



The Industry Advocate: Brian Berry says SME builders are key to Gove's levelling-up aims



A heart of oak: Explaining the roots of a new luxury oak-framed Springbourne Homes scheme



The Climate Challenge: Methven offers advice on tackling a future with scarce water supplies

HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022

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James Parker

FROM THE EDITOR

Michael Gove's 'Levelling Up' White Paper roped in a variety of important housing moves as part of its wide regeneration agenda. There has been controversy around re-announcements of funding packages, 'regifted' like unwanted christmas presents, and suggestions this substantial initiative has been a rushed, cobbled-together affair.

At least £1.5bn of it isn't new money – Rishi Sunak actually announced the 1.8bn Brownfield Fund in October 2021, however £1.5bn of it has been polished up and put on show as the Levelling Up Home Building Fund. This is an important source of brownfield regeneration loans for SME builders – in priority areas in the north and midlands. Despite this however, it's money diverted away from perhaps equally needy areas in the rest of the country – with a paltry £300m left for other brownfield projects across the rest of the UK.

Gove eagerly announced an ambitious, Homes England-led plan to regenerate 20 towns and city centres, starting with Wolverhampton and Sheffield. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is excited by the regeneration of London's Kings Cross into a high-end commercial and residential zone, and wants levelling-up projects to be equally ambitious.

Perhaps the most important change in the White Paper is scrapping the '80/20 rule', which leads to most Government housing investment being directed to London and the south east. For areas prioritised for 'levelling up' (largely former 'red wall,' now Tory seats), there'll be a bonanza of housebuilding work, albeit on brownfield sites.

We need to remember the big picture of the net zero 2050 target. In replacing dilapidated infrastructure in cities, new schemes must be driven by sustainability. Yet there is little in terms of mandatory Government green building standards beyond the interim Future Homes Standard 31% carbon cut. Developers will need to create their own eco momentum, and deploy their nous in delivering it efficiently.

Come the April energy price rises of £700 a year for consumers, some people will have to choose between 'heating and eating,' so low carbon homes need to be the focus, for more than just the planet. The newly-appointed Housing Minister, Stuart Andrew, has his work cut out.

James Parker

HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

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ON THE COVER



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Government confirms 'Levelling Up' housing pledges



The details of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper have been revealed, including a range of housing announcements as part of a broad devolution agenda.

Among a range of proposals intended to increase prosperity for regions targeted for 'levelling up' outside London and the south east, significant plans for the housing sector were confirmed by Secretary of State for Housing, Michael Gove. However the moves have been criticised for not being new investment.

Gove announced a Homes England-led project to regenerate 20 towns and city centres, starting with Wolverhampton and Sheffield. They will undertake "ambitious, King's Cross-style regeneration projects, transforming derelict urban sites into beautiful communities," said the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

The '80/20 rule' (which causes 80% of Government funding for housing to be directed at 'maximum affordability areas' – principally London and the south east) will be scrapped under the plans. Also, much of the Government's current £1.8bn brownfield funding will be diverted to sites in the north and midlands, with city Mayors being allocated £120m of it.

The £1.5bn Levelling Up Home Building Fund was also announced for loans to SME builders, targeting "areas that are a priority for levelling up," with "genuinely affordable social housing. However despite being hailed as 'new' money by the Government, this will reportedly be taken from the £1.8bn

brownfield funding pot.

In addition, a new Social Housing Regulation Bill will "deliver upon the commitments the Government made following the Grenfell tragedy." The Government also pledged to legislate "for the first time ever" that all homes in the Private Rented Sector will have to meet the Decent Homes Standard. 'No fault' Section 21 evictions be abolished, "meaning renters should no longer be kicked out of their homes for no reason," said DLUHC. Further to this, Government will consult on introducing a landlords register, and will set out plans for a "crack-down on rogue landlords."

Industry gives mixed response to Gove's re-cladding requirements

The construction and housing industries have given a mixed response to Michael Gove's announcement that £4bn for replacing cladding to ensure it is fire-safe on buildings over 11 metres will be passed from leaseholders to house-builders, developers and product manufacturers.

David Renard, spokesperson for the Local Government Association, welcomed the Secretary of State's "threat to use the legal system to ensure developers meet their responsibilities to leaseholders as a "positive step."

He added that the construction industry "must be made to fix the fire safety defects it has built into blocks owned by councils and housing associations." He said if the Government didn't do this, remedial costs for social housing blocks "will fall on council housing revenue accounts and housing associations."

Developers have been given a deadline of early March to create a "fully funded plan of action" to address cladding responsibilities, otherwise the Government will step in with legal measures to force them to do so.

Law firm Irwin Mitchell believed that Gove's proposals were "of questionable efficacy and breadth." Jeremy Raj, national head of residential property at

the firm, said: "The Government's acknowledgement that reaction to date has been slow and ineffective will be cold comfort, particularly in relation to those with non-cladding issues. Government must accept when its own performance has not been acceptable and ensure a rapid improvement."

Mike Robinson, chief executive of the British Safety Council agreed: "The Government must also shoulder its own responsibilities, having overseen the regulatory framework that led to Grenfell and other similar tragedies. We need to see all sides taking a positive and constructive approach to discussions between now and March."

Jeremy Raj added: "The cladding on Grenfell had nothing to do with current or historic developers of new build homes, having been retrofitted many years after the original build, using materials that were clearly dangerous that seem to have been ignored or waved through by the regulatory authorities."

"The idea that responsibility for resolving the cladding scandal – which has now widened to become a general building safety scandal – should be laid solely at the doors of developers asked to voluntarily cough up more cash, is likely to lead only to further delay and heartbreak for leaseholders caught in dangerous or un-sellable properties.

Raj concluded: "Many developers will be puzzled as to how and to what extent they can justify such expenditure on a 'voluntary' basis in the context of their obligations to shareholders, and a lack of direct responsibility, particularly given clear evidence of contributory negligence by others."

Mike Robinson said that the £4bn promised by Gove "will not pay leaseholders' costs for other issues beyond cladding that aren't included in these plans, such as balconies on a building that have been built with flammable material."

He added: "The Grenfell fire showed how broad the building safety crisis is, spanning not just construction but design, manufacturing, fire safety and building management."

Eddie Tuttle, director of policy at the Chartered Institute of Building, commented that the body was already taking steps to address safety concerns. "The CIOB has been actively engaged in raising standards and promoting best practice in building safety," he said, "adding that the organisation "will continue to work with industry and government to bring about the culture change that is needed, as well as developing the required competency standards for the duty holder roles under the upcoming Building Safety Act."

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Planning delays 'threaten the demise' of SME builders

More than nine out of 10 smaller housebuilders have said planning is the biggest obstacle to increasing their housing delivery, according to a recent survey from the Homebuilders Federation (HBF).

The survey revealed that its respondents expect planning delays to get worse in 2022 in many parts of the UK due to political turmoil, namely because of local elections for all London boroughs and Scottish and Welsh authorities in May.

Respondents also said the planning process had deteriorated over the last year, leaving them disadvantaged compared with larger builders who could absorb long wait costs. Nine out of 10 said local authorities had insufficient staff and resources to offer an efficient service.

SME builders said planning authorities favoured bigger housebuilders, as larger schemes made it easier for housing delivery targets to be met.

Material supplies and costs were quoted as the next biggest barrier to housing delivery. More than three-quarters (78%) of the 100 SME builders who took part in the online survey cited this as a problem compared with just 20% in the previous year's survey. Although some respondents said the increases could be absorbed by raising house prices, most claimed this wasn't possible, as building materials were running out before houses could be completed.

Labour shortages and costs were also an issue with 59% saying this was a problem compared with 19% a year ago. However, nearly 60% were employing apprentices compared with 33% a year ago. The survey said this showed SMEs were continuing to employ a disproportionately higher number of trainees than their national counterparts.

Land supply was also a significant challenge for just under half of respondents, with 47% citing it as a problem. They commented that more desirable places to live had experienced price inflation allowing bigger organisations to acquire sites rather than SMEs. Ecological issues and reducing nitrate levels in rivers had also constricted supply with Natural England and some councils imposing planning moratoriums.

Interim FHS targets to be mandatory from June 2022



Parliament has voted into law changes to Building Regulations, which from June 2022 will require CO₂ emissions from new build homes to be reduced by 31% against current standards, and introduce a new Approved Document O covering overheating.

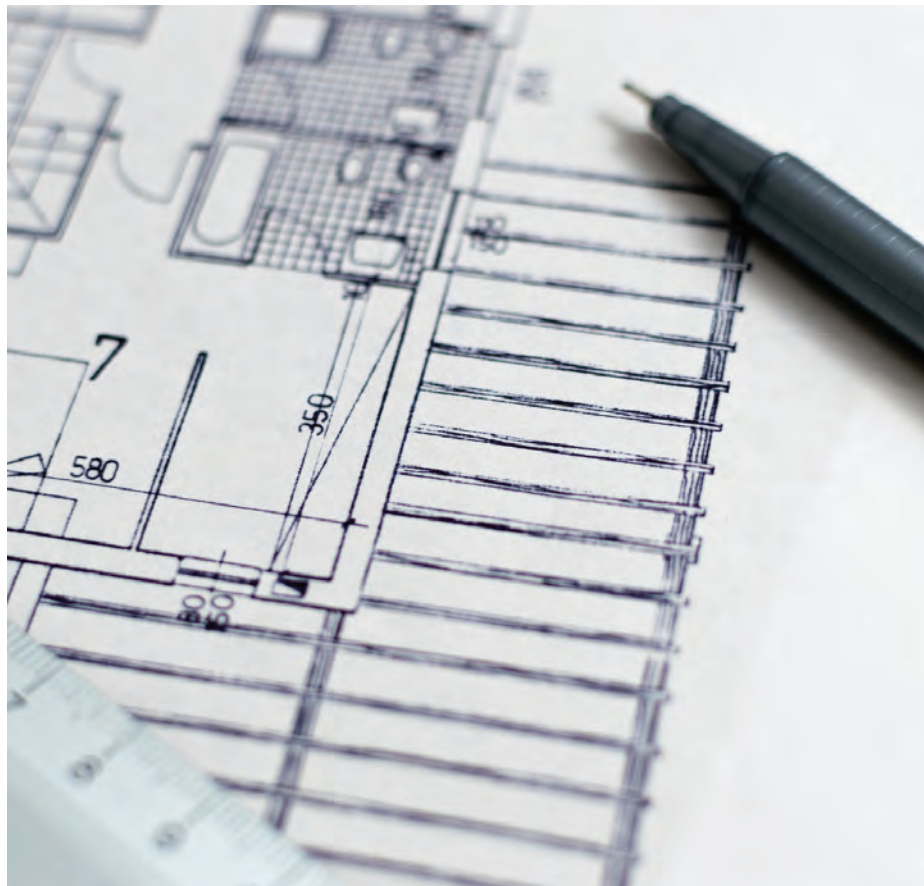
This is an interim measure towards the Government's Future Homes Standard 2025, and the overall net zero carbon target in 2050. In addition, regulation changes mean emissions from other new buildings, including offices and shops, must be reduced by 27%.

Under the new Part O, all new residential buildings, including homes, care homes, student accommodation and children's homes must reduce overheating, making sure they are "fit for the future and protect the most vulnerable people," said the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Improvements to ventilation under Part F will also be introduced to "support the safety of residents in newly-built homes and to prevent the spread of airborne viruses in new non-residential buildings."

The changes announced follow a public consultation and will come into effect from June 2022. They "pave the way for the Future Homes and Buildings Standard in 2025, which will mean all future homes are net zero ready and will not need retrofitting," said DLUHC.

Housing Minister Eddie Hughes commented: "The Government is doing everything it can to deliver net zero, and slashing CO₂ emissions from homes and buildings is vital to achieving this commitment.

"The changes will significantly improve the energy efficiency of the buildings where we live, work and spend our free time and are an important step on our country's journey towards a cleaner, greener built environment."



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Persimmon ups its focus on hiring apprentices in north east



Persimmon Homes is currently focusing on its apprenticeships, training and development throughout England, Scotland and Wales. In line with this, the North East, Durham and Teesside businesses in particular are striving to create the best opportunities possible for the region's programme. This initiative is now bearing fruit for the housebuilder, having taken on 23 new apprentices across NE, Newcastle, Durham, Sunderland, Teesside and Hartlepool in recent months.

One success story is that of Cameron Robinson-Wilson, who has recently started his degree course while continuing to work for the company. He joined Persimmon Homes in 2019 as a trainee design technician, and so far has gained a L3 Diploma in Civil Engineering for Technicians and L3 BTEC Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment.

He said: "The best thing about taking up an apprenticeship is that I have been

learning and gaining qualifications while at the same time earning money. The scheme provides the opportunity for real life practical experience to build a career, rather than going down the university route and ending up in three years' time saddled with debt."

Another is Chris Curry, now regional managing director for North East, Durham and Teesside. This year, he will celebrate his 30 year anniversary with Persimmon Homes, having started out as an apprentice joiner. He said: "At Persimmon Homes we are passionate about providing opportunities for young people and bringing new talent into the business through our apprenticeship scheme. Our aim is to attract young men and women who possess a strong sense of drive and determination to succeed and we are currently expanding our apprenticeship scheme intake to facilitate this."

He continues: "We believe no other housebuilder is adopting this approach, and our aim is to make Persimmon Homes the 'go to' employer in construction and do what we can for the future of our company and that of our industry."

Michael Johnson, Persimmon Homes' apprenticeship manager, who has previously worked as a quality advisor for the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), explains the reasons behind this approach: "There is much talk at the moment about the skills shortage in construction with a lot of companies struggling to find the calibre of personnel they need. Our philosophy has been to establish a scheme and working environment that will not only attract the people we need, but will also encourage them to remain with us and build their career for the long term."

Midlands housebuilder helps support children's hospice

A Leicestershire charity has received a £1,000 donation from property developer Rippon Homes to help towards its work with children and young people with life-limiting conditions.

Rainbows Hospice for Children and Young People, located in Loughborough,

"IT IS WONDERFUL TO HEAR FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES WHO WANT TO SUPPORT THE HOSPICE, BUT IT IS ESPECIALLY HEART-WARMING GIVEN THE PAST YEAR OR SO THAT COMPANIES ARE STILL THINKING OF US"

Emily Wright, corporate partnerships fundraiser at Rainbows Hospice

provides end of life, palliative, and respite care for over 300 children, as well as young people and their families across the East Midlands.

Rippon Homes selected Rainbows as their charity of the year for 2021, and despite the pandemic impacting fundraising opportunities, the housebuilder managed to still raise £1,000 for the hospice. The housebuilder also has a development in Leicestershire, Marquis Gardens, located in Old Dalby.

Emily Wright, corporate partnerships fundraiser at Rainbows Hospice, said: "It is wonderful to hear from local businesses who want to support the hospice, but it is especially heart-warming given the past year or so that companies are still thinking of us.

"The donation from Rippon Homes will help us to continue to provide care and support for over 300 children and their families across the East Midlands."





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Brian Berry

THE INDUSTRY ADVOCATE

PLAYING OUR PART
IN LEVELLING UP

Brian Berry of the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) discusses why the Government should be harnessing the power of SME housebuilders to achieve 'levelling up.'

The industry closed out last year on a relative high with workloads doing well, despite tough trading conditions caused by the pandemic, materials shortages, and the ever-lingering issue of skills shortages. This year presents many opportunities for the Government to enhance the market for small builders, with levelling up high on the agenda and the much-anticipated Planning Bill around the corner. But, there are significant changes coming to those that build new homes. Indeed, I've had some members call them the most significant they've ever seen.

The incoming changes in the form of EV charging points, new Building Regulations and biodiversity net gain requirements are here to limit the impact new homes have on the environment. They affect both big and small builders alike, but I'm quite conscious that significant alterations like these can be difficult for SME housebuilders to incorporate, as resource and time are precious commodities. The FMB will be working with the Government, our members and the wider industry to ensure these changes don't exacerbate further the already declining SME housebuilding market. Especially with levelling up as a Government priority, who is better placed to deliver such a change than small, local housebuilders who are at the heart of their communities?

GOVERNMENT TARGETS

Housebuilding and levelling up naturally go hand in hand, and it's positive for the industry that these key tenets of Government policy fall under the same departmental remit. However, 'micro' home builders, who are part of their communities, have been on the decline for some decades. Planning problems, accessing finance and availability of land have slowly, but surely forced more and more of them out of the market.

Levelling up is the perfect opportunity to address this imbalance. SME housebuilders deliver quality properties that reflect their communities and use up underutilised land that larger developers wouldn't touch. They

also train up the vast majority of apprentices, taking local talent and forging them into the next generation of tradespeople.

Tackling these barriers for SME builders head on would not only deliver success for the levelling up agenda, but would tackle the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities' other great ambition of hitting their housing targets. Without SMEs delivering quality homes, the 300,000 a year target for new homes will be difficult to achieve.

PLANNING NEEDS AN OVERHAUL

This year we will see the release of the much-anticipated Planning Bill, the contents of which will hopefully rectify this long-standing issue for SME housebuilders, with 62% of FMB members reporting planning as a major barrier to housebuilding.

What's needed is greater investment in local authority planning teams, granting them the ability to tackle the backlog of applications, and the scope to deal with smaller projects. It would also go some way to enable faster turnaround times of applications. Small builders are often faced with long wait times that delay sites and put a strain on finances and their limited staff numbers. Beyond just resourcing, planning teams need to

INCOMING
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communicate more effectively, bringing transparency and clarity to the process which so often frustrates small builders, already suffering from long delays without knowing why.

Digitisation would go a long way to alleviate this issue; much of the mechanics of planning is now done through digital methods, so let's get the process online in the form of a tracker, much like you would see with parcel deliveries. This would create a simpler, more transparent system for all involved, but it would still need detailed communication to accompany it – digitisation doesn't have to mean the loss of human interaction.

A YEAR OF GREAT POTENTIAL

This year, the third in which the pandemic still lingers, will be a bumpy one. Inflation is wreaking havoc with material prices and people's purse strings, skills shortages still plague the industry and SME housebuilders will be under increasing pressure from significant changes to planning requirements. But the Government's agenda should be leaning in our favour.

If there is a genuine way to boost the local economies of our communities and unlock new opportunities as part of 'building back better,' look no further



than your local housebuilder. They enable people in local communities to train locally, work locally and ultimately stay local, which uplifts every part of the nation in equal measure, and this to me

is what levelling up truly looks like. Government has a rare opportunity this year to make it a reality, and the industry is waiting with bated breath. Let's see if they can deliver.

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Patrick Mooney

THE SOCIAL NETWORK

BUILDING
GENUINELY
AFFORDABLE
HOMES

Patrick Mooney, housing consultant and news editor of Housing, Management and Maintenance magazine discusses why levelling up requires more genuinely affordable homes, including homes for social rent.

There are approximately 24 million households in England, and a surprisingly high number of us are dissatisfied with our existing accommodation and are looking to move.

In fact some 1.151 million households are currently sitting on local authority waiting lists across the country, hoping to be rehoused into a property more suitable to their circumstances in the very near future. Limited incomes means they cannot buy a solution to their problem.

The bad news for the vast majority of them is that they are likely to be waiting for a very long time before they get offered a chance to move, largely because of a national shortage of low-cost homes. So, they'd better be patient.

The numbers joining the housing waiting lists are rising fast. In fact they're rising so fast that the combined forces of the state and the private sector are spectacularly failing to keep up with demand. And, of

course, the Coronavirus pandemic has made matters worse.

One of the worst affected groups are those people waiting for what is glibly referred to as 'affordable housing.' Many of them will be waiting for over five years before receiving an offer, and the Local Government Association warned Ministers just before Christmas that they expect the number on council housing waiting lists to rise to 2.1 million households during 2022/23.

This is understood to be due to the impact of Covid-related support schemes winding down, rent arrears spiking, evictions returning to pre-pandemic levels and an increase in homelessness.

PROBLEMS WITH SUPPLY

Sadly the outlook does not look good, as the latest delivery figures show only one new social rent home was built for every 192

THE NUMBERS
JOINING THE
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THE STATE
AND PRIVATE
SECTORS ARE
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KEEP UP WITH
DEMAND



households currently stuck on local authority waiting lists, according to data from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Government statistics on affordable housing supply in England released before Christmas shows that between March 2020 and April 2021:

- Just 5,955 new social rent homes were delivered last year, a 12% decrease on the previous year, and a decrease of 85% from 10 years ago
- Only 11% of 'affordable homes' built last year were genuinely affordable social rent homes
- In 150 Local Authorities (45%) no social homes were built at all last year
- Government grants paid for 1,492 of the 5,955 social homes built – just 3% of the total 52,100 'affordable' homes delivered

Part of the problem is that the generic term 'affordable housing' is now practically meaningless because it refers to so many different forms of housing, including shared ownership (which usually requires a higher than average income), as well as affordable rent and social rent.

Affordable rents are usually set at 80% of the private sector rents in a locality, while social rents are often more like 50% of the private rents.

There is a sizeable cash difference between the two figures, with local housing allowances (the amount of housing benefit available to support low-income households) closer to social rent levels. Tenants on affordable rents have to make up any shortfall from the rest of their income – which would normally be paying for groceries, heating and clothing.

UNWELCOME STATISTICS

The upshot of all this is that more than 274,000 people are homeless in England right now, including 126,000 children. Detailed analysis by Shelter shows that one in every 206 people in England are currently without a home.

Of these, 2,700 people are sleeping rough on any given night, nearly 15,000 single people are in direct access hostels, and nearly 250,000 people are living in temporary accommodation – most of whom are families.

The housing charity Shelter has identified the areas across England where homelessness is most acute. Not surprisingly, London comes out worst, with one in 53 people now homeless in the capital.

Outside of London, Luton is the area with the highest rate of homelessness with one in 66 people homeless; followed by Brighton and Hove (one in 78), Manchester (one in 81) and Birmingham



(at one person in 96 who is homeless.)

In addition, the Office for National Statistics has recently released figures showing that in 2020, an estimated 688 homeless people died in England and Wales, which equates to two people dying every day. An estimated 256 people died while homeless in Scotland in 2020, up 40 on the previous year.

In fact, the true picture could be even worse, as the ONS says that the Government's 'Everyone In' scheme has made it more difficult to identify homeless people in mortality records.

English cities with the highest number of estimated homeless deaths were London (143), Liverpool (46), Greater Manchester (35), Birmingham (21), Bristol (20) and Leeds (18). In addition, there were seven times as many homeless male deaths as female ones. The average age at which homeless men died was 45.9 years and for women it was 41.6, which is three to four decades younger than the average age for non-homeless people dying.

GENUINELY AFFORDABLE HOMES ARE WHAT'S NEEDED

Commenting on the figures, Polly Neate, chief executive of Shelter, said: "The fact that only 11% of 'affordable homes' built last year were genuinely affordable social homes is beyond belief – especially when thousands of renters are edging closer towards homelessness. Building a few thousand social homes a year given over a million households are stuck on social housing waiting lists, just doesn't cut it.

"Every day our helpline picks up the

phone to families desperate for the security of a social home. With soaring living costs and pandemic protections withdrawn, hard-up families are more worried than ever about how they'll keep a roof over their heads, and food on the table.

"This is exactly the time for the Government to start putting its money into the right place, by building the only type of housing that's actually affordable by design. Investing in sustainable social homes will give us the best odds of levelling up the country."

Before Christmas, the Government announced it was making £316m available to local councils in 2022/23, as an increased pot for the Homeless Prevention Fund. This will pay for a whole range of preventative and support measures – all of which are very welcome and should make a significant change to the lives of those who are helped.

But alongside this help, the hope is that Michael Gove will do a number of things to greatly increase the number of new 'social rent' homes being built, particularly in those parts of the country experiencing high rates of homelessness.

If levelling up means anything, surely it means giving people better life chances and a leg up. Having a decent, safe and affordable home is a basic building block towards living a productive life, which is also essential to doing well at school, holding down a job, and being able to make a contribution to society, rather than being a drain on the state. So it's over to you now Mr Gove, to see what impact you can make.

Tap into the potential to futureproof developments against drought

With future water shortages in the UK continuing to cause concern, Martin Walker of Methven discusses the various efficient water saving technologies which are available to futureproof new homes.

The UK's shrinking water supply continues to be a major area for concern. According to predictions from the recent COP26 summit, there will be a 40% shortage of 'freshwater resources' by 2030.

In June 2021, George Eustice MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, issued a Ministerial statement regarding measures to be introduced to reduce the nation's water consumption.

The three most pertinent measures for the industry were the introduction of a mandatory water efficiency label, encouraging local authorities to adopt the minimum building standard of 110 litres per person per day in all new builds where there is a 'clear local need,' such as in 'water-stressed' areas; and lastly, the development of a roadmap in 2022 towards greater water efficiency in new developments and retrofits.

As bathrooms account for the majority of daily water usage within residential developments, housebuilders must take a proactive approach to the water efficiency of these rooms when designing and building their properties, to not only futureproof their homes for potential occupiers, but also protect the UK's diminishing water supply.

INDUSTRY EFFORT

The Environmental Agency reported that 15 out of the 23 water companies operat-

ACCORDING TO THE OUTCOMES OF THIS YEAR'S COP26, IT'S PREDICTED THERE WILL BE A 40% SHORTAGE IN FRESHWATER RESOURCES BY 2030



ing throughout England are rated as being under 'serious' stress. Water UK has stated 46% of people believe their household uses 20 litres of water daily. In reality, it's almost 142 litres per person.

As the Government's target of building 300,000 new homes continues to be in force, the need for sustainable products and construction methods has become more and more crucial to the future of environmentally efficient housing.

To ensure the conservation of water, anyone building a new home within England must comply with Part G of Building Regulations 2010. These regulations require any new home to be built to use no more than 125 litres of water per person per day (pppd), although it is possible to build to as little as 80 litres.

In order to encourage housebuilders to adopt a proactive approach to minimising the water usage of their properties, water providers including Severn Trent and Southern Water are offering substantial incentives to developers that can meet the target of a property being built to 110 litres pppd or less.

Methven has worked with a number of developers to optimise their product specifications in order to reduce water consumption per person per day (as measured by the water calculator), increase end-user satisfaction through the

right water-efficient product specification, and finally assist the developers in claiming a significant financial incentive.

From a manufacturer's perspective, it is vital the products and services they provide fulfil not only the end-user experience and desired aesthetics, but also meet all applicable Building Regulations, whilst supporting housebuilders and developers in proactively meeting future regulatory changes.

BUILDING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Research has found that 82% of British homebuyers, particularly the younger generation, would pay more for eco-features within their home. This is at a time when housing alone generates almost a third of UK emissions, at 29%. Therefore, specifying water-efficient fixtures and fittings will not only help to protect the nation's water availability, but also aid the reduction of homeowners' future water bills.

Whilst the inclusion of environmentally efficient products within a property will attract first time buyers, the cost savings that they provide are a secondary incentive. The Energy Saving Trust states installing simple water-saving measures, such as water-efficient taps and showers, will save both water and energy by minimising heated water, which could reduce house-



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that deliver the highest standards in water efficiency, without sacrificing performance or aesthetics.

Whilst there is still work to be done to integrate sustainable water management into the construction of new build properties, specifying water-saving products and establishing long-term

approaches to water conservation are achievable and much-needed steps that can be taken to protect the UK's strained water supply, and achieve a sustainable future for all.

Martin Walker is chief executive officer of Methven.

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NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Affordable homes and charity HQ set to regenerate Hemel locality

Plans have been submitted to regenerate a brownfield site in the centre of Hemel Hempstead with 56 new homes, and a purpose-built headquarters for homeless charity DENS.

On behalf of Dacorum Borough Council, multi-disciplinary design practice rg+p has designed and submitted plans for a complete redevelopment of the Paradise Depot site, off St Albans Road, east of the town centre. Currently occupied by the DENS office and food bank, as well as other commercial/industrial premises, the intention is for the site to become “an asset for the town.”

rg+p’s design proposes a two-storey building to better serve DENS’ needs, comprising a ground floor food bank and bike workshop together with first floor community cafe, office space, kitchen, and multi-functional meeting rooms. A “shared surface” unites this building with a new apartment block of 56 one and two bedroom homes. Cycle and scooter storage, car parking, residents’ garden and additional landscaping is also incorporated into the overall design. Each apartment has a private balcony, and some units will be built to accessible standards.

Hemel Hempstead’s distinctive local vernacular “heavily influenced the proposed material palette,” said the developer. The concept for the apartment building references the Old Townscape’s Tudor heritage and features a blend of red and dark brickwork with hit and miss detailing and a rusticated plinth. In contrast, the new DENS centre will have a predominantly darker appearance with black framed windows and rainscreen cladding. However, the food bank entrance is designed as a focal point and will feature decorative tiling inspired by Hertfordshire Puddingstone. Unique to the area, Puddingstone traditionally has a subtle and muted exterior but when cut, it has vibrant orange, brown and blue hues, meaning this facade will look both striking and individual.

Grant Giblett, the project’s lead and rg+p’s director, commented: “The local architecture has offered plenty of inspiration, and we’re confident these new buildings will complement the townscape.

“More importantly, they will deliver essential homes and services for some of the most vulnerable people in the community. Having worked with Dacorum Borough Council for several years, we fully understand their ambitions, especially regarding repurposing brownfield sites and avoiding greenbelt development.

Paradise Depot is rg+p’s third affordable housing scheme for Dacorum Borough Council, following the award-winning Kyna Court and Magenta Court. Two further sites, also in the town, are currently in development.

“THE LOCAL ARCHITECTURE HAS OFFERED PLENTY OF INSPIRATION, AND WE’RE CONFIDENT THESE NEW BUILDINGS WILL COMPLEMENT THE TOWNSCAPE”



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£21m 'eco-efficient' development launched on Salisbury Plain

A prime eight-acre (3.22 Ha) site in the Wiltshire village of West Lavington has been acquired by Hayfield, intended to host 50 eco-efficient luxury homes. The plans for the £21m project will feature air source heat pumps, energy-efficient underfloor heating, electric vehicle fast-charging points, and ultra-fast broadband.

Located on the north edge of Salisbury Plain, five miles from the medieval market town of Devizes, the site has been purchased from Gaiger Properties and Crossmolina with outline planning consent. Hayfield has submitted a Reserved Matters Application to Wiltshire Council for a range of bungalows, maisonettes and two-, three-, four- and five-bedroom "executive" houses.

30% of the proposed scheme will be designated for affordable housing, with all 50 homes designed to be "tenure blind." All homes will have designated parking, with many benefiting from garages, and visitor parking spaces will be widely available. To improve local biodiversity, the scheme will also incorporate landscaped public space, a play area, native tree planting, an attenuation pond, and a new area of pollen and nectar-rich wildflowers.

Hayfield's plans include the creation of a new access road and footpaths to adoptable standards from Lavington Lane, with the development having been designed to supplement existing mature hedgerows and trees. The proposed executive homes have reportedly been designed with a high degree of consideration to the local vernacular, with features including brick detailing and traditional porches. Predominantly heritage red brickwork will be complemented by dark grey feature window frames, and traditional brown and grey roof tiles.

The development has been designed to blend seamlessly into the surrounding semi-rural landscape of its picturesque and historic village setting. Also located in West Lavington is Dauntsey's Public School, which was founded in 1542, while Dauntsey Academy Primary School is located adjacent to Hayfield's scheme. 20 new designated drop-off car parking spaces will be provided for the primary school, for the use of parents and carers.

Andy Morris, managing director at Hayfield commented: "We are delighted to be kick-starting the New Year with such a prime acquisition. This is our second site in Wiltshire, the other being in Broad Blunsdon, nearly an hour away, and this proposed scheme will appeal to a very different market. As a reflection of the desirability and popularity of this area with aspirational purchasers, this scheme will become one of Hayfield's most luxurious new developments."

THE DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO BLEND SEAMLESSLY INTO THE SURROUNDING SEMI-RURAL LANDSCAPE OF ITS PICTURESQUE AND HISTORIC VILLAGE SETTING

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CASE STUDY

A heart of oak



Already in receipt of several awards, Hornsey Rise in Leicestershire was developed to meet strong demand for luxury detached homes with a more 'intimate' community feel. Lee Harris of developer Springbourne Homes explains to Jack Wooler how the site's rich history and ecology helped inform the project's oak-framed designs.

Hornsey Rise, in the hamlet of Wellsborough just outside Market Bosworth, Leicestershire, comprises 19 homes, from three up to six bedrooms, with generous gross internal areas running from 1,400 to 4,000 ft².

Developer Springbourne Homes has constructed these luxury homes on the top of a hill among three acres of mature woodland, surrounded by bluebells and snowdrops. Maximising the site's natural features was an integral part of the project's ethos.

Intended to be a counter to what the developer sees as typically 'bland' new build housing developments of late, there are 16 different house types spread across the site – even including a refurbished 1930s chapel. However the reiterated house types have been mirrored or repositioned to ensure that every home is differentiated in some regard.

Connecting the development aesthetically, the homes' envelopes all have oak-framed double gables. These are intended to 'root' the properties into their rural landscape, and set the tone and expectations for what's inside.

Viewing the homes, this expectation is met; they have been designed to heighten

the level of intimacy and connection with the occupier. Both are characteristics which Springbourne CEO Lee Harris believes helps to set Hornsey Rise apart as a genuinely 'luxury' project.

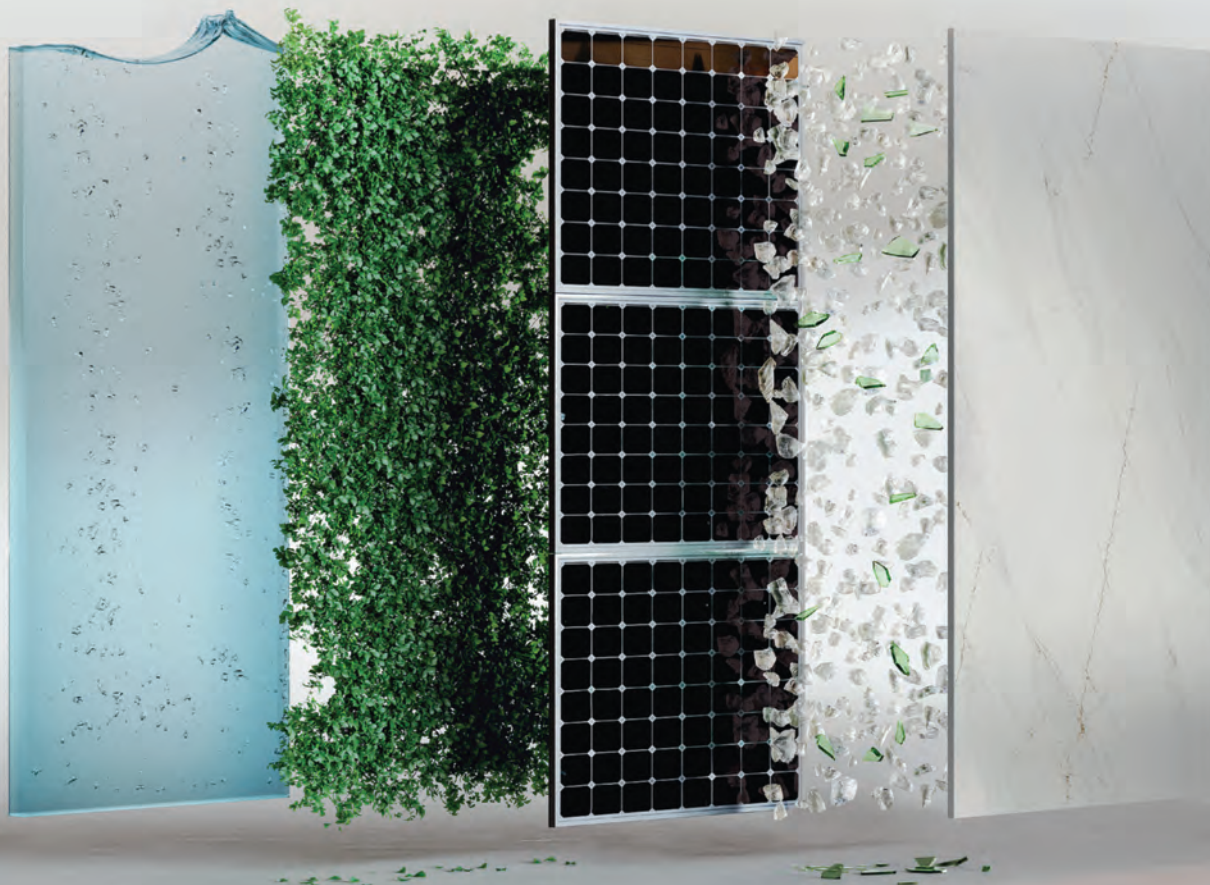
Since its inception, Harris reports that the project has been hugely successful, winning a number of local and national awards and quickly selling off-plan. Despite this success however, he says there were a number of hurdles the developer needed to overcome to make Hornsey Rise the project it is today, and lessons that Harris hopes to share with his peers.

QUALITY & INTIMACY


According to Harris, early research from local agents initially informed Springbourne's early development decisions, with agents reporting an appetite for large, luxurious, detached homes in rural locations.


Not satisfied with just any home that meets these needs however, Harris explains that the firm's research indicated that those who sought such new build homes were also tired of "monolithic house types and congested developments." Instead they were searching for


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


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high quality builds and “the intimacy of a smaller community.”

Springbourne has set out to embody these traits at Hornsey Rise, and to raise the bar: “From the moment they enter the homes, we want to wow visitors; it starts when you walk through the oak screen and front door and see a double height hall with connecting doors to the reception room. Your eye is then drawn to a contemporary oak staircase weaving its way throughout the void, and meeting the gallery landing.”

The internal layouts are intended to support modern family living, and as such offer open plan connected spaces, with large kitchen, dining and family rooms blending into the gardens through bifolding doors, large bedrooms with ensembles, and flexible breakout areas, snugs, cinemas and more, all kitted out to the highest specification. High-end brands chosen include Karndean flooring, kitchens with three ovens, built-in coffee machines, wine coolers, and Quooker instant boil taps. Other ‘preselections’ include Hans Grohe and Villeroy and Boch sanitaryware, and porcelain tiles from Porcelanosa.

Harris continues: “Luxury is experienced with every connection, opening a door, turning a tap, sliding your hand up the hand built staircase, or simply sinking your feet into the deep pile carpets and feeling the warming glow of the under-floor heating.”

INSPIRATION

Before any of this could be achieved however, it was first essential to find a home for these luxury designs.

According to Harris, the site itself was in fact one of the main inspirations for the design of the entire project, offering a rich history and enviable views across the nearby landscape, both of which the team intended to make the most out of.

In order to best achieve this, at this early stage of the project Leicestershire historian Nigel Palmer was commissioned to research the site’s history, with Springbourne using the research to decide how the land could best be treated.

In this process, Palmer reportedly uncovered “an astonishing timeline,” which featured some of the most significant figures and notable events over the last millennium – the site dating back to the pre-Norman conquest days of Lady Godiva. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and “directly linked” to five English Kings.

Fast-forwarding to the existing buildings on the 10 acre site, the team learned that it was developed by the then printers union as a convalescent home, opening in 1921. It then became a retreat for retired

missionaries, but closed in 2012 when the home was no longer economically viable. In its prime, the site was reportedly regarded as a landmark location, boasting royal visits, distinguished gardens, and wide vistas.

After being briefed on the site’s offerings, Harris tells me that Springbourne Homes chairman Adrian Burr immediately recognised the “fabulous potential of the site” and the “splendour of the surroundings.” He acted quickly to meet the Aged Pilgrims Trust, who ran the missionary retreat, to agree the purchase, with a promise to restore the site to prominence and build beautiful homes.

REMEDIATION

The site’s parameters were defined, but as the previous building footprint had been respectful of its location, Springbourne were keen to show similar respect to the landscape, “countering any encroachment into country views and impacts of urbanised living.”

HOUSE TYPES IN THE SCHEME HAVE BEEN MIRRORED OR REPOSITIONED TO ENSURE THAT EVERY HOME IS DIFFERENTIATED

Three boundary lines were established – the first being the building line etched into the site at its midpoint, preventing the stretch of houses beyond the boundaries of the previous forms. Secondly, a formal garden line defined the limit of lawn and spread of planting – blended into a natural meadow grass. Then, the final boundary forms the landscape ‘buffer,’ a natural margin that is beyond the ownership of the residents and a space that can be controlled and maintained for improved biodiversity.

As soon as the project kicked off, a secure fence was erected around these boundaries, as the site would be vacant through the appraisal, design and planning processes. Despite these efforts however, the existing building was targeted by arsonists, making it structurally unsound, exposing asbestos ceilings and insulation, and requiring a “painful” remediation process.

A demolition team was brought in to make the buildings safe while Springbourne continued to pursue planning, and a high security fence was erected in front of the existing fence to

prevent trespassing.

“By this time,” Harris says, “the buildings looked ‘wounded,’ scarred with graffiti – and the once beautiful gardens had become overgrown and largely inaccessible.”

As part of the careful demolition process, the majority of the materials were able to be recycled, either crushed and reused for roadways, or sold to salvage companies. Landfill was kept to less than 5%.

DESIGN BRIEF

While this work was ongoing, Springbourne had handed the design process over to Hayward Architects of Hinckley, with a brief to create a development of 19 homes “rich in architectural distinction,” and harnessing the site’s strong existing qualities.

Harris tells me that the team explored more contemporary options such as curtain walling, mono pitched roofs and contemporary materials. However they found that while such individual designs were strong and exciting statements in themselves, when presented in a street scene with each other, they actually diluted the effect.

After extensive design sessions, the team arrived at a form they believed to be “familiar, yet majestic and classical.” This included double gabled, cathedral-style windows with expansive glazing, all set in oak frames.

“This resonated with the development’s rural aspects,” explains Harris, “and juxtaposed with the modern building technologies harnessed within.”

He tells me that the strong building lines here are intended to be accented by the use of natural oak, which was an early choice as the prevailing material across the project, “holding the expanses of glass in natural skins that bring bold strength rather than the slender and sleekness of aluminium.”

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

While the use of timber solved the design challenge of blending the new homes into their surroundings, the material did create more practical challenges for the developer.

An oak frame brings natural inconsistencies, for example, and some movement was anticipated in the design. This meant the connection details therefore needed to respond, in order to remain air and weather tight. To ensure the best performance possible here, green oak frames would be prefabricated in offsite workshops and brought to site on flat bed lorries.

The original intention was to lower the frame sections in, secure to the external



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walls and then install the roof. However, the team found that the oak frames needed further lateral support and would need temporary propping while the roof was installed. Then, the tolerances of the large roof spans and variances in the wall plates could pose problems with the pitches.

"After many design and installation meetings with our supply chain partners, architects and structural engineers we decided to construct the houses with the opening, roof included," says Harris.

"It would require strengthening in the roof structure using gable ladders and glulam beams, however the oak could then be scribed and installed within the aperture – tolerances were critical here, as was access for cranes to position and access for trades to make safe and secure fixings into the walls."

PERFORMANCE

A further benefit that this use of timber brought to the development is its inherent environmentality, also bolstered by the offsite methods used to put them together.

Harris tells me that minimising the development's environmental footprint was always an essential goal for the team in the whole project, particularly as it is a greenfield site.

One way in which they hoped to achieve this was to embrace EVs for example, and install, as standard, one car charging point per property, the capacity to add a second was included.

Another example, and one that was more challenging, was the transition to air source heating technologies across the

homes, "presenting a learning curve in every part of the build."

To fill the company's gap in experience here, Springbourne partnered with Vaillant, who Harris says were invaluable in this journey: "The lower operating temperatures of the air means that the battle to reduce radiators had now returned." However, their suggestion of using underfloor heating negated unsightly radiator panels and provided balanced ambient heat to the house, controlled with in-room thermostats, and wirelessly operated.

One further challenge they faced was balancing the heat output with the relative heat losses – making it vital to retain energy. At Hornsey Rise, this was achieved through creating large 250 mm cavities to include high performance mineral insulation, reportedly outperforming the standards for SAP and air tightness.

ECOLOGY

Beyond technological innovations, Springbourne Homes also had a duty of care to look after the surrounding ecology, including not just the varied tree and plant life, but badger sets, rabbits, birds of prey, and even the occasional Muntjac deer.

In order to approach this in the most informed way, the team engaged the services of specialists, including arboriculturists, to preserve a number of special trees. He continues: "We have invested large sums of money in the restorative works and maintenance of trees within the woodland, and removed self setting

OAK FRAMED DOUBLE GABLES ARE INTENDED TO 'ROOT' THE PROPERTIES INTO THE RURAL LANDSCAPE

species in order to maintain the healthy canopy and carpets of bluebells."

Also integral to minimising impact on this ecology, the team developed a SuDS design for the site, using an existing combined drain at the rear of the site. In line with environmental guidance, then added an attenuation pond to control the flow of storm water into the central systems.

SUCCESS

Having spent the best part of two years developing, designing and creating the masterplan for Hornsey Rise, Harris is "delighted" with the initial response to the project.

"The real success came when we finally erected our first sign board outside the entrance," he says. "The enquiry rate was a steady two to three per day, and the conversion rate on site was over 80%."

According to Harris, people were buying off plan in "absolute comfort," and within eight months of the site being operational reservations were completed throughout. This included plots that had not been dug out for foundations.

Outside of prospective residents, Harris says the project's greatest reactions have been from within the industry, especially scooping three prestigious prizes at the UK Property Awards, including Best in the UK for Architecture.

Looking back on the efforts behind this success, Harris reflects that building bespoke luxury homes is "no easy journey."

"It takes time to craft the design, harness the build and care for the customer," he says. "However, it is all worth it when you see the excitement in their eyes as they take the keys." ■

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CASE STUDY

Historic achievement



Excavations prior to a much-anticipated development in Cambridgeshire have unearthed a rich history, including Bronze Age skeletons and pottery. Council-partnered developer This Land explains the benefits of this major scheme to Jack Wooler.

A large-scale new development is beginning to make headway near Cambridge following a major archaeological dig, which has uncovered remains and artefacts dating back to 1200 BC.

Developer This Land says that once complete, Millstone Park will form a “community” of 350 new homes. Including both affordable and private housing, it features a mix of spacious family homes as well as self build plots.

The project has been formed on a 6.5 hectare site on the eastern edge of the village of Burwell, 10 miles north east of Cambridge. Being a greenfield site, the developer has had to conduct a series of surveys to satisfy local residents’ demands, and jump through a number of planning hoops to limit perceived impact on the environment.

As part of meeting the former aim, the proposed development has been designed carefully to meet the needs of both new and existing residents. Intended to embrace the “unique character of Burwell” and the significant nearby areas of green open space, the plans incorporate several village greens, recreational areas



for local children and teenagers, and an extensive network of pedestrian and cycle paths.

At the conclusion of the archaeological dig, which began in May 2021, This Land is now set to commence the development's main infrastructure.

THE TEAM

The project is one of a number of sites in Cambridgeshire that have been acquired by This Land, a firm established by Cambridgeshire County Council, its sole shareholder.

As is appropriate for a large scale project, the team working through planning and delivery at Millstone Park is broad-based, including Brookbanks (development management and contract administration), Carter Jonas (planning), Fabrik (masterplanning and landscaping architecture), Paul Basham Associates (highways), Orion (heritage and archaeology), WSP (flood risk, drainage and engineering designs), Noveus (utilities), and Howes Percival (legal).

This Land will undertake a master developer role on the site, in securing planning, technical approvals and delivery of the spine road and infrastructure through the development, with utilities diversions through the new junction to be formed off Newmarket Road and spine road construction commencing in early 2022.

The majority of the site will be sold to the market with obligations on the purchaser to deliver the requisite levels of quality and sustainability. This Land will complete the development of the final phase itself as well as facilitate the development of the self-build elements of the site.

SURROUNDINGS

With an absence of existing infrastructure

on and around the site, there was significant potential for the project to increase the visual impact on views from the surrounding area. The planning authority has kept a particularly keen eye on the project because of this.

Appropriate landscape buffers were therefore required to mitigate this risk in the landscape masterplan, particularly on the northern and eastern boundaries.

Complicating things further however was a listed building to the south-west corner within Melton Farm, which meant that any development on this part of the site needed to be sensitive to the heritage asset.

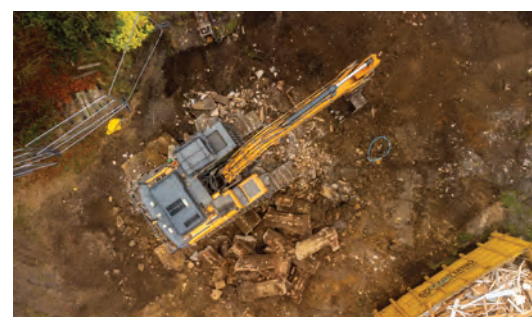
Helping somewhat on the other boundaries is the character of the existing residential edge of Burwell, directly adjacent to the site, which has one of the more modern developments. This lent itself more readily to additional housing of an appropriate scale, which would also provide potential improvements to the settlement edge.

Although elements of the eastern settlement edge are currently partially screened by trees, the proposed scheme could enhance the existing stark, geometric settlement edge with a softer, vegetated boundary comprising public open space, with filtered views through tree belts and reinstated hedgerows.

STYLE

With the boundaries agreed, and the visual impact attenuated, the design team began the process of designing the look and feel of the homes. According to This Land, the team's approach to designing homes is to take every site and project on its own merits, with each of the company's schemes being designed to reflect the local vernacular, the community, and the target customer base.

As such, This Land does not have a set



THE PLANS INCORPORATE SEVERAL VILLAGE GREENS, RECREATIONAL AREAS FOR CHILDREN, AND EXTENSIVE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE PATHS



WITH AN ABSENCE OF EXISTING [SERVICES] INFRASTRUCTURE, THERE WAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL FOR THE PROJECT TO INCREASE THE VISUAL IMPACT ON VIEWS

style, with the company more focused on embracing a sustainable approach to building. This reportedly includes creating places that benefit the community and people living in them, as well as those that will use them in the future.

Despite this somewhat agnostic approach to style, the company does embrace traditional designs where appropriate. Due to Millstone Park's edge of village location, this project is set to be of a more classic design that is intended to align with and enhance the distinctive character of Burwell.

DIALOGUE

With a design in mind, research was conducted to support a planning application for the ambitious new development, designed to understand buyers' thoughts, views, and factors that influence purchasing.

The research included a series of face-to-face focus groups, which saw dialogue with potential home buyers about the proposed scheme. Providing the team with valuable insights to help shape the scheme, potential buyers were interested in a "deviation from the traditional in terms of layout and facade material," said the developer, and were "highly focussed on the relationship of the homes with the open spaces, and the implementation of roads and parking especially."

While the group brought up a number of other criteria, such as sustainability, gardens, built-in technology, low maintenance, and energy efficiency, interestingly it was acoustics that were one of the most talked about criteria when looking at

buying a new house. According to This Land, this is partly driven by the fact people are spending more time at home working, making peace and quiet increasingly important.

As such, the team soon realised that the proposed 'indicative layout' of the development – as is now shown on the Development Framework Plan approved at the outline application stage – would have to take residential amenity into consideration. It would also provide a landscaping buffer adjacent to the existing properties.

This Land proposed using 'Melton Fields' for this purpose – between the existing farm and the properties. At the detailed design stage, the team also carefully considered the layout and orientation of the buildings close to the farm.

EXCAVATIONS

Before the team could begin construction, however, an archaeological dig being conducted during the design and planning processes unearthed significant findings dating as far back as the Bronze Age. This didn't take the team entirely by surprise; the site had previously been identified as a possible Bronze Age settlement, and therefore an archaeological dig was required from the very beginning.

Following the extensive excavations across the site over a nine month period, however, archaeologists discovered two complete human and horse skeletons as well as a vast number of post holes, pits and pieces of pottery which date from 1200-350 BC.

This indicated that a large and established community used to live at the site, while the holes' layout implies the timber structures would have been both round and rectangular in shape. The team also uncovered a substantial number of pits containing animal bones and broken pottery, suggesting they had been used for throwing away unwanted food remains and other goods.

With the fieldwork now complete, there will be a programme of post-excavation assessment and analysis of the artefacts and environmental samples which will be recorded and followed by a full publication of the results. The information will be built into a 'story of the site' and archived, and the artefacts will be donated to Cambridge County Council and made available for public viewing.

BUILDING APPROACH

With the dig nearing completion, This Land is now looking forward to beginning construction.

In line with one of the company's approaches to designing schemes, the company also veers away from a 'set'

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build approach, instead looking at every scheme differently, and considering which build methods best suit each. They employ both traditional brick and block builds as well as more modern methods like timber and steel frame.

At its Cityglades development in Cambridge, for example, the team has incorporated a number of innovations in housing design that are geared towards reducing the demand for energy, while creating modern, comfortable spacious homes. One way in which this has been achieved is in the specification of pre-insulated Durisol ICF blocks, made of 80% recycled timber, designed to offer a faster construction method, and maximise the thermal mass benefits of the building envelope.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT

This Land is already very focussed on ensuring that the above process is performed as sustainably as possible, and have set out a list of goals to ensure that the development affects the ecology as little as possible.

The company is looking at how to achieve net zero over the coming years, beginning with meeting the Government's Future Homes Standard. One way in which this is being implemented now is in the adoption of renewable technologies such as air source heat pumps, and another is in its mission to adopt a more landscape-led approach putting planting and open green spaces at the top of the agenda.

At Millstone Park specifically, some such goals have already been met in the planning stages, though not without some difficulty. One such challenge achieved was to ensure ecological enhancements

could be created, including new hedgerows and trees. This is intended to improve biodiversity, as well as address the Chalklands Landscape Character Area thereby reversing the intensification of agricultural practices and resultant loss of hedgerows.

Another element of sustainability incorporated into the planning applications is the project's SuDS system, which will be designed throughout the site to contribute to the creation of ecological corridors, as well as mitigate flood risk.

ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the project to date, This Land has carried out close engagement with key stakeholders, including conversations and meetings with the Parish Council and letters to local residents, taking in comments on the plans and feedback on the preferred way forward.

In fact, the team reports its primary goal as being "outreach to as much of the community as possible." The archaeological dig for example was used as an opportunity to engage with stakeholders wider than residents, as well as to secure press coverage to illustrate the progress the company was making in delivering the new scheme.

This Land believes it has succeeded in that already, having already welcomed over 200 local visitors to the site during a number of open days, with visits from classes from the local primary school, archaeology groups, Burwell Museum, councillors, and Burwell residents.

With reportedly warm feedback on the whole, Millstone Park is on a fast track to become a well-loved part of the local community, heralding a new era for the historic site. ■

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How to navigate your development's past

Clare King of Wessex Archaeology offers an expert perspective on the archaeological issues around developing historic sites, and best practice for gaining successful planning outcomes.

The historic environment encompasses a wide range of assets that are likely to be encountered by housing developments, including buried remains, historic or listed buildings, and historic or protected landscapes or viewsheds.

Archaeology has been a key consideration in the planning process since the introduction of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 in England in 1990, evolving into the current guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This places the emphasis on understanding and conserving the significance of heritage assets as part of sustainable development. Significance varies between different heritage assets, and your Local Planning Authority (LPA)'s archaeologist will also have a view on it, so having your own archaeological advisor is important to help you understand what's likely to be considered significant on your site.

Buried archaeological remains needing assessment and investigation to deter-

mine significance may be present on both greenfield and brownfield sites. On brownfield sites, existing buildings and remains may make planning requirements more complex, as well as any proximity to existing heritage assets whose 'Setting' may be affected by the proposed development. Greenfield sites are likely to present a diverse array of heritage assets, in particular buried remains, which will need assessment and investigation to determine significance.

Specialist advice on historic environment constraints, impacts, and benefits should be sought for housing developments as early as possible; not only to provide a smooth journey through planning, but also to ensure that measures imposed by regulators are proportionate, and the risk of unexpected issues at key construction stages is reduced.

ENGAGEMENT AT SITE ACQUISITION

Awareness of potential heritage issues before acquisition of a development site can be very advantageous and calls for expert archaeological advice.

With a thorough knowledge and understanding of what's there and how it will need to be managed, developers are in a stronger position to negotiate on the costs of buying a site, as well as having an early grip on opportunities and constraints to inform project design.



MANAGING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH REGULATORS

LPAs are required to maintain Historic Environment Records (HERs) and to have a planning archaeologist to advise them on heritage issues. The relationship between your archaeological advisor and the local regulators is key to achieving successful – and importantly, proportionate – planning outcomes.

Often a desk-based assessment (DBA) and archaeological evaluation surveys will be needed to identify known and potential archaeological and built heritage assets, their significance, and the extent to which the proposed development would affect them (NPPF para 194). This results in a heritage statement, for inclusion in an environmental statement and/or design and access statement when planning permission is applied for. The planning archaeologist will usually issue a brief or specification for the required work, and will monitor and approve it.

A good archaeological advisor will have an excellent relationship with your local planning archaeologist, and work with you to ensure that the specification delivers for your needs, as well as those of the historic environment and local communities.

While the archaeological evaluation work contained in your planning application will enable your project to go ahead, any conditioned mitigation work will also have been negotiated on your behalf with the regulators by your archaeological advisor. They will ensure that the mitigation measures imposed are proportionate to what is there and targeted to the areas of impact, rather than, for example, a costly and unnecessary full-scale excavation.

EARLY COLLABORATION

The historic environment should be planned for like any other development risk – with a proper assessment and mitigation programme. Collaborating with your archaeological team from an early stage will ensure you understand your heritage resource and avoid nasty surprises during your construction phase.





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In addition, it may also be possible to make efficiencies and reduce access phases by coordinating with enabling works such as ground investigation and ecological surveys.

With the right team on board, archaeology and heritage can also bring a surprising amount of added value to your scheme, particularly in the area of social value. The large-scale Army Basing Programme reaching across Salisbury Plain, for example, has incorporated archaeological features into new community spaces to create a sense of place and continuity for new inhabitants of what is a very ancient landscape.

With the Government's commitment



to 'Build Back Better' and the launch of the UK's Sustainable Development Strategy, there has never been a better time to draw on the benefits of sites' heritage, and deliver on the social value

targets which are increasingly required of housing development projects.

Clare King is principal heritage consultant at Wessex Archaeology.

AG scoops 3 major construction awards

AG, leading paving and building supplies company, has won three major industry awards in quick succession across the UK and Ireland.

Established 60 years ago, AG is a 3rd generation family-owned business which now employs more than 230 people at eight locations across the UK and Ireland.

The first accolade was winning the Property and Construction Family Business of the Year category at the Energia Family Business Awards. The Energia Awards showcase the commercial success of Irish family companies and highlights the impact their business has on communities.

The company was recognised at the ceremony for having navigated two major economic downturns, before emerging with a fit for purpose business model, which has seen it deliver strong financial performances.

The second award - from The MPA and British Precast for Safer Management of Pedestrian and Transport on its sites - provided positive proof of AG's excellent work within Health and Safety.

Meanwhile, AG received a Distinction Award at the NISO (National Irish Safety Organisation) and NISG (Northern Ireland Safety Group) Safety Awards for 2021. Winning this award demonstrates the commitment and dedication of all AG employees and contractors to safety



within the company.

Stephen Acheson, CEO at AG, said winning the three major awards was fitting recognition of the outstanding work everyone at AG has been doing.

"We are extremely proud to receive these three prestigious awards. With everything that has happened since the first lockdown, it is truly amazing to be able to share these awards with everyone at AG."

"Since we first opened over 60 years ago we have held family values and health and safety at the core of our business operations. We plan to continue our focus in these areas while maintaining our community work and investment in the training and development of our staff."

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Vent-Axia donates MVHR unit



Vent-Axia has donated a Sentinel Kinetic Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) unit to Tom and Jane Howson who are living in the award-winning Hanham Hall eco development. The MVHR unit was presented by Richard Paine, Product and Marketing Director at Vent-Axia. The unit allows Tom and Jane to re-start the innovative ventilation workshops that they have

previously been running in their local eco community. The workshops are designed to teach their neighbours how to maintain the ventilation units in their homes to help ensure good indoor air quality, avoid condensation and mould, while explaining the benefits of features like the summer bypass.

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Designer Contracts invests £500k in business

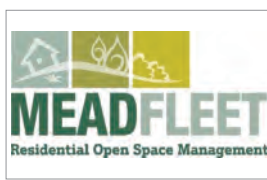


Designer Contracts starts 2022 with the news it has just completed a round of pandemic-busting spending. The Chesterfield based company, which has successfully traded throughout the coronavirus crisis, has invested £500K in the future of the business with additional racking at its national distribution centre in Kettering; and

upgrading the company's IT systems. Said md Peter Kelsey: "Our strategy has always been to invest heavily in significant stockholding levels – and given current supply issues, this has never been more important. It gives customers the reassurance of knowing that whatever else they might struggle to source, flooring needn't be one of them."

01246 854 577 www.designercontracts.com

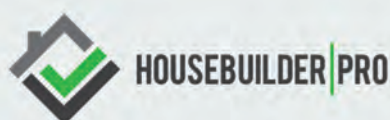
Responsible Open Space Management



Meadfleet continue to be voluntary members of The Property Ombudsman Scheme (TPOS). As a responsible open space management company, Meadfleet are committed to providing long-term, quality maintenance of the areas in their care along with excellent customer

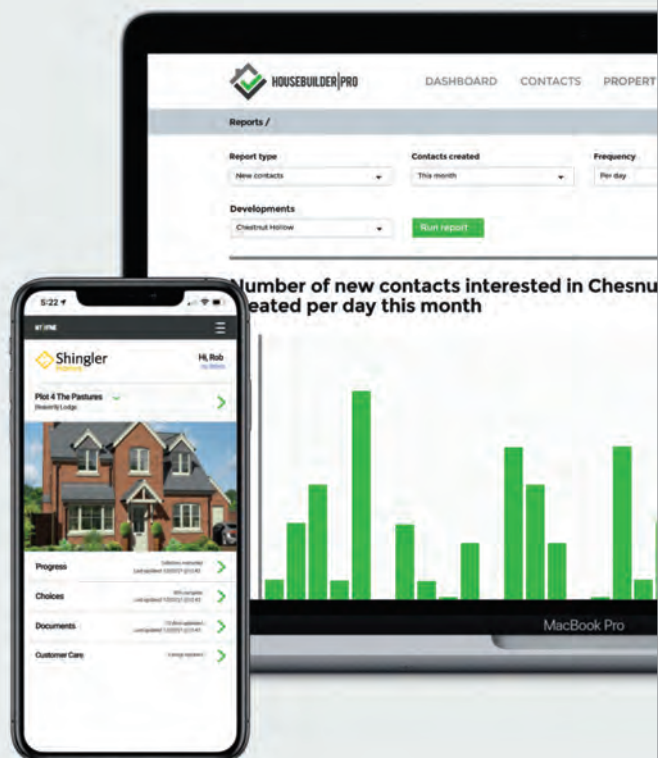
service. Meadfleet believe that consumers should be protected and were one of the first in their sector to offer access to free and independent redress, demonstrating a commitment to provide the best customer service. The Property Ombudsman Scheme are an independent, government backed body with wide ranging experience across the sector.

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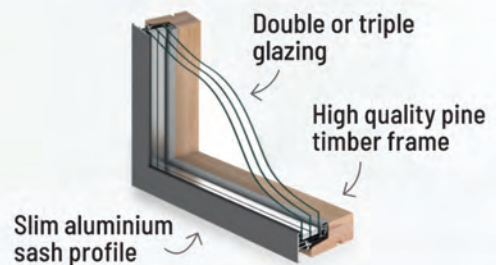
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Reginox UK announces exciting management changes for 2022

Sinks, taps and accessories manufacturer, **Reginox UK**, has kickstarted 2022 with a bang thanks to a series of important management changes. Dave Mayer, the previous Sales and Marketing Director, who has been with Reginox for over 20 years, has been promoted to Commercial Director.

As part of the new role, Dave will oversee all commercial aspects of the U.K. business covering internal sales, operations, purchasing and external sales with a dedicated management team in these departments reporting into him. As part of the role changes, Dave has also restructured the UK team creating a designated external sales division which will now be led by Gareth Hughes.

Gareth has been promoted at the end of 2021 to the newly created position of National Sales Manager and he will have overall responsibility for the nationwide sales force. Gareth joined the business in 2017 as area sales manager for London and the South and has successfully grown his sales by 20 per cent in recent years.

The new role will see Gareth grow and develop Reginox UK's client base across the UK with the support of his team, while maintaining the highest level of customer service and client liaison.

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Keystone Lintels awarded heavyside supplier of the year 2021

Keystone Lintels is delighted to have been awarded 'Heavyside Supplier of the Year' at the Builders Merchant Journal Awards 2021 in recognition of its outstanding customer service. The glittering event took place on November 26th at the Park Plaza London Riverbank. The awards recognise brands, builders' merchants and individuals that are making a difference to the sector and are chosen by the merchant industry professionals working within it. Commenting on the award, Chris Hemmington-Green, Sales Director for Keystone Lintels commented: "This is a fantastic achievement and a great celebration of the robust and engaging partnership between the Keystone Lintels team and our merchant customers. We are delighted that our industry leading customer service has once again been recognised with this prestigious award. This is a great way to end the year and we are looking forward to continuing to set the standard for customer service in 2022." Hosted by TV presenter Gabby Logan, the BMJ award winners were announced by the voice of the National Lottery and Strictly Come Dancing, Alan Dedicoat. Keystone is the largest supplier of steel lintels in the UK and Ireland and supports merchants with innovative ranges of products which solve problems for the builder and deliver more opportunity, added value and margin for merchants.

01283 200 150 www.keystonelintels.co.uk

Certifire approval for TECTUS Hinges

SIMONSWERK UK is proud to announce that the TECTUS range of concealed hinges has been approved for the Warrington fire CERTIFIRE certification scheme.

CERTIFIRE is an independent third-party certification scheme that assures fire protection products' performance, quality, reliability, and traceability. The scheme is recognised by regulatory authorities worldwide, it is an internationally respected mark of fire safety and one of the most authoritative in the industry.

Following stringent tests and further assessments, the TECTUS is the only CERTIFIRE approved multi-axis concealed hinge on the market.

Robin Guy Managing Director says "The certification is a fantastic asset to the range; it gives both our customer and the end-user the confidence and reassurance that the products carry the mark of a reputable third-party certification body. It gives assurance as to the performance of the products, particularly following the understandable stringent requirements on products to meet additional fire test standards due to recent tragic events.

The certification underlines SIMONSWERK'S commitment to the highest quality standards and the products performance reliability".

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Designer Contracts leads the way



Designer Contracts is spearheading a new industry initiative aimed at reversing the crisis level shortage of skilled fitters. On January 17, 2022, the company took on its first cohort of 10, 16 to 18-year-old apprentices under a new block release training scheme launched as a joint venture between FITA and Webs Training Ltd. The apprentices will attend the FITA training centre for practical training for one week in every eight. In

between – over the course of the three-year apprenticeship scheme – they will train with one of Designer Contracts' employed or sub-contract fitters. FITA is also creating a bespoke Designer Contracts' training standard so the company can assess and further develop its trained, employed fitters.

01246 854 577 www.designercontracts.com

Siderise launches mullion overlaid system

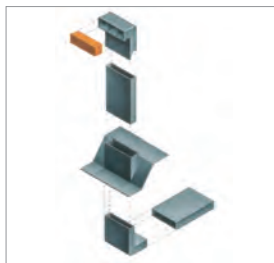


Siderise Special Products has launched the new SIDERISE® MC System — a decorative mullion liner designed to provide a simple yet robust solution for enhancing the acoustic performance, or acoustic and fire performance, of curtain wall facade systems.

Suitable for both 'stick' and 'unitised' curtain wall facades, the system is ideal for projects where internal acoustic upgrades to the mullion are not practical. This includes situations where the internal layout is unknown during construction or when fit-out or operation has already begun. Its simple installation process allows it to be installed quickly with minimal disruption to occupiers, without the need to empty spaces of furniture, etc.

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Cavibrick challenge



The Cavibrick is a moulded ventilator from **Cavity Trays** of Yeovil. Cavibricks have integral louvres, deflectors and an internal back upstand to guard against water ingress. Whilst traditional airbricks generally have two rows of 9 square 8mm x 8mm apertures, (Total airflow rating 1152mm²) the Cavibrick has louvres promoting an airflow rating of 7,500mm² – over 600% greater. Meet

ventilation requirements easily and at less cost. Plus there's a supporting range of duct and extension attachments.

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Senior has its moment at retirement village



Senior Architectural Systems has supplied the full aluminium fenestration package for a new retirement village in the West Midlands which comprises 261 one- and two-bedroom apartments for the over 55s. The scheme features Senior's SPW600 aluminium windows, SPW501 doors and thermally enhanced SF52 curtain walling; all fabricated

and installed by supply chain partner Acorn Architectural Aluminium for main contractor Vistry. Senior's SPW600 aluminium windows fit the brief perfectly by offering attractive slim sightlines, high thermal performance and meeting the requirements of Secured By Design.

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MORE FROM WOOD.

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Roto's Innovative Inowa from Carl F Groupco

Carl F Groupco, the major stockist of Roto hardware, reports increasing demand from fabricators for the innovative Patio Inowa sliding door hardware system. Launched in the hardware distributors range in 2020, the sliding door system has gathered momentum thanks to its enhanced functionality and security options.

Commenting on the trend Julie Warner, Carl F Groupco's Roto Product Manager said: "There has been a significant increase in interest from fabricators for the Roto Patio Inowa range in the last 6 months partly due to Aluplast launching their Smart-Slide door which features the hardware. Inowa is particularly popular for new build installations as the system meets many stringent regulations, namely the rain and air impermeability test to BS EN 13126-17 and the ability to achieve PAS 24 security.

"As with all Roto hardware, the Inowa is also supplied with Grade 5 corrosion resistance as standard which assists with its suitability for coastal and high-rise installations."

Innovating sliding door hardware with the Patio Inowa system, Roto ensured users

could comfortably slide sash weights up to 250kg for timber, PVCu and aluminium profiles. Minimum effort is required to move sashes as the closing movement is perpendicular to the frame profile and roller bearings mean that it is not necessary to lift the sash. Soft functionality also gently brakes the sash when coming to a stop in the open or closed position, ensuring safe opening, every time.

Equally suited for low- and high-rise applications, including coastal or penthouse living, Patio Inowa hardware keeps the sash tightly sealed in bad weather conditions thanks to the circumferential gasket and active control of locking points. The system is also capable of achieving PAS 24 compliance by securing locking points in the mullion and V locking cams. The handle is also lockable with drilling protection.

Carl F Groupco has a strong reputation for hardware expertise and the company prides itself on supplying it's UK fabricator partners large and small.

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Roto's Patio Inowa sliding door hardware system is suitable for PVC, timber and aluminium profiles





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Fassa Bortolo lend rendering expertise to breathe new life into period property

Leading Italian render manufacturer, Fassa Bortolo, has recently completed work on a stunning period property in Windlesham, Surrey.

Briefed by The Structure Group, this high specification residential project required a quality finish to retain its premium appearance and period charm. Having used Fassa on various other developments, the contractor was keen to specify a Fassa system to deliver the best results giving the homeowner a stunning finish that will last for years to come.

Covering a total space of 5,500m², the project was carried out using one of the popular Fassarend systems, which includes applying **SP 22** primer directly onto existing brick work before adding a layer of **KI 7** base coat and for the new medium dense blockwork was a direct application of **KI 7** finishing both cycles with a **FX 526** primer and **RX 561** siloxane topcoat to finish.



To find out more about Fassa Bortolo and its range of render systems and building products,

*visit <http://www.fassabortolo.co.uk/en>
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HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER



Senior brings a trio of solutions

High-performance aluminium windows, doors and curtain walling from **Senior Architectural Systems** have helped create a stunning glazing package for a new residential development in Solihull. Senior's thermally-efficient double glazed SPW600 aluminium windows were specified to create a comfortable interior environment for the residents, with the complementary SPW600 aluminium doors installed to both the main entrances and balcony areas. As well as providing low U-values and the potential to reduce energy bills, the SPW600 suites of thermally-broken aluminium windows and doors have also been designed to be both safe and secure and are fully compliant with the requirements of Secured By Design. Senior's slimline and thermally-enhanced SF52 aluminium curtain wall system has been installed on two of the buildings which accommodate ground-floor retail space. Senior's aluminium windows, doors and curtain wall systems have been fabricated and installed by specialist supply chain partner Logic Aluminium Systems for main contractor G F Tomlinson.

01709 772600 www.seniorarchitectural.co.uk

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THE OUTLOOK FOR GLAZING TRENDS IN 2022

After some significant recent industry impacts including Covid and net zero targets, John McComb from Reynaers Aluminium UK looks at five key glazing specification trends and how it's responding to them.



During these undoubtedly uncertain times, it is difficult to make accurate predictions. However, with recent updates to the Building Regulations coming into force from June 2022, it is apparent that environmental impact and maintaining a higher standard of living will be at the forefront.

BALANCING AESTHETICS WITH PERFORMANCE

The continuous trend to invite more natural light into properties has increased interest in aluminium profiles. This has sparked a change in design – with slimmer sightlines and more room for glazing, the whole construction approach is evolving.

Developers need to provide properties that are not only aesthetically better but thermally improved too. The renewed focus

on thermal performance is apparent across both residential and commercial settings due to the updates to Part L of the Building Regulations which relates to the conservation of fuel and power, in particular thermal insulation and energy efficiency. As part of the journey to net zero 2050, the Future Homes Standard legislation and Building Regulations will lead to a reduction in U-values in 2022, and further major reductions in both 2025 and 2050. The lower the U-value, the easier it is to keep heat flow through building structures to a minimum. In order to achieve this, house-builders must ensure that new buildings do not exceed a maximum CO₂ emission rate. This will ensure that new properties are properly insulated and produce fewer carbon emissions.

The ongoing trend for properties to let more light in requires more glass and less

metal, however, it is essential this balance is struck with thermal efficiency in mind. Currently, bi-fold doors have a big market as they allow residents to better connect with the outdoor world, while commercial users will continue to rely on curtain walling solutions to create spaces that are productive and pleasant places to work in. Residentially, there has also been a definite move towards sliding doors, as these use a lot more glass and allow more daylight to enter.

UNCERTAINTY

As many people were unable to travel during lockdown, trends have shown that many households have spent income on home improvements instead, which has led to extra revenue.

However, with the current uncertainty of the pandemic and supply of materials,

THE GLAZING INDUSTRY NEEDS TO ADAPT TO RAPID CHANGES IN SOCIETY BY PROVIDING INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS

It remains to be seen if the growth in residential developments will continue over the next 12 months.

We can be certain that the supply chain and the ongoing effects of the pandemic will be the defining factors for the direction in which the market takes.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability continues to be high on the agenda of all building product manufacturers, and this will only be accelerated following the recent COP26 conference. With focus on thermal insulation in Part L and the Future Homes legislation, the industry as a whole will have to review the products it manufactures, fabricates and installs.

With the entire industry now committed to working towards a zero carbon approach for 2050, being able to demonstrate green credentials as a manufacturer and supplier will become increasingly important. While in some places it has already begun, in future, tenders will require the ability to demonstrate green credentials and certifications. This is because developers and contractors use this as part of their value proposition to clients; they want to show that they have a transparent and green supply chain.

SUPPLY CHAIN

Supply chain issues experienced in 2021 are expected to continue, however some suppliers have mitigated against these risks by employing additional workers, implementing intensive training, and partnering with new suppliers.

While there has been a spike in people investing in home improvements, it is the supply chain which will drive the market depending on availability of materials and, given that there is currently a capacity issue on materials and labour, that customers may have to wait longer for work to be completed.

Fortunately, the residential market should begin to stabilise, and there is plenty of market share, but ultimately it is

the supply chain that will affect the way in which the market goes. From that perspective, in the near future traditional builds on site will change, with modular construction coming more to the forefront, saving time and speeding up production to meet the demand.

VENTILATION

Ventilation, thermals and acoustics have been driving the glazing industry for a decade from a design point of view. Part F of the Building Regulations forces a change regarding ventilation. Traditional methods of ventilation such as natural ventilation (opening a window) and trickle ventilation (vents) are often considered ineffective because they are either draughty or allow in intrusive outside noise.

As society is getting louder, residential settings are starting to pose a challenge for noise control. Mechanical ventilation could be the way forward in domestic settings; however, this poses a balancing act between ventilation and energy. In order to achieve targets and aspirations there needs to be a real change in regulations.

John McComb is technical director at Reynaers Aluminium UK.



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JACKON is 'Future Homes ready' at Futurebuild

At Futurebuild this year **JACKON** will be promoting the fact that it is Future Homes ready. The company's building systems are ready for the rigorous new u-value targets for new-builds, when these come into effect in 2025 as part of the Future Homes Standard.

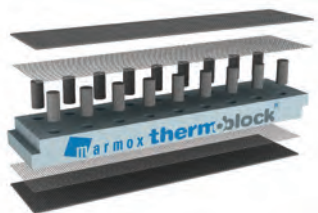
JACKON's THERMOMUR® ICF and JACKODUR® ATLAS ranges already meet or exceed the new targets for thermal insulation. The THERMOMUR® 350 Super range – currently the company's best-selling range in the UK – already achieves 0.15 for walls with no added materials, and the JACKODUR® ATLAS system can be designed to achieve 0.11.

Visitors to the company's stand at the Show will be able to find out more about the benefits that JACKON's 60 years' expertise in XPS and EPS manufacturing can bring to your construction project. JACKON building systems make a positive contribution to the construction of highly energy-efficient buildings due to very low energy inputs required for heating or cooling.

More information on JACKON's products is available on the company's new website.

01204 221089 www.jackon.co.uk

Futurebuild stand no H50



Marmox Thermoblock to fight cold-bridging at Futurebuild 2022

Fully in step with the sustainable construction goals of Futurebuild, **Marmox** will be exhibiting its well proven and versatile Thermoblocks on stand K10 from March 1st to the 3rd. The easy to install product is widely used to tackle the issue of cold-bridging around the floor/wall junction at the base of perimeter and internal walls, beneath both masonry and timber frame constructions, while it also finds applications at intermediate floor levels, beneath parapet walls and even in the construction of swimming pool surrounds. Thermoblocks are available in widths of 100, 140 or 215 mm and are formed from sections of XPS (extruded polystyrene) encapsulating two rows of high strength, epoxy concrete mini-columns. These are attached at either end to the top and bottom layers of glass-fibre reinforced polymer concrete, to ensure a good bond with the rest of the structure. Marmox's technical sales team will be on hand to explain how specifying Thermoblocks can avoid having to adopt the punishing default value under SAP and therefore help achieve Part L compliance in a practical and economic manner. Visitors can also gain an insight into the performance benefits of Marmox 360 multipurpose adhesive – used to seal the stepped end joints to the Thermoblocks – and other products in the manufacturer's extensive range.

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CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT

Diagram illustrating the components of a bathroom renovation project, showing a modern bathroom layout with various fixtures and materials.

- Toilet Box**: The area surrounding the toilet.
- Shower**: The shower area, including the showerhead and shower tray.
- Walls**: The walls of the bathroom, including the shower area.
- Vanity Units**: The vanity unit, including the sink and vanity cabinet.
- Pipe Box**: The pipe box, which is a storage unit for pipes and plumbing fixtures.
- Bath Paneling**: The paneling around the bathtub.
- Floors**: The floor of the bathroom.



futurebuild
the future of the built environment

SHOW PREVIEW

BACK TO THE FUTUREBUILD

Futurebuild, the event that's championed a sustainable built environment for the past 16 years, is back. Taking place from 1-3 March at ExCel, the event will connect specifiers, decision makers and 'disruptors' with major brands and start-ups from across the built environment.

Staged in the aftermath of the COP26 conference, Futurebuild (previously known as Ecobuild) will be perfectly timed to focus on the key issues and actions needed to work towards net zero.

The focus is no longer about ambition — it is about delivery. Attracting over 20,000 senior professionals from right across the built environment, Futurebuild is the perfect opportunity for the industry to meet and collaborate face to face, to achieve the transformational change needed if the built environment is going to reach net zero by 2050.

Labelled the "home of innovation" by the organisers, Futurebuild 2022 will be organised into six sections — Buildings, Offsite, Interiors, Resourceful Materials, Energy and Critical Infrastructure.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Sponsored by Construction Innovation Hub, Futurebuild 2022's conference programme will explore some of the key questions and issues around "closing the gap between net zero ambition and delivery." Panels of industry experts will share their experiences on a range of topics, from embodied carbon to investing in education, skills and diversity.

The second day of the conference programme, for example, will focus on "leading transformative change," including a panel discussion about how the built environment can lead by example to raise aspirations. Futurebuild commented: "If the industry is going to achieve net zero, it must nurture a talent for excellence." With this in mind, Bea Natzler, senior analyst, business and buildings, at the Climate Change Committee, chairs a



panel discussing how the built environment can "engage more widely and move from following orders to being more influential," and ensure that delivering net zero is a fundamental part of all contracts with clients."

COLLABORATION IS KEY

The event will showcase over 250 leading brands – companies who are developing the innovative technologies, products and solutions. Visitors can participate in the 'Innovation Trail,' which highlights the event's innovation partners. The winners of the Big Innovation Pitch, a competition that celebrates new approaches to the biggest challenges facing the industry, will also be announced during the event.

Futurebuild commented on the event's important role in the current context: "By bringing together individuals and companies from all areas of the built environment, we can accelerate innovation and provide everyone with access to the products and processes needed to deliver change."

Martin Hurn, event director at Futurebuild, concluded: "Now it is more important than ever to meet in person and do business face to face because our exhibitors and attendees are all working towards a common goal — achieving net zero."

To register free to visit Futurebuild 2022, click the 'Register Now' button on the home page of the event website:

WWW.FUTUREBUILD.CO.UK

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Awards season is again upon us



After a turbulent 2 years, the awards season is again upon us. This year **HD Services** have entered the National Energy Efficiency Awards for the first time in the categories of Renewable

Heat Installer of the Year and Business Development Manager of the Year and they are lucky enough to have been shortlisted in both categories! HD Services are keeping their fingers crossed for the awards event which takes place on the 18th February 2022 at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole. Watch this space to find out the results!

energyefficiencyawards.co.uk www.hdservicesltd.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 is a one-stop source for all the latest press releases providing any visitor with access to information about products and services that they may require. From the website, you can find links to digital issues that have live

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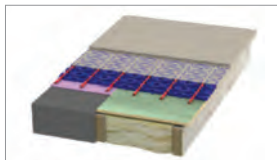


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Solution Fires closes 2021 on an impressive trading high. The manufacturer who retails throughout the UK and Ireland via specialist fires retailers, benefitted from a substantial sales uplift of 58% in 2021. Solution Fires has now set an ambitious new target for 2022, and the company is aiming to achieve a further

30% hike in turnover over the course of the year. Andy Hitchman, Managing Director at Solution Fires explains: "Our new product development and dedicated focus on the customer experience have put us in a very strong position, and as such we are in a great position to plan for further expansion next year."

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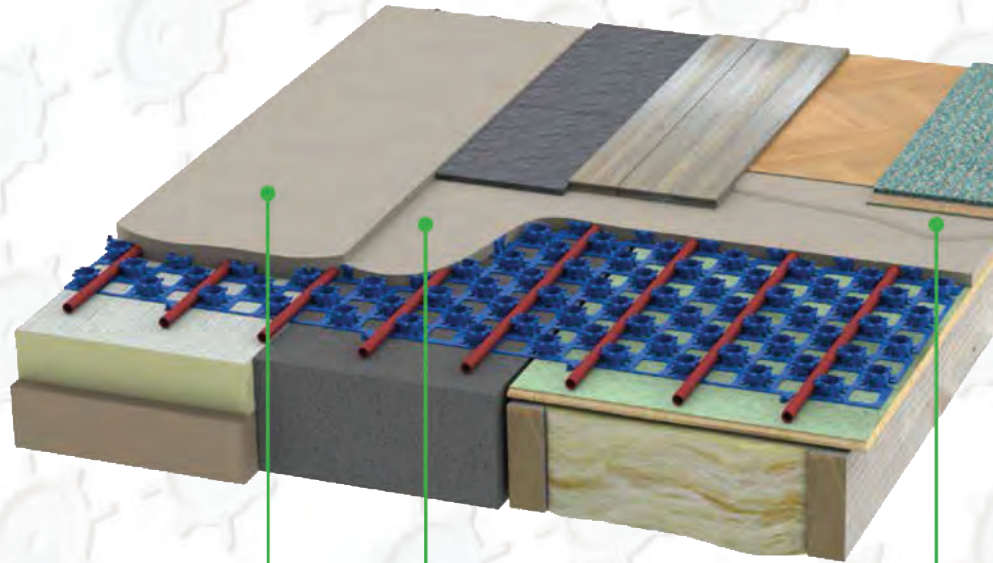
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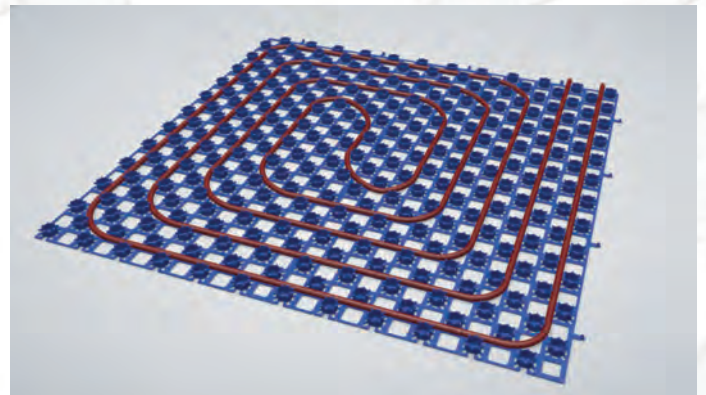
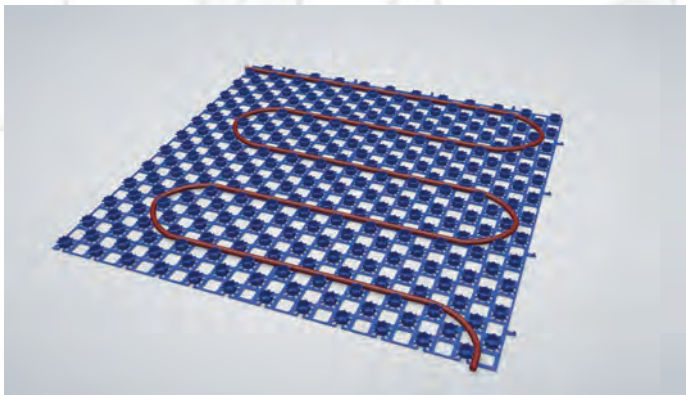
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THE INS AND OUTS OF AIR POLLUTION

Paul Williams from Domus Ventilation says that indoor air pollution needs to be taken more seriously, and proposes measures for addressing it.

In 2021, the UK was found guilty by the European Court of Justice of “systematically and persistently” breaching air pollution limits. The court ruled that, since 2010, the UK had failed to tackle the problem of toxic NO₂ emissions in the shortest possible time. The UK government’s latest data shows that NO₂ limits are being exceeded in 33 out of 43 air quality assessment zones.

Measures to tackle air pollution have been announced, which cover both NO_x (the collective name for oxides of nitrogen, with NO and NO₂ having the most effect on the environment and human health) and PM2.5 (particulate matter, which is a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets such as soot). It aims to have new legal air pollution limits in place by October 2022, which will be informed by WHO guidelines.

So, air pollution is being taken seriously, but the focus is on external air pollution. When you consider we spend 80-90% of our time indoors, are we in danger of sidelining indoor air pollution?

WHAT ARE THE INDOOR POLLUTANTS?

When it comes to outdoor air pollutants the focus is very much on NO₂ and PM2.5, with the key emissions sources being transport and domestic fossil fuel burning respectively. For those living near busy roads and in built up areas, these emissions remain a problem indoors as well as outdoors as they readily enter homes around closed doors, through windows etc.

Pollution is, however, also generated by activities conducted within the house. Levels of particulate matter (PM) increase burning fossil fuel such as gas cookers

and heaters, and even candles. The cleaning equipment used often contains harmful toxins that accumulate indoors and linger. Even seemingly innocuous items within homes, such as furniture and the very materials these homes are built from, can release potentially harmful pollutants if properties are poorly heated and ventilated.

Sadly, this is a much under-studied area, and our knowledge of the sources and worst effects of indoor air pollution is lacking.

HOW TO ADDRESS INDOOR POLLUTANTS

While ‘there are things that we know we don’t know’, as the saying goes, the things we do know that cause potentially harmful pollutants indoors we can address.

The first and easiest one of these is to switch to non-toxic cleaning products. The second is to move away from fossil

fuels in our home. While these focus on removing the pollutant at source, the third way to address pollutants in our homes is to disperse them through effective ventilation.

The simplest form of ventilation is to open windows, but this isn’t a good option if the property is in a heavily polluted area as you are simply bringing more polluted air into it. Basic mechanical ventilation, such as bathroom and kitchen fans are essential and will remove a level of pollution (as long as they are correctly ducted!), but to truly make a difference you need to turn to mechanical ventilation systems. And this is where housebuilders can make a potentially life changing difference to future home owners and residents.

EFFECTIVE VENTILATION

Mechanical ventilation, in the form of intermittent extract, continuous extract or

WHEN YOU CONSIDER WE SPEND 80-90% OF OUR TIME INDOORS, ARE WE IN DANGER OF SIDELINING INDOOR AIR POLLUTION?



A WAY TO ADDRESS POLLUTANTS IN OUR HOMES IS TO DISPERSE THEM THROUGH EFFECTIVE VENTILATION

supply and extract, are recognised as the most proficient means of ventilating a modern property.

Mechanical Extract Ventilation (MEV) and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) systems actively extract air from wet rooms (kitchens, bathrooms, utility spaces) via ducting to a central ventilation unit which exhausts to the atmosphere. In the case of MVHR, there's the added benefit of supply and extract ventilation combined as these systems reuse waste heat from the extract air and use it to efficiently pre-warm the fresh air drawn into the building using a heat exchanger. The filtered, pre-warmed air is then distributed around the home, effectively meeting part of the heating load in energy efficient dwellings. New MVHR units feature advanced heat exchange proficiency enabling up to 95% of waste heat to be recovered. They come

with 100% thermal (summer) bypass which automatically activates when the air temperature reaches a pre-set level, allowing in cooler, fresh, filtered air without warming it through the heat exchanger.

Both MEV and MVHR systems provide effective ventilation, are energy efficient and extremely effective at dispersing polluted air.

Even with these clever systems, they still rely on bringing outdoor air in so, in more polluted areas such as cities, you will need to combine them with a filter.

Because of the nature of these systems, which require extensive ducting, they are mostly suited to new build properties. For existing properties, the most cost-effective options are bathroom and kitchen intermittent extraction fans (axial and centrifugal) and Positive Input Ventilation units (PIV). PIV units are a cost-effective method of eliminating moisture from the home by gently pressurising a dwelling to expel stale and humid air through natural ventilation points. They can be mounted either in the loft area of a house, or a hallway cupboard of a flat.

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH INDOOR AIR QUALITY

We certainly don't want to detract from



the work being done to improve external air quality – it's literally life saving – but we do need to start taking indoor air quality seriously. We should feel safe in our homes.

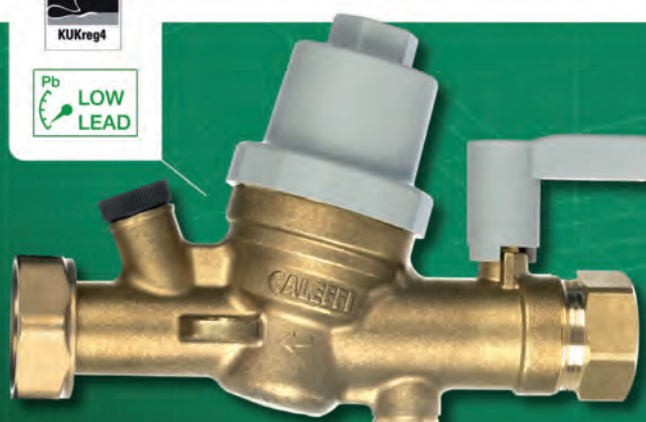
Paul William is product manager for Domus Ventilation.



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EnviroVent's ventilation system chosen



Barratt Developments has specified an innovative low carbon ventilation system from leading manufacturer **EnviroVent** for its flagship zero carbon home, known as 'Z House'. The MEV 300 ventilation system from EnviroVent was selected by Barratt Developments as it is

constructed mainly from recyclable materials to reduce the impact on landfill and is designed to ensure that components can easily be replaced. Versatile, compact and high performance, the system provides airflow rates up to 103l/s (370 m³/hr) and, as it is powered by DC motor technology, EnviroVent's MEV range uses the lowest energy consumption, therefore reducing carbon emissions.

0345 27 27 807 www.envirovent.com/roadmap-to-net-zero

All systems go with Everbuild's new system



Sika Everbuild has launched a new Central Heating Treatment System which offers an effective three stage solution to clean, protect and test central heating and hot water systems. Sika Everbuild's Central Heating Treatment System comprises a range of targeted solutions to solve the most common cause of heating breakdowns – accumulations of limescale,

sludge, bacteria, mould, rust etc. Each of the nine products in the system provides a high performance, rapid response – making it easy for professionals to clean, protect, test and ultimately prevent problems caused by a build-up of debris in central heating systems.

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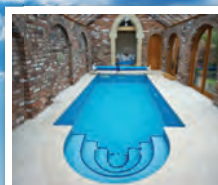
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FRUGAL FIRES

Not only do fires and stoves provide a luxurious traditional aesthetic, but they can now also achieve high levels of energy efficiency. Annabelle Carvell of Stovax gives the argument for why they should be high on developers' agenda.



New build homes are designed for energy efficiency – they tend to be cheaper to run, with ‘sealed’ rooms and improved water bills, not to mention being much warmer than older houses. On top of this, they come with the appeal of an easy move experience that cuts out long chains, plus the available finishing touches and upgrades give the customer the same sense of satisfaction from renovating an older home, but with much less stress. So, what makes a stove or fire an essential centrepiece, when it seems that a new build property already has it all?

The saying goes that we consume with our eyes. Developers' showhomes already do an excellent job of ‘building the lifestyle’ in a visual way, so that prospective owners can truly imagine themselves in the comfort of a new home – but what visually differentiates one developer from another?

Enter the stove or fire. Including a fireplace within a new build property at

the ‘discovery point’ in the customer journey adds an extra edge that allows the developer to stand out against their competition. The fireplace is often seen as the heart of the house, around which the entire family spends their time creating that feeling we call ‘home.’ It makes sense to include a fireplace to sell the bigger picture, and include a glimpse of the character and interest that customers often are looking to inject into their future property to truly make it their own.

Additionally, a stove or fire can invite a sense of luxury. Installation does not need to be complex either – while there are plenty of options with woodburning or gas appliances, one of the easiest ways to create a homely atmosphere is to install an electric fire. This only requires a three-pin plug socket to function, so can easily be built into the scheme of a showhome, and offers an easy way to add value to the property as a functional and fashionable finishing touch. With energy efficiency on the top of the agenda,

today's electric fires feature a host of energy-saving features, including open window detection, scheduled heating, and much more that goes hand-in-hand with a typical new build home.

Talking of energy, the benefits of a stove or fire go beyond their aesthetics. Although new build homes already boast a warmer environment, a stove offers the ability to warm rooms without using central heating. An electric fireplace goes a step further, letting the customer enjoy the ambience of a fire with or without the heat. This is an essential feature in a new build property in particular, as localised on-demand heat is a must for an already efficient environment.

So, what are the different fuel types, and what are their benefits to the new build? It's easy to see the appeal of an electric fireplace from the start – the convenient heat, energy-saving features, ease of installation, plus the ability to ‘upsell’ with a luxury item and finishing touch in the property.



ONE OF THE EASIEST WAYS TO ACHIEVE A HOMELY ATMOSPHERE IS TO INSTALL AN ELECTRIC FIRE

between the ultra-modern electric fireplace, and the real woodburner.

Finally, for most, the allure of real flames and logs is what draws them into purchasing a woodburning stove, but many believe a real woodburner is out of their reach if they own a new build property as typically it is only older houses that come ready with a chimney for making their own. By simply opting for a prefabricated system that works in the same way as a chimney, a developer is able to not only offer all of the appeal of the new build property, but also the real experience of burning wood in the home – offering the customer all of the character and charm they might otherwise believe is not possible from a brand new build.

Annabelle Carvell is communications officer at Stovax.

Gas offers a similar degree of convenience, with most offering remote control access, and some even offering app-based control. Living flames can be turned on or

off at the touch of a button, and some are even available for fitting into the internal leaf of a cavity wall – so no chimney is required at all. It's a happy medium

Consort Claudgen launches app



Consort Claudgen have launched Consort Connect app which allows users to have complete control over their heating remotely via their smartphone or tablet. The app is free and downloadable from Google Play or Apple Store. It controls Consort's Wi-Fi enabled heaters or SL heaters connected to an SLPBWIFI wireless controller. It features a 7-day timer with 24 heating periods per day, lock function,

open window tracking and response capability, and custom automations. A self-learning control ability utilising occupancy and temperature sensors is also available but only on the SLPBWIFI and Consort 'MW' heater models.

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Three RIBA accredited CPD courses released



Domus Ventilation has released three RIBA accredited CPD courses on residential ventilation. The courses are designed to improve architects' understanding of ventilation in residential new builds. Each RIBA accredited CPD covers the basic

principles of ventilation and why it is so important to provide adequate ventilation in modern energy efficient homes, not only for the health of the occupants but also for the fabric of the building. From here, the CPDs take different paths: the first addresses recent changes to Part F - Ventilation of the Building Regulations; the second looks at Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) system design; whilst the third focuses on how to successfully integrate mechanical ventilation into a project.

megan.bennett@domusventilation.co.uk

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It's hard to imagine designing your dream home without a real fire at its heart, there to cosy around on a cold winters night. A Fondis insert fire gives you the crackling flames, warmth and firelight of a traditional fireplace but with the efficiency, controllability and low emissions of a modern stove, and all without compromising the building's air tightness and insulation value. With

its all-glass guillotine door that slides up and away at the lift of a finger, it is easy to light and simple to operate. And if there's a power cut, it's there to keep you warm. Please visit the **Firepower** website for more information.

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Kensa steps up production



Kensa Heat Pumps, a leading manufacturer of low carbon ground source heat pumps, has broken production records recently, doubling its output over the past 18 months and working towards a further twofold increase in capacity by 2023. Kensa Group CEO, Simon

Lomax, said: "Kensa has passionately advocated for a long time that ground source heat pumps are best placed to deliver low carbon heat to the UK." "In response, we are committed to scaling up production to meet increased demand and fulfil the Government's ambition to 'build back greener'. Our mission is to connect thousands more people in homes and businesses across the country to cleaner, greener, affordable heat."

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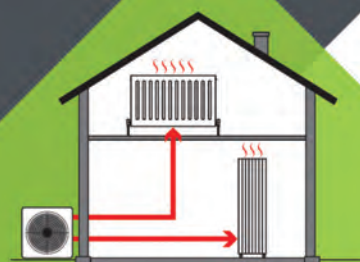
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CorkSol UK has recently launched its next generation building coating, SprayCork. Offering an improved finish and enhanced functionality when transforming internal and external walls, SprayCork is set to provide applicators and consumers with an even better cork-based product, with a wider range of practical benefits and colours available. Well suited to the UK, the new product has 40% more cork content, making it more thermally efficient in a climate where heating systems struggle to insulate buildings in the winter months.

01484 442420 www.CorkSoluk.com

Trio of inspirational showhomes for Barnsley



Designer Contracts developed a hattrick of inspirational show homes when developers Keepmoat Yorkshire East chose to work with the company's design team at its Kestrel Gardens, Barnsley site. Said Antony Rowe, sales manager at Keepmoat Yorkshire East:

"Our three show homes at Kestrel Gardens have been showcased with individually thoughtful themes. It is rewarding to see how the designs, from concept to completion, come to fruition. The feedback from our customers has been extremely positive, with insightful comments over various aspects, such as cleverly designed furniture solutions, colour concepts and textures of soft furnishings and wall coverings."

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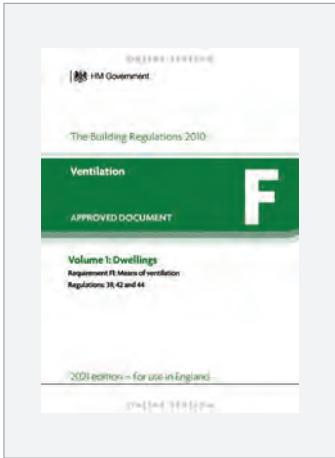
Building Regulations Update – England

England 2021 Regulations have been released and Scotland & Wales are currently under review. It is the intention that the updates ensure adequate ventilation of all types whilst the energy efficiency of housing is improved at the same time. As the saying goes, 'Ventilate when you Insulate'.

This is all part of the Government's proposals for the Future Homes Standard, which provides a pathway for highly efficient buildings that are zero carbon ready, better for the environments and fit for the future. Implementation of a full technical specification is scheduled for 2025. There are also proposals being discussed to mitigate against overheating in residential buildings.

Titon welcomes the increased emphasis that has been put on ventilation in both new and existing buildings as per the Building Regulations update, particularly in the current climate. Titon has a user guide section to help explain this.

www.titon.com/regulations www.gov.uk/government/publications/ventilation-approved-document-f





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BESPOKE IS BEST

James Hulbert of Knauf Insulation explains how housebuilders can navigate their way to cost-effective Part L 2021 compliance in England.



Part L was published in December and will bring England's new build homes closer to net zero, and its pivotal role is reflected in the speed of implementation. The changes will come into force in June this year. Transitional arrangements allow for a brief grace period where homes with planning permission can be built to the old standard but after June 2023, all undeveloped plots (not sites) must comply with the new standard regardless of when planning permission was obtained. So, housebuilders must get to grips with the implications fast.

For many that will be easier said than done. Recent Industry Viewfinder research by *Housebuilder & Developer* revealed that over half of respondents didn't understand what Part L's 31% reduction in carbon would mean for their developments. Furthermore, 80% expressed concerns about the cost implications of compliance.

I want to reassure housebuilders that compliance can be both achievable

USING THE SAP METHODOLOGY ALLOWS HOUSEBUILDERS TO DETERMINE THE RIGHT WHOLE-HOUSE RECIPE FOR THEIR REQUIREMENTS

and affordable.

Under the new regulations, CO₂ emissions from new build homes must be 31% lower than current standards, which will be delivered by fabric improvements as well as low and zero carbon technologies.

But, Part L 2021 does not require a wholesale rethink of the building fabric. Housebuilders retain a large degree of freedom to find the most cost-effective mix of technology and fabric improvements that will achieve compliance.

NOTIONAL IS SIMPLY A SUGGESTION

The most important message is that the notional dwelling is just one example of how to achieve compliance for a typical home. It outlines a 'recipe' for fabric specification; U-values for the walls, roof, floors, windows and doors, as well as parameters for thermal bridging, air permeability and heating design.

It's not the only way, or indeed the best way. Most housebuilders are unlikely to find it is the most cost-effective route to compliance.

The notional dwelling for Part L 2021 includes U-values of 0.11 W/m²K for the roof and 0.18 W/m²K for the walls. Adding more mineral wool insulation to the loft is an easy and extremely cost-effective way of achieving a U-value as low as 0.09 W/m²K, so 0.11 is arguably an under-specification. Loft space is usually dead space, so the plot footprint won't be affected.

By contrast, achieving 0.18W/m²K in cavity walls is more costly, and may

require compromises. Housebuilders may find they need to adopt wider cavities (and therefore plot footprints).

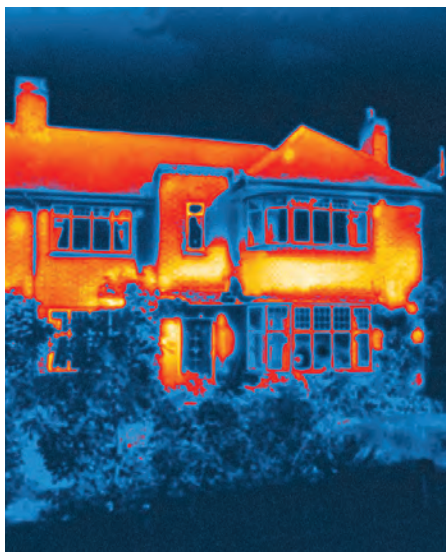
In essence, following the notional dwelling to the letter could lead to unnecessary expense when compliance can be achieved in a smarter, more cost-effective way.

GO BESPOKE

Using the SAP methodology allows housebuilders to determine the right whole-house recipe for their requirements. A recipe that finds an optimal balance between building design, high-performance insulation, and low-carbon services.

In many cases, the fabric performance required for compliance can be delivered cost-effectively by adding insulation to the roofs and floors. This means that existing wall insulation preferences and build-ups can be retained.

The good news is that compliance can be achieved more cost-effectively by



taking a bespoke approach instead of using the notional dwelling.

So how can it be done? Consider, a three-bedroom semi-detached house with two wet rooms and a gas combi

boiler. Instead of the $0.18\text{W/m}^2\text{K}$ wall U-value, compliance can be achieved by increasing floor and roof insulation, and improving the air tightness of the building, alongside low-cost wastewater heat recovery (WWHR). Coupling this with a simple ventilation system means some rooftop solar PV will be required, but even this can be avoided using upgraded mechanical ventilation with heat recovery.

In both cases, it's possible to retain a 100 mm non-combustible fully filled cavity.


Ultimately, you need to comply with Part L, but don't feel forced into following the notional dwelling route. There are better options available by going bespoke. If you don't want to work with an external SAP assessor, then the right insulation supplier will have whole house recipes available to share.

James Hulbert is head of housing at Knauf Insulation.

UNDER THE NEW REGULATIONS, CO₂ EMISSIONS FROM NEW BUILD HOMES MUST BE 31% LOWER THAN CURRENT STANDARDS, WHICH WILL BE DELIVERED BY FABRIC IMPROVEMENTS AS WELL AS LOW AND ZERO CARBON TECHNOLOGIES

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Drawer delights from Keller



Keller Kitchens is well known across the UK's residential and contract markets due to the impressive flexibility in terms of designs, colours and finishes. The latest innovation is the Merivobox from BLUM which can now be incorporated into any Keller scheme. As standard, the kitchens are equipped with the Antaro drawer box which has been known for years for its

high user comfort and beautiful design. The Merivobox offers an alternative if the design demands that extra something. This pan drawer system boasts even better running properties, stability, ease of assembly and a higher load capacity. The drawers are fitted with a full metal side wall while a new inlay mat and cutlery tray have also been developed.

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ALL HUMAN LIFE IS HERE

Buyers are looking at properties differently nowadays, says Tim Spann of Keller Kitchens – desiring multi-functional kitchen spaces that work for the whole family. Bearing this in mind, he discusses trends and functionalities to consider.



Every year brings a new set of trends. Whether it's fashion, cars, exercise or kitchens, there is always something new, and, after a tumultuous couple of years, people are looking to utilise the space in their home to full effect.

Choice and flexibility are now needed when a homeowner is considering a new kitchen. The customer is looking for interesting colour and material combinations, and there are endless possibilities in terms of design, space and technology available today.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

The 'norm' is no longer desirable – homeowners want their kitchen to stand out among others. Having the standard cabinet size is now not enough for some as they need that extra space, for example – perhaps choosing to have an XXL cabinet to facilitate the larger family.

Not everyone wants to have closed doors on their cabinets, so there are further options to have open display units or add a smoked glass door. More and

CHOICE AND FLEXIBILITY ARE NOW NEEDED WHEN A HOMEOWNER IS CONSIDERING A NEW KITCHEN

more properties are now featuring shelves and smart-cubes or open wall units in the likes of black aluminium – as opposed to wall units with closed doors.

Ultra-matt kitchens, with different cabinet colour options, recently rose in popularity, and they are here to stay. The material looks sleek, and it's easy to clean.

MATERIALITY

Choosing a material for a kitchen door is the first step, depending on the budget – after that, the colour can be considered, as most colours come in most finishes

with today's more flexible manufacturers. The cabinet front colours are obviously the most striking points in a kitchen scheme, so making sure the right colour, or colours, is chosen for the room is essential.

This all depends on the room itself – is it small and naturally dark with not a lot of daylight? If so, you could choose a brighter shade to give the illusion that the room is larger than it actually is. Larger rooms can get away with a deep navy or even a striking black shade. Kitchens tend to follow other trends such as paint colours for walls. Dark was the latest trend we saw – from statement walls in the living room to kitchen cabinet doors – everyone wanted that deep shade in their homes!

Natural wood is another classic trend that will never stray. Wood effect finishes are very popular right now, especially when used with contrasting colours and materials. To get the full effect, contrast a warm oak finish with a dark shade for the handleless rail profiles, sink and tap, for example.



Wood effects for kitchens are enduring, offering reassuring warmth and charm standing the test of time. The new generation of faux wood finishes are stunning. The 3D depth of grain with

shade, light and detail is so close to the real thing, it really is hard for the untrained eye to tell the difference. However, the wood effect finish offers the distinct advantages of price and durability. With a smaller budget, you can emulate the natural look with a considerable reduction in price; and with a product that will take the knocks and bumps of family kitchen life without the damage that may occur to softer natural materials.

COVID-19

We cannot sweep over the fact that our homes are used completely differently now compared to one year ago. We now sleep, eat, work, home-school and exercise under the one roof. Creating a multi-functional hub to accommodate all of those things is essential.

A large island for your kitchen can also be used for the children when doing schoolwork or simply as a home office for those that don't have the luxury of a spare room they can convert.

LIGHTING AND ELECTRICS

Lighting is a factor that has to be considered too. It can be added almost anywhere in the kitchen – inside cabinets, drawers or underneath the overhead

THE KITCHEN IS NOW A MEETING HUB FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY – EVEN IF THERE'S NO COOKING HAPPENING

cabinets or shelves. People also choose kitchen lighting for the aesthetic appeal as well as functionality – choosing different colours and settings.

Making sure the kitchen has the latest high-tech gadgets and appliances is also key. Installing a hot tap so cooking dinner or even making a cup of tea is easier. Or installing charging pads for your mobile phone and smart devices can eliminate the arguments as to where the chargers are. The kitchen is now a meeting hub for all members of the family and somewhere where everyone wants to be – even if there's no cooking happening.

Tim Spann is national sales manager UK at Keller Kitchens.

Reginox introduces Tekno sink



Reginox UK is shining a light on its stunning Tekno sink. Tekno, made using the same techniques as the other 'Reginox by Elleci' ranges, comes either as a single or bowl and a half sink and is also reversible. Available in both black and white, this beautifully designed sink has a modern drainer profile and can be

fitted inset making it suitable for any kitchen. The Tekno perfectly combines a modern contemporary style with great design and quality, at a price point that make it ultra-competitive. The Tekno sinks are very hygienic, easy to clean and maintain, guaranteeing that it will look better for longer within any kitchen.

01260 280033 www.reginox.co.uk

Be inspired by new BLANCO brochures



The *BLANCO UNIT à la Carte Collection 2022* is a concise, comprehensive 76-page guide to **BLANCO's** kitchen sink and tap portfolios while *BLANCO UNIT Selections 2022* is a 32-page catalogue detailing a range of stainless steel, ceramic and SILGRANIT®

sinks and complementary kitchen mixer taps along with integrated waste solutions. Finally, the *Dealer Guide 2022*, again focusing on BLANCO UNIT solutions, is a 260-page compendium which is designed to arm the retailer network with more detailed information on all they need to know about the BLANCO offerings for 2022.

www.blanco.co.uk



Easy Stair – site staircase

Easy Stair is a temporary site staircase which is now extremely popular and in widespread use across the UK housebuilding industry. Easy Stair increases productivity by allowing SAFE, FAST access to upper floors from the very earliest stages of construction, allowing construction activities to speed along prior to the installation of the finished stairs.

They are particularly popular in faster build methods such as timber frame but they have benefits across all methods of construction as shown in the picture. Safety is also improved by removing the need to climb up and down ladders whilst carrying tools or materials.

Safety Platforms provide a range of solutions to assist with the speedy and safe construction process, these include Stairwell Edge Protection Solutions to prevent falls down the stairwell prior to the installation of permanent balustrades. If you would like to make your sites more productive and safer, call Safety Platforms, or visit the website.

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VitrA expands Origin with new countertops and vanity units



Origin patterned black oak vanity unit from £711 (90cm). shown with Calacatta silk Neolith from £809 (90cm). Water Jewel vanity basin in pearl white and black £465 (40cms).

VitrA has extended the design possibilities of the elegant Origin brassware and accessories range with a new versatile collection of modular vanity and side units along with complementing countertops. The new Origin furniture range, created by Studio Design VitrA, has a graceful, minimal style designed to be highly flexible, stylish, and practical.

Counters and countertops are available in black or white glass, flat oak and patterned black oak. Notably, the range also includes a Calacatta silk Neolith® porcelain, a hard-wearing, man-made stone, a fusion of ceramic and porcelain, combined with a mix of quartz, glass, and silica. The countertop is versatile and easy to clean - ideal for the bathroom. The durable surface is liquid-resistant with low water absorption - much more practical and easier to look after than natural marble. 90cm, 120cm and 150cm vanity units are available as well as 60cm

or 90cm side units to meet individual needs.

"The countertops have been carefully chosen so that designers can create interesting combinations, says Margaret Talbot, marketing manager for VitrA Bathrooms (UK and Europe). "The Calacatta silk Neolith® is a luxury choice and looks particularly effective with darker finishes. The whole collection works together seamlessly for complete customisation."

Wooden vanity units are available in flat oak, patterned black oak and elm and can be combined with countertops available in flat oak, patterned black oak, elm, black glass, white glass, or Calacatta silk Neolith® porcelain. Origin vanity units are compatible with a wide variety of VitrA washbasins, including those from the Equal, Plural and Outline ranges, and are designed to work perfectly with the VitrA Origin brassware.

01235 750990 www.VitrA.co.uk



Origin vanity unit 90cm shown in flat oak £711 with White glass countertop with left basin £170 Tall Origin basin mixer in chrome £225. Water Jewels countertop bowl £306. Deluxe circular illuminated mirror £318 (80cm).



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Polyflor expands luxury vinyl sheet portfolio with launch of new Architex collection



Polyflor, a leading UK manufacturer of commercial and residential vinyl flooring, is delighted to announce the launch of their new Architex collection. The Architex collection is a UK manufactured premium textile backed Luxury Vinyl Sheet floor covering containing 18 stunning wood, cement, and abstract designs, ideal for residential settings in private & public housing.

Polyflor has become a leading provider of residential vinyl sheet flooring delivering high quality designs that are available in multi-widths with reliable stock availability. Designed to sit perfectly alongside existing Luxury Vinyl Sheet collections, Designatex and Secura, the Architex collection has been developed to include a unique hybrid backing that combines the comfort of Secura with the



textile backing of Designatex. The primary aim of the range is to offer the highest standard of vinyl sheet flooring as an alternative to other felt-backed ranges.

Architex includes features such as R10 slip resistance, 19dB sound impact reduction and a

Polyurethane Reinforcement for eased cleaning and maintenance. Architex can also be loose laid in most residential interiors up to 20m², making it quick to install as no adhesives are required and the addition of the textile backing mean the floor can be installed over damp subfloors where a Relative Humidity (Rh) of 90% is not exceeded.

Tom Rollo, Marketing Director commented, "Ideal for both public & private housing projects, our new Architex collection offers an impressive collection of beautiful trend lead designs as well as an outstanding set of performance benefits designed to enhance residential spaces."

"With the launch of Architex we also took the opportunity to refresh the look and feel of our UK manufactured Luxury Vinyl Sheet offering and align the collections with an extensive sampling package, including a brand new retail display presence."

The new Architex collection is beautifully presented within a sampling package which includes a brand new Luxury Vinyl Sheet brochure and retail display unit which combine all three of the Luxury Vinyl Sheet collections, Secura, Designatex and Architex, in addition to Architex specific shade cards and presenters. Sampling can be ordered free of charge on the Polyflor website or by calling the Polyflor Samples Direct Hotline on 0161 767 2551.

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BAL Waterproof 1C – the new one-coat solution

All the features, none of the faff

BAL, market-leaders in full-tiling solutions, have launched a new one-coat waterproofing solution, perfect for protecting domestic bathrooms, wetrooms and showers prior to tiling.

BAL Waterproof 1C is a ready-mixed tanking solution that can be used without priming on most common substrates* and is ready to tile after only two hours – perfect to fast track project completion and protecting backgrounds from water ingress and damage that can occur.

Formulated with fibre-strand technology for improved strength, it can be applied in one-coat on walls and floors with a brush, roller or 4mm

notched trowel.

No additional tapes or matting is needed as it is crack-bridging from 2-3mm.

This innovative new product is lightweight with easy-to-apply rheology and provides excellent coverage of up to 6m² - making it suitable for domestic shower rooms, bathrooms or wetrooms.

BAL Waterproof 1C also has sustainable benefits with Low VOC and using 40% recycled materials.

As part of the launch, BAL is streamlining its current waterproofing solution by deleting BAL WP1 / BAL Waterproofing Kit – and old technology that will be replaced by the higher performing Waterproof 1C.

Continuing in the product range will be BAL Tank-it – a quicker setting 2-part powder and liquid product that can be tiled in only 90 minutes.

BAL Tank-it can also be used for large scale commercial projects and external waterproofing such as fountains, balconies and terraces.

Alex Underwood, Head of Marketing said: "BAL Waterproof 1C is a significant waterproofing innovation, greatly improving the performance of our former ready-mixed



tanking solutions.

"With no tapes required, no priming in most instances, and a one-coat solution, BAL Waterproof 1C provides an easy waterproofing solution to ensure tiled wet areas are compliant with BS 5385-1:2018: a new regulation that any wet areas, whether domestic or commercial, must be fitted with a suitable tanking system.

"BAL Waterproof 1C applied at one coat thick – minimum 0.8mm – provides complete protection against water ingress, protecting backgrounds from water damage and erosion."

01782 591120 www.bal-adhesives.com



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Simpson Strong-Tie launches new catalogue

Introducing the 2022 Connectors for Timber & Masonry Construction Catalogue from **Simpson Strong-Tie**, a leader in engineered structural connectors and building solutions. Alongside the UK's widest range of construction connectors for new build, refurbishment, renovation, and extension of buildings, sit brand new product innovations, including: The versatile universal Engineered Wood Hanger (EWH), designed to fulfil a wide variety of joist to joist/panel configurations. The innovative Engineered Post Base (PWBS): a single-piece, non-welded post base for connecting timber to concrete. The high strength HTT Hold Down tension tie provides a timber to concrete, or timber to masonry, tension connection. The SSH Structural Connector Screw for installing connectors where high load capability is required, coated with Impreg®+ for suitability to exterior applications. "Our new catalogue brings together our full collection connectors and connector fastenings, complete with technical information and installation guidance to help you to make informed choices for your building project," says Jon Head, Sales Director, Connectors. The new catalogue is available to view or download now.

01827 255 646 www.strongtie.co.uk

Earthborn's new Bonding Primer



Silicate Masonry Paint for all surfaces

A newly formulated Bonding Primer from **Earthborn** can now be used alongside Silicate Masonry Paint for exterior masonry surfaces that do not need to breathe. Bonding Primer provides a mechanical bond between a 'sealed' wall and the paint, allowing Silicate Masonry Paint to 'stick' to the pre painted surface. And in places where there is a mix of painted and unpainted masonry, you can now spot prime the patches where the previous paint cannot be removed with Bonding Primer and prime the rest of the unpainted area with Silicate Primer. The updated Earthborn product range means that Silicate Primer used on uncoated masonry with Silicate Masonry Paint will create a highly breathable and permanent chemical bond. This new primer means the 48 beautiful shades can be used on an even wider range of buildings, including those with a mix of previously painted and bare masonry.

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1 | PREPARATION
AND BRIEF



2 | CONCEPT
DESIGN



3 | SPATIAL
DESIGN



4 | TECHNICAL
DESIGN



5 | CONSTRUCTION



6 | HANDOVER



7 | USE



Gilberts helps protect twin towers

An “iconic” site that has been transformed into high rise, high specification living for young professionals is a showcase for the latest in modern methods of construction- including its fire protection. Modular construction techniques were chosen as far as possible to deliver a sustainable solution that simultaneously provided robust acoustic and fire safety performance, including precast concrete sandwich panels and the latest in smoke evacuation – **Gilberts Blackpool’s** Series 60 dampers. Smoke control specialist, Baiceir, recommended installation of a Gilberts Series 60 smoke damper into the fire shafts on each floor (30no in total), with fan skids on the roof of each building to accelerate smoke evacuation. Gilberts’ Series 60 is believed to be the only vent of its kind designed and manufactured in the UK. It has been tested to – and passed – all relevant tests (EN1263-1, EN1363-2). Delivering up to two hours’ fire integrity, the damper combines a low leakage rate and high free area through parallel linked blades when open to deliver high smoke evacuation rates. Activation is triggered to open the damper on the fire floor for smoke evacuation, whilst all other dampers failsafe close to protect the rest of the building. Series 60 simply slots into the shaft opening, with the installation finished by fixing the fascia grille.

01253 766911 info@gilbertsblackpool.com



DuraPost® by Birkdale specified for ultimate fencing solution

Birkdale’s DuraPost® steel fence post and composite gravel board system has been used to create a clear boundary between a local business and housing development in North West Ireland. Specified due to its block aesthetic and durability, the gravel boards helped to create a full fence panel throughout. With a simple installation process, the system also enabled the project to be completed within a tight time frame. During the initial planning process, the fencing contractor held several meetings with the business, its architects and representatives of the housing development to find an agreeable solution. The challenge was that the client preferred a timber close board fence while the residents wanted a block wall system. As such an alternative solution was required that could satisfy all parties. Thankfully, The Fencing People had already been introduced to the DuraPost® galvanised steel fence post system by Mark Watson, Ireland Area Sales Manager at Birkdale. Flexible and incredibly durable, DuraPosts® can be used in conjunction with most standard timber fence panels as well as a number of DuraPost’s own composite panel solutions. “When comparing DuraPost® to alternative fencing solutions, its durability, longevity and its ease of installation are what really made it stand out,” commented Steven Kilpatrick, Fencing Manager at The Fencing People.

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SAFE IN THE KNOWLEDGE

Regulations for smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are set to change to ensure greater protection for homes in England. In this article, Aico's Andy Speake explains what the legislation means for specifiers – and how to comply.

In November 2021, the Government published the results of a consultation proposing an extension to regulations for smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms, applicable to all rented properties in England, and also bringing changes to the regulations for new build properties.

The consultation proposed to amend the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 and Approved Document J, with the aim of extending the existing private rented legislation to socially rented properties; it also considered the important question of whether the existing legislation was sufficient.

In addition, the legislation looked to remove the word 'solid' from the requirements for CO alarm installation. The change would also be included in the building regulations (Approved Document J).

These regulatory updates are the first part of several reforms outlined in the social housing white paper.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CO ALARMS

CO poses a risk in any home where there is a fuel burning appliance; it is a poisonous gas that is odourless, colourless and tasteless, which can cause significant health problems and can even be fatal. The best way to stay protected is through installing a CO alarm, and the importance of this has been recognised through the updated Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015.

There are several amendments to the requirements for CO alarms to bring greater protection to residents.

The first requires all private and social landlords to install a CO alarm in any room of a property that contains a fuel burning appliance, such as gas boilers, fuel burning stoves, oil burners, biofuels, coal boilers/stoves, wood pellets etc. Cookers are excluded from this requirement.

However, although cookers are excluded from this legislation, the use of CO alarms in rooms with fuel burning cookers is still recommended within the British Standard, BS EN 50292, but

there is no associated legal obligation.

The extended requirements also state that all new build and materially altered properties in England have a CO alarm installed wherever a fuel burning appliance is present (excluding cookers), as per the Building Regulations' Approved Document J.

Any CO alarm installed must comply with BS EN 50291-1; this standard shows that the alarms have been extensively tested to ensure their quality including sensor reaction times, minimum alarm sound levels and temperature resistance.

Landlords are able to use either battery or mains-powered alarms within their properties in order to meet the requirements stated in the updated legislation; there is however no requirement for CO alarms to be interconnected with a property's existing smoke alarms, although this remains an option if the landlord of the property wishes to do so.



REQUIREMENTS FOR SMOKE ALARMS

The consultation has resulted in a proposal that seeks to align the requirements for smoke alarms in social housing with those in the private rented sector to improve fire safety for all tenants, regardless of tenure.

Social landlords will now be required to install at least one smoke alarm on each storey of their properties, where there is a room used for living accommodation. However, the majority of social landlords already exceed the proposed requirements by installing smoke alarms within their housing stock as per BS 5839-6:2019+A1:2020. Any smoke alarms installed must comply with BS EN 14604.

TESTING AND MAINTENANCE

By law, all landlords will also be required to repair or replace alarms once notified of a fault. Although regular alarm testing will remain the residents' responsibility, a landlord must ensure that every alarm in

the property is working correctly at the beginning of each new tenancy.

BRITISH STANDARDS

For fire alarm installation, it is recommended to follow the British Standard BS 5839-6:2019+A1:2020. The standard lists three categories of a system to describe the level of protection the systems provide – generally the higher the category of system the higher the level of protection.

For CO alarms, it is recommended to follow BS EN 50292 for installation. The standard states that CO alarms should be installed in any room that has any fuel burning appliances, rooms where people spend the most time – such as a living room; rooms where people sleep, and any room that has a flue running through it. This means that a CO leak can be detected from all the potential sources and heard throughout the property.

There is not yet a confirmed date



when this new legislation will come into force in England, but it is expected to be around late 2022. It could, however, be earlier or later, so the most appropriate advice is to install the alarms at the earliest

opportunity, as it is expected that there will be no grace period for compliance.

Andy Speake is national technical manager at Aico.

ANY CO ALARM INSTALLED MUST COMPLY WITH BS EN 50291-1; THIS STANDARD SHOWS THAT THE ALARMS HAVE BEEN EXTENSIVELY TESTED TO ENSURE THEIR QUALITY INCLUDING SENSOR REACTION TIMES, MINIMUM ALARM SOUND LEVELS AND TEMPERATURE RESISTANCE



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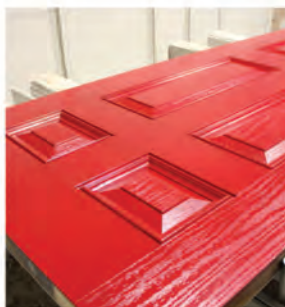
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help builders, specifiers and architects choose the right flooring system for every project, coupled with handy installation guides and videos for the individual CaberFloor products. West Fraser's panels are manufactured in the UK from locally grown timber and are net carbon negative.

uk.westfraser.com/resources/help-advice/installation-instructions

Triton launches a new, pre-applied, lightweight waterproofing membrane system for concrete structures

The new Triton Shield System is reliable form of pre-applied, Type A barrier waterproofing, which provides a flexible approach to specifying a system requiring two different types of waterproofing protection – as defined in BS 8102 (2009). Use the new Triton Shield System in conjunction with concrete made waterproof by the addition of Triton TT Admix (Type B integral waterproofing) or, alternatively, in conjunction with a sealed cavity drain membrane system (Type C drained waterproofing).



Triton's new Shield System comprises a pre-applied, fully bonded, waterproofing (Type A) barrier membrane for use on the outside of a poured concrete structure – such as a basement slab and retaining walls – and a Stretch Tape that makes easy work of sealing around curved or irregular profiles due to its unique stretchability and flexibility. A key benefit when specifying the new Triton Shield System is the Triton team's technical knowledge of all three types of waterproofing system and their extensive practical experience of choosing the right combination of systems for the expected usage of any basement or below ground structure.

The mesh-faced, HDPE Triton Shield Membrane offers a tenacious grip to the concrete poured on top of it. The 2 m x 20 m membrane rolls are light enough to be carried by two people but are still larger than many competitive product rolls. This means fewer side lap or end to end joints will be required with a resulting reduction in the risk of defects occurring.

New Triton Shield System offers a cost effective, fast to install, very lightweight and durable solution for concrete waterproofing –



contact the Triton team for further advice and project-specific details drawings, or download the data sheet found on Triton's website.

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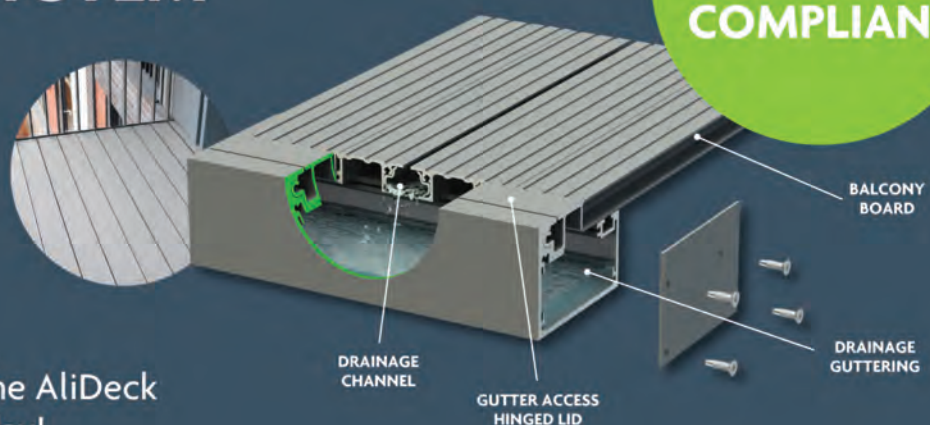
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