now Chairman, remarked: "This is an incredible milestone for any company. Freefoam has achieved this success through a combination of factors. First and foremost the hard work, passion, and exemplary commitment by our team members whose cooperative spirit throughout the company is at the heart of our business. The development and continued improvements to our product range and our innovation to create best in class building products that are guaranteed to provide value and longevity to homeowners has also proved to be a winning formula. We have dedicated ourselves to 30 years of product innovation, manufacturing and business process improvements and efficiencies".

01604 591110 www.freefoam.com



Innovative LIQUIROOF insulation boards available exclusively from SIG

To support their range of liquid waterproofing products, **SIG Design & Technology** are working with EAP to exclusively supply their innovative LIQUIROOF insulation boards. This partnership combines their expertise on both the insulation and waterproofing under one package.

LIQUIROOF interlocking PIR boards deliver a super-flat surface ideal for liquid and flat roofing systems. Liquid waterproofing coatings are typically between 1.25 to 2mm thick meaning even the most minor imperfections in the substrate surface can create alignment issues and stress points on the outer surface coating. LIQUIROOF fully supported PIR insulation boards interlock on all four sides, from top to bottom, to create a strong and solid surface with no raised edges, misalignment or gaps.

Faced with a lightweight 8mm OSB 3 panel on the topside, LIQUIROOF panels are designed for use on old or new boarded structures. The polyurethane rigid foam insulation core provides maximum insulation with minimum panel thickness. The serrated edges on the boards slot together easily to cover large uneven surfaces, and with minimised alignment time are quick to install.

01509 505714 www.singleply.co.uk/flat-roofs/liquiroof-insulation-board

Understanding the Dynamics of Fast-Track Construction

The adoption of offsite construction involves upfront capital costs – this is often where comparisons are made between factory-based and traditional building methods. If evaluated in isolation the traditional approach could appear a cheaper option, without taking into consideration the numerous cost saving advantages of factory-based methods. Steve Thompson, Managing Director for EOS discusses why fast-track construction is beneficial for developers.

Construction clients may not fully understand the dynamics of fast-track construction. Part of our role as a specialist steel framing manufacturer, is to help them get to grips with the cost model and determine where savings can be made without compromising on quality.

As a major project delivery strategy, factory-based construction methods reduce construction time, delivering an earlier return on investment. Offsite manufacture for onsite assembly provides a clear schedule for high outputs, with stringent systems to track schedules, milestones and enable the smooth collaboration between contractors and clients.

From less material waste onsite with vast reductions in associated disposal costs, to improved quality with less investment in snagging, reworking and delays – comparing cost models is complex. The greatest gain of fast-track construction is shorter construction times with reduced prelims and site management costs – bringing houses rapidly on-stream. The main benefit of these shorter schedules is improved cash flow. By generating faster rent or sales income, construction financing costs are reduced - delivering a better and faster return on investment.

Working in full compliance with all relevant building standards, including the new Building Regulations relating to residential builds over



18m – EOS manufacture robust steel frame panelised systems and volumetric modules for non-loadbearing and loadbearing applications. We deliver a consistently high quality of finish with fewer defects than traditional building methods as a result of our advanced lean manufacturing processes in a BSI compliant facility.

The future of design and construction is all about finding efficiencies – building faster, more cost effectively and delivering a better-quality product. Offsite manufactured non-combustible steel systems are considered one of the most efficient fast-track residential construction solutions.

SYSTEM APPROACH

Our latest product development, the revolutionary Thrubuild® range uses offsite manufacture

and the latest testing to deliver structures faster, with assured performance built in. Developed in collaboration with Etex brands – EOS, Siniat, and Promat – our Thrubuild® systems have been established as an integrated solution using the award-winning EOS range of light steel framing, Siniat Weather Defence external sheathing board, and Siniat Frameboard, an internal plasterboard. Comprehensively tested, the range of Thrubuild® systems meet building performance requirements for fire, thermal, weathering, acoustics and airtightness. Delivering an 'all in one' solution, Thrubuild® systems provide crucial time and cost benefits and are performance guaranteed for 30 years – ensuring peace of mind for clients, contractors and designers.

There is an imperative to improve industry productivity, with increasing requirements to design and construct in a more detailed manner and at a rapid pace. There is a massive opportunity to deliver the built environment differently. Offsite system manufacturers are operating in exciting times and there has never been a better time to capitalise on the raft of benefits that factory-based offsite technologies can deliver.

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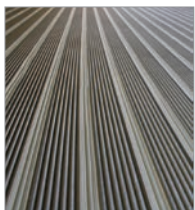


The Port of Chatham faces regular assault by storms, prompting the designers for an apartment development on an elevated site to specify a weather resistant render finish to the elevations, applied across **Magply** boards. For the upper storeys, the 12mm Magply boards are secured across the timber framework infilling the main structure, while concrete blockwork features right around the ground level podium. This will have timber battens secured to it to create a cavity

behind the Magply boards, ready to carry the render treatment. Magply boards carry a variety of internationally recognised accreditations.

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Neaco launches new plank systems



Neaco has launched two aluminium plank systems which are made-to-measure for fast supply and installation, outstanding performance and full compliance with Building Regulations. Neatlok and Neatwalk are designed to replicate the aesthetic of timber decking with the option of durable coating in any RAL colour or one of Neaco's standard finishes. Neatlok is a closed, interlocking plank

providing privacy and directional drainage. Neatwalk planks are laid with 5mm gaps for a free-draining solution. Providing an A1 or A2 Fire Rating, the systems are ideal for new build and refurbishment projects which are required by law to use non-combustible materials on balconies.

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Bow River village residents benefit from MVHR



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www.domusventilation.co.uk

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Kingspan Insulation has launched a free online calculator and app to make it easier than ever to estimate the additional space and value you can add to a commercial property by using Kingspan's thinner, more thermally efficient wall insulation solutions – realvalueofspace.co.uk. Users can choose from five common external wall constructions, each comparing Kingspan Kooltherm solutions with lower performing alternatives. By setting a few additional project parameters, including floor area, rental price and yield value, you can receive a clear estimate of the additional floor space that can be recovered by using a Kingspan Kooltherm solution, and the added rental income and capitalised value this can provide.

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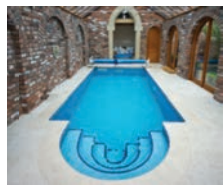
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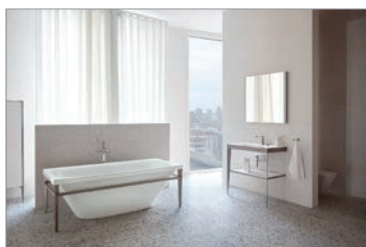


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With over 300,000 existing heat network connections in the UK that still require a fit-for-purpose metering and billing system, and regulations due to be updated soon, now's the time for building owners to assess their housing stock and source the best service provider to meet their needs. That's where **Minibems** fits the bill, with metering and billing solutions that are designed for easy integration in existing or new build developments that also provide synergy with their heat network performance system. Providing the ultimate in flexibility, Minibems credit and pre-payment billing solutions operate with a real-time payment system. Credits made are applied instantly using a range of payment methods, meaning customer satisfaction is high and ongoing management is hassle-free for building operators. The Heat Network (Metering & Billing) Regulations 2014 are currently under consultation for the revised cost effectiveness tool for existing heat networks. Following this, the regulations will be updated, and heat suppliers will be obligated to carry out the cost-effectiveness assessment on existing developments and install meters where required within a specified compliance period. Minibems offer advice and guidance to ensure developments meet with these regulations and can supply products and billing services to suit.

020 3411 4170 www.minibems.com

Lighter shades in bathroom furniture



"Off White" has become increasingly more popular within the bathroom; this mixture of white and gentle beige is warmer than a bright white and is used to create a modern, yet inviting feel to the room. **Duravit's** Viu ceramics series and the XViU bathroom furniture range uses 'Off White'

as a contrast to the Black Matt profiles, a softer look can be achieved by pairing champagne-coloured profiles with white furniture surfaces.

01908 286 680 www.duravit.co.uk

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assembly, the steel enamel Cayonoplan is the ideal solution available in a generous range of sizes, 100 per cent recyclable and comes with a 30-year guarantee. Also available in matt shades from the Coordinated Colours Collection, shown here in Lava Black matt with **Kaldewei** Secure Plus.

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OPEN TO SMART & SUSTAINABLE APPLIANCES

Phil Slater of Whirlpool UK looks at how sustainability drivers plus a trend for open plan living are being supported by innovation in modern appliances.



Homebuyers seek the latest kitchen appliances and technology. With more households opting for open-plan living, the days of a purely practical kitchen are becoming a thing of the past, as the boundaries between kitchens and living areas are increasingly blurred. The kitchen, more than ever, needs to be a fully adaptable environment that is suitable for family life, entertaining and relaxing. The kitchen must offer the homeowner a functional space that is as easy to use as it is beautiful. High-performance appliances are therefore integral, to make everyday living, cooking and cleaning as stress-free as possible.

The built-in appliance market has grown in popularity over the last few years due to the open-plan living trend. Open-plan living has meant that kitchen design and appliances must flow seamlessly into the living area, which is easily attained with built-in appliances. Built-in appliances ensure stylish design,

superb functionality, and are available to kitchens of all shapes and sizes, with the possibility of horizontally or vertically stacked models. Black and stainless steel appliances currently dominate the colours that are featured in the kitchen.

However, freestanding appliances also continue to be popular for a number of reasons. A freestanding appliance allows the consumer to take it with them when they move home, it can be quickly and easily installed with minimal disruption, and can make a bold statement (such as a stunning fridge freezer) – which is currently a key trend in kitchen design.

Housebuilders should offer a variety of freestanding and built-in appliances to customers, as every customer has different needs and preferred styles.

Noise levels are important in any kitchen, especially where the kitchen is open to other spaces in the home, as consumers not only cook in kitchens but also socialise with family and friends. Appliances today are quieter than ever to

suit open-plan living arrangements, and to make life more pleasant.

SUSTAINABILITY

Homeowners today demand appliances that are efficient and reduce energy and water consumption. Energy efficiency is a key trend in new homes, with consumers understanding that the cost of running kitchen appliances can significantly affect the cost of running their household.

Amendments to Part G of the UK Building Regulations state that the maximum allowable consumption of water in new dwellings is 125 litres per person per day. This regulation is a challenge as, according to the Environment Agency, the water consumption of the average person in the UK is 150 litres per day. This is a driving force for the trend of sustainable kitchen appliances with low water consumption.

Many consumers are under the impression that dishwashers use a lot of water and energy. However, dishwashers



are highly efficient appliances that save the consumer time and resources. Many modern dishwashers use as little as nine litres of water to clean a full load, much less than washing by hand, which typically uses between 40 and 60 litres.

Induction hobs are attracting a lot of attention and are a key trend in the kitchen appliance market, with their greater efficiency, speed, safety and flexibility. Induction hobs are faster and much more efficient than regular hobs because they directly heat the base of the pan. As a comparison, 84 per cent of the energy used when cooking with an induction hob is used to cook the food, whereas only 40 per cent of the energy in a common gas hob is used to cook, as a large quantity of the

energy is lost around the edge of the pot/pan.

We are living in a fast-changing world, where people are increasingly dependent on technology to make tasks easier, safer and more convenient. Induction hobs are perfect to do just that, especially as they are almost twice as fast, and very efficient compared to ceramic or their gas equivalents.

For the future, it is expected that the strongest trends in appliance development on an eco-level will come from connected and smart grid-enabled products. Smart grid is essentially an intelligent energy distribution system that communicates with household appliances to ensure a more efficient and cost-effective

THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE CONSUMPTION OF WATER IN NEW DWELLINGS IS 125 LITRES PER PERSON

distribution of electricity. So for instance, the innovation will allow appliances to tailor their operation, and move the washing of laundry to times of off-peak electricity demand without affecting performance. What's more, smart connected technology will mean delegating the whole task to the appliance, with the appliance connecting directly to the smart grid for the ultimate in energy efficient operation.

Smart appliances make everyday living easier and more enjoyable for the user. Advances in technology provide greater convenience, further reduce energy consumption and help people live a more sustainable lifestyle. Connectivity will continue to develop rapidly in the next couple of years, and will begin to filter through to mid and entry-level segments in the market in the future.

Phil Slater is channel manager (Contracts) at Whirlpool UK Appliances Limited.

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Wetroom specialist rolls out tile mosaic range



Designers and developers, as well as specialist bathroom and wetroom contractors all stand to benefit from the introduction of the new Slicedstone mosaics range on a roll, launched by **Marmox (UK) Ltd**. The palette of colours available under the Slicedstone brand

extends from Copper, Bronze, Beige and Graphite to Autumn Leaf, Mars Stone and Sea Stone. There are also three mosaic mixes: comprising Beige Stone, Copper Stone and Slate – Lava Stone and Lauze – then Slate, Lava Stone and Sea Stone. The laser cut 25 x 25mm or 50 x 50mm tiles provide a crisp and regular finish offering stunning visual impact.

01634 835290 www.marmox.co.uk

Reginox extends its stainless steel sink range



Reginox UK – one of the leading sinks, taps and accessories manufacturers, has launched its latest stainless steel sink – Houston. Ideal for housebuilders, the Houston sink is available in four sizes – each with a polished inox finish. With a very competitive price point, the Houston is highly functional with its

square bowl and 10mm inside radius. With a beautiful high gloss finish, Houston is an undermount sink and is a very versatile and practical product, that comes with a lifetime warranty.

01260 280033 www.reginox.co.uk

Longfloor launch game-changer for industry



At this year's Concrete Show on 25th March, **Longfloor** will launch a game-changing development for the construction industry, a revolutionary approach in the way liquid cement screeds are applied, a global first which will

fundamentally enhance the way liquid cement screeds are used. Darren Williams, Longfloor General Manager said: "We are very excited to announce an industry first at this year's Concrete Show. The future is grey!" Please come along and see us on stand 60 to find out more about this game-changer for the industry.

01629 540 284 www.longfloor.co.uk

Keller Kitchens partners with BKNC



Keller Kitchens, the leading Dutch kitchen manufacturer, and part of the DKG Group, has announced a strategic alliance with North West-based BKNC, a leading kitchen specialist in supplying and installing contract kitchens. Tim Spann, Keller Kitchens' UK Sales Manager, explains: "This initiative is a big win for our brand and I am proud to make this announcement having reached this positive and encouraging agree-

ment with a major player in the field. BKNC has been a leading supplier of high quality brands to the UK contract sector for over 29 years and delivers service excellence to national and regional developers throughout the UK; and Keller is now a key element of the company's offering."

www.kellerkitchens.com

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For more information please contact the Project Team on 07734 971 082 or visit franke.co.uk



A SOUND SOLUTION- ADDRESSING ACOUSTICS IN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS



New Geberit research shows that more than half of us are affected by unwanted noise in the home, and it's having a direct impact on wellbeing. In its new white paper (A Sound Solution) Geberit is calling for a radical rethink of UK regulations around acoustics in the home.

NOISIER THAN EVER?

Geberit surveyed more than 2,000 adults across the UK to gain insight on the impact of 'everyday' noises in and around the home.

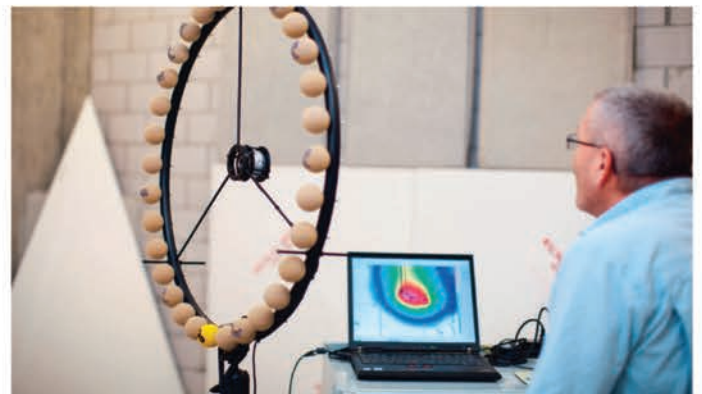
More than a third of respondents (38%) indicated that noises inside the home currently affect them more than traffic from outside. And more than half (51%) cited that these noises negatively impact their wellbeing.

The issue affects landlords too. 35% of those surveyed who live in rented accommodation said that the issue of noise in their home would affect whether they renew their current lease.

REGULATING THE ISSUE

Recent research shows a quarter of us (28%) are regularly disturbed by bathroom sounds at night or when relaxing. Despite bathroom elements having direct contact with walls and floors, there remains a lack of clear regulations governing the control of waste water noise inside new buildings.

It's waste water in particular that is an issue. Geberit's research found that one in five (19%) of us are regularly disturbed by flushing toilets, running taps or pipe and drains. UK regulations offer little clarification on the products available to achieve specific sound pressure.



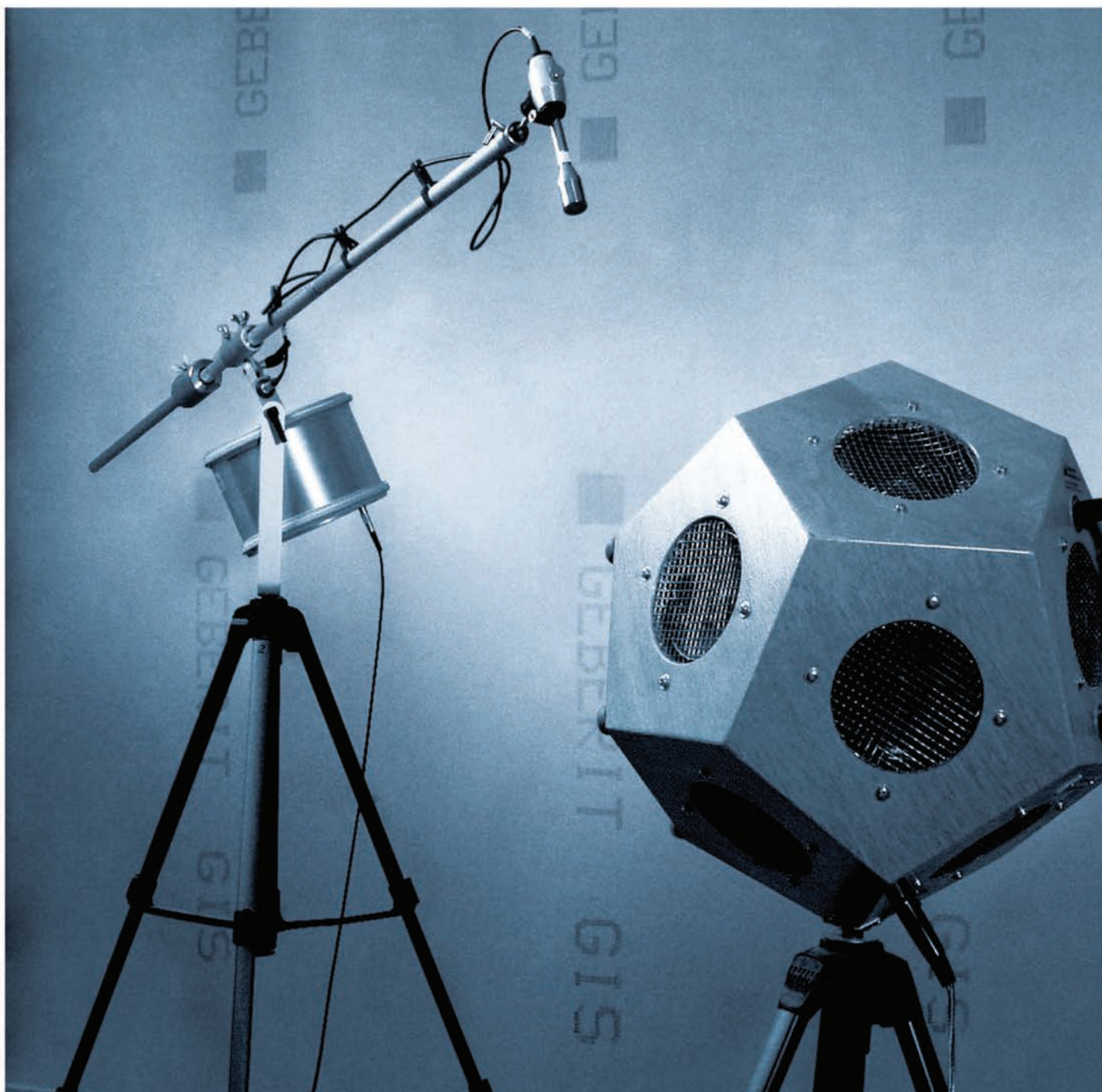
ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE

While developers can use their expertise to make decisions to reduce waste water noise - and subsequently increase wellbeing - without UK standards there is no baseline requirement. Similarly, there is no defined approach to testing so no incentive for a collaborative approach for suppliers working on a single project.

In contrast, Germany's acoustic standard sets maximum limits for acoustics inside a building. While some leading manufacturers here in the UK will ensure all products adhere to these standards, there nevertheless remains no baseline figure for the sound pressure of water and drainage passing through pipe system in UK guidelines.

DESIGN
MEETS
FUNCTION

Download our white paper at
geberit.co.uk/acoustics



RAISING STANDARDS

We are all aware that buildings need to consider acoustics but without recognised standards to work to, it's a challenge for developers to specify a well-informed, collaboratively-tested solution across an entire building.

It's time for the UK to revisit standards as well as outline maximum sound pressure figures and fair testing – thus enabling developers and specifiers to work together to achieve better results for our end-users.

Shhh...

Reginox's new range of super-quiet waste disposal units is out now.

Better than ever, all models in the range are not only quieter, they also have a more powerful motor and feature an antibacterial coating, a removable splash guard for easy cleaning and a quick fit mechanism.

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Double the brochures to support product expansion from RAK Ceramics

Due to significant growth in its product ranges for 2020, particularly in sanitaryware, **RAK Ceramics** has launched not one but two product brochures. Bathrooms and surfaces are now showcased in their own dedicated brochures, which are now available to order from the manufacturer or from the download area at www.rakceramics.com/uk. The Bathroom Book runs to 448 pages, with inspiring photography and full specification details of each product to make the brochure a handy reference guide for retailers. Navigation through the wide array of products is made simple, with each area of the bathroom divided into categories. RAK Ceramics has the whole bathroom covered, with sanitaryware, baths, showering, brassware and accessories all included. The manufacturer's work with leading product designers is also highlighted, with sections detailing its designer collections. Details of the company's latest technology are also included. The Surfaces Book is another important tool for retailers, enabling each wall and floor tile in the RAK Ceramics collection to be found and ordered with ease. The brochure details the manufacturer's extensive selection of XXL format tiles in sizes 60 x 120cm and above, spanning 17 collections of marble, cement and metal available for delivery to site on a dedicated RAK Ceramics vehicle.

01730 237850 www.rakceramics.com/uk



Gilberts rise to smoke evacuation challenges

The "best yet" is how **Gilberts Blackpool** is describing its latest range of smoke evacuation dampers for multi-storey buildings. The UK's market leader in the sector, Gilberts is taking its reputation to new heights with its new Series 60 smoke evacuation damper range. Believed to be the only vent of its kind designed and manufactured in the UK, Series 60 offers what Gilberts claims will be the biggest standard range of EN12101-8 compliant fire-tested dampers. The initial launch will soon be available and will provide seven sizes, from 440mm x 440mm up to 1000mm x 1125mm, and all CE marked to EN12101-8; further sizes in just 1mm increments will follow. Series 60 combines a low leakage rate and high free area when open to deliver high smoke evacuation rates. Activation (by powered motor) is triggered to open the damper on the fire floor for smoke evacuation, whilst all other dampers failsafe close to protect the rest of the building. The damper has been tested and will provide 120 minutes' fire integrity. Manufactured from galvanised steel with intumescent material and gaskets within, Series 60 has passed all relevant smoke and fire tests (EN12101-8 and EN1366-10), retaining its integrity and performance when incorporated into evacuation shafts and risers.

01253 766911 info@gilbertsblackpool.com

New LiteWork stretch trousers



Snickers Workwear's hi-tech fabrics and body-mapping designs give plenty of scope for every professional craftsman and woman to stretch their performance on site comfortably. Designed for a wide variety of jobs on site, these LiteWork 4-way stretch work trousers are the ideal choice if you're working hard in warmer weather. For maximum flexibility in getting work done, these new

Trousers feature detachable holster pockets while the trousers themselves are made from full-stretch material for maximum mobility wherever you're working while the Cordura®-reinforced Kneeguard™ pockets offer additional comfort and protection. For maximum functionality there's also ruler, and cargo pockets for easy access to tools and fixings.

www.snickersworkwear.co.uk



Concealment enhances tenant safety

British designed and manufactured, Powermatic controlled, concealed door closers from **Samuel Heath** are gaining increasing popularity for use on fire doors in high-rise flats, apartments and HMOs. The door closers carry the CE mark and have been independently tested and proved to meet the requirements for FD60 and FD30 fire doors under BS EN 1634-1. Totally concealed when the door is closed, Powermatic door closers are less susceptible to damage from vandalism or tampering. This gives them a significant advantage over surface mounted door closers when it comes to reliability of the fire door and maintenance costs, making them the right choice for both tenants and social landlords. Unlike other jamb-mounted devices, Powermatic door closers facilitate a door's compliance with the accessibility requirements of Approved Document M, are the only Certifire jamb-mounted door closer and do not have to be removed from the door to be adjusted.

0121 766 4200 www.concealeddoorclosers.com

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FUTURE FIRE COMPLIANCE

Nick Rutter of FireAngel explains how to achieve 'constant compliance' in fire safety, exploring some of the intelligent solutions that can adapt to future needs.

Following the Hackitt Review, many developers are looking to adopt its principles to ensure the long-term efficiency of their properties with regard to fire safety. While specifying smoke and heat alarms that quickly and adequately respond to all types of fires is essential, developers can go above and beyond legal requirements by choosing innovative solutions that react in real time to potential or actual fire events.

While ionisation sensing technology was traditionally a popular choice due to its low price point and outstanding ability to detect fast-flaming fires, the concerns regarding its potential radioactivity and sensitivity quickly began to outweigh its benefits.

To ensure the quickest response times are ensured for all types of fires and maintain compliance with latest standards and regulations including British Standard 5839-6, developers should look to specify multi-sensing or optical alarms throughout the circulation areas of their properties, including landings and hallways. This will provide a basis for ensuring all minimum requirements with regard to fire safety are met.

However, there are a wide range of technologies currently available to aid professionals in taking compliance one step further, supporting them in adopting a proactive approach to the long-term safety and suitability of their properties.

Following the Government's confirmation of the introduction of the Future Homes Standard in 2025, housebuilders and developers are also under increasing pressure to improve the sustainability of the construction process, while also ensuring the long term efficiency of the home for potential owners. While fire protection systems may not initially appear an effective place for this, the latest advancements in technology have led to the creation of mains-powered smoke alarms that have proven low-carbon footprints.

Typically, a smoke alarm spends 99.9 per cent of its time in standby, dissipating the unused energy through heat – which is extremely inefficient. Once the alarm is activated, a significant increase in power is utilised, which is commonly provided by 'dropping' the voltage from the mains power supply.

SMART & FLEXIBLE SYSTEMS

Latest developments have led to the creation of mains-powered ranges that are Smart RF compatible, and feature an intelligent 'step down' circuit that monitors the active state of the alarm to adequately manage the power available. This ensures the alarm uses just 10 per cent of the energy when compared to the average AC alarm, significantly improving the long-term efficiency of the alarm throughout an often 10-year lifespan.

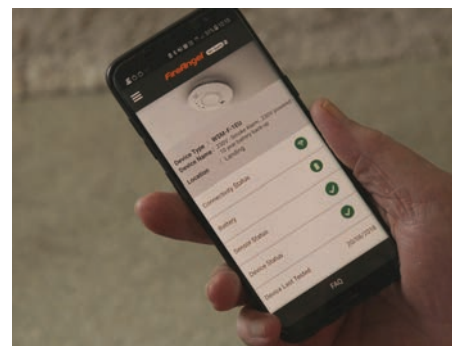
With such ranges being Smart RF compatible, they also provide professionals with the adaptability to futureproof their properties to meet the specific needs of future residents. Offering the benefits of sensing technology to adequately respond to all fire types, they support developers in adopting a mixed system that interlinks hardwired and wireless mains and battery powered alarms.

A mixed system (also known as a hybrid system) not only provides the opportunity to adopt both 230 V mains AC 50Hz and DC battery alarms, but you can also include Smart RF ready alarms, providing enhanced flexibility as additional smoke, heat, CO and specialised products, such as alarm control units, strobe and pads and low frequency sounders can easily be wirelessly added or removed.

This enables professionals to achieve a higher standard of fire protection throughout an entire property, where previously a hardwire interlink may not have been possible.

With all their alarms being Smart RF compatible, developers have the flexibility to upgrade the system by installing a Smart RF radio module into the alarm. This provides wireless interlinking of up to 50 alarms within one network, providing homeowners, along with their family and friends, the opportunity to also access vital information including current status, alarm history, replacement dates and network health through the activation of a cloud-based 'gateway'.

Some products even utilise a gateway which uses a unique algorithm to identify and highlight dangerous patterns of behaviour with regard to fire safety, bridging the gap in communication by instantly notifying necessary individuals in the event of an alarm activation. For example, high risk or



vulnerable individuals, such as those living with dementia, who may leave the hob on after cooking a meal, can be remotely overseen by family members as the gateway sends updates in real-time regarding the status of the smoke, heat and CO alarms installed throughout the property.

SMART & FLEXIBLE SYSTEMS

By adopting a proactive approach to the passive fire protection systems installed throughout their developments, housebuilders can create connected homes that efficiently provide the highest standards in fire and CO safety, well above the current legal requirements. This also provides homeowners with the opportunity to easily adapt or upgrade the fire protection within their home, to adequately meet the needs of themselves or their family members in the future as individual requirements change over time.

Nick Rutter is chief product officer at FireAngel

Leadax sets the example for making the circular economy work for cities

Global circular economy leader and CEO of Leadax, Roeland van Delden presented his closed-loop strategy that is already impacting cities worldwide, during the Futurebuild exhibition in London. Sustainable companies like Leadax, are developing circular products that use waste as a raw material to create and produce recyclable and sustainable waterproofing building materials.

Features such as cost price, quality, capital and scalability are important to change the way our economy works, however as Mr van Delden described in his presentation, it is all about mindset and being creative. "Just do it" was the main advice he gave. His idea of modifying PVB-waste to reuse for circular building materials like Leadax was a bold move, but it works extremely well. PVB is the foil that is used in laminated glass (e.g car windows or safety glass). Large amounts of polyvinyl butyral (PVB) waste are being buried every year, up to 1,500,000,000 kilos each year in Europe alone and Leadax is using this waste to create their sustainable building materials.

DESIGNED FOR REUSE

Current products for waterproofing buildings



aren't sustainable, have a large carbon footprint and are (often) toxic. To be aligned with the UN sustainability goals to create a sustainable environment there had to be a solution. Part of this solution is not only using waste as a raw material, but 'closing the loop,' which is why all Leadax products have been designed with reuse in mind.

THE NEW LEAD

The first innovative product from Leadax is an alternative solution for the toxic and often

stolen heavy metal lead which is still being used in construction as a flashing material. This Leadax product is already being sold in 15 countries globally and contributes to the environmental well-being of our society. Daniel Marshall, Sales Director of Cromar Building Products commented: "We are proud to be part of this exciting journey to contribute to a more sustainable and safer building environment as the exclusive distributor for the UK."

MAKING AN IMPACT

Large scale reduction of CO₂, increasing autonomy of resources and technology, decreasing large amounts of waste, creating new jobs in the cleantech and developing sustainable solutions for toxic materials like lead, are all achievable. Working together at a multi-level cooperation of international stakeholders with the right mentality can make a real impact.

Mr van Delden concluded that he is excited about Leadax vision for the future and the role it will play in developing a global circular economy.

www.leadax.co.uk www.cromar.uk.com



Don't let Rusty ruin your render!

Building regulations outlined by NHBC and LABC only advocate the use of austenitic stainless steel or PVCu beads in all external rendering applications, anywhere in the UK. Galvanised steel beads are no longer approved for external rendering in any situation. **Simpson Strong-Tie Sales** Director Jon Head explains: "Although it's generally known for its corrosion-resistant properties, galvanised steel can react with the chemical components in render, which will lead to quality issues, from unsightly rust stains, to the degradation of the bead and possible cracking in the render. Simply put, galvanised steel in external rendering may rust and can be costly to put right. But the good news is it's easily avoided. Stainless steel beads are specifically designed for cement based renders, and our range of stainless steel angle beads, bellcast beads, stop beads and movement beads, and the PVCu plastic alternative has been engineered to provide reinforcement and resist impact damage. Our range of beads makes bellcasts, corners, stops and abutments all easier to form, and they can be cut to size as required." Download the Simpson Strong-Tie 2020 catalogue... and make sure you stay away from Rusty!

01827 255 600 www.strongtie.co.uk

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Based in the North West of England, Anywl Homes, with their roots in joinery and woodwork, have been building houses in the UK for over 80 years. This well established record has allowed Anywl Homes to cultivate an expert knowledge of the best products to use in the creation of new homes.

It's no surprise to learn that in a recent development in the busy market town of Wellington, Shropshire, Anywl Homes opted to use **Norbord's** ever popular CaberDek for the flooring. CaberDek is an 18mm or 22mm thickness flooring panel that provides protection from weather conditions and dirt. It has a film layer which can later be removed to reveal a smooth and clean surface, ready and primed for the next stage in flooring application.

www.norbord.co.uk

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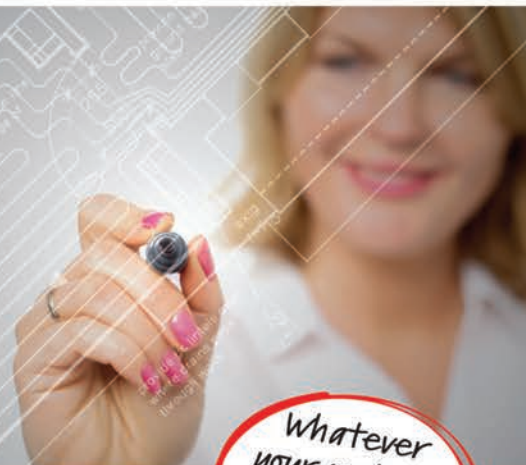
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