



Marco Abdallah of Drees & Sommer on what a 'circular economy' could look like for housebuilding



The FMB's Brian Berry explains the importance of diversification in UK housing



Patrick Mooney ponders whether the Housing Secretary will succeed where others have failed

11.20

# HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER



## ON THE WATERFRONT

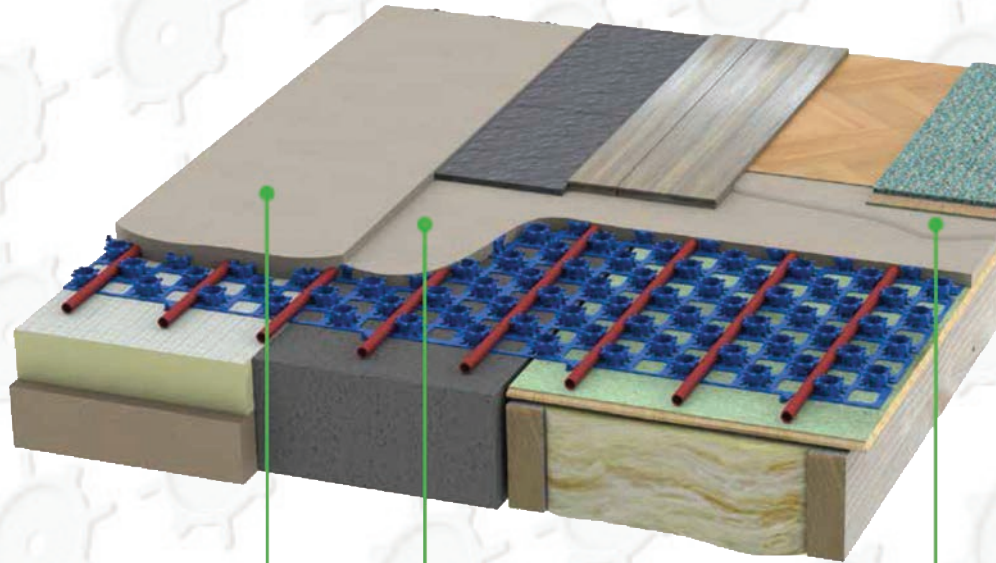
Labelled one of Europe's "most exciting placemaking projects," Barking Riverside is set to bring over 10,000 homes to the capital. Jack Wooler reports





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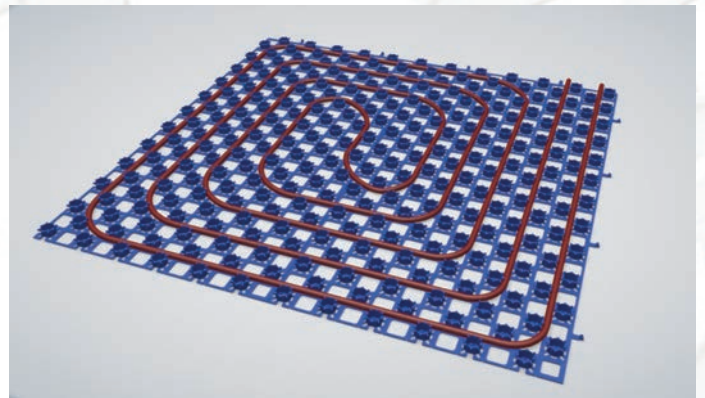
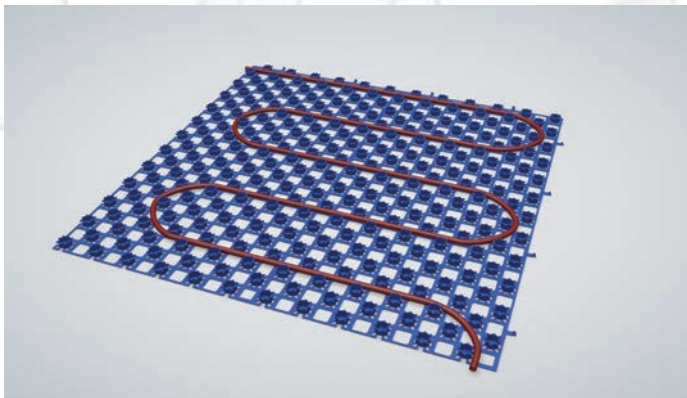
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James Parker

# FROM THE EDITOR

First and foremost, on behalf of the team at netMAGmedia, I would like to say that it's very satisfying to be able to bring you not only a print edition after a short Covid-related hiatus, but what is our largest ever issue of Housebuilder & Developer.

The magazine's deputy editor Jack Wooler has been working hard to produce great content for the title in recent months since the pandemic forced a pause in operations, and has been a consistent figure in the market in terms of engaging with developers in order to find interesting new case studies and features to report on. Contact Jack with any ideas for content at [jwooler@netmagmedia.co.uk](mailto:jwooler@netmagmedia.co.uk)

The 'return of the lockdown' has plunged the UK back into limbo, although construction mercifully remains exempt from the full force of work suspension regulations. The problem is, as so often, those regulations are slightly hard to fathom.

It's clear that construction staff cannot "work effectively from home," therefore they should continue travelling to sites to maintain operations. However the guidance (which doesn't appear to be backed by legislation), says this is 'not limited' to construction (and critical infrastructure or manufacturing), so there could be considerable wriggle room here for employers in fields outside of, but related to, construction to insist that their staff must come into work.

The bottom line is that Covid still appears to be affecting some areas of the country in a highly disproportionate way, with hospital admissions in the north and the Midlands remaining much higher than those across the south.

The good news is that construction's exemption is a sign the government for once at least recognises its crucial importance to the economy, not always something you feel is given the maximum weight by Ministers.

Enabling construction to continue also has a lot to do with the fact that the housebuilding industry's efforts to climb towards 300,000 homes a year has been severely knocked by this virus. It needs all the help it can get now to get back on track. The freeing up of permitted development in town centres is one major weapon in the fight.

Currently, building on the right land for the right customers is one of the big challenges facing developers, but nonetheless a 222-bed brownfield scheme for elderly residents in leafy suburb Walton-on-Thames has just been rejected on the grounds that it was "turning into a town for old people." This seems to be ageism gone mad, given that avoiding building on greenfield sites, and tackling such derelict urban sites is the way forward on a host of criteria, not least sustainability.

Especially given the pandemic's impact on their demographic, if such brutal as well as inflexible decision-making persists and becomes widespread, there's little chance of the housing sector tackling the UK's demographic timebomb.

*James Parker*

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## ON THE COVER



### ON THE WATERFRONT

Labelled one of Europe's 'most exciting placemaking projects', Barking Riverside is set to bring over 10,000 homes to the capital. Jack Wooler reports

Barking Riverside, London – go to page 22



# Brownfield can support 1.3 million homes

There is enough brownfield land for 1.3 million new homes, and over half a million already have planning permission, according to a new report from CPRE.

The figures demonstrate that there is already enough available and suitable land in the planning system to meet the Government's ambition to build 300,000 homes per year for the remainder of this Parliament (five years). According to the CPRE this calls into question the controversial plans to deregulate the planning system that have been proposed by Ministers.

Brownfield land – (land that has previously been built on, but now sits derelict or vacant) – “provides a valuable resource in the protection of greenfield land from development,” said CPRE. The State of Brownfield report 2020 is the latest in a series of CPRE reports on the brownfield register, which catalogue the number of brownfield sites available for development.

The analysis argues that the planning system is not slowing building rates. There is currently planning permission for over half a million (565,564) units on brownfield land. In February 2020, the Local Government Association found that over one million homes had been granted planning permission but were not yet built. This means that brownfield sites and other unbuilt sites with planning permission could provide over 1.5 million new homes – demonstrating there is already enough suitable land in the planning system to meet the Government's 300,000 target for the rest of this Parliament.

Many areas across England with high housing need also have a large amount of brownfield land ready for

redevelopment. London, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield have identified land available for regeneration that would provide nearly half a million homes (458,587).

In order to make best use of suitable brownfield land, CPRE is urging the Government to introduce a genuine ‘brownfield first’ policy, which ensures that suitable previously developed or under-used land is prioritised for redevelopment over green spaces and countryside.

Commenting on the figures, Crispin Truman, chief executive of CPRE, said the figures “clearly show that the planning system is not what is ailing our housing market.”

Truman continues: “If there is enough land in the planning system to meet the Government's own housing targets, what will an overhaul of the planning system, with rushed and untested changes, really achieve? It's clear the Government have gravely misdiagnosed the problem – slow build out rates and market led housing are blocking the quality affordable housing that rural communities are crying out for.”

## RTPI looks at strengths and weakness of zonal planning

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) has published a report which sets out the strengths and weaknesses of zonal planning systems.

Planning Through Zoning provides an insight into the use of zonal planning in a number of different nations such as the

Netherlands, Germany and the US, and examines the potential impact a similar system might have in England.

It comes following the publication of Planning for the Future, a Government White Paper which proposes three broad land classifications – sometimes known as zones – in a new local plan, differentiating areas for growth, renewal and protection.

The report aims to improve general understanding of different types of zonal planning systems and how England could use zonal planning based on these practices. It looks at England's current discretionary planning system and compares it to more regulatory zoning approaches in other countries, exploring the pros and cons of each.

Chief executive of the RTPI, Victoria Hills, said: “Zonal planning is not a homogenous idea and exists in many different ways in different countries, including in countries where zonal planning is implemented in a hybrid system.

“The move to a less discretionary planning system is a controversial and radical move for England. It is essential that such moves are backed by a strong evidence base and open to wide debate. Our report provides a useful contribution to that.”

In a letter to the Times in June, chief executive of the RTPI, Victoria Hills, referred to local planning zones as ‘blunt instruments’.

Following publication of the White Paper, she referred to the proposed new system as ‘rather simplistic’ and called for further detail on how it would enable the upfront delivery of critical infrastructure and increase design quality, especially when coupled with the expansion of Permitted Development Rights and changes to the Use Class Order.

The Institute is currently consulting its members on the Planning White Paper and will be making its formal response at the end of October. The RTPI has also produced a one-page ‘explainer’ on zoning.



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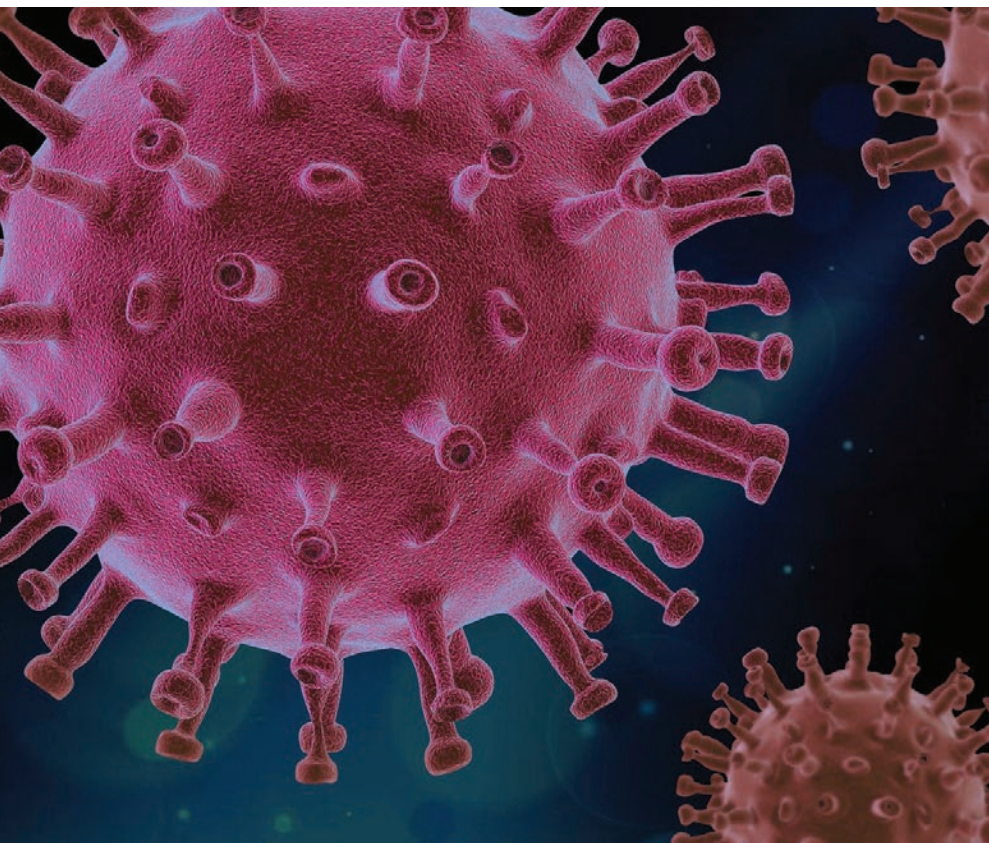
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## Covid-19 threatening SME housebuilders' growth

65 per cent of housebuilders have said their business growth projections are down as a result of Covid-19, with 39 per cent reporting their growth to be down by 10-50 per cent.

In a survey of SME housebuilders conducted by the Home Builders Federation (HBF) and Close Brothers Property Finance, planning delays and securing permission were found to be a major barrier to housing delivery over the next 12 months, according to 83 per cent of respondents.

According to the HBF, however, Help to Buy has been a "lifeline" to this part of the market, with figures showing that 76 per cent of the survey respondents use the initiative on 39 per cent of their new homes sales (mean average).

In terms of financial support during the pandemic, SME developers were shown in the report to have seen varying degrees of success in accessing the Government's measures, with some facing numerous challenges including delays, inconsistent approaches from lenders, and a refusal by some to lend to the real estate sector. Just over half of the respondents (53 per cent) have reportedly tried to access support through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans Scheme and of these,

only 44 per cent of respondents had been successful.

Despite this, the HBF found it "encouraging" that development finance was rated as the lowest barrier to growth by SME housebuilders, with 41 per cent not considering it to be a barrier.

Lastly, a third of respondents reported that they employed apprentices and were training new employees, and that they make up 19 per cent of their workforce, on average (just under one in five employees). Nearly half (48 per cent) of all respondents do not employ apprentices or train new employees, however, with 19 per cent only previously employing apprentices.

Stewart Baseley, executive chairman at HBF commented: "As we look to boost housing supply post the coronavirus lockdown, it is vital we support SME builders such that they can play their part. Increased bureaucracy and regulation and a harsh operating environment has seen the number of SME builders plummet in recent decades.

"Government needs to work with industry to develop policies that allow SMEs to grow. Doing so will increase housing supply, create jobs and stimulate economies across the country."

## PM promises 'Generation Buy' with 95pc mortgages

Last month PM Boris Johnson promised a new scheme to create two million more owner-occupiers, by launching 95 per cent mortgages for first time buyers.

Much like the Help to Buy scheme, Johnson has stated that first time buyers will be able to purchase homes with a deposit of 5 per cent.

He said that the Government wants to "transform Generation Rent into Generation Buy," and will announce a number of initiatives that it hopes will give young people "the help they need to get a foot on the property ladder, while also boosting the housebuilding sector."

Johnson confirmed plans to introduce long-term, fixed-rate mortgages worth up to 95 per cent of the value of a home for first time buyers. He claimed the move could deliver the biggest expansion of home ownership since the Thatcher era.

The PM commented it was "disgraceful" that levels of home ownership among under-40s had plummeted over recent years, forcing millions of people to "pay through the nose to rent a home, which they can't truly love or make their own."

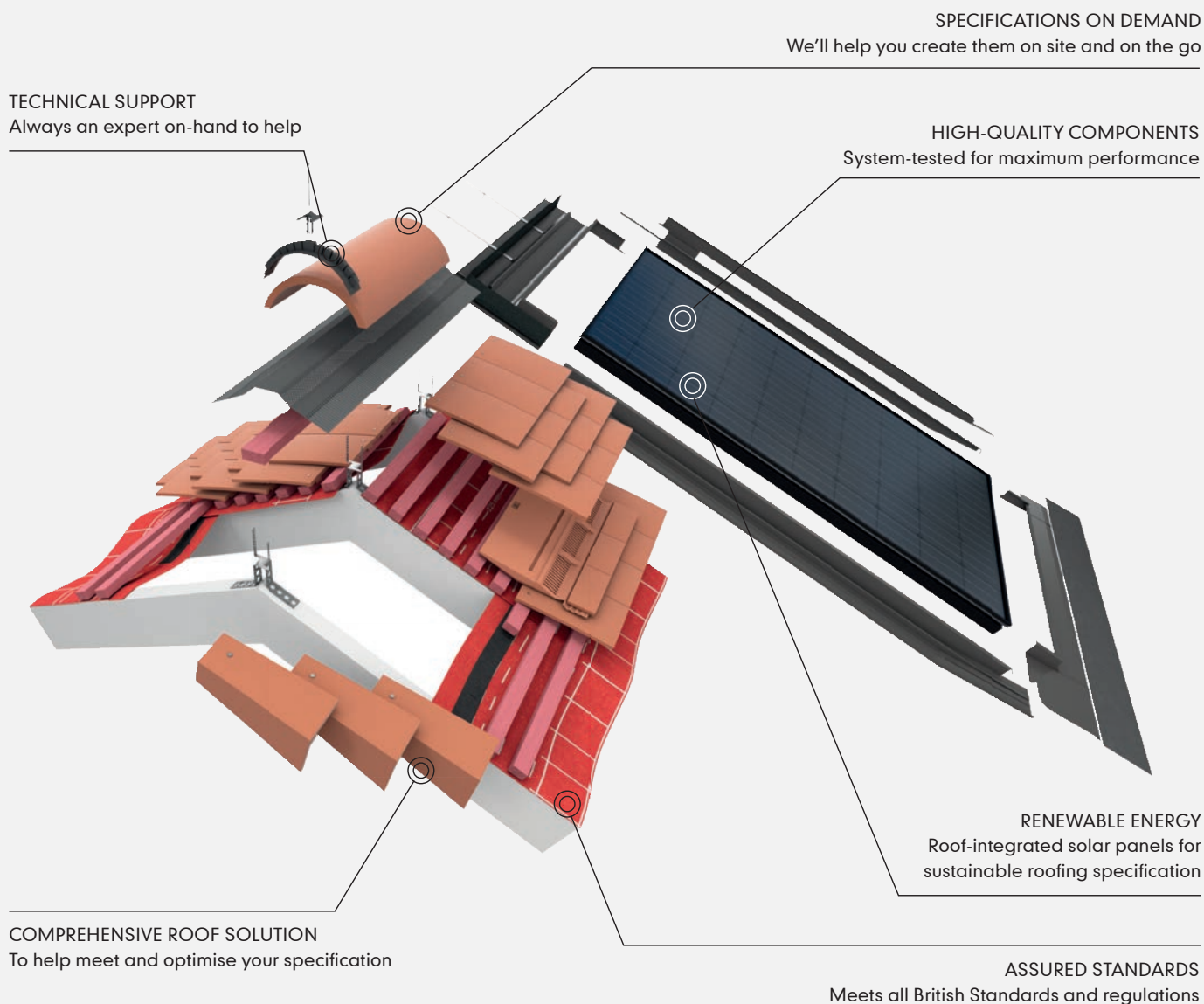
In addition, the First Homes initiative being consulted upon currently is set to add to the portfolio of housing opportunities available to first-time buyers. It is intended to provide an "important stepping-stone to full owner occupation – provided they are seen as part of the overall affordable requirement."







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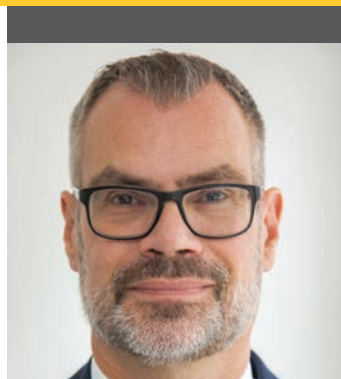
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Brian Berry, chief executive of the Federation of Master Builders

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SUPPORT THE  
GROWTH OF  
ALTERNATIVE  
METHODS OF  
DELIVERING  
HOUSES

## THE INDUSTRY ADVOCATE

# JOINING THE FIGHT FOR INCREASED DIVERSITY

Brian Berry explores how a different kind of diversity – housing diversification – is vital to meeting housing targets, and why the FMB has co-founded a new action group.

**T**he Government cannot meet its ambition of building 300,000 new homes a year without reversing the decline in small to medium-sized (SME) housebuilders.

In the 1980s, SMEs built 40 per cent of new homes, but now that figure sits at around 12 per cent. Supporting SMEs has never been more important, as we know that local builders employ and train local people and contribute to economic growth in every community. Indeed, the coronavirus has shone a light on this country's need for more spacious, good quality and affordable homes.

SME housebuilders create jobs, typically build higher quality homes, and to high standards of design, beauty, and sustainability. Research from the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) shows that consumers are twice as likely to be 'very satisfied' with the quality of their new build home if it was built by an SME compared to a PLC developer. Now is the time to support the rise of the SME housebuilder.

### HOUSING DIVERSIFICATION

To this end, I am pleased that the FMB has joined forces with the UK Cohousing Network, National Community Land Trust (CLT) Network, and National Custom and Self-Build Association (NaCSBA) to establish the Housing Diversification action group.

We are calling on the Housing Secretary to support the growth of alternative methods of delivering houses, and to do more to reverse the decline in SMEs. By facilitating the delivery of a much wider range of routes to housing development, we can unlock many more homes that our communities desperately need.

Housing Diversification is calling on the Housing Secretary to take the first step and establish a high-level Housing Diversification Task Force which will consider policies in support of SMEs, and community and custom building. We come armed with plenty of ideas

in this space, one of the important ones being for the Government to commit to a five-year renewal of the Community Housing Fund as part of the next Spending Review. To measure our progress, we also need a robust and statutory system of reporting on diversification as part of government housing statistics. Without publicly available data on, for example, the number of homes built on small sites, we cannot understand the success of government policy to support SMEs.

### PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

This campaign comes at an important moment of debate with regards to the future of our planning system. The Government is planning radical reforms to the system, but these have received mixed reviews.

I personally believe that the premise of the reforms, which aim to bring greater certainty for small housebuilders navigating the planning system, are positive. This is because the FMB's annual House Builders' Survey found that 'the planning system' was the biggest constraint on SMEs' output in 2020, with 48 per cent of small builders saying so. Efforts to simplify and streamline the process are therefore welcome.

However, in efforts to speed up housebuilding, I caution the Government against facilitating the creation of 'identikit' homes. It is important that SMEs can continue to build the homes that communities want and need. That means maintaining a certain degree of freedom in the design and style of home that builders can bring forward. Beauty is subjective and design codes should not be too prescriptive nor prohibitive.

Any reform to the planning system should ensure that SMEs are supported to thrive, and that we unlock new homes in each community across the country. Without focusing on this outcome, we cannot meet the Government's target of building 300,000 new homes a year.



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Patrick Mooney, editor of  
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THE SCALE  
OF THE  
PROBLEM  
WHICH THE  
REFORMS  
ARE TRYING  
TO RESOLVE  
IS APPARENT  
IN THE MOST  
RECENT NEW  
HOUSING  
FIGURES

## THE SOCIAL NETWORK

# WILL JENRICK'S REFORMS SUCCEED WHERE OTHERS HAVE FAILED?

HMM news editor and housing consultant Patrick Mooney bemoans the recent 'revolving door' of Housing Ministers, and speculates on Robert Jenrick's chances of success.

Every Housing Secretary or Minister that I can remember promises two things – to overhaul the planning system and to get Britain building more homes – and yet each new policy initiative largely fails to deliver the houses and flats we badly need, so will Robert Jenrick be any more successful than his predecessors? The latest figures on housebuilding starts and completions are not a good portent, in fact they are pretty poor. The impact of the lockdown and Covid restrictions has had a predictably negative impact on the construction sector, which it will take some time to recover from. But the figures give the Housing Secretary plenty of food for thought, and it will be interesting to see how he reacts.

Back in August he unveiled his landmark planning reforms, which will see land across England divided into three categories – for growth, renewal or protection. There will be a presumption towards development, rather than against, with a simpler system of developer contributions through an Infrastructure Levy replacing Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy. Jenrick described them as “once in a generation” changes to sweep away an outdated planning system and boost building. Planning applications based on pre-approved “design codes” will get an automatic green light – eliminating a whole stage of local authority oversight within designated zones. But some practitioners were less effusive, labelling the new planning policies as undemocratic, disruptive and rushed, with Alan Jones, the president of RIBA, describing them as creating “the next generation of slum housing.”

Most people will probably measure the success of the planned changes in terms of whether they deliver the big numbers of houses and flats, in places where they are

needed and of a good standard, principally in terms of their quality and size. They also need to be supported by the right levels of infrastructure in terms of roads, schools, leisure facilities and GP surgeries.

### HUGE FALL IN STARTS AND COMPLETIONS

The scale of the problem which the reforms are trying to resolve is apparent in the most recent new housing figures released by Mr Jenrick's department. These show the number of new homes completed in the April to June quarter was just 15,950, which represents a sizable drop of 62 per cent compared to the January to March period, which itself was down five per cent on the previous quarter at the end of 2019. Completions are now 67 per cent below their peak in the March quarter 2007 and 37 per cent below their previous low point in March quarter 2013.

In fact the most recent quarter's figures are the lowest recorded number of completions





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since the current reporting system was introduced in the year 2000. Altogether an estimated 147,180 new build dwellings were completed in the year to June 2020, a decrease of 15 per cent compared to the year to June 2019. This level is roughly half of the ambitious target of 300,000 new homes a year which Mr Jenrick has set for himself and the housing sector.

There isn't any good news on the horizon either, as the number of homes where building work started on site was just 15,930 in April to June. This was a fall of 52 per cent on the January to March figures. There were 121,630 estimated new build dwellings starts in the year to June 2020, a 26 per cent decrease compared to the year to June 2019. The National Housing Federation added to the gloomy picture, reporting that the total number of people in need of a social home (provided by a HA or council) has reached 3.8 million. This equates to 1.6 million households – 500,000 more than the 1.16 million households recorded on official waiting lists. But we should also remember that there are existing planning permissions currently in place for roughly one million new homes yet to be built across the country.

#### THE MINISTER'S RESPONSE

The Government has introduced a number of stimulus measures to ramp up demand through a market led recovery, such as the stamp duty reduction, but in many respects this is being offset by a decline in the number of first time buyers coming to the market – no doubt put off by changes in the availability and terms of mortgages. The Housing Secretary has largely shied away from putting pressure

on developers to speed up their build out rates, either through penalties or incentives, although he will no doubt argue that his reforms package will encourage housebuilders of all sizes to 'crack on'.

The last time a Conservative government tried to break the house planning and delivery mould, was when Permitted Development rights were changed in 2013. This removed local authority control over office-to-flat conversions, unless there were demonstrable concerns about issues such as flooding or land contamination. The changes meant local authorities and local residents could not oppose or alter developer's proposals. They also had no power to insist on adequate room sizes or daylight or influence the look of a building.

Officials at Jenrick's MHCLG department say that allowing developers to bypass the traditional system of obtaining planning permission to convert offices into flats has created more than 60,000 badly needed new homes in the past four years. However, in many instances the office conversions attracted huge controversy, particularly in places like Harlow, in Essex, which has seen over a dozen such schemes pop up across the district. Many of the buildings are characterised as ugly blocks of small and poorly insulated flats for low-income households, often situated on industrial estates or business parks, with no access to community facilities.

Mr Jenrick and his advisers have clearly heard the criticisms, as the Housing Secretary announced at the end of September that all new homes delivered through Permitted Development Rights in future will have to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards, including on adequate natural light. The space standard begins at 37 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace for a new one bed flat with a shower room (39 m<sup>2</sup> with a bathroom), ensuring proper living space for a single occupier. Time will tell how successful these changes are, although Mr Jenrick appears to be in no doubt, saying: "These changes will help transform boarded-up, unused buildings safely into high-quality homes at the heart of their communities."

Another potential source of many new homes in the near future is likely to be the modular housing sector. Two leading lights of the sector have recently co-authored a report 'Build Homes Build Jobs Build Innovation,' calling on the Government to set a target of 75,000 modular homes per year by the year 2030. Mark Farmer, the Government's modern methods of construction champion, and Mike De'Ath, partner at HTA Design, say that such a programme would create 50,000 new jobs and help the Government meet its target of achiev-

ing net zero carbon emissions by 2050, as research suggests modular construction can reduce carbon emissions by up to 40 per cent compared to traditional methods.

#### A WARNING FROM COUNCILS AND THE SHIRES

But the Local Government Association which represents councils across England is warning the Government they risk seriously disrupting existing plans, which in turn could undermine efforts to level-up the country and lead to another housing boom in London and the south, while swathes of the north will see fewer homes built. They also claim it will disproportionately impact rural rather than urban areas. Some of the most rural places in England will see a requirement for a 59 per cent increase in homes to be built, compared to a 20 per cent increase in major urban areas.

Northern cities stand to see significantly fewer homes built with the new requirement seeing a 66 per cent decrease on those built in recent years in Newcastle, 59 per cent in Liverpool, 20 per cent in Sheffield and 16 per cent in Leeds. The LGA is urging the Government to think again about where the new housing is needed and should be built. "This seriously jeopardises any ambition to level-up the country. Building new good quality and affordable housing is vital to regenerating our towns and cities, improving our health and wellbeing, creating jobs and enabling local economies to thrive and bounce back following the coronavirus pandemic."

And campaigning group Shelter said social housing "could face extinction" if the requirement for developers to build their fair share of affordable rented homes was removed. "Section 106 agreements between developers and councils are tragically one of the only ways we get social homes built these days, due to a lack of direct Government investment," said its chief executive, Polly Neate. "So, it makes no sense to remove this route to genuinely affordable homes without a guaranteed alternative."

Clearly we are at something of a tipping point but Robert Jenrick appears emboldened to proceed with his planning reforms. It will be interesting to see if his backbench colleagues join forces with the local government sector in persuading him to take a second look at how local housing targets are being affected and what role councils will have in shaping the future housing plans for their areas. Surely the target for all concerned should be in creating more balanced and successful housing markets than we currently have.



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## THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE

# Cradle to cradle – squaring the circle

Marco Abdallah of Drees & Sommer tells Housebuilder & Developer's deputy editor Jack Wooler what a 'circular economy' could look like, and what concrete steps the construction industry can take to achieve this ideal.

**'C**ircular economy' is a buzz phrase that has become the aim of many in the UK construction industry, and across the world. That aim is to ensure that all resources used can serve as starting materials for new, pollutant-free products once their service life is over.

Such a system would allow materials to circulate continuously in product cycles – instead of 'downcycling,' the aim is to enable 'upcycling' of products, drastically minimising waste as a result.

Marco Abdallah, head of engineering UK at international planning consultancy Drees & Sommer, believes that this concept of a circular economy "is more than just a material science."

"It is the basis for a fully integrated sustainability concept for building," he says, "covering all aspects including materials, water, air quality, health, energy, carbon and more."

## WHERE WE'RE AT

Housebuilding as it stands today falls woefully short of this ideal. A large amount of building waste cannot currently be recycled simply because it was not designed for this purpose.

The UK construction industry as a whole follows this trend. According to a 2018 Government report, a staggering 60 per cent of all UK waste is created by construction, demolition and excavation.

"This makes our industry the single largest contributor of waste, meaning it is paramount we act to ensure sustainable building now," says Marco.

Composite wall insulation, for example, often consists of 20 layers of different materials containing toxic pollutants that are all glued together; such materials

cannot be properly recycled, and they often cannot even be burned because they are too toxic.

"What we consider as recycling is often a form of downcycling," explains Marco. "Window glass is recycled to become a beer bottle which is recycled to aggregate, and finally ends up as waste. We often just postpone the move to landfill and ultimately lose the raw material."

## CRADLE TO CRADLE

'Cradle to cradle' is a movement to replace the industry's current system of materials supply and its high levels of waste. According to Marco, the model "has the potential to bring the next revolution to the construction industry."

The set of design principles, developed in the 1990s by Professor Michael Braungart, William McDonough and EPEA Hamburg, "is inspired by nature," says Abdallah. "The aim is not only to minimise negative influences, but also to leave a positive ecological footprint."

As a result, he believes "products, processes, buildings and cities will emerge which are safe for humans, healthy for the environment and successful for business."

Marco explains that the term cradle to cradle simply describes the safe, and potentially infinite, circulation of materials, as well as 'nutrients'. "If all constituents are chemically harmless and recyclable, waste as we know it today – which is generated according to the pre-existing take-make-waste model – would no longer exist, leaving only useful nutrients instead."

## PURITY OF MATERIALS

First and foremost, Marco believes that biological materials which are biodegradable will be the leaders in the new circular economy – but they must be kept pure.

Timber for example, which is often used in our built environment, is a great solution. According to Abdallah however, it loses its beneficial characteristics when it is covered with a chemical coating or laminated.

Cross-laminated timber is one example of this, he says; how much the material can be dismantled and reused in the future is not clear, but if it is burned in an incineration plant, many toxic compounds would be released into the air. Fortunately, he tells me that there are methods of biological protection and assembly which do not require glue.

Alongside this, technical materials such as facade systems also work well, he says, as long as they follow the principle of 'design for disassembly' and the materials are made for recycling.

"The key, therefore," he says, "is to use pure materials and avoid compounds of different materials which cannot be separated during the later recycling process."

## EMBODIED CARBON

Half of the carbon emissions created by buildings are those associated with embodied carbon.

These 'embodied carbon emissions' are associated with the material use, including raw material sourcing, transportation, product manufacturing and installation on site.

Concrete forms an enormous chunk of embodied carbon emissions — in 2018, around 8 per cent of total global CO<sub>2</sub> [SUBSCRIPT] emissions were related to cement production — and it is also responsible for a huge amount of construction waste because concrete in the past was barely ever recycled.

Suppliers have recognised this however, so, besides the recycling of aggregates (which is starting to become commonplace), methods of reclaiming cement are being developed that will significantly lower carbon emissions.

## COSTS

Of course, when the bottom line comes into play many builders may become wary of such models – though even if costs were to be increased, it is argued by many that these costs are 'easily' recouped through modern buyers' desire for high performing buildings.



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According to Marco, however, cradle to cradle products do not necessarily increase cost either way. “The circular economy actually creates completely new business models, such as material leasing,” he explains.

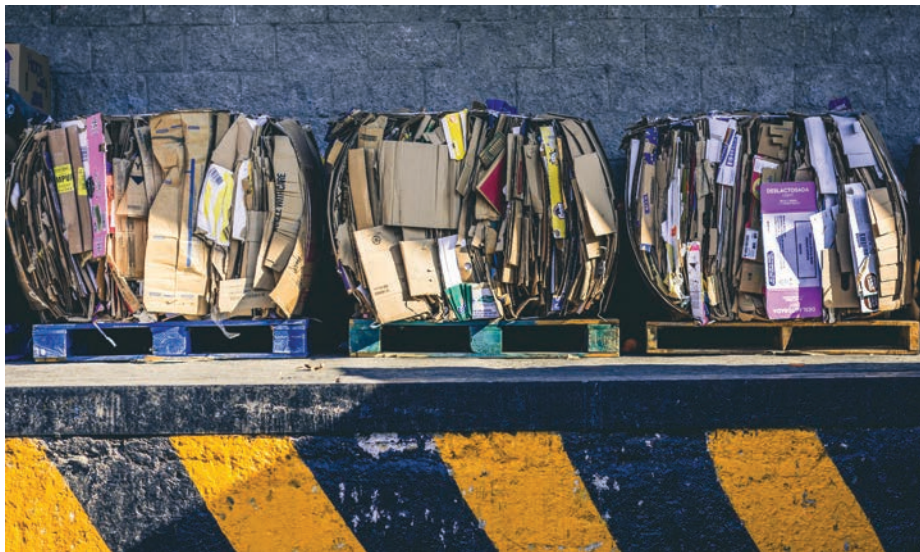
“Many suppliers already provide leasing models because they know that they can reuse the product and reclaim raw materials to produce new products — they don’t need to take the cost of disposal into consideration.” He uses the lift industry as an example, where suppliers have started to provide commercial benefits when they reclaim old lifts.

#### A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Arriving a decade ago at Drees & Sommers’ headquarters in Stuttgart, then moving to Shanghai for five years, and recently relocating to the UK where he is now head of engineering at the company, Marco has always had a passion for sustainability.

According to Marco, all this experience has served to inform him that the circular economy is “the next big thing.”

“Drees & Sommer always had a very strong commitment to sustainability and in 2019 joined together with EPEA, to apply the principles of circular economy to the real estate sector with the cradle to



cradle concept.”

He continues: “Interestingly 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of Drees & Sommer, and we are celebrating our golden jubilee by becoming climate positive through reducing and compensating for the CO2 emissions. Our long-term goal is to be a company which benefits the environment and society as much as possible. We promote future-shaping and innovative concepts such as cradle to cradle and our Blue City approach to implement a

positive and sustainable future, not just in our projects but also as a company.”

For housebuilders and developers interested in the cradle to cradle model, Marco recommends online platforms such as the ‘Building Material Scout’ where materials can be found which are assessed and also certified according to the model’s principles.

*Marco Abdallah is head of engineering UK at Drees & Sommer*

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## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

# Innovative modular housing scheme completes in Lincolnshire

A new modular housing scheme in Grantham is reported to be the first of its kind in the region, according to Midlands contractor G F Tomlinson, which has recently completed work on the project.

Delivered for South Kesteven District Council, through the Scape Regional Construction framework, the scheme comprises two modular housing developments valued at a total of £2.1m, which will provide critical social housing to meet the current requirements of the local authority.

Works commenced at the two developments – Kinoulton Court and Earlesfield Lane – late last year, and the plots were completed in summer.

The 2,200 ft<sup>2</sup> Earlesfield development comprises a block of four one-bedroom semi-detached apartments, and Kinoulton Court is a 5,400 ft<sup>2</sup> development comprising 10 one-bedroom apartments split into two blocks – one of which has four one-bedroom apartments and the other, six one-bedroom apartments.

Delivered by lorry to site, the houses were fitted onto prepared foundations which include functioning pipework and electrics. This process ensured that time is saved at the construction stage, with 10 weeks of programme time being saved for this particular scheme, compared to traditional methods.

Works on both South Kesteven plots involved clearance of the sites – as Earlesfield was a small car park, and Kinoulton Court underutilised land. Prior to the installation of the modular units by supply chain partner, Premier Modular, a full enabling groundworks package was required for each plot with foundations, drainage and a protective ground gas membrane. The homes were then roofed and cladded on site, before external works were undertaken to each property including fenced boundaries, landscaped gardens, car parking and footpaths.

External elevations were fitted with insulation and brick slips, and all internal finishes were completed by Premier Modular including PVCu glazing, mechanical and electrical works, plastering, decorations, flooring and commissioning. The traditional timber truss roofs and slate tiling was completed on site due to restrictions with transporting overly large modular building sections through the narrow residential streets.

Mark Robinson, Scape Group chief executive, commented on the completion: “The UK’s housing shortage needs to be addressed with speed and efficiency, so it’s exciting to see G F Tomlinson and South Kesteven District Council using our Regional Construction framework and innovative modular construction methods to do just that.

“We take great pride in helping them to deliver a regional first strategy that will be of huge benefit to local communities.”

**THE SCHEME COMPRISES TWO MODULAR HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS VALUED AT A TOTAL OF £2.1M, WHICH WILL PROVIDE CRITICAL SOCIAL HOUSING TO MEET THE CURRENT REQUIREMENTS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY**





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# Newhaven council homes 'raise the bar'

A new modular council development in Newhaven, East Sussex, is being hailed as a “game changer for social housing” and a “window into the future of residential schemes.”

Now complete, the development consists of 36 modules constructed within the Boutique Modern factory in Newhaven and craned into place.

The 13 one and two-bed apartments have reportedly been equipped to the highest specification in terms of standard features and extras, sustainability credentials, and fire safety standards – all of which have led Lewes Council to claim it has ‘raised the bar’ for social housing.

Every apartment has its own 2.1 kWh solar PV installation and 2.7 kW battery to store electricity generated during the day for use at peak times. It is anticipated the mains energy use will be reduced by 70 per cent, taking the properties ‘off-grid’ for up to three or four months of the year.

Highly insulated, the apartments are claimed to be 40 per cent more energy efficient than traditional homes, and mechanical ventilation and heat recovery systems are installed in each apartment.



In terms of fire safety, the development is said to be “effectively futureproof” against all anticipated toughening of regulations that may come in the wake of the Grenfell inquiry.

As an example, despite being under 18 metres in height, Palmerston House has been built to meet the 18 metre fire regulations introduced following the investigations. Each apartment also constitutes a one-hour fire compartment, and every habitable room has a MIST fire suppression system installed, which will extinguish a fire at source, rather than the whole property being drenched. In the event of a fire every walkway window and the roof vent in the stair core will automatically open.

Other features include a storm water attenuation tank, communal door entry systems, and a roof safety system to allow safe working for maintenance teams. All homes have superfast fibre broadband pre-installed.

Councillor William Meyer, cabinet member for housing at Lewes District Council, commented: “There is no doubt that this is a game changer, not just in terms of raising the bar for sustainability and fire safety, but also in build quality and finish.”

# Saltash scheme revised to be more in keeping with locality

Revised plans for a new Cornish housing development by Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes have been shared with the local community to help inform a new planning application later this year.

The new proposals outline the first phase of the Treledan development on the site at Broadmoor Farm, Stoketon on the outskirts of Saltash.

The plans consist of up to 390 homes, 40 fewer than proposed in a previous planning application. The project will be made up of two, three and four bedroom homes, situated five minutes from central Saltash and 20 minutes from Plymouth.

Environmental features have reportedly been significantly increased under the new proposals, which now include a much larger range of cycle and pedestrian routes through the site in order to reduce car dependency, retaining more hedgerows and changing the orientation of the scheme to take full advantage of sunlight. Electric car charging points are also planned along with improved gardens and more areas of public open space.

A farmstead-style area of stone-fronted houses with smaller terraced cottage-style homes is intended to add a traditional feel to the development, and help it to blend in with the adjoining buildings. Affordable housing will also be distributed more evenly across the development.

The design and materials of the new homes have been altered

considerably to take inspiration directly from neighbouring historic buildings and to better reflect Cornish style and character, which was a point of concern in the last planning application.

Subtle variations in materials used will help “ensure the development as a whole has a unique, distinguishable character,” said the developers. Walls will be rendered in off-white and pastel shades, and stone will also be used, plus two appropriate roof slate varieties.

Outline planning permission is already in place for the overall development of up to 1,000 homes and related infrastructure and facilities, as well as extensive open spaces, employment and community facilities in the area, and investment in education and community services.

David Matthews, land director for Barratt David Wilson Homes Exeter, commented: “We have listened carefully to feedback from our previous application and as a result have made wholesale changes to improve the overall design, appearance and character of Treledan.”

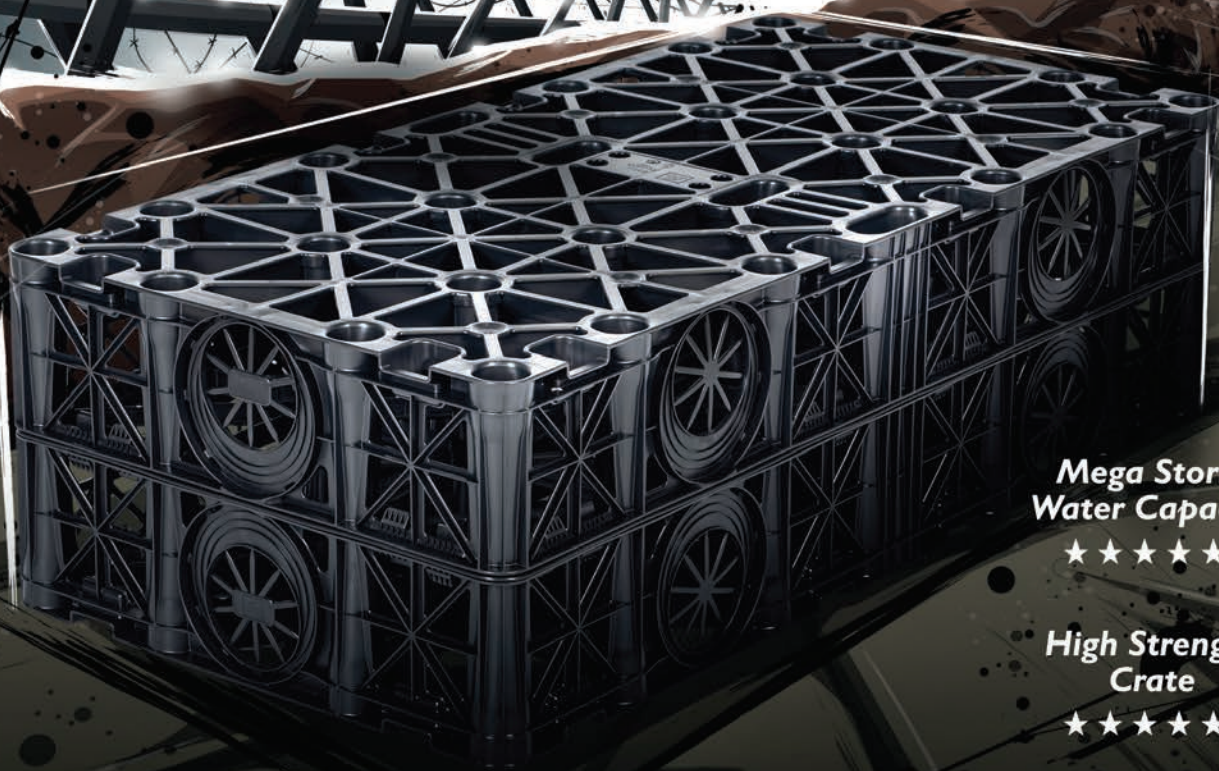
Views and comments from the local community have been sought and will be reflected in new proposals now being finalised by Barratt David Wilson Homes. The new planning application is expected to be submitted to Cornwall Council this month.



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# A new district on the waterfront

Set to bring over 10,000 homes to the capital, Barking Riverside has been called one of Europe's "most exciting placemaking projects." Housebuilder & Developer's deputy editor spoke to David Watkinson of Barking Riverside London.

The Barking Riverside project is set to transform a former industrial site along the River Thames into a new London district. A joint venture between L&Q and the Mayor of London, the development covers an area the size of London's Hyde Park.

Based largely on brownfield land, Barking Riverside will deliver not just homes, but 65,000 m<sup>2</sup> of commercial and leisure facilities, 148 acres of new parkland, and riverside walks along 2 km of river frontage.

With such a site requiring significant infrastructure of varying types, the master developer responsible for the design, planning and infrastructure delivery for the project Barking Riverside London (BRL) has committed to the delivery of seven new schools. Four of these are now open, and other facilities include an Ecology Centre and a new 'health hub.'

Alongside this, in terms of transport and connectivity there is currently a new London Overground Station under construction on the 443 acre site,

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## BARKING RIVERSIDE LONDON HAS LED THE PLANNING PROCESS, PREPARING MASTERPLANS AND DESIGN CODES FOR 1500-2000 HOMES AT A TIME ACROSS THE SITE

extending the Gospel Oak to Barking Line, and the team are soon to start work on a new pier for a Thames Clipper Uber Boat river taxi, both of which are expected to dramatically increase connectivity into central London.

### BEGINNINGS

David Watkinson, planning, design and communications director at BRL explains his role as “envisaging the place being created, and engaging the people we need to create it with,” which includes overseeing design, master planning, statutory consents, placemaking, communications and events for the project.

Going back to the genesis of the project, he explains that though the scheme began in the late 2000s, the current Barking Riverside JV wasn’t formed until 2016 – in order to ramp up housing delivery on the site to over 600 homes a year.

According to David, it has been “an incredibly collaborative” project from the get go, with “continuous input” from stakeholders including the JV partners, Homes England, Transport for London (TfL), the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and, “crucially,” David adds, “local people.”

Currently, the plot developers L&Q and Bellway homes are involved in the construction of residential and commercial builds, while the design process is being led by the architecture and urban design firm Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands.

### BIG PLANS

Being such a large scale project, Barking Riverside has been underpinned by a rolling programme of masterplanning, land use, and other regulatory consents.

The original site-wide planning permission was granted in 2007, based on a proposed extension of the Docklands

Light Railway from Beckton, but the DLR line was ultimately unviable. To ensure sustainable transport to the site, BRL worked with TfL to secure and part-fund the extension to the London Overground network which was consented under a Transport and Works Act Order in 2017.

A new site-wide planning application was then prepared and submitted in tandem, and the team are now working under the most recent revisions to this which were consented in 2018.

BRL has led this planning process across the site, preparing masterplans and design codes for 1500-2000 homes at a time.

David explains further how this works:

“We and our plot developers then prepare reserved matters applications for 180-200 homes beneath these and do so with the confidence that these sit within the consented scheme.”

“The approach is similar to some of the models being proposed in the Government’s recent planning white paper, and promotes confidence and allows for faster delivery.”

### UNDER PRESSURE

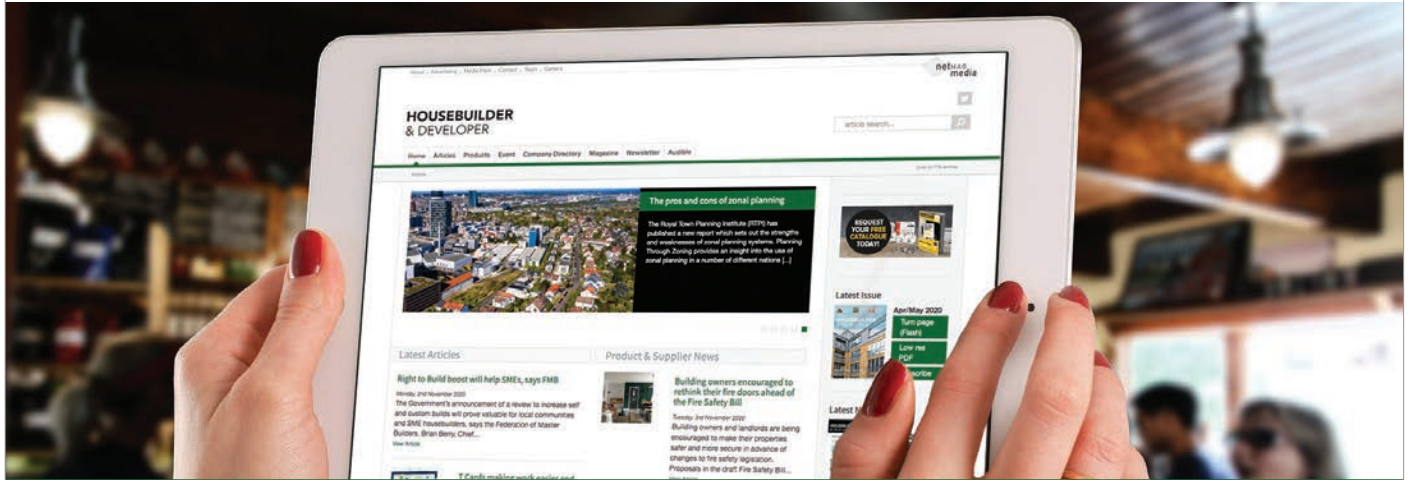
David tells me that one of the biggest challenges for a scheme of this size and complexity has been “ensuring that the place you deliver at the end successfully and authentically responds to the people who will actually live and work there.”

He says there’s already a “thriving community” living in Barking Riverside and the neighbouring Thames View district, and once completed the project will have increased the population by more than 30,000, as well as brought many new businesses to the area. As such, David tells me there is “huge pressure” to get this right for current and future residents.”

“We know all too well that simply building houses and facilities doesn’t



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## THE “CLEANER, GREENER” SYSTEM ALLOWS RESIDENTS TO DEPOSIT THEIR WASTE INTO ONE OF THE DEVELOPMENT’S 460 ENVAC WASTE INLETS

automatically create community life, have a positive impact on those living close by or support the attractiveness of the place for future residents,” he continues. “People want more involvement and a sense of ownership, especially when they are going to be living as part of the scheme for a long time.”

In order to promote this greater sense of “community ownership,” BRL is using polling platforms and co-design initiatives on key projects, enabling it to collaborate with members of the community to design facilities for current and future residents and visitors.

According to David, the team have challenged themselves to make good on their commitments by using social impact assessments, benchmarked in partnership with local people to measure success.

### CLEANER & GREENER

Besides its sheer size, one of the more noteworthy elements of Barking Riverside is the automated waste collection which has been organised for the site. It is on course to be Europe’s largest single waste collection system of its kind, and is a key element in helping mitigate the development’s carbon footprint.

According to David, a development of this scale would have required an estimated 19,000 waste bins, with eight industrial waste collection vehicles running full time throughout the site every day. Instead, the “cleaner, greener” system allows residents to deposit their waste into one of the planned 460 Envac waste inlets, located close to their homes. Waste is then sucked at 40 mph through a subterranean network of pipes to a collection centre on the edge of site.

From an air pollution perspective especially, with no need for waste

collection vehicles operating across the site, the masterplan incorporates safer, less polluted streetscapes. Carbon emissions and the safety issues associated with these vehicles are eradicated almost completely, and BRL estimates that the system’s inclusion will reduce waste vehicle related carbon emissions by at least 90 per cent.

“Integrating this future-proof technology will promote sustainability and liveability for all our residents,” David adds.

### A RICH ECOSYSTEM

Alongside the environmental benefits brought by the waste system, BRL has incorporated a thorough ecological strategy into the project.

The site was historically Thames marshland, which was then reclaimed for industry through the 20th century, before being left derelict and contaminated.

In that time many of the native species began to recolonise, and there is now a “particularly rich” ecosystem in the area, he says.

According to David, the team views this as a “huge asset” for the site and community. “Our approach is to work with the ecology, creating brand new habitats and relocating species as we work across the site,” he explains.

This is reportedly working well so far – in 2010/11, the BRL ecology team recorded 24 species of bird on site. By 2018, it saw the number of species double to nearly 50 species– “remarkable for one of London’s largest live construction sites.”

### PRIDE IN THE PROJECT

Since 2016, the team have been focused on securing the transport connections, investment and partnerships needed to deliver the project.

David believes that BRL is now in a “strong position” to deliver an “exceptional place,” and the project is starting to gain recognition - “particularly for the way in which we are working with our growing community to shape further phases of the project and create a place that they know, understand and love in the way that we do.”

At the stage the project has now reached, he believes that finding the right partners and driving design quality are “key to building confidence” in what the team is doing, and ensuring that, ultimately, “they create a place people are proud of.”

“We proudly view this project as an opportunity to have a positive impact on the lives of those who already, and of those who will come to live and work here,” concludes David. ■



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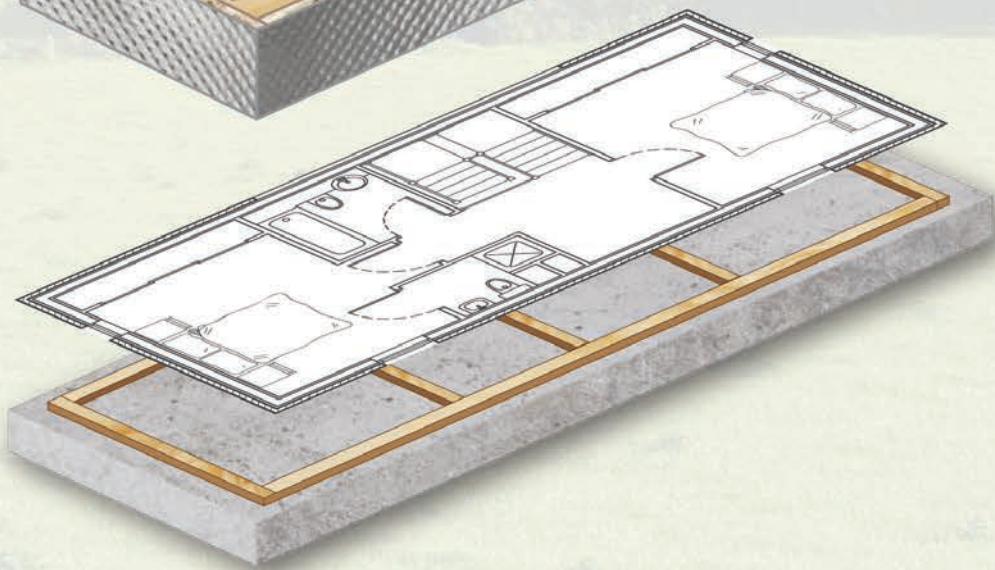
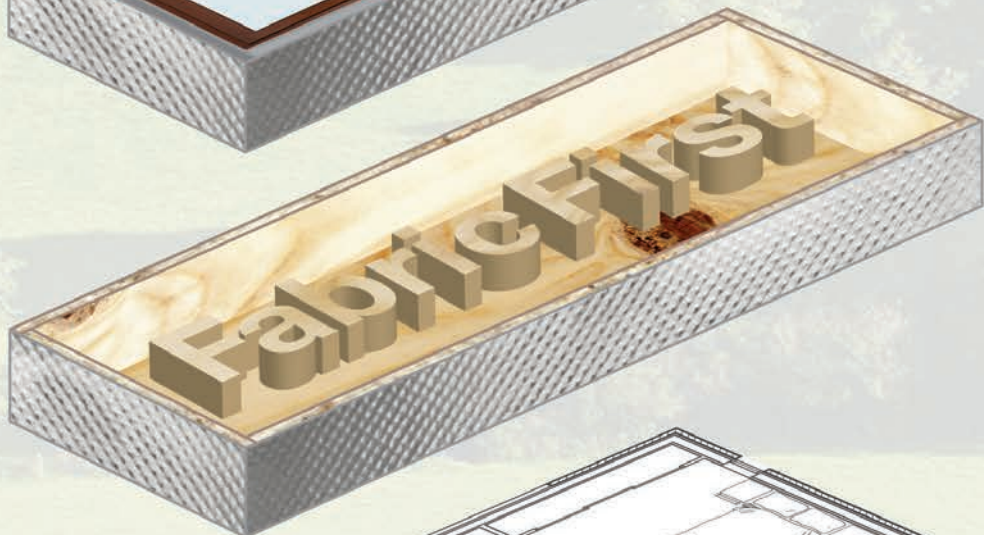
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## Nordic Copper Bristol Fashion

A major new residential building in Bristol is defined by its 170m long facade, clad in Nordic Brown Light pre-oxidised copper, complementing its modern, listed neighbour.

Designed by Ferguson Mann Architects, the new Copper Building replaces a factory, demolished in the 1990s, and provides 136 apartments for rent or for sale, including purchase through Shared Ownership.

FMA project architect Nick Brown explained: 'The form and language of the Copper Building were always intended as a reference to its Cor-ten steel clad predecessor. We sought a more friendly and economic material to speak of the industrial heritage of the site, yet in a warmer and more refined way – a material with



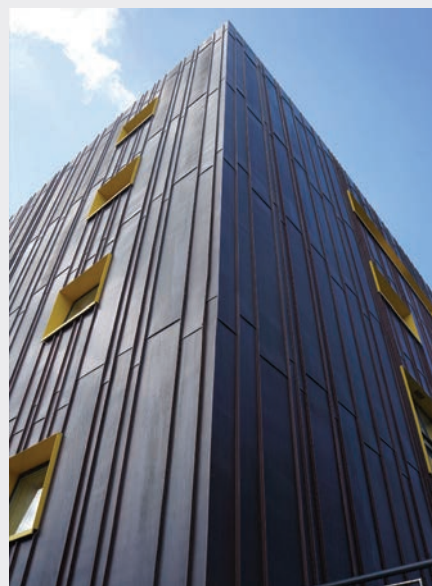
some life, that would patinate subtly over time. The warm colour of the Nordic Brown Light pre-oxidised copper, along with the longevity, sustainability and natural credentials of copper made it the perfect choice.'

Nordic Brown Light is part of an extensive portfolio of architectural copper surfaces and alloys from Aurubis, with an unrivalled lifespan, no maintenance and full recyclability. With an 'A1 (non-combustible material)' fire classification to EN 13501-1, copper is suitable for cladding tall buildings, using appropriate constructions.

The range includes Nordic Standard 'mill finish' and Nordic Brown pre-oxidised copper offering lighter or darker shades of brown determined by the thickness of the oxide layer. The extensive Nordic Blue, Nordic Green and Nordic Turquoise ranges have been developed with properties and colours based on the same brochantite mineralogy found in natural patinas all over the world. As well as the solid patina colours, 'Living' surfaces are available for each.

Copper alloys include Nordic Bronze and Nordic Brass, which can also be supplied pre-weathered. The innovative Nordic Royal is an alloy of copper with aluminium and zinc, retaining its golden colour.

01875 812 144 [www.nordiccopper.com](http://www.nordiccopper.com)



## Investment boosts CMOSTores.com



**CMOSTores.com** is seeing superb results from its latest investment in improving customer experience on its six e-commerce sites, with recommended product purchases doubling since the company invested in a new onsite personalisation solution. In the six months since

CMO partnered with artificial intelligence (AI) pioneer Peak, its onsite personalisation solution is driving twice as many transactions as the site's original non-AI recommender tool. The solution, part of Peak's Customer AI offering, creates hyper-personalised product recommendations at the point of sale across CMO's web superstores. The success of onsite personalisation is a further boost to the rapidly-growing e-commerce company.

01752 692 769 [www.cmostores.com](http://www.cmostores.com)

## Crown Paints continues support of local projects



**Crown Paints** has continued its efforts to add colour to people's lives during these unprecedented times, through a series of paint donations to community projects across the UK. The Lancashire-based leading paint manufacturer, which also has a manufacturing facility in Hull, regularly donates paint to local causes and charities through its network of more than 140 Crown Decorating Centres and social enterprise,

NIMTECH. Crown Paints also regularly donates to causes across Hull, where many of its popular products are manufactured, and has offered support to Hull's RSPCA branch in recent years through regularly donating paint and sundries via its nearby Crown Decorating Centre.

0330 024 0297 [www.crowntrade.co.uk](http://www.crowntrade.co.uk)

## Fastflow prepares for the future



**Fastflow Group** has restructured its business in a move designed to ensure the company is 'fit for the future' and able to adapt to the changing marketplace. It will also cease using the Fastflow Group name and instead be known as **The United Living Group**. It follows the successful merger last

year and the creation of a new business. The Group will have combined revenues for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 of c£400m, with 2021 revenues budgeted to be £420m. The new streamlined business is made up of the three distinct service pillars – United Living Infrastructure Services, United Living New Homes and United Living Property Services that together will deliver a broad range of integrated services.

01332 665522 [unitedliving.co.uk](http://unitedliving.co.uk)

## Housebuilder & Developer website



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

links to advertisers' sites, as well as daily email alerts to keep you as informed as possible.

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





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# ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Though the industry is now back on sites, Covid-19 has not left it unscarred. Managing director of online appliances retailer AO.com Anthony Sant speaks to Jack Wooler on how the virus has brought supply chain issues to the fore, and what the company has learned during the pandemic.



As in all areas of life, the coronavirus pandemic has introduced many challenges to the construction industry during recent months, and has highlighted both strengths and weaknesses across the board.

One of the most discussed has been supply chains, which have been highly disrupted for much of the sector, from landlords, to developers, to housebuilders large and small.

“Let’s make no bones about it, the Covid-19 situation has been an extraordinary challenge for the entire construction sector,” begins Anthony Sant, managing director of AO Business UK - the B2B arm of online electricals retailer AO.com. “Suddenly, when lockdown was introduced, businesses were told they’d have to stop working; for some companies, it was not as easy as just picking back up where they left off.”

AO.com however was in the very “fortunate position” of being deemed essential by the government - “you’ve got to have a fridge,” notes the MD, “you need to wash your clothes, you need to cook” - and as such has been open

throughout the pandemic. It’s this position that Anthony believes has provided the company with a “unique insight” into post-Covid supply.

According to Anthony, the experience has highlighted weaknesses in supply right across the industry - and, as he found out from research with potential B2B clients, the ramifications of this on site can have major implications on entire projects. The pandemic has then worsened this greatly in his view, with many suppliers left unable to keep commitments or gain the momentum necessary to get builders back on track.

He tells me that working through such times has not been easy, but the lessons that this has taught him have been “invaluable,” and it is these lessons he hopes to share.

## SNAGS IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Anthony first explains that after discussions with housebuilders, developers, housing professionals and landlords, the company truly began to unravel the extent to which projects rely on speedy supply (even pre-pandemic) - especially

when it comes to the products, he knows best.

“Appliances are probably the last thing to go in,” he explains. “While anything can happen during the period from start to completion - and anything will - the one thing that’s immovable is the completion date.” This rings true for landlords just as much as builders, he adds: “If there are tenants due to move in, it’s essential that the appliances promised are specified and delivered on time.”

A common issue here that was reported to AO was other suppliers’ inability to be in every postcode every day - it could be a week before the product they need arrives, which means a week’s delay on site.

“What you’ve got to remember is that a house being unfinished - missing something as simple as a cooker hood - can hold up the completion of a project that’s worth many hundreds of thousands of pounds,” says Anthony. “And, if a landlord’s got a tenant with a broken appliance, how much rent is at risk while they wait for the appliance to turn up?”

Anthony remarks that “as Brits, we’re fairly cynical;” he’s always amazed how



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people are so surprised at the “simple fact” that his firm will do what they say they will, and deliver when they say they say they’ll deliver. He suggests that this is something that may come from experience in other supply chains - noting that of course the pandemic has again introduced even greater problems here, with companies folding or suddenly being unable to keep commitments they’d made pre-lockdown.

One of the biggest challenges for businesses is when there are snags in their supply chains, Anthony argues. He tells me that when Covid hit there were a huge number of companies who had made commitments they couldn’t make, or had inbound products that they simply couldn’t receive - especially B2B providers who’s customers were suddenly put on hold.

“If your world is just B2B supplying - housebuilders, landlords, whatever - and suddenly lockdown hits, you’re in a position where it’s hard to justify staying open,” laments the managing director. “Because of that, we have seen a number of distressed customers that have come to us out of the blue because they need supplies now, and their existing supplier isn’t back up and running yet.”

### CHANGING THE FACE OF WHITE GOODS

Anthony went on to explain how the company came to be in this position, and the steps it took to offer such stability to both B2B and B2C customers: “20 years on, selling appliances on the internet isn’t such a big deal, but people forget that when John Roberts (CEO and Founder of AO.COM) first came up with the idea, Amazon was still only selling books on the internet through dial up connections.”

He continues: “Back in 2000, when John basically decided to go and change the face of the white goods industry, there’s no question about it - it was a hugely bold statement.”

Anthony remembers how most people would go into an appliance store, make an order, and receive it at least seven days later. “John’s attitude was different, however,” he says. “To give customers what they really wanted, we needed to do more.”

“He decided that for us to become a differentiator, and to give true customer service, the only way to do that was to own our own logistics business,” says the firm’s MD.

AO purchased Expert Logistics from food retailer Iceland, which, according to Anthony was an “inspired” decision: “About three of four years ago I was at a round table industry discussion, and I was chatting to this person who said he sometimes wonders if John realised at



the time how significant that was, or was he just got lucky.” The MD adds: “He knew, truly, he did.”

With “probably the best two-man delivery fleet in the country” - so much so that other companies are now utilising it - the retailer is able to cover all its own deliveries and be in “every postcode, every day” as customers were demanding. This means that buyers can get whatever they want from the company’s over-a-million-square foot of warehousing the very next day - from individuals, to landlords, to large scale developers.

This control over the chain is so important to AO’s ethos that the company even launched its own facility to collect and recycle old appliances - including the largest fridge recycling facility in the country, which covers more than just its own products.

“Why?” he asks, “because we wanted to make sure it was done properly.”

### A JOURNEY

Taking things back to the present situation, Anthony tells me that this approach to bringing more and more of the supply chain under the same umbrella has been a “huge help” towards its stability during these uncertain times. Of course, AO did not go wholly untouched during the current troubles, but the MD believes it has actually strengthened the company’s position in some respects.

“There have been a lot of changes, and it’s been a really interesting journey - I’ve been blown away by how people have coped and what they’ve done,” he says. “But, while it’s been challenging and thought-provoking, it’s really been one of those proud moments - just the fact that we’ve been open for customers has been really positive for us as a business.”

He tells me how in three days the company immobilised all its offices to home working, including call centre aftercare - “everything” - and introduced all the necessary social distancing measures in its warehouses - even opening new warehouse space in order to

accommodate these rules. In doing so, he believes the company has provided an “essential lifeline” to the sector in such times of uncertainty.

Another strengthening factor the online retailer has found during the pandemic is the general move away from the store-front, says Anthony: “As John has said, there has been five years of market change in five weeks - this huge migration from the retail store to internet-based solutions. I suspect that now people know how easy and trouble free it is, people will continue to buy on the internet.”

He continues: “I can’t predict the future, but it’s hard to deny that people have changed their shopping habits. When was the last time you went anywhere except the local shop? It takes 66 days to make a habit, and we’re well past that now.”

### MESSAGE TO THE INDUSTRY

Bringing the conversation to a close, AO’s managing director says that looking back he is “very proud” of the company’s approach to these times, celebrating its “can do” attitude.

He explains how this attitude has helped define AO Business, and what it offers over other routes: “Intrinsically, we are selling the same product, but a very different service - a washing machine is a washing machine - but in the business market, what people want to know is that you’ll meet your promises and deliver when you say you will. And, in 20 years, we’ve met all our promises, and we always deliver when we say we will.”

He provides me with a great example of this in action - another matter the company discussed with builders, where in order to meet social distancing measures and spread out their workforces, companies were changing a five day working week into a seven day working week. “What does that mean for AO?” says Anthony. “Well it’s not a problem, because we deliver on Saturday and Sunday anyway; there are so many advantages in working in this retail-esque way.”

“Saturdays and Sundays are some of our most popular days in the consumer market, so if a developer wants the same, it’s not a problem.”

The managing director concludes with a message to the industry that, while throughout the purchasing space there are “all sorts of issues like this” with supply currently, from where you can get hold of your brick to your cement, “you can spend your time worrying about that, but when it comes to the appliances you want delivered, there’s no need to worry - we’ve been doing it for 20 years.”



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CHESHIRE PLAINS, ENGLAND

Fastflow Group makes top track 250



Fastflow Group has made it into the Sunday Times PwC Top Track 250 for the first time, ranked 177th. The Sunday Times PwC Top Track 250 league table ranks Britain's leading mid-market private companies with the biggest sales. Fastflow Group provides essential gas, water and multiutility infrastructure services to blue chip customers across the UK, as well as the development of new homes and planned and responsive property maintenance services for social housing and local authority clients. Neil Armstrong, CEO and

Chairman at Fastflow and United Living Group, said: "I see this accolade as recognition of the strength of our business and our people."

01322 665522 [www.fastflow.co.uk](http://www.fastflow.co.uk)

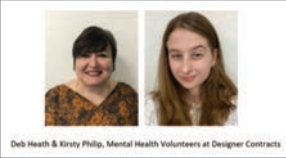
Now is the time for timber



With the threat of missing critical environmental targets, a very real danger in the post COVID-19 economy, the **Time for Timber** campaign is launching a new drive that directly targets the financial and insurance sectors. Andrew Orriss from the Time for Timber campaign commented: "We are at a crossroads in the UK and on a global basis: we need to act now if we are going to meet our environmental obligations and timber is the primary building material that will help us do this. As well as being sustainable, replenishable and easily recycled, the adoption of timber within off-site construction and MMC techniques would have a profound effect on the wider construction market and a demonstrable reduction in the carbon footprint of projects."

01259 272140 [www.timefortimber.org](http://www.timefortimber.org)

Mental health volunteer scheme



Designer Contracts is encouraging employees to open-up about mental health. The company has introduced a scheme using mental health volunteers to support colleagues at the company's 15 regional depots. Said Designer Contracts md, Peter Kelsey: "Mental

health is just as important as physical wellbeing, and we are proud to be introducing our very own volunteer scheme in what has been an incredibly difficult year for many. We have always tried to support our employees in any way we can – whether that's through the various benefits we offer – including Westfield Health cover - but this takes things a little further."

01246 854577 [www.DesignerContracts.com](http://www.DesignerContracts.com)

Formica Group's new residential sales team



It's a positive time for change at **Formica Group** with the launch of newly refreshed residential Axiom® and Prima® worktop ranges fast approaching. In order to support the launch, following on from investment in new state of the art production facilities, technology and innovation, Formica Group have set about to strengthen and develop their residential sales team to ensure they can offer the

best service possible. Pictured are residential sales team members Ryan Smith, Paul Stewart, Nicola Toledo Gonzalez and Rowan Harrison.

0191 622 0106 [www.formica.com](http://www.formica.com)

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Vent-Axia named as finalist in awards



Ventilation industry leader **Vent-Axia** is delighted to be a finalist in the 'Product of the Year' category at the prestigious Housebuilder Awards 2020. Vent-Axia's Lo-Carbon Sentinel Kinetic Cooker Hood, which improves indoor air quality (IAQ) and so helps households stay healthy, is on the shortlist following winning the Kitchen and Bathrooms category at the Housebuilder Product Awards earlier this year. "We are really thrilled to have reached the final of the 'Product of the Year' category at the Housebuilder Awards. The Awards honour innovation and excellence in UK house building, we are therefore very proud that our products have been recognised in these prestigious awards," explains Jenny Smith, Head of Marketing at Vent-Axia.

0344 856 0590 [www.vent-axia.com](http://www.vent-axia.com)

ecoSEAL system re-launched



With over 100 million plastic cartridges ending up in landfill every year, it's vital the industry takes steps to reduce its consumption of plastics and packaging. The re-launched ecoSEAL system offers one of the simplest ways to make a positive impact - and can now be used with the sealants and fillers most commonly used on site. By specifying the ecoSEAL system, organisations can significantly reduce the amount of plastic waste sent to landfill from the sealant and filler products that are used on their sites every day. Andy Cummins, Senior Product Manager at **Geocel** said: "With a re-usable sleeve that fits into any standard gun, the system is easier to use and more cost effective than the alternatives – it is the painless way to go green."

0114 2409409 [www.geocel.co.uk](http://www.geocel.co.uk)



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## Vicaima launches new website strengthening the user's experience

**A**lways aiming to build the perfect online experience for its customers and partners, Vicaima, one of the largest European players in the production of sophisticated solutions for interior doors, wardrobes and panels, has just launched a new website, which aims to improve the ease of navigation for its users, providing spontaneous and differentiating interaction with all features and tools. Yet another innovation, from a company which is continuously investing in a close, modern and intuitive digital footprint.

Among the new features, Vicaima highlights the speed of the platform and the

contemporary, functional and responsive redesign, strategically created to facilitate the search process for users, in line with their intentions, needs and desires.

Thus, the new website is characterized by dynamism, accompanied by carefully selected content, as well as a wide range of products, performance and solutions, with a view to boosting the digital presence of the brand in the national and international arena.

This redesign includes aesthetic improvements allowing for more immersive experimentation and improved navigation, which allows visitors to easily find the information they need.

The new Vicaima page thus highlights the company's willingness to invest in a digital sphere that provides the best user experience for its customer. The renewal follows, precisely, the thought provoking attitude of the brand towards the different markets in which it operates. This is also related to an integrated multichannel strategy, which reconciles the company's multiple digital tools, placing it, once again, at the forefront of the sector.

01793 532 333 [www.vicaima.com](http://www.vicaima.com)



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The Adek evolution



Originally unveiled at the beginning of the year, the Adek Balcony and Terrace system from **Ecodek** has evolved and now features a 147mm board to provide further flexibility for smaller refurbishment projects. This lightweight, A2FL S1 fire rated aluminium decking system meets all the safety requirements for high rise balconies, roof terraces and walkways and is simple to fit, either on-site or off-site. Manufactured from 100 per cent recycled aluminium with a durable coating that provides both excellent slip and wear resistance means the system easily stands up to the rigours of everyday living.

01978 667 840 [ecodek.co.uk/adek-non-combustible-aluminium-decking-system](http://ecodek.co.uk/adek-non-combustible-aluminium-decking-system)

Rooms with a view



Ali VU from **Senior Architectural Systems** has been specified for a new residential development in Liverpool. The scheme comprises 20 one and two-bedroom apartments, all benefiting from the attractive slim sightlines offered by Senior's Ali VU casement windows. As well as successfully emulating the look of heritage style windows, the Ali VU system offers a range of contemporary features including excellent energy-efficiency, security and durability. Featuring a polyamide thermal break, Senior's Ali VU aluminium double-glazed windows have been designed to achieve a Window Energy Rating (WER) of A, with the triple glazed option designed to achieve a rating of A+.

01709 772600 [www.seniorarchitecturalsystems.co.uk](http://www.seniorarchitecturalsystems.co.uk)

Former workshop into luxury home



When engineer, Ivan Semenenko, decided that he no longer required his former barn and workshop in the heart of the Cotswolds, he pondered a new life for the building. Ivan decided to embark on a project to transform the workshop into a beautiful new home. To create the distinctive steel windows and doors, he called on **Steel Window Association** member, Cotswold Casements. Trusting in the team's expertise, after having worked together on previous projects, Cotswold Casements was seen as the ideal partner. Trevor Woskett of Cotswold Casements commented, "This project turned out fantastically with Ivan and his wife loving the look created by the steel windows and doors."

[www.steel-window-association.co.uk](http://www.steel-window-association.co.uk)

Nationwide launch next generation range



The vital role that fire doors play in protecting the occupants of a property has never been more compelling as it has been in the past few years. **Nationwide Windows & Doors** has devoted time, clever product design and testing at levels never previously seen to launch their next generation GRP fire door range. Nationwide's expertise in fire doors makes them the ideal partner of choice

when it comes to large scale replacements or new installation programmes. With four door hinges, letterplate, spy hole, closers and specialist hardware, the Nationwide GRP fire door provides architects and specifiers a complete low-maintenance and thermally-efficient solution.

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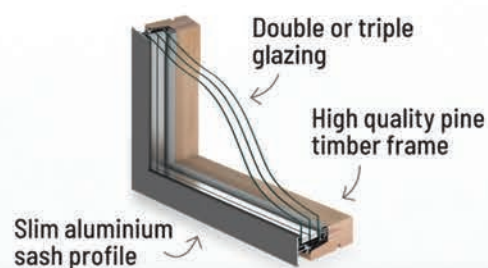


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## Fireside chat No. 2: Supporting new build with 'The power of many'

Freefoam Building Products are pleased to announce the launch of the second in a series of videos with Commercial Director Colin St John, covering pertinent themes and current issues around the roofline industry. This latest video sees Colin talking about how Freefoam supply and support the new build sector through a variety of national and local expert suppliers. The video explains Freefoam's approach to supporting new build customers, being flexible and adapting to the differing needs of a variety of house builders. Colin explains "Some builders want a national supply network while others want to work with specific local suppliers. What we're trying to do is link the three parts together, housebuilder, supplier and manufacturer". Future videos to be released this Autumn include a look at the challenges for the supply chain and Freefoam's consistent approach to supporting and helping its customers grow.

01604 591110 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBBv9gOAKl4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBBv9gOAKl4)

## Testing confirms membrane performance



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01250 872261 [www.proctorgroup.com](http://www.proctorgroup.com)

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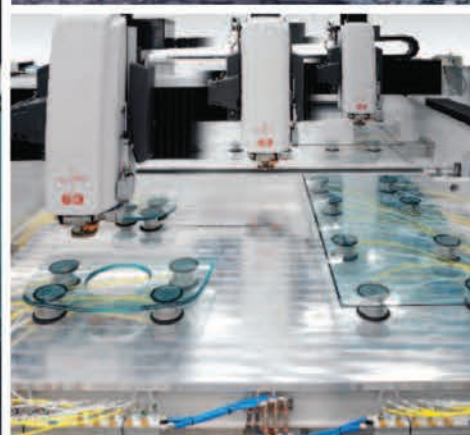
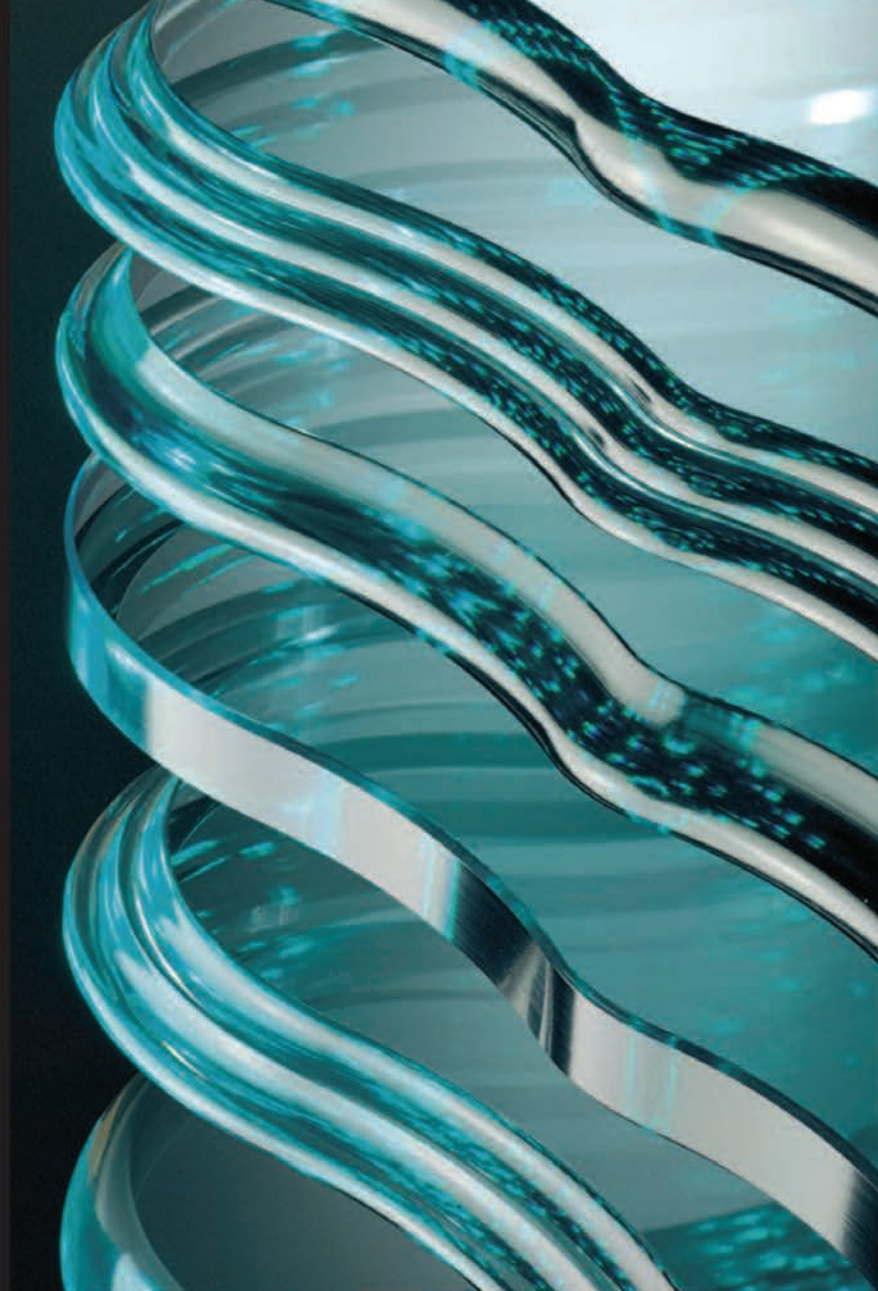
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# MANUFACTURING A RECOVERY

Stormking explores the challenges the pandemic has brought to manufacturing, and the way in which the UK construction industry has responded to the pressures so far, particularly the move to offsite

**W**hen it comes to manufacturing, the UK is a global leader, producing high-quality components during wars, political and domestic conflicts.

The coronavirus has proven to be a different kind of threat, however. Although many manufacturing facilities are adapting to the new normal, it is anticipated that it will take until 2022 for UK manufacturing to recover its pre-Covid 19 growth trajectory, according to the report: 'Responding, Resetting, Reinventing UK Manufacturing Post Covid-19'.

With this new reality made all the more challenging with a housing crisis and a construction industry skills shortage, how can the UK respond to this pressure? What can be done to ensure UK manufacturing continues on the right course and avoids any uncertainties that might stand in its way?

## IMPACTS

Manufacturing is at the heart of Britain's cultural and industrial identity – it is part of who we are as a nation.

Although it is sacred, during the peak of the coronavirus it is reported that manufacturers were operating between 25-50 per cent of their full capacity. These alarming figures were published in the report, 'Responding, Resetting, Reinventing UK Manufacturing Post Covid-19' by manufacturers' organisation, Make UK in association with Santander.

This report is the first detailed analysis of the direct impacts of Covid-19 on the UK manufacturing industry, and its findings highlight that it will take until 2022 for the sector to recover its pre-Covid levels, with added costs of around £35.7bn.

For the construction industry – itself affected by the virus' repercussions – the dent in the manufacturing sector's productivity is problematic, especially when some parts of the industry rely on

the goods this sector produces. This problem is further compounded by other issues which leave housebuilders at a difficult crossroad. The construction industry is facing a huge skills shortage. It is said 22 per cent of the workforce is over 50, and there isn't a sufficient pipeline of talented youngsters who can succeed them.

These issues are further augmented by a housing crisis; something that has understandably taken a backseat during the pandemic but one which we shouldn't forget nonetheless. The UK Government in June stressed the need to 'build, build, build', as the nation continued to fall behind its aim to ramp up annual construction to 300,000 a year by 2050.

Taking all of these aspects into consideration, it is difficult not to feel overwhelmed. Housebuilders are faced with the challenge to build homes when industries are facing skills shortages, pressure from the Government, and a drop in manufacturing productivity. These concerns are all framed within a post-Brexit, mid-pandemic Britain that is also at the crown of a recession.

## OFFSITE MANUFACTURING

All is not lost, however, as housebuilders and others in the industry can use this time to rethink the way they produce and deliver homes.

Although the 'Responding, Resetting, Reinventing UK Manufacturing Post Covid-19' report highlights Covid-19's effect on manufacturing, it makes timely and notable recommendations to the Government to ask for better awareness of the importance of manufacturing. This championing of Britain's industrialism is reinforced by a resurgence in British manufacturing techniques and products – something that will only prove to be more important as the UK becomes more independent post-Brexit.

UK offsite manufacturing is one of these alternative methods of construction which

will help the industry combat its skills shortage and meet its housebuilding aims too. Speedier installations, less labour-intensive, higher quality control; the benefits of offsite manufacturing to the housebuilding sector are wide-ranging.

It will be very difficult to meet the UK's housing shortage with traditional methods alone; there simply isn't the labour available. With the correct installation guides and training, products manufactured offsite are easier to install, which is a worthy benefit when considering the industry's huge skills shortage.

With a GRP chimney for instance, a housebuilder doesn't need to employ a traditional tradesperson. The product can be crane-lifted to the roof, where it sits straight onto the structure to be fixed in place – it is as simple as that! Contractors can tile up to the chimney as they ordinarily would. Some products are also pre-lead at the bottom to keep them secure in inclement weather conditions.

On larger orders where the same product is needed in higher volumes, offsite manufacturing guarantees the same quality finish is met every time. In a period where it is sometimes difficult to get relevant tradespeople, offsite manufacturing is a winner.

If financial costs are ever obstructing the view of offsite manufacturing, take comfort in the fact that its costs can be neutralised when compared to traditional construction, or offset by the savings in terms of repair costs.

The benefit of offsite manufacturing extends further however – such that it has to be a national priority. The industry desperately needs speedier alternatives which alleviate the burden on the current workforce and ensure the industry meets the Government's new homes target. Without the help of offsite manufacturing the sector may just, regrettably, flounder.

*Stormking is a leading supplier of GRP building components and solutions*



Marmox Multiboard makes ideal render backer



The redevelopment of an unusually large agricultural homestead at a farm in the Surrey commuter belt has seen the main contractor make full use of the technical benefits offered by **Marmox** Multiboard, in facilitating the creation of an attractive new outward appearance that will deliver low maintenance as well as improved energy performance. One of the company's founders, Charlie Cooke, recounts: "Marmox offered us all the technical guidance we required, including comprehensive installation instructions, and our operatives found the boards very easy to install using the special washers and sealant."

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Marley's Ashdowne – A 'hand-made' evolution



**Marley** has launched an enhanced Ashdowne clay handcrafted range, following manufacturing innovations. Thanks to advancements in processing technology, the new Ashdowne tiles feature subtle distressed edges and irregularities, replicating a hand-made tile aesthetic. The evolution of this popular tile enables contractors to achieve a unique, hand-made look, with all the benefits and cost effectiveness of a machine-made clay tile. In addition, the Ashdowne range is fully compatible with the Marley full roof system, complemented by a range of fittings and accessories, and covered by a 15-year guarantee. Marley's Ashdowne handcrafted tiles have variegations and distressed edges, giving each one a unique character.

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LG heat pumps make an impact



The **LG R32 Monobloc** range has already had a massive impact on the residential heat pump market.

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## Introducing the Tecla stove



The beautifully designed, A+ energy rated Tecla stove combines timeless Italian design with the most progressive technology. This low-powered pellet stove (6 kW) offered by MCZ – Europe's number one manufacturer of pellet appliances – features forced ventilation, has a cast iron top and painted steel sides. It offers intelligent combustion management via the MCZ Maestro app, making it fully controllable from outside the home. This product is already

compatible with EU Regulation Ecodesign 2022 and is DEFRA approved for smokeless zones. Visit the [Specflue](http://www.specflue.com) website for more information.

0333 999 7974 [www.specflue.com](http://www.specflue.com)

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installations. The pipes are tempered, having undergone a heat treatment after extrusion, resulting in less shrinkage when cooled down from high operational temperatures. This creates less stress on joints, resulting in a longer life for the pipe system.

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# THE GREEN HOMES GRANT – EXPLAINED

Stewart Thompson of Global Energy Systems looks into the Green Homes Grant, and how small builders can reap the benefits of an increase in energy efficient projects

**F**ollowing on from the Government's commitment for the UK to be carbon neutral by 2050 – and to stimulate the market post Covid-19 lockdown – Government has launched a new funded scheme for the installation of energy efficient measures.

Through the Green Homes Grant (GHG), homeowners and landlords in England can apply for a voucher which will financially contribute towards the cost of installing energy efficient measures like insulation, and low-carbon heating improvements to their homes. Up to 600,000 households could save up to £600 a year on energy bills.

The Government will provide a voucher that covers up to two thirds of the cost of qualifying improvements to a home. The maximum value of the voucher is £5,000. However, homeowners may be able to receive a higher level of subsidy if they are or a member of their household receives one of the qualifying benefits. Landlords cannot apply for the low-income part of the scheme, but can claim the £5,000 voucher.

The process is very simple to apply for; applicants must simply answer some basic questions about their property and the improvements desired, attach a copy of a quote (you must be a registered installer), and if accepted a voucher will be issued to the client. You can then redeem the voucher and ensure improvements are completed by 31 March 2021 or the voucher expiry date, whichever is sooner.

## DOMESTIC RHI

The Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) is designed to be combined with the run cost saving of having a low carbon heating system versus a fossil fuel boiler to bridge the additional capital cost of installing a low carbon heating system, rather than replacing a broken boiler with another fossil fuel boiler.

Homeowners and landlords are paid quarterly for seven years, but the carbon savings are accounted for over 20 years which is the estimated life expectancy of



a good ASHP. To claim RHI, the applicant needs to apply via OFGEM.

Clients can claim both the Domestic RHI and the Green Homes Grant, however they must claim the GHG first and then claim for the RHI once their GHG voucher has been redeemed. Because both the GHG & RHI are taxpayer funded, and to avoid 'double dipping' into the public purse, applicants will have to declare that they already received funding from the GHG. This value will be deducted from their RHI claim.

## AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS

The UK has committed to become carbon neutral by 2050; this legally binding policy is called NET Zero.

With 32 per cent of carbon emissions produced by heating buildings in the UK and almost 80 per cent of a homes energy output being used to produce heating and hot water in our homes, using a low carbon renewable heating system is key to the country achieving NET Zero.

As the production of electricity becomes even cleaner through the use of renewable generation, air source heat pumps are seen by the Government as part of the solution. ASHPs can save up to 60 per cent carbon emissions compared to

condensing gas boilers – even higher when compared to oil and LPG.

ASHPs can also help property developers and builders comply with the latest Building Regulations, futureproofing properties as the country is decarbonised and moves towards an electric economy.

Yet another benefit of installing ASHPs to the new build market is that no more expensive gas connections to the site are needed. A good ASHP can provide all of a home's heating and hot water, even down to outdoor temperatures as low as -20°C.

## INCENTIVES FOR HOMEOWNERS

There are some great financial incentives to help homeowners adopt low carbon technologies such as Green Homes Grants and the Renewable Heat Incentive - in turn bringing you an uptake in projects as an installer.

Forward-thinking developers and builders who want to save carbon as well as money on their energy bills can also choose low carbon heating systems prior to the Government's Future Homes Standard, which will see the installation of fossil fuel boilers banned in 2025.

*Stewart Thompson is technical national manager at Global Energy Systems*



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# THE UK CA MARK IS COMING

With the end of the Brexit transition period looming, Dennis Milligan of the British Flue and Chimney Manufacturer's Association (BFCMA) looks at how the UK CA Mark will differ to its EU predecessor

Unlike many in the industry who have been set back by the coronavirus and having to furlong staff, legislators and those creating product standards have been busier than ever.

The end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December will see the introduction of the UK CA mark (UK Conformity Assessed). The UK CA mark will replace the CE mark for products being placed on the market in Great Britain.

There is of course one complication; in Northern Ireland and for products being sold into the European Union the CE mark will still be required. After all, it is Brexit.

But, for the most part, housebuilders and developers must be aware of the upcoming change and ensure all products used meet the new requirements.

## TRANSITION

2021 will be a transition year for the new arrangements, but the CE mark will no longer be valid in Great Britain from 1 January 2022. In 2021 a new product designed and manufactured in accordance with UK CA regulations should carry the UK CA mark.

The CE mark has become widely recognised as the mandatory approvals mark on flue and chimney products. The UKCA mark will take on this role now. Like the CE mark, the UK CA mark will be your guarantee that the product meets the latest product standards - to achieve the CA mark a product must be tested by a UK conformity assessment body to ensure that the product meets the latest standards and is fit for purpose.

The British Flue and Chimney Manufacturers (BFCMA) is currently working on the development of new product and installation standards that are due to be published in 2021.

Specifiers and installers in GB should start to look for the UK CA mark when they are considering the use of a product.

## MATCHING THE FLUE

The function of a chimney or flue is to discharge the products of combustion safely into the atmosphere. This, however, is not as straightforward as it may sound.

Most chimneys operate under negative

pressure, relying on the laws of thermodynamics to transport the flue gases up the length of the chimney or flue to the atmosphere. This requires an unimpeded flow path to the top of the flue that maintains the temperature of the gases above the dew point.

Effective and continuous insulation is a key part in maintaining flue gas temperature, and chimney and flue standards are there to specify the components that should be used and how they should be used to achieve this primary function.

Chimneys and flues are required to discharge a variety of combustion gases, and different types of flue will be required to safely handle the different gases.

A key feature of the chimney and flue standards is a user-readable classification system that designates the features of the flue components. The features covered include temperature and pressure rating, fire, condensate and corrosion resistance,

and distance to combustibles.

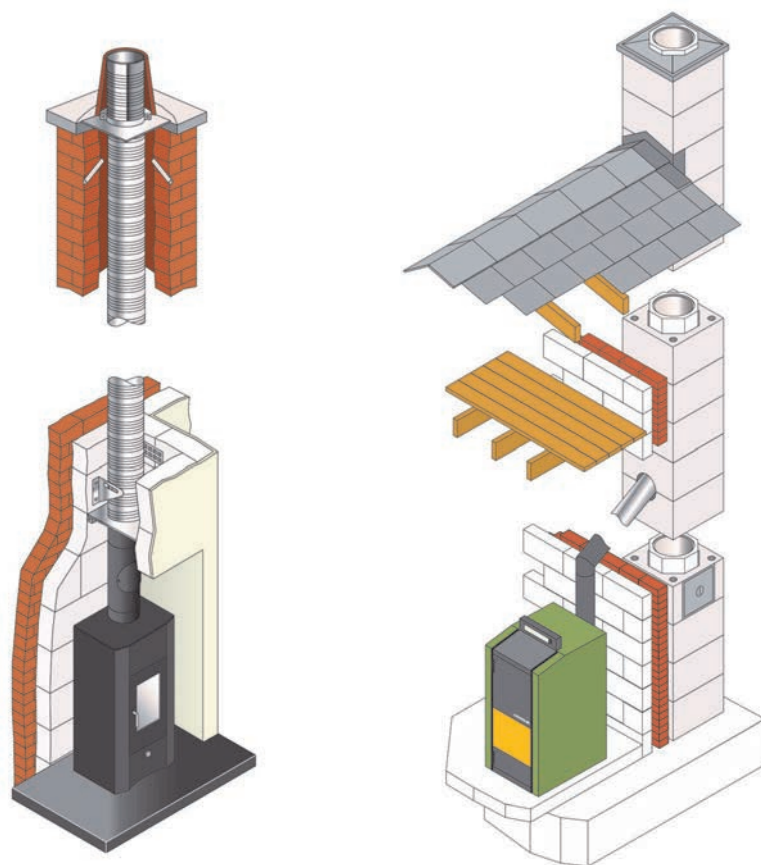
With stainless steel flues, a label showing the classification must be delivered with each flue component, so that the product's specification can be easily verified. It is important, for example, to use a condensing flue with a condensing appliance, and the designation will help housebuilders to ensure this is done.

## PRODUCT TESTING

---Product testing is the backbone of setting standards. Chimney and flue components are rigorously tested by approved test houses to prove that they can safely meet the required performance.

In addition to this, most chimney and flue companies use simulation software to confirm that a system chimney or flue will function as specified. If in doubt about the effectiveness of your chimney design, talk to the chimney or flue manufacturer about a chimney or flue simulation.





### SYSTEM CHIMNEYS

Product standards and CA marking will apply to both flue components and to system chimneys. It is worth pointing out that a CE or UK CA mark for a system chimney applies to the complete flue system, including additional components like rain caps.

The use of components that have not been tested with the system will invalidate the CE or CA mark and turn the system into a custom flue. As such however, the manufacturer's system chimney guarantee is no longer valid.

### DESIGN & INSTALLATION GUIDES

In addition to establishing standards, the BFCMA has also produced a number of design and installation guides covering wood burning and multi fuel stoves, biomass appliances, gas appliances and commercial flues – all of which can be downloaded from the BFCMA web site.

The design and installation of chimneys and flues in the residential sector are covered by Approved Document J, though the update of Document J is long overdue.

*Dennis Milligan is president of the BFCMA*

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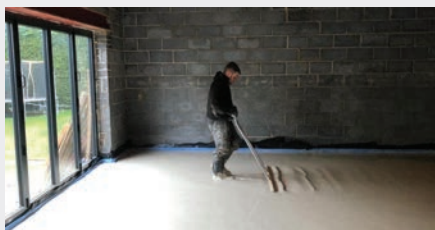
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# 'Alexa: What's next in smart homes?'

By Nico van der Merwe, VP of Home & Distribution at Schneider Electric

## Our smart home assistants do more than play our favourite playlists and tell us the weather.

In many ways they are our life assistants, planning our days, telling us the news and controlling our home appliances. For years, homeowners have been able to customise the aspects of their home using their smart devices, so what's next?

As homes become smarter, bringing greater benefits, so will heating systems. By adopting smarter features, heat will be generated only when and where its required to the exact temperature that is optimal for every square foot. Simple upgrades to homes across the country will have a huge impact on comfort, convenience and energy bills. Homes will provide more control and improved thermal comfort of occupants by enabling the personalisation of each room.



## The Smarter Choice

Many smart heating systems are designed so users can easily control their thermostat directly from an app on their phone – whether you're out, on the sofa or having a lie-in. This is an obvious and altogether better and smarter choice for people to keep out the cold this winter.

With homes and heating systems becoming increasingly connected, the benefits continuing to grow. The Internet of Things (IoT), allows home owners to control their heating wherever and whenever, and schedule heating for when you wake up or arrive back. This saves not money and time, while improving comfortable.

To reduce energy consumption and heating bills, connectivity, reliability and overall performance are all crucial. However, there are a number of new functions that are fast becoming a necessity.

## Smart Rooms

Today we demand personalisation. The next stage for heating is control and scheduling in each room independently. From a comfort point of view, each room should be at different temperatures – the bedroom cooler and the bathroom warmer. We control our lights switch-to-switch and we control our water tap-to-tap – why don't we control our heat room-to-room.

Traditional thermostats and radiator controls simply aren't efficient or measurable. A smart room thermostat, multi-room system measures and controls the temperature of each room and has a huge impact on comfort, convenience and energy bills. Smart heating systems now enable users to personalise their home environment according to their needs by allowing them to control the temperature and schedule in their home completely independently.





## Smart Usability

With the explosion of apps, it's now possible to take control of at-home appliances including heating, lighting and entertainment systems. Not only does this make it easier for individuals to control their appliances, for heating in particular it allows individuals to take control of their energy on the go to reduce their long-term energy consumption.

Now, however, heating is joining the smart home assistant (Google Assistant & Amazon Alexa, etc.) revolution. Controlling heating with voice commands, makes it easier than ever. You can now ask them to set your heating at a certain temperature, increase/decrease the heating and check what temperature your home is at.

## Smart Analysis

Next generation heating solutions aren't simply customisable, they provide complete insight into usage and self-improve. How does room temperature naturally change during the day, how does occupancy cause levels to fluctuate, and what is optimal? Today's systems enable the kind of insight, crucial in a data driven world.

Today pioneering smart heating system, come as a single solution, linking radiators and thermostats through IoT technology, while a phone app provides convenience and control and analytics continuation optimises cost and comfort. These solutions allows users to monitor the temperatures of individual rooms and change them remotely via their smartphone, wherever they are.

## Our thoughts...

Home improvers may now be striving for smarter, more connected homes, but they want something that's plug and play. Smart heating systems fit the bill as they have no wires, no installation and no mess and of course are better for the environment. Adopting technology like this is necessary if people want to reduce their energy consumption in the future. The most modern heating solutions will be key in facilitating smarter, more energy efficient homes for the benefit of our wallets and our planet.

# Smart meet **Wiser**™

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A flexible system that makes multi-zone heating simple and affordable.

[se.com/uk](http://se.com/uk)

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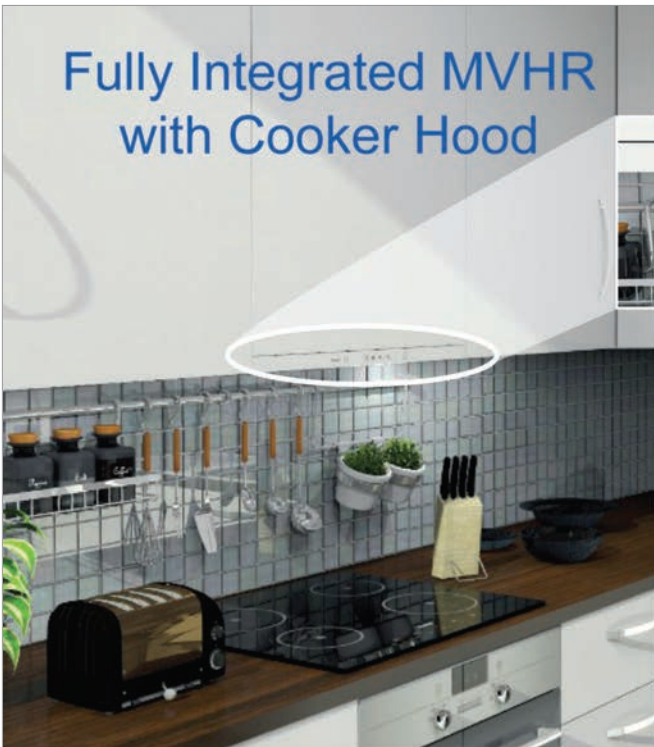


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## First contract awarded for Offsite Solutions



**Offsite Solutions**, a leading bathroom pod manufacturer, has been awarded the first contract for its new enhanced and floorless GRP pods developed for the build-to-rent sector – a £1.6m project for ISG in Cardiff.

Offsite Solutions will manufacture over 400 bathroom and shower pods for Cardiff Interchange – an £89m flagship, mixed-use construction project for developer Rightacres Property. Offsite Solutions' new floorless GRP pods allow the bathrooms to be installed directly onto the floor slab to achieve continuous level floors throughout each apartment whilst minimising floor build up for each storey. This innovation in pod technology is ideal for build-to-rent schemes.

[www.offsitesolutions.com/floorlessGRP](http://www.offsitesolutions.com/floorlessGRP)

## Airflow Developments conquer



On the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 Heating and Ventilation Review (HVR) held their 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive annual awards. As many other events have, HVR took to our screens and held their first ever virtual ceremony. Celebrating the best of the Heating and Ventilating sector, HVR gave out 11 prestigious flame trophies

to the winners of their category awards. **Airflow Developments** are a long-term supporter and attender of these prestigious awards. With the highest number of products shortlisted across the categories, Airflow conquered with two Highly Commended products and one Category Win.

01494 525252 [www.airflow.com](http://www.airflow.com)



## IVC Commercial meets the challenge of today's young professionals

LVT floors from **IVC Commercial** have been used in one of Manchester's latest build-to-rent projects, Affinity Living Trinity Riverside. Affinity Living Trinity Riverside offers luxurious PRS accommodation across a mixture of studios, one, two and three-bedroom apartments with 15 different layout styles. Including co-working space and lounges, Trinity Riverside serves the needs of today's young professionals. IVC Commercial worked with Select Property Group, operator of Trinity Riverside, to deliver affordable floor finishes that would uphold the high living standards of the project, while also fulfilling the need to maximise ongoing profitability. Across 11,000m<sup>2</sup> of floor space, IVC Commercial has provided LVT for apartment living areas, off-site constructed bathroom pods from Offsite Solutions, communal amenity space, corridors and lift lobbies. Throughout the project, IVC Commercial's Moduleo 55 LVT specification has been used. Designed to deliver maximum performance in commercial environments, Moduleo 55 provides durability and ease of maintenance, equipped with Protectonite® for a floor finish that's easy to look after by renters and maintenance teams alike. Opting for the same high-performance specification throughout ensures that Affinity Living Trinity Riverside utilises a floor made to withstand intense use, providing a long life while bringing a natural look to foster wellbeing within private and shared spaces.

[info@ivc-commercial.com](mailto:info@ivc-commercial.com) [www.ivc-commercial.com](http://www.ivc-commercial.com)

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## Geberit grows its bathroom offering with two newly-named collections - Select and Aspire



**G**eberit has extended its offering to housebuilders and property developers following the launch of two newly named bathroom collections. The wider product portfolio will provide the sector with an even greater range of washroom solutions for homebuyers.

### GEBERIT SELECT COLLECTION

Geberit has launched its new Select Collection, which offers housebuilders functional, affordable and on-trend design possibilities across Geberit's range of space-saving concealed cisterns and wall-hung technology solutions.

The collection includes several ranges that were formerly branded as Twyford, with the popular Twyford E100 and E200 rebranding as

the Selnova bathroom series. The range includes the Selnova Square Slim S, which incorporates a narrow rim design to maintain the illusion of space in the washroom, with the modular storage cabinet and mirror cabinet also offering additional storage space – bringing design and functionality to the fore.

### GEBERIT ASPIRE COLLECTION

Geberit is continuing to innovate in the luxury bathroom market with the expansion of its high-end offering, now known as the Aspire Collection. The exclusive collection includes well-known ranges such as Acanto, Smyle and the iCon bathroom series.

Perfectly adapted to suit smaller rooms, Geberit's iCon series features reduced depth washbasins and clever solutions for corners. Its modern, linear design and clear lines help create the illusion of space and the innovative storage concept offers a variety of flexible combination options for generous and practical storage.

Geberit has also introduced its pioneering Geberit ONE range, which integrates behind-the-wall sanitary technology with stylish ceramics to maximise space and create additional storage.

### EVERYTHING IS CHANGING AT GEBERIT...

Mark Larden, Managing Director of Geberit, explains more about the new additions: "Whether you're new to the Geberit brand or an existing partner, we're continuing to optimise and evolve our products and services. That's because we understand the importance

of meeting the ever-changing business requirements across our sectors.

"The introduction of these new collections will open up a wider range of choice for housebuilders across the mid-premium and basic-mid bathroom segments. These changes will provide housebuilders with a wealth of new opportunities to offer a host of added-value specification packages and upgrades across your development portfolio."

### ...BUT NOTHING IS CHANGING

But, as Mark adds, Geberit's 150 years of innovation, know-how and continual investment means that it will remain at the forefront of technology in the bathroom space – behind the wall and in front of the wall. "From bathroom solutions that offer new design possibilities, to products that lead the way in championing hygiene, sustainability and smart technology, we will continue to redefine the bathroom," he adds.

"While we continually innovate and adapt, we also remain dedicated to working with housebuilders to provide the same great service they have come to expect from Geberit, including planning and design, technical support and accredited CPD training."

### A NEW ERA

From on-trend bathroom designs to cutting edge technology Geberit is proud to be setting the standard for a new era in washroom design – giving housebuilders more choice and more selection across a wider breadth of products.

01926 516 800 [www.geberit.co.uk](http://www.geberit.co.uk)





# THE GEBERIT BATHROOM EVERYTHING IS CHANGING BUT NOTHING CHANGES

DESIGN  
MEETS  
FUNCTION

Everything is changing at Geberit. Introducing two newly named bathroom collections to enhance your residential project. Offering an even wider range of solutions; including on-trend bathroom designs, to cutting edge technology that champions hygiene and sustainability at range of price points. But nothing is changing. We are committed to making specifying Geberit easy; from planning, design and technical support to approved CPD training - we're proud to be setting the standard for a new era of bathroom design.

Discover more at [geberit.co.uk/ourcollections](https://geberit.co.uk/ourcollections)

↑ Geberit Selnova Square S

## DRU launches new Virtuo series of contemporary electric fires



Virtuo 75 front model

**D**RU Fires, based in The Netherlands, is a leading European manufacturer of contemporary fires and stoves in gas and wood.

DRU has launched the Virtuo, a revolutionary, realistic electric fire with a unique 3D flame picture and a design and build quality that is the equal of its award-winning gas fires. The Virtuo series is based on the design of the DRU Maestro range of high-end gas fires. They are glass-fronted with authentic log fire beds, realistic flames and a selection of front-facing, 2-sided and 3-sided models. The fires can be

installed into false chimneybreasts or other architectural features around the home to create complete, contemporary fireplaces.

### UNIQUE PROJECTION SYSTEM

Unlike ordinary electric fires, the Virtuo 3D flame picture is generated by a unique projection system that replicates the image of a real log fire, from the tall, dancing flames to the glowing LED fire bed and flying embers. The mirrored decorative glass interior further enhances the depth of image and there is even the sound of crackling wood.

There are three different flame variations, including special light effects that can be updated. In addition, there is a remote control and an exclusive control app for smartphones and tablets with a timer and thermostat.

### SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT

Virtuo delivers a cosy 2 KW output or it can be run as a purely decorative fire. There are no ribbons to twist or spindles to squeak and it is energy efficient with low running costs.

Commenting on the Virtuo launch, DRU UK general manager Niall Deiraniya said:

'Virtuo fulfils a real need in the fireplace market. Many householders are moving away from burning fossil fuels towards more sustainable home heating. Virtuo is also suitable for today's well-insulated properties that do not require an appliance with a high output, but still want the luxury of a beautiful flame effect.'

'For home builders and self-builders, Virtuo also makes a very attractive option, as it requires no chimneys, flue pipes or complex construction. Simply plug it into the domestic power supply and enjoy the experience of an atmospheric log fire.'

For further information and a brochure, please email.

[info@drufire.co.uk](mailto:info@drufire.co.uk) [www.drufire.com](http://www.drufire.com)



Virtuo 80/3, 3-sided model



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**DESIGNER SERIES**  
FROM LECICO BATHROOMS

## The Successful Happy D2 Plus series now includes C-shape technology



**D**uravit and Sieger Design have teamed up again to create an extension to the Happy D.2 Plus series and are delighted to present the new patent-pending c-shaped technology. This evolution of the patented c-bonded process guarantees that the ceramic washbasin and furniture run in parallel with no overhang or recess.

C-shaped has all the benefits of a ceramic glaze; however, it's made entirely of DuraCeram®

specially finished so it's robust and easy to clean.

The new Happy D.2 Plus c-shaped is available in two versions: with a ceramic, glossy white outer edge in combination with a vanity unit or metal console in chrome. In addition c-bonded now comes with a new, rounded outer edge in the same colour as the vanity unit or to match the metal console in Black Matt.

In each version the basins have a narrow flat

edge and harmoniously integrated tap platform and are available in three widths (575, 775 and 975 mm). A white acrylic cover conceals the fittings beneath the basin, guaranteeing perfect aesthetics from any angle.

The floor-standing, height-adjustable metal consoles have an integrated towel rail other additions include an optional shelf or built-in drawer. A further option is a seat (width 625 mm) with a cushion in matching greige made from a woven fabric suitable for wet rooms, the seat has an integrated drawer; which can be added to either the left or right side of the console.

Additional storage space is provided by wall-mounted vanity units with two drawers, available in luxury wood or matt surfaces in light or dark in total there are eleven carcass surfaces to choose from, plus an additional option of a high-end interior furnishing system in Maple or Walnut.

The new washing area variants can be combined with all elements from the Happy D.2 and Happy D.2 Plus design series, ensuring a constant design for the all bathroom furnishings. Happy D.2 Plus offers a consistent colour concept with toilets and bidets in Anthracite as well as bathtubs with seamless panelling in Graphite Supermatt – harmonizing perfectly with the black metal console and dark furniture surfaces.



[info@uk.duravit.com](mailto:info@uk.duravit.com) [www.duravit.co.uk](http://www.duravit.co.uk)



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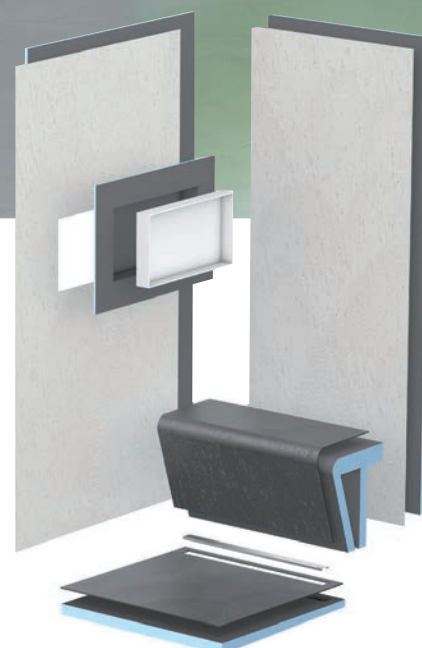
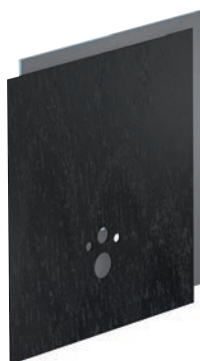


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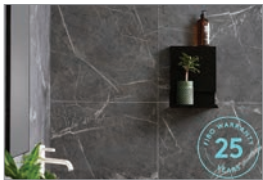


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## Fibo increases its warranty to 25-years



Following significant product development, waterproof bathroom and kitchen wall panel manufacturer, **Fibo**, has increased its product warranty to an industry leading 25-years across its entire range, underpinning the quality and performance of its panels as a true alternative to tiling.

An industry first, Fibo's leading 25-year guarantee applies to Fibo's entire range of precision-engineered waterproof wall panels – a true alternative to tiling – and certifies that its wall panel and kitchen boards will not delaminate, stain, fade or crack as a result of defects of its materials or manufacturing methods.

01494 771242 [www.fibo.co.uk](http://www.fibo.co.uk)

## Duravit and Cecilie Manz expand the Luv series



The Luv series created for **Duravit** by Danish designer Cecilie Manz invokes the Scandinavian concept of living with a sense of wellbeing. Carefully conceived materials that appeal to the sense of touch and a harmonious colour palette help to complete the overall picture.

This is reflected in the new furniture colour Almond Satin Matt; with its interplay of light colours and natural shades combined with the different console surfaces, in quartz or solid wood creating a calm interior which exudes elegance.

[info@uk.duravit.com](mailto:info@uk.duravit.com) [www.duravit.co.uk](http://www.duravit.co.uk)



## Geberit grows its offering with two newly-named collections

**Geberit** has extended its offering to architects, interior designers and specifiers following the launch of two newly named washroom collections. The announcement marks the start of an exciting new chapter for Geberit in the UK. The Aspire Collection is the new name for Geberit's premium offering, formerly known as the Geberit Bathroom Collection. The exclusive collection includes well-known ranges such as iCon, Acanto and Smyle. Geberit has also introduced its pioneering bathroom innovation, Geberit One, which integrates behind-the-wall sanitary technology with stylish ceramics to generate more space, create additional storage and easy cleaning. The Geberit One range offers designers a wide choice of new slim furniture options, from a floating washbasin to a mirror cabinet with fully integrated lighting. Alongside the Aspire Collection, Geberit has also launched its new Select Collection, which offers architects, interior designers and specifiers functional, affordable and on-trend design possibilities for the mid-market across its space-saving concealed cisterns and wall-hung technology solutions. The Select Collection features the Selnova bathroom series, which incorporates a variety of different designs including Selnova Compact for smaller washroom spaces, as well as the Selnova Comfort accessible range for end-users with reduced mobility.

01926 516 800 [www.geberit.co.uk](http://www.geberit.co.uk)

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## Designer Contracts helps emergency appeal



**Designer Contracts** has stepped in to help a local charity's emergency appeal. The company has donated a further £10,000 to Ashgate Hospice. The boost towards the #AshgateUrgentAppeal, was launched to generate vital funds to help the hospice continue

providing end of life care while responding to the challenges of coronavirus in the community. Said Designer Contracts md, Peter Kelsey: "The pandemic has seen many charities suffer from a dramatic decline in income with fundraising activities cancelled as a result of the COVID lockdown. Ashgate Hospice relies heavily on these planned events, which are organised throughout the year. We were delighted to be able to help, as we are all too aware of the amazing work that they do for people in and around the community."

01246 854577 [www.DesignerContracts.com](http://www.DesignerContracts.com)

## Where quality matters



Devon-based luxury housebuilder, Bishopstone Homes, is currently creating Amberley Gardens, in Kingsteignton, Devon. Creating high quality homes demands high quality, reliable materials and Bishopstone has once again chosen **Norbord's** CaberDek flooring panels for the intermediate floors. Sam Bishop, Managing

Director of Bishopstone Homes, particularly likes the strong film covering on CaberDek which, he says, "protects our homes during the build process and peels off easily to reveal a clean smooth surface ready to accept floor finishes". "We use CaberDek on all our housebuilding projects as it is easy to work with and debris is easily swept off at the end of the day".

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

## New LAMIA tap from BLANCO



The new, slender **BLANCO** LAMIA chrome twin level monobloc mixer tap has been developed with practicality in mind. The high L-shaped spout allows for easy filling of tall pots and vases while the working radius is optimised due to the 360° swivel facility. The tap is designed for super long life and easy installation as with all **BLANCO** products. Features include a ceramic disk cartridge, flexible connector pipes,

patented jet regulator for reduced scaling and a stabilisation plate to increase the stability of the tap when fitted in stainless steel sinks.

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

## Sizzling Smokey Wood kitchen from Keller



This stunning new Smokey Wood kitchen scheme from **Keller** has been designed to ooze beautiful rustic charm in the heart of the home. The rough veneer, with smoked wood stain, is luxurious and adds a modern touch to this country

style kitchen; while top quality manufacturing techniques make for long life and smooth operation. The handle trims in gun metal provide the finishing touches along with superb Keller pan drawer lighting and custom-made dresser and seating. Keller Kitchens offers complete versatility; finishes comprise veneer, melamine or lacquered; while matt, silk, high gloss and structured lacquers are available in over 1950 NCS colours.

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



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## The Axiom® Worktop Collection



Twenty new and exclusive decors, 13 new feature splashbacks and three new textures are among the exciting highlights of **Formica Group's** cutting edge Axiom® by Formica Group worktop Collection launched in October 2020. The details have been revealed as Formica Group prepares to unveil an ultra-premium, refreshed and refined collection

for one of the market's most recognisable worktop brands. A selection of lighter woods, stones and slates have been added to meet growing demand for enriched yet timeless designs.

0191 622 0106 [www.formica.com](http://www.formica.com)

## Style and simplicity key



A new streamlined Prima® worktop Collection from **Formica Group** promises offers the ultimate in fresh, modern kitchens. Our product and design experts at Formica Group have opted for a quality-over-quantity approach, simplifying the Prima Collection from 52 to 34 core and on-trend designs, including 16 new worktop decors and 10

feature splashbacks. Light woods, warm stones and solid colours are at the heart of the selection, which draws upon intensive design research, complemented by detailed customer research and of course knowledge and expertise from our own in-house design team.

0191 622 0106 [www.formica.com](http://www.formica.com)

## Königstone's search for a fabricator



Worktop and surface specialist, **Königstone**, is seeking a new fabrication partner in the North West of UK to supplement the company's healthy growth and expansion. This is following on from the success of Königstone's debut presence at KBB 2020 which generated much

excitement from visitors to the show. Königstone supplies an impressive range of supreme quality kitchen surfaces with both a natural stone and elegant Quartz range. Recent developments include the innovative new Königsink and breath-taking portfolio of semi-precious materials for use in unique kitchen features.

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

## External porcelain and stone tile trends



**Norcros Adhesives** is launching a new three-part system for fixing increasingly-popular 20mm external porcelain and stone tiles, called Norcros Rock-Tite Exterior Porcelain & Stone System. The Rock-Tite system comprises a Primer, a Mortar and a Brush-In Grout. It is designed for use by landscapers and garden design-

ers, as well as tile fixers, and capitalises on a key trend in the tiling market currently. This is where internal tiled space is being extended to terrace or patio areas outside a building, which is part of a long-term lifestyle trend to enhance living areas by making better use of external space.

01782 524 140 [www.norcros-adhesives.com](http://www.norcros-adhesives.com)



## Claypaint transforms listed property

Paragon is a grand Grade 1 Listed Georgian Terrace designed by Thomas Attwood and built in 1768. Situated in Bath city centre, it is surrounded by period architecture. Guinness World Record holder and Britain's fastest snowboarder Jamie Barrow, decided to take on a slower challenge to fully renovate a two storey apartment in the terrace. Jamie re-plastered the apartment in lime to ensure it remained breathable. He said: "In the basement of a Grade 1 Listed building, there were obviously some damp issues. As we were not allowed to damp proof these buildings, we had to use breathable materials, which is why we used lime plaster on the walls."

Jamie decided to use **Earthborn** Claypaint due to its high level of breathability, thick creamy consistency and ease of use. He added: "We initially used a lime wash as this is what was suggested but after many coats it just wasn't covering well. This is when I looked into what breathable paints are available and came across Earthborn Claypaint. I decided to give it a go and after just 1 coat it covered amazingly and gave a really nice luxury feel. That is why I am now using it on my other projects."

01928 734 171 [www.earthbornpaints.co.uk](http://www.earthbornpaints.co.uk)



## JACKOBOARD® provides the ideal preparation for tiling

Manufactured with an extruded polystyrene foam core and a special coating on both sides, JACKOBOARD® construction boards form an ideal base for tiling. The surfaces of the JACKOBOARD® system provide an extremely strong bond and can be used on virtually any substrate. The boards are moisture resistant, waterproof, thermally insulating, lightweight and very strong. JACKOBOARD® high performance construction boards provide the flexibility to meet modern requirements in bathroom design. What was once considered a mere washroom has now been elevated to a private wellness oasis. In recent years, the demands placed on bathroom finishes have changed dramatically to allow refurbished bathrooms to shine like new with flexible and high-quality renovations. Recent changes in British Standards for tiling require the wider use of more appropriate materials for construction, and for receiving tiles in water sensitive and wet areas. This has increased the demand for the JACKOBOARD® range in new build applications as well as in renovation works. JACKOBOARD® products including CANTO angled elements, WABO bath panels and FLEXO boards allow the bathroom designer to create customised dream bathrooms with exceptional speed and ease. Visit the **JACKON** website for more information.

01204 221089 [www.jackon-insulation.co.uk](http://www.jackon-insulation.co.uk)



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# IMPROVEMENTS IN THE KITCHEN

Dave Mayer of Reginox UK looks into how current kitchen trends will affect what's installed in the new wave of home improvements predicted to occur.

**W**hen planning for 2020, no one could possibly have predicted what the reality would turn out to be.

The term 'unprecedented times' has been frequently used to describe the pandemic and the global impact it's certainly likely to be more severe than we have ever experienced before and to last for many years to come. Many industries were forced to grind to an unexpected halt due to restrictions being enforced, and others continue to be greatly affected by the global issues surrounding the exports and supply chain.

However, a recent industry survey stated that three-quarters of consumers are planning home improvements over the next 12 months, and kitchen products are seeing considerable demand for our across the construction sector.

With this in mind, there are certain trends likely to feature for the rest of the year during this upturn.

## SINKS

### MATERIALS

Granites are seeing more interest than ever before with creative designs and colours that are likely to fit well within the multitude of today's 'mainstream' kitchen colours.

Ceramics are now almost as likely to be found in contemporary settings as they are in farmhouse-style kitchens, with modern designs and colours lending themselves well to the consumer looking to add something different.

The UK's never-ending love affair with stainless steel continues, probably due to steel's good looks, longevity, ease of maintenance and ability to look good in any style of kitchen. There are now some stunning contemporary steel sinks available, often with eye-catching features such as square wastes.

The industry is still seeing a steady growth of coloured sinks manufactured from all three of these materials, as consumers look to coordinate the sink

area with their worksurfaces or kitchen units. Neutrals such as white, cream, beige, grey and black are staples within the kitchen, and more sinks are becoming available in these colourways, whether manufactured from granite, ceramic or even coloured stainless steel.

### DESIGN

In terms of design, sinks are mirroring the overall trend for minimalism in the kitchen. Slab-sided sinks with clean modern lines, softened by gentle curves, are continuing to grow in popularity, in line with the trend for linear kitchens featuring curved end units. The emphasis is on simple but striking designs that are easy on the eye.

### BOWL SIZES

The '1.5 bowl' is still the most popular configuration in the UK, as it has been for many years. However, the large single bowl is increasing in popularity and many customers find that when they do switch from a 1.5 bowl to a single bowl, they realise they really don't need the

additional half.

With the majority of modern households having dishwashers, a large single bowl is far more practical as it enables larger items that won't fit in the dishwasher, such as woks and oven trays, to be easily washed up in the sink.

### SINK STYLES

Inset sinks remain the most popular, as they are easy to fit and can be installed into any worksurface material.

Integrated sinks are equally easy to fit and can provide a sleeker, more streamlined appearance than inset models. Undermounted or flush mounted sinks look the best when installed, but can only be fitted into solid surface materials such as timber or granite.

## TAPS

### DESIGNS

There has never been a greater choice of taps available for consumers to choose from, and there is no doubt that an aesthetically striking tap can really help to draw attention.

Once merely a commodity item, the kitchen tap has been elevated to a position of much greater standing and, as a result, there is now a vast selection of taps available for consumers to choose from, many of which deliver far more than just water.

The choice of tap style and material is really down to personal taste in terms of functionality required and a design that will sit well with the sink and overall look of the kitchen. Sinks are most often chosen first, and then a tap is chosen to complement it – so a curvy tap for a curvy sink, or an angled tap for an angular sink.

The single lever Monobloc tap remains the most popular choice by a long way,





although boiling hot water taps are proving to be a real growth market. The market for taps with pull-out sprays and LED lights has never really materialised; these taps are, of course, still available, but they have remained very much a niche market.

#### BOILING HOT WATER TAPS

Boiling hot water taps are currently undergoing massive growth, with consumers increasingly looking for three-way taps that offer instant hot, ordinary hot, and cold water.

No longer a luxury item, boiling hot

water taps are starting to almost become the norm in the modern kitchen and, as prices continue to fall, they will become even more accessible.

#### WHAT SHOULD SPECIFIERS LOOK FOR?

Specifiers should look for taps that are WRAS or equivalent approved, which is the hallmark of quality when it comes to taps. Two taps can look very similar yet be worlds apart in terms of quality, and it makes sense to invest a little more money upfront for a quality tap that will last, than to risk the reputation loss of residents having to replace a cheap one after just a few months of use.

A local kitchen fitter should be able to make recommendations when installing taps. Whoever installs the tap should be qualified to do so, and will therefore be able to check and advise on compatibility with any pre-drilled holes and compatibility with water pressure. If a boiling hot water tap is being installed, it is likely that an electrician will also need to be involved as hot taps can draw a lot of current – again, ensure that the electrician is approved.

*Dave Mayer is sales and marketing director of Reginox UK*

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experience and ensures that the beauty and strength of the sink can be maintained for longer.

Available in three colour ways - Light Grey, Black and White - the Multa range comes in a choice of three different sizes and is suitable for either inset or undermount fitting.



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# TILED HYGIENE

The pandemic has thrown the spotlight on issues of hygiene as never before; The Tile Association explains tiled surfaces' wide applications for helping achieve clean, healthy environments.



**T**iles are a durable and aesthetic solution for walls and floors in domestic homes, and current trends are increasing the appeal even further. Large format tiles, metro tiles, industrial look and wood-effect are increasingly popular, and, more importantly, there are practical health and safety benefits as well.

Current concerns about health and hygiene, triggered by the coronavirus pandemic, are likely to remain with us long after the current health crisis has passed. Housebuilders and developers are sure to be looking hard at the hygiene benefits of tiled surfaces long

into the future.

The current generation of wood-effect tiles are one interesting example of the benefits tiled surfaces can bring, since they give the aesthetic impression of real wood flooring, but bring hygienic properties to the home, which wood flooring could never hope to achieve.

This is not unique to wood-effect tiles, of course. All tiled surfaces are inherently hygienic.

## GROUT

There are sometimes concerns about the grouted area, but grout areas in a tiled surface will in fact normally only amount to about 3 per cent of the total area, and if epoxy grouts are used, the surface will be totally impervious and will not harbour bacteria or viruses, provided an appropriate cleaning regime is employed.

It is also worth noting that tiled surfaces can safely be cleaned at temperatures in excess of 60°C, since they are fired to temperatures far above that during the manufacturing process. This means that tiles are a good solution in an environment where boiling liquids might

accidentally get spilt on them.

Glazed tiles and certain types of unglazed tiles, such as increasingly popular porcelain tiles, are to all intents and purposes impervious. When used with epoxy grouts, this enhances the level of protection still further, since these are also impervious.

## STANDARDS

The relevant British Standard is BS EN 14411:2012, which covers the specification of ceramic wall and floor tiles, including their resistance to abrasion and chemicals. BS 5385-4:2015 includes a code of practice for the design and installation of ceramic and mosaic tiling in specific conditions. This gives recommendations on design considerations and on the installation of ceramic wall and floor tiling and mosaics in situations where there are specific environmental or functional requirements.

BS 5385-4:2015 also covers grouts and states that: "Epoxy-resin based materials are superior to cementitious mixtures by virtue of their impermeability and smooth surface texture whereby the degree of contamination is reduced and cleaning facilitated". Grouts used should conform to BS 13888, which covers the specification, conformity and evaluation of all types of tile grout.

Research has been carried out in the past by the Campden & Chorleywood Food Research Association, published in the Journal of Applied Bacteriology, which concludes that "the grouted joints and texture did not compromise the cleanabilities of tiled surfaces." The research also states that the cleanability of tiled surfaces with grouted joints is not compromised over that of tiles alone.

Tiled surfaces can even have a beneficial effect on the air we breathe in the home. All building materials can have an impact on air quality. The manufacture of ceramic tiles results in a final product which is inorganic and fully inert. This means that tiled surfaces do not emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

## AIR QUALITY & ALLERGENS

Tiles are also hypoallergenic, since the hard surfaces on ceramic tiles don't give allergens a place to hide. Ease of cleaning also means that dust mites, pet hairs, pollen and other chemical allergens common to other floorings have nowhere to hide on a tiled surface. Tiles are also resistant to the growth of mould and mildew spores.

There are also no chemicals in tiles which can potentially cause an allergic reaction, such as formaldehyde or halogenated flame retardants, as can be found in vinyl, wood or carpet.

**A BESPOKE TILING BACKER BOARD SHOULD BE USED - THE INTEGRITY OF THE TILING SUBSTRATE CAN ITSELF HAVE IMPORTANT HYGIENE IMPLICATIONS**



#### FURTHER BENEFITS

From a fire safety perspective, ceramic tiles are neutral in terms of fire risk, being non-combustible. Since they don't burn, they don't cause smoke and will not emit toxins in a fire as many other floorings do.

A further consideration for house-builders is in the construction of tiling

substrates. Waterproofing for tiled surfaces is installed behind the tiles as a tanking system. In other types of installation however, such as a vinyl flooring system, the vinyl may provide the tanking itself. Therefore any failure or damage to the covering or poor sealing techniques at the drain interface could have serious consequences for water sensitive backgrounds and subsequent bacteria colonisation. Whereas if a tile is damaged then the background, when tanked, remains fully protected and the waterproofing element is maintained.

An area that TTA has been working on is that of slip resistance of tiled surfaces, and TTA has a technical document on Slip Resistance of Hard Flooring. Ceramic tiles are not inherently slippery when clean and dry, but the slip resistance of any type of floor covering can significantly reduce if it becomes contaminated by any form of lubricant, such as water or dust, depending upon the floor's surface texture and footwear used. Anti-slip tiles for use in bathrooms and wetrooms are available from many manufacturers, and can also feature special step tread patterns.

#### INSTALLATION

All work should be carried out to British Standard BS5385. In its latest revision



(2018), tiling directly to plywood is no longer recommended for wall tiling. A bespoke tiling backer board should be used - as described previously, the integrity of the tiling substrate can itself have important hygiene implications.

The latest British Standard also states that tiling works should be carried out by a skilled operative, who has been trained to a level of competence, certified by a recognised authoritative body, such as the TTA.

*The Tile Association is an independent trade association representing the UK tiling industry*

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## Reginox UK welcomes new Area Sales Manager



Sinks, taps and accessories manufacturer, **Reginox UK**, is celebrating its latest addition to the team – Natasha Pearce. Natasha, from Huddersfield, has joined Reginox as its new Area Sales Manager across the North region. The role will see Natasha grow and develop Reginox UK's client base across the region both through existing and new customers, as well as maintaining the

highest level of customer service and client liaison. Natasha Pearce, Area Sales Manager, North said: "While I'm new to the KBB industry. I have a wealth of experience within the sales function so I'm really excited to use the skills and expertise that I have gained over the years to benefit Reginox in my new role and make the North region the most successful in the company's history."

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**Snickers Workwear** jackets are well known for delivering performance and comfort at work – integral features of this new range of Windproof Jackets. Sharp, stylish looks and market-leading GORE® WINDSTOPPER® and stretch CORDURA® fabric technology to make this jacket a must for winter on site or outdoor leisurewear.

This great-looking jacket has a fleece-lined interior for warmth and climate control fabric to keep your body warm or comfortably cool when you most need it. With a water-repellent fabric, it can be worn on its own or combined with Snickers' Mid and Base Layer garments. Fashionable and functional, this jacket has long arm cuffs with thumb grips for warm comfort and a high collar that delivers extra wind protection.

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

## House showcases systems from Jackon



An impressive new house in Devon highlights the benefits of **Jackon's** Jackodur Atlas insulated concrete raft system and Thermomur ICF blocks for internal and external walls. Used together, these systems enable more rapid construction and in this project produced an insulated slab with a u-value of 0.15 and external walls with a u-value of 0.15. On some projects use of the Jackon systems enables even lower u-values to be achieved. Laing Bespoke Homes developed the property and were amazed by both the ease of use of the Jackon systems and the very high energy efficiency of the completed building.

01204 221089 [www.jackon-insulation.co.uk](http://www.jackon-insulation.co.uk)

## New developments with Permeable Paving and SuDS

The trade association Interpave has published a new edition of 'Understanding Permeable Paving and SuDS', an essential introductory guide to all aspects of concrete block permeable paving for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) – and much more. This comprehensive guide explores the latest innovations for new and retrofit paving, and potential with wider benefits for the urban environment.

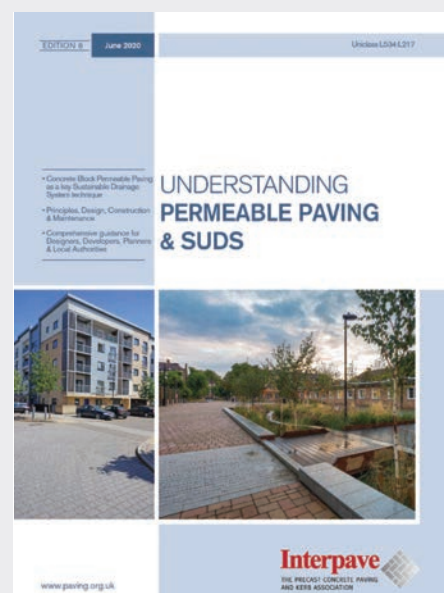
Concrete block permeable paving is uniquely placed as an essential, multifunctional SuDS technique, providing an inherent drainage system that requires no additional land take for water storage. It combines proven engineering design solutions with water management replicating nature near the surface. Permeable paving can be used for direct infiltration of attenuated, treated water to the ground or conveyance to other SuDS or sewers. It should also cost less than conventional paving and piped drainage to install and maintain, as the guide demonstrates. The new edition then explains how to use straightforward flow controls to maximise storage and other capabilities of permeable paving, offering further cost savings.

And permeable paving is also very effective at

removing pollution from surface water runoff, notably vehicle pollutants, identified in recent research as particularly harmful to our rivers. In fact, permeable paving provides a gradual supply of clean, treated water as an asset, supporting landscape (including trees), biodiversity, water harvesting and safe open SuDS features downstream. But the wider benefits of concrete block permeable paving are also discussed in the guide. It offers 'cool pavements' helping to reduce the urban heat island effect, making our cities more comfortable in summer, with evaporation of rainwater from the surface and within the paving. This enhances the already high albedo – or heat reflectance – offered by concrete block or flag paving generally.

One particular innovation covered in the latest edition of the guide is set to play a major role in the post-pandemic public realm. Retrofitting concrete block permeable paving as an overlay to existing streets offers a low-intervention technique to transform the public realm in response to the raft of recent active travel and open space initiatives.

To download edition 6 of Understanding Permeable Paving and SuDS, please visit [www.paving.org.uk/home/permeable-paving](http://www.paving.org.uk/home/permeable-paving)



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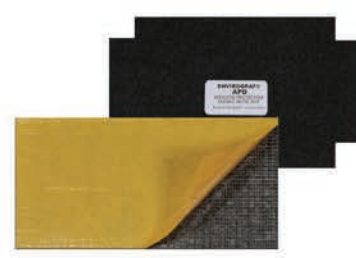
GASKETS FOR DRY LINING BOXES



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GASKETS FOR METAL CONSUMER UNITS



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## PRODUCT 4 - INSTUMESCENT COATED SLABS

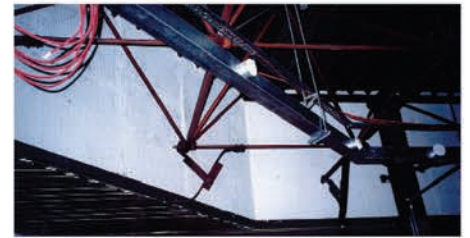
600mm x 1200 x 60mm slabs coated both sides up to for 4 hours fire protection



SEALING SERVICES THROUGH WALLS



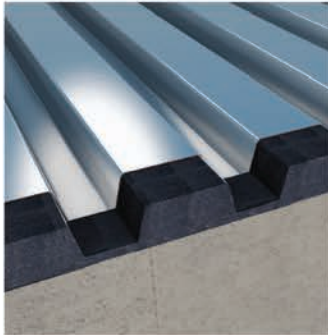
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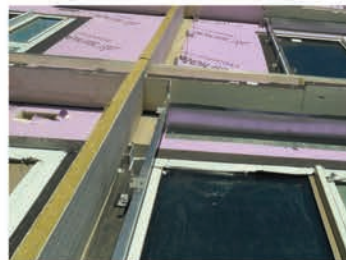
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## Building owners encouraged to rethink their fire doors ahead of the Fire Safety Bill

**B**uilding owners and landlords are being encouraged to make their properties safer and more secure in advance of changes to fire safety legislation.

Proposals in the draft Fire Safety Bill seek to amend the Fire Safety Order 2005 to clarify the role of the responsible person or duty holder for multi-occupancy residential buildings. If approved, the changes will make it clear that building owners and landlords must manage and reduce the risk of fire in relation to entrance doors for individual flats that open into common areas.

The new Door-Stop International fire and security doorset range, aims to be the product of choice for those wanting to improve their existing buildings or specify new developments. Designed by Door-Stop, a subsidiary of Premdor Crosby, the timber core product with GRP facings is third-party certificated and a robust base of primary test evidence has been used as the foundation for certification.

Hannah Mansell, Technical Director at Premdor Crosby said:

"We want residents and stakeholders in the fire door safety chain to have complete confidence in the performance of our Door-Stop doorsets, knowing that they have been tested and certificated by reputable, independent third-party certification bodies.

"Our strict factory production control system provides a digital golden thread of traceability for every component or raw material that goes into each doorset that leaves our factory."

The Door-Stop Fire and Security Dual-Certificated Doorset including the glazed topight is Certifire-accredited by Warringtonfire. Although it is not a requirement for timber fire doors, it has been furnace tested from both directions in order to provide



additional assurances to building owners and occupants. Certisecure, a scheme recognised by Secured by Design, has been used to demonstrate its security credentials.

Hannah added: "We have a vast library of primary test evidence and certification for our range of Door-Stop products. This is underpinned by the strict, digital, factory production control system that we operate which is designed to provide complete control and traceability of our raw materials and components.

"Those same factory control processes are regularly audited by independent, UKAS accredited auditors. Our system is designed to ensure the doorset specification, manufacturing controls and therefore its performance, is consistent and robust.

"The factory production control system also provides a digital golden thread of traceability

for each and every single component or raw material that goes into each doorset that leaves our factory gates, adding further reassurance for purchasers and occupiers."

Warringtonfire has said that Door-Stop International's doorset range is among the first to have achieved dual certification for both security and fire through Warringtonfire's Certisecure and Certifire schemes.

Mark West, Technical Development Engineer at Warringtonfire, said: "Dual certification for both security and fire with the same certification body is now advocated by Secured by Design. Warringtonfire and BM TRADA, which are both part of the Element Group, are among the only certification bodies in the UK with the technical competency to offer this dual certification through their Certisecure, Certifire and Q-Mark certification schemes at laboratories in Wednesbury, Warrington and High Wycombe.

"Dual certification gives the end user confidence that the product supplied under the scope of certification has been assessed for both security and fire performance with equal weight, and any future product enhancements will be rigorously assessed by our engaged experts in both areas. This ensures that neither performance is compromised at any point, a position that cannot necessarily be achieved when the certification is not linked in this way."

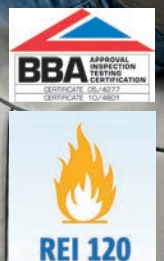
Every doorset is shipped with detailed installation instructions and a Resident Guide. The Resident's Guide includes an easy to follow check list that will help residents avoid the common pitfalls that prevent fire doors performing in the event of an emergency, as well as the methods to report concerns and find out further information.

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[www.door-stop.co.uk/firedoors](http://www.door-stop.co.uk/firedoors)







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regulations, are approved by the BBA, LABC registered and classified as fire resistance class REI 120.

## Thermoblocks used for student building



The development of a new student accommodation building in one of the South Coast's most popular towns has included the use of the proven-in-practice and very versatile **Marmox Thermoblocks**: specified to combat cold-bridging at the junction of its parapet walls with the

property's roof decks. The site agent for Henry Construction, John Keeley commented: "I have used Marmox Thermoblocks on a number of projects in the past – including with previous companies and always found them ideal for applications such as this, easy to cut and lay, while also being very robust."

01634 835290 [www.marmox.co.uk](http://www.marmox.co.uk)

## Fast and agile over rough terrain



**BAL** have launched a new rapid-setting levelling compound – **BAL Level Fast**. **BAL Level Fast** lets you get on with tiling sooner with floors ready to walk on after only 30 minutes and ready to tile after only 45 minutes! Fast and agile over rough terrain, it is suitable over underfloor heating and timber

floors from just a 3mm bed depth, **BAL Level Fast** is engineered to ensure a longer wet edge (10 minutes) and anti-shrinkage technology to provide the perfect substrate for tiling small domestic projects.

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## New research highlights offsite opportunities

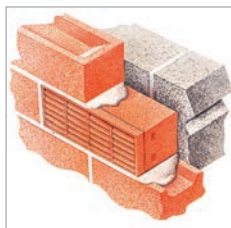


**Kingspan Insulation** has published a new whitepaper with research from leading consultants, Currie & Brown, showing that structural insulated panels (SIPs) can cut housebuilding timescales by up to 26 per cent when compared with masonry approaches, providing overall cost savings of as much as 2.9 per cent. The research programme compared the Kingspan TEK Building System of SIPs (comprising OSB/3

faceted panels with a rigid insulation core) with masonry constructions across three modelled case study buildings. The results showed that by using the Kingspan TEK Building System, the overall programme length for both detached dwellings could be reduced by 26 per cent (8 weeks) whilst the programme length for the apartment block was cut by a full 12 weeks.

01544 387 384 [www.kingspantek.co.uk/costofspeed](http://www.kingspantek.co.uk/costofspeed)

## Compliant ventilation at the correct level



Whilst clay and concrete airbricks commonly have airflow ratings under 1,200mm<sup>2</sup>, the Cavitybrick has an airflow rating of 7,500mm<sup>2</sup> and is offered in a range of colours. Providing the requisite NHBC ventilation is made easier plus there's a range of straight and cranked sleeves to ensure the Cavitybrick can always be the correct height off ground level. And if there are obstructions such as contaminated

land gas barriers present in the cavity, there are gastight preformed harmonising sleeves to pass through them. For more information, please visit the **Cavity Trays** website.

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## The Light Gauge Steel Solution

**Simpson Strong-Tie** is all set to provide the steel frame construction industry with performance tested connectors and fixings with the release of their 2021 Connectors for Light Gauge Steel catalogue – created for suppliers, architects, engineers, erectors and contractors alike. Alongside the ever popular TJC Jack Truss and Rafter Connector, an on-site adjustable angle bracket, HTT5 Tension Ties and the Quik Drive collated fastening system sit brand new product innovations:

- The LGSSC Splicing Clip connects over-sail LGS studs to the primary structure
- The RCKW Parapet Wall Bracket resists an over-turning moment at the base of exterior knee-walls and parapets
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- X1224 screws are capable of drilling through 12.5mm steel and suitable for fixing to hot rolled steel sections.

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