



The Social Network:
Patrick Mooney says
now is the time for
Truss to prioritise
social housing



Climate Challenge:
Wienerberger's Paul
Hodgkinson on the
'biodiversity trilemma'
facing housebuilders



Case Study:
Caledonia HA tackles
a brownfield site in
Glasgow and turns
offices into housing

HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2022



HOTEL LIVING IN CHELSEA

GRID Properties teams up with Marriott International to fine-tune all the details for high-end buyers in a luxury west London scheme



Meet the new EHS Mono HT Quiet

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optimal performance

Samsung's newest eco heating system is the ideal heating solution for Europe's residential renovation market. Durable and stylishly designed, this heat pump combines advanced features and new technologies to achieve hot water temperatures of up to 70°C¹ for domestic heating purposes. It operates at noise levels as low as 35 d(BA)² using a 4-step Quiet mode. It is also capable of reliably providing 100% heating performance* even at temperatures as low as -25°C³). Installation and maintenance of the unit is easy and hassle-free, with its internal parts being accessible via a side panel which can be removed by simply undoing 3 screws.

1. Leaving water temperature, when the outdoor temperature is between -15°C - 43°C. Results may vary depending on the actual usage conditions.

2. Based on internal testing of the EHS Mono HT outdoor units. The noise level is measured 3m away from the front of the outdoor unit, in an anechoic room with an outside temperature of 7°C. Results may vary depending on environmental factors and individual use.

*Efficiency ratio of heating output (capacity) versus power input (electricity). Internally tested under lab conditions based on EN 14511, results may vary depending on the actual usage conditions.

3. Based on internal testing on an EHS Mono HT outdoor unit (AEI20BXYDGG), compared to a conventional EHS outdoor unit (AEI20RXYDGG). Results may vary depending on the actual usage conditions.

The Quiet Mark certificate is applicable for UK & EU territories only.

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James Parker

FROM THE EDITOR

Given the seemingly impossible set of challenges facing Liz Truss, is it perhaps a natural instinct to be suspicious of someone who really seems to relish the job of Prime Minister at the moment? However we should at least praise her courage, if wondering slightly fearfully how it's all going to end, and if it's likely to be sooner rather than later in her case?

In order to placate diametrically-opposed parts of her party, Truss somehow has to cut taxes, while giving millions of people the support they need through one of the most demanding winters the UK will face. Capped energy bills of £2500 are still a massive increase for many families and individuals – they will still be 96% higher than last year. This is going to be a panic-inducing time for those seeing their mortgage payments jump endangered as the interest rates continue to escalate to try and curb inflation.

Maybe a 'rebalancing' in house prices is overdue, to help people on the lower rungs get onto and progress up the ladder. However that doesn't mean there won't be considerable collateral damage, and a big welfare bill, in the meantime. The UK's productivity (which is a complex thing) lags behind that of many European competitors, and inflation shows little sign of slowing.

Truss' optimistic growth plan relies on a big programme of 'supply side reforms,' to boost business, from deregulating planning permission to loosening of restrictions in financial services, and the oil and gas sector. This means more gas extraction in the North Sea, and pursuing fracking; the latter in particular will be wildly controversial even among her own party members.

But with such a widespread impact, if the planning reforms genuinely open up areas such as green belts, they could be the scene of the most conflict. The industry knows that 'green belts' are often far from green, and are simply the 'edge of a town.' However, tell that to a potentially violently disgruntled local who thinks their house price will drop.

The notorious 'mutant algorithm' brought in to speed planning in 2021, brought down the Tory candidate in the Chesham and Amersham byelection. Conservative-voting locals were virtually up in arms at the spectre of their Buckinghamshire properties plummeting in value thanks to new developments. The planning reforms (allegedly coming soon), might be where Truss and co really need to do some invasive work on 'hearts and minds.' Or if not those organs, the pockets of disgruntled voters.

The problem is, if Liz Truss doesn't survive long-term, will her successor pick up the baton on planning? Or will, as ever, a new administration mean reinventing a team and the agenda, and reiterating the problems yet again?

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ON THE COVER



HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

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GRID Properties teams up with Marriott International to fine-tune all the details for high-end buyers in a luxury west London scheme

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Chancellor signals autumn planning relaxations to drive housebuilding



In his first 'mini-Budget' as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kwasi Kwarteng announced that in order to drive the supply of housing in the UK, the Government would bring forward local Investment Zones across the UK, with more liberal planning regimes and lower taxes for businesses.

Kwarteng's announcement was centred around tax cuts, including a removal of Stamp Duty for first time buyers, on homes worth up to £250,000, and a cancellation of a planned rise in Corporation Tax. Kwarteng commented that in order to increase housing supply and "enable forthcoming planning reforms," the Government would "increase the disposal of surplus government land." He said that the planning reforms, to be announced later this year, would "streamline planning regulations and make securing planning permission easier."

Kwarteng confirmed that the government is "in discussion" with 38 local and mayoral combined authority areas in England including Tees Valley, South Yorkshire and West of England around the setting up of Investment Zones in "specific sites." Each zone will offer tax cuts for residential development, and "liberalised planning rules in specified agreed sites, releasing land and accelerating development."

The Chancellor explained further: "On purchases of land and buildings for commercial or new residential development, there will be no stamp duty to pay whatsoever."

Kwarteng added that the overall approach was that the Government was "getting out of the way to get Britain building."

Industry reacts to Truss appointment as PM



Liz Truss has been formally appointed Prime Minister, becoming the fourth Tory PM in six years.

Truss faced an array of immediate challenges, in particular the cost of living crisis. The construction industry gave a mixed response to her appointment at such a critical time for the UK.

Brian Berry, chief executive of the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), lamented that the UK is "fronting an unprecedented energy crisis with over 12 million households facing fuel poverty," and noted that Truss "has a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform our existing homes to help ensure everyone has a place they can afford to heat."

Berry continued: "A national retrofit strategy also offers the opportunity to create thousands of new jobs and deliver growth in every village, town, and city. The energy crisis needs a green revolution, but this requires bold leadership, so I'm looking to Liz Truss to deliver."

Focusing on planning's role in industry output, Simon Cox, managing director of Walter Cooper, said "resolving the issues in planning needs to be one of the top items on the next PM's agenda, and that will mean making some unpopular decisions."

He added: "Truss now needs to shift her focus from pandering to the NIMBY masses and publicly turn away from previous statements made by other Conservative MPs such as Michael Gove, regarding the so called industry 'cartel,' or face alienating the housebuilding community entirely. However, with a general election likely on the horizon I'm doubtful these difficult choices will be put into action any time soon."

Clive Docwra, managing director of property and construction consultants McBains, also had doubts on the likely

success of the new administration on planning reform: "Truss has pledged to cut red tape to get homes built faster, but this has been promised by her predecessors without any real success."

"Scrapping 'nutrient neutrality' environmental regulations will only go so far to help. There's not enough disused brownfield land for the amount of new homes required to meet demand, so building on a small proportion of the green belt is needed, but no previous Conservative PM has demonstrated an appetite to do this."

Simon Clarke is appointed as fourth Housing Secretary in 12 months



After just two months in the job, Greg Clark has been replaced by Teeside MP Simon Clarke as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in new Prime Minister Liz Truss' Cabinet.

Clarke, 37, was previously Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and won his seat in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland from Labour in 2017 after the sitting MP stood down. He is the fourth Housing Secretary in a year, and oversees a demanding brief including the wide-ranging 'levelling up' agenda.

Clarke resigned from a previous post as Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government in a Cabinet reshuffle in February 2020, citing "personal reasons."

Marketing do's and don'ts in second episode of Builders' Voices podcast

In the second episode of Builders' Voices, produced by netMAGmedia, Kelly Worrall, a marketing expert, offers her specialist advice for housebuilders.

Kelly Worrall got the bug for construction in 2015 when she began renovating properties with her partner, who's a builder. They enjoyed it so much that they set up a development company, NH Construction, specialising in masonry and stonework on home improvements, with her husband being a trained stonemason.

She has had a successful career as a marketer, and formed Yorkshire Marketing Consultants in 2019, which soon began to focus on construction trades and home improvement firms. Her experience and interest in housebuilding has given her the inside knowledge of marketing success in construction, particularly the benefits of using social media, and online advertising. She has some great insights for housebuilders on the do's and don'ts

BUILDERS' VOICES

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As online marketing continues to evolve fast, keeping on top of it in a tough market can be challenging. Bearing that in mind, this Builder's Voice is very much

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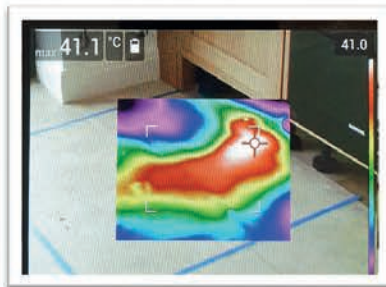
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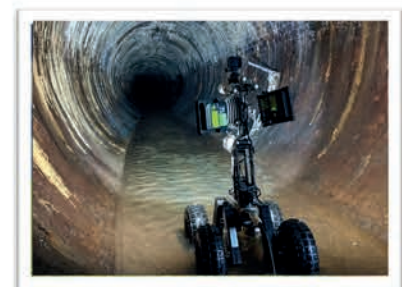
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Returning to nearly normal

Ross Baxter of Saint-Gobain Off-Site Solutions gives some good news on the supply of standard timber products, in the light of Housebuilder & Developer research on demand in the sector.

Pasquill, part of the Saint-Gobain Off-Site Solutions' division and the largest supplier of trussed rafters in the UK, supported Housebuilder & Developer's latest survey – exploring the key criteria housebuilders have when sourcing a timber supplier

The report cited availability, price, and the capacity to deliver as high priorities. In some instances, many considered lead times to be a higher priority than health and safety or sustainability concerns.

Now, with encouraging signs over the last quarter, as availability of standard timber products continues to ease, Saint-Gobain Off-Site Solutions has examined the findings from the survey, which help inform how we can continue to support customers with their project requirements.

LOOKING BACK

The Government's 2025 industrial strategy, which continues to encourage the industry to 'build, build, build' (and in particular the Construction Sector Deal; a £420m commitment to build new homes faster), has placed pressure on the construction industry to respond at pace.

In line with this increase in new build

projects, suppliers to the housebuilding industry witnessed a disproportionate increase in demand for product between 2021-2022. According to the Builders Merchants' Federation (BMF), "the value of sales increased by almost 18% at the start of 2022, in comparison to the same period in 2021."

Initially, this led to product shortages and longer lead times in some instances, with the impact felt by builders, contractors and developers working on self-build, new build, renovation, and extension projects.

At the time, Pasquill, as with other responsible supply chain partners,

adapted to this upsurge in demand, increasing stocks of timber products used for roof trusses and floor joists. This ensured we could continue to supply our roof and floor solutions consistently, within the lead times required by customers year-round and nationwide.

As demand has now returned to the levels the industry is more accustomed to, housebuilders can capitalise on a more readily available supply that has been built up during this peak demand period. We have certainly experienced an easing of these stock issues during the last quarter, which was backed up by the Construction Leadership Council's (CLC) report in August 2022. It states that "construction materials shortage is now easing slightly with product availability improving across most categories."

It continues to explain that "extremely high levels of demand seen at the beginning of 2022 has eased, as has the shortage of HGV drivers in late 2021. Goods are reportedly now moving more freely between ports, although the CLC reports that only 25 per cent of goods from the far east are arriving on time."

The market is still experiencing some challenges in lead time with specialist timber products, but the standard timber products used extensively on housebuilding projects remain in good supply.

LOOKING FORWARD

A quick Google search will reveal a variety of viewpoints on the availability of construction materials and





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THE REPORT CITED AVAILABILITY, PRICE, AND THE CAPACITY TO DELIVER AS HIGH PRIORITIES

agreeing that communication with their supply chain partners is important.

At Pasquill, we work closely with our customers to support their delivery schedules. Where there is a need for a short-term 'distress' requirement we can often adapt our manufacturing schedules to accommodate, due to how well our sites across the UK work together.

The easing of standard timber product supply is set to continue, and we are working across the breadth of the UK to help customers to meet their deadlines and the upsurge in building demand.

Ross Baxter is managing director of Saint-Gobain Off-Site Solutions

housebuilders may still be unsure as to the real picture. So, what can we do to help alleviate any concerns our customers may have?

It was strikingly clear in the Housebuilder & Developer survey we supported that effective communication is key, with 92 per cent of respondents

Designer Contracts move and staff boost



Designer Contracts has relocated its Slough office to larger premises in Reading and made a raft of key appointments across the company. Said commercial director Louise Walters: "The move represents a significant investment in the future of the company, along with a number of senior appointments and promotions." Heading up the new Reading office team and area manager for the Western

Counties region is Litin Makwana. Elsewhere Rachael Pemberton-Baghurst, based in Chesterfield, is promoted from training and development manager to performance and development director; the Yorkshire region's new area manager - through an internal promotion - is Jason Turnbull; and Steven Lendrum joins the company as area manager for the Southwest office.

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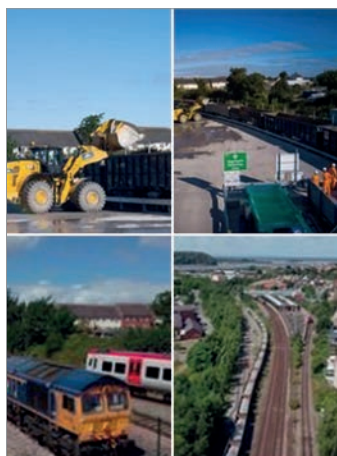
Award-winning Open Spaces



Meadfleet are celebrating success after reaching the finals of three top industry awards. The open space managers are shortlisted in the Landscape Institute's Landscape Legacy Award along with Innovator of the Year and

Campaign of the Year in the UK Housing Awards 2022. Last year, Meadfleet won top prize in CIRIA's Big Biodiversity Challenge Pollinator Award 2021. With a sustainable, long-term approach to managing over 320 developments across England and Wales, Meadfleet are committed to providing a legacy of well-maintained, bio-diverse areas.

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Breedon Group extends commitment to sustainable rail infrastructure

A joint initiative between **Breedon Group**, Network Rail and the Welsh Government has brought the disused Llandudno Junction freight yard sidings back to life. The Llandudno Junction freight yard had not been used for several years but extensive work - including vegetation removal, track repairs and refurbishment of the points which allow trains to swap tracks - has brought it back into service. The yard is near the main Penrhyn Quarry of Breedon Group subsidiary Welsh Slate, and up to 260,000 tonnes of materials - ranging from sub-base to decorative aggregate - are expected to pass through it each year, with trains expected to run weekly. Typical freight trains will carry 1,500 tonnes of material, compared to a truck's 28 tonnes, leading to reductions in CO₂ emissions, road traffic and operating costs. The first freight train left the refurbished railhead carrying the equivalent of 76 truckloads of Welsh Slate Hard Grey Type 1 sub-base aggregates to Luton. Breedon already operates several other railheads around the UK, and this latest investment will further improve its distribution network for customers and lower the carbon footprint of its operations. The project was supported by the Freight Facilities Grant Scheme, which encourages modal shifts to deliver environmental benefits by removing HGVs from roads.

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Increasing biodiversity with SuDS



Adam Cane of ACO Water Management explores how housebuilders and developers can build better places to live through including biodiversity and SuDS.

It may come as little surprise, but the current prognosis for biodiversity in the UK is stark. Almost half of Britain's natural biodiversity has disappeared over the centuries since the Industrial Revolution. Many species and habitats are still being lost today, owing to the pressure to continue building and an ever-decreasing availability of land.

To illustrate the situation, we just need to look at the hedgehog population. Up to three quarters of all of Britain's rural hedgehogs have been lost in the past 20 years. Already classed as vulnerable to extinction, countryside populations have declined by an average of 8.3% a year for the past two decades, as road networks have left the animals isolated.

In another instance, the UK has seen a 90% depletion in wetland habitats in the last 100 years. As a result, over 10% of freshwater and wetland species are now

at risk of extinction, as reported in the 2021 River Basin Management Plan. Only 16% of England's water bodies are rated at 'good ecological status' (GES), which could explain this decline.

These issues are not just having an effect on wildlife. People and places are being negatively impacted, too – replacing green spaces with hard landscaped developments not only means a loss in natural beauty but also increases the chance of flooding. Therefore, it's no longer a case of just reducing carbon emissions – reversing the impact of the built environment on the natural world is imperative. Here, housebuilders have a unique role to play, and are positioned to make a difference.

PREVENTING POLLUTION

One such way of making a positive change is preventing contaminants left on roads from being washed into waterways and surrounding the surrounding habitats. Controlling the quality of runoff is critical here, forming a key pillar of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Natural resources can only clean water to a certain point, so before water is discharged into swales and ditches in SuDS schemes, there needs to be a system



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ONE SUCH WAY OF MAKING A POSITIVE CHANGE IS PREVENTING CONTAMINANTS LEFT ON ROADS FROM BEING WASHED INTO WATERWAYS AND SURROUNDING THE SURROUNDING HABITATS



in place to treat it beforehand.

Housebuilders, working in conjunction with highways engineers and water management specialists, can use the simple index approach (SIA) to help determine whether the proposed SuDS provide adequate mitigation against pollution hazards like tyre rubber, oils and heavy metals from vehicles.

Developers should also look to combine nature-based solutions and SuDS in both retrofit and new construction projects. Trees and green areas, for example, offer shade, amenity, natural air conditioning and refuge opportunities for wildlife. SuDS solutions, such as bioretention areas, rain gardens, swales and tree pits, take runoff from hard surfacing. This can then make developments more amenable, beautifying spaces for people, making them more aesthetically pleasing and enjoyable to live, work and play in.

BUILDING UP BIODIVERSITY

Continuing in this vein, not only should water be cleansed, but the local

ecology should be assessed prior to any construction work, and then continually monitored to ensure that the development does not negatively impact on wildlife. This is a key requirement under the Biodiversity Net Gain regulation, and housebuilders will need to prove that their sites will provide a 10% uplift in biodiversity. Alongside this, habitat guidance in CIRIA's SuDS Manual states that any new SuDS scheme should link with other local and/or regional habitats to help build and enhance habitat connectivity.

There are several ways to integrate wildlife mitigation measures across developments and roads connecting to these places, from wildlife kerbs and guide tunnels to escape ladders that can help mammals and amphibians navigate road networks safely.

One instance of good biodiversity management that ACO Water Management was involved in is a new 550m carriageway in Wokingham that connects a new housing estate to the

wider road network. The project saw a 4.5 hectare open space landscaped to include both nature-based solutions and specially designed SuDS features that protect and improve the diversity of local wildlife.

The ambitious project involved the creation of an 'eco pond' and grass verges, which are designed to attract crested newts, dragonflies, damselflies and grass snakes, as well as otters and a variety of birds. Alongside the nature-based solutions, tunnels and guide walls were installed to ensure wildlife can cross under the road. Bringing these features together has harmonised people, wildlife and infrastructure together to co-exist and flourish.

Creating better places for people and nature to thrive will certainly take a lot of thought and consideration. Housebuilders can begin to turn the tide on habitat loss, and good design is at the heart of driving change.

Adam Cane is sustainability lead at ACO Water Management

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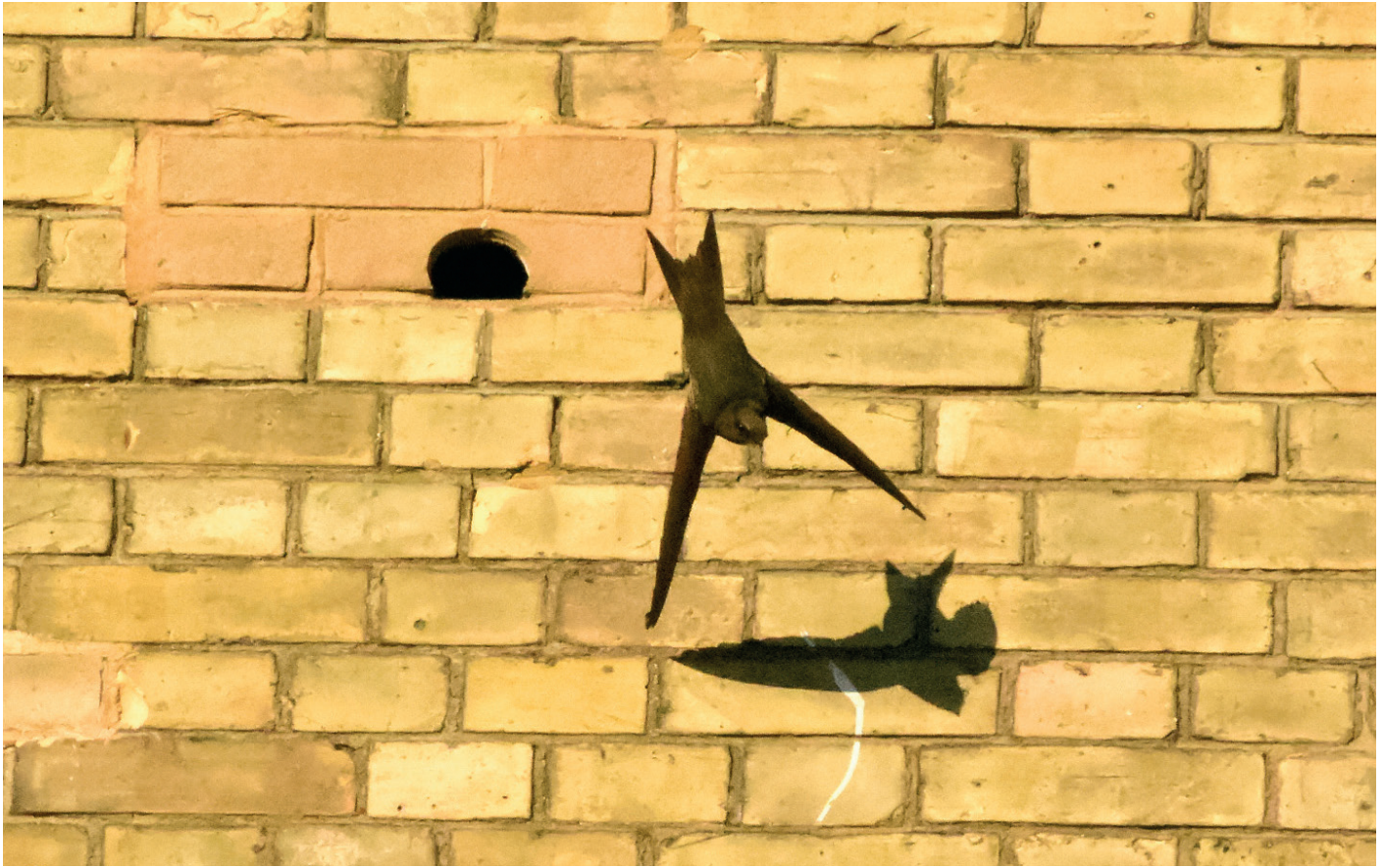
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THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE

Biodiversity's triple threat



Paul Hodgkinson of Wienerberger considers the impact of the 'Biodiversity Trilemma' of evolving legislation, declining species abundance and greater consumer understanding of environmental matters, and what it means for housebuilders.

The challenges faced by housebuilders of meeting Biodiversity Net Gain requirements are both complex and unprecedented. Let's begin by looking at legislation. The Government's Environment Act 2021, for instance, marks a real step change in biodiversity requirements for new construction projects.

This legislation introduces a mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10 per cent on or near new developments, measured using a complex calculation

based on Natural England Metric 3.0, which replaced Defra's Biodiversity Metric. This follows a series of ongoing changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which has raised the bar for biodiversity standards over the last 10 years.

In 2012, NPPF required developers to "seek net gains for biodiversity where possible" and in 2019 the wording was changed to state: "opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity."

In 2021 it was updated again to drive integration through design. NPPF now states: "opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity". Other relevant policies include the

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Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and individual European Protected Species Licensing for individual species.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

It's not just regulatory drivers that are raising the profile of biodiversity in new residential and non-residential developments.

The 2019 State of Nature Report states that urban areas in the UK now hold more species than the countryside, due largely to the provision of essential components for biodiversity. But wildlife is in a state of decline across the UK, with 41% of species dropping in numbers since 1970.

Bats have fallen dramatically in numbers over the last 50 years and our most common bat, the common pipistrelle, has declined by almost 70%. House sparrows have declined by around 50% in the same period and are now red-listed as a species of high conservation concern. The number of swifts fell by 53% between 1995 and 2016, and starlings by 66% since the mid-1970s – also red-listed as a bird of high conservation concern.

Add to this the final facet of what we call the 'Biodiversity Trilemma' which is the growing need for developers to appeal to 'hearts and minds'. As homebuyers become more aware of both the environment and their own wellness, buildings that support local wildlife to create better outdoor spaces will become more attractive.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), for instance, recorded a 69% increase in web traffic between March and May 2020 compared with the same period in 2019, including a tenfold increase in views of its 'build a bird box' web page.

WHAT CAN DEVELOPERS DO?

By planning for nature, architects and specifiers can support housebuilders to reconnect with nature. But this relies on making informed, data-driven decisions on projects which are shaped by early communication and collaboration.

Such measures no longer need to be costly or complex. Those responsible for design and specification now have access to a wide range of solutions to help achieve the necessary ecological enhancements and ensure biodiversity net gain. Often these will work together to help contribute to the net gain required.

For example, whilst they don't specifically gain points in the Biodiversity Net Gain calculation tool, Eco-habitats

provide a fuss-free and inexpensive option, which can be introduced as supplementary enhancements to provide durable and discrete habitats for British birds, bats and other species.

WHAT ARE ECO-HABITATS?

The premise is simple. Initially driven by architect demand for more discrete solutions, integrated wildlife boxes offer durable and discrete habitats for British birds, bats and other species. Ready to be integrated into the fabric of a building as it is built or renovated, they are produced to standard brick sizing for ease of installation. Boxes are available faced in any brick type or stone, and roofing eco-habitats are also available; all can be made bespoke to suit individual project requirements.

Bird boxes are tailored to individual species such as swifts, starlings and sparrows, providing space for nesting and roosting which is safe from predators. They are usually constructed using insulating concrete block which provides an internal roost space, with access holes to suit different species, before clad with a brick face to match the building fabric.

Bat boxes are also solid boxes made of insulating concrete that provide an internal roost space and clad appropriately. Suitable for most species commonly found in the UK, a single chambered unit with increased surface area is beneficial for bats to roost against, whilst allowing freedom of movement.

Bat access roof tiles are specifically designed to provide the right kind of space to protect bats from the elements in their new habitat.

Solitary and bumble bee bricks are produced to UK brick size format so they can be easily installed in place of a standard brick. These feature holes of varying sizes to provide resting space for different species of solitary bee. Bees lay their eggs in these cavities before sealing the entrance with mud and chewed-up vegetation. The offspring then emerge in spring and the cycle repeats.

Bug bricks are produced to UK brick size format and therefore can be installed in place of a standard brick. The range of hole sizes provides different species of bugs a much-needed resting place and a vital food source for other animals such as birds and bats.

Hedgehog boxes (designed in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice) incorporate an internal baffle system to prevent predators entering the house. Made from exterior quality plywood,



they come from an FSC sustainable source ensuring boxes are durable and waterproof.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Biodiversity is no longer a 'nice to do' in new developments. Recent changes in planning frameworks and the introduction of the Environment Act 2021 mean biodiversity net gain is now a critical requirement in order to secure planning consent for new developments. Under the NPPF, developers are at risk of not securing planning consent if they do not integrate biodiversity improvements within their design.

There is currently no quantitative value assigned to Eco-habitats through Natural England Metric 3.0, but wider biodiversity benefits must also be considered, including the provision of Eco-habitats; they can also be included within a project's Biodiversity Net Gain report to support developers to overcome the biodiversity challenge.

That is why project teams are increasingly turning to these thoughtfully-designed solutions as proactive solutions, creating spaces for wildlife rather than replacing them.

To download Wienerberger's new white paper, 'The Changing Shape of Biodiversity in the Built Environment – Exploring the Role of Eco-Habitats in the Drive For Biodiversity Net Gain', visit: www.wienerberger.co.uk/biodiversity-report

Paul Hodgkinson is director of new business development at Wienerberger UK and Ireland

NPPF NOW STATES: "OPPORTUNITIES TO INCORPORATE BIODIVERSITY IMPROVEMENTS IN AND AROUND DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD BE INTEGRATED AS PART OF THEIR DESIGN"

Our last chance to make our homes fit for the future

The Decisive Decade The world is facing a climate crisis, yet it remains hesitant about what to do. Another year of dramatic climate events and record-breaking temperatures helped yield an unprecedented societal will to act. There has never before been a greater consensus that humanity is at risk from a changing climate.

There remain, however, discrepancies in the sense of urgency that needs to be shared by everyone, if we are to protect the planet we have. This includes the consumer and individual households as much as it does multinational businesses and governments, but crucially also builders, engineers and developers – all of whom have the capacity to design and implement solutions at speed.

The majority of the world's decision-makers recognise that we are in a decisive decade. The outcomes of COP26 in Glasgow may have fallen short of the expectations of many, but the event demonstrated progress: the Glasgow Climate Pact was the first agreement of its kind to plan to reduce unabated coal usage.

At Expo 2020 Dubai in January 2022, the United Nations relaunched its Sustainable Development Goals, calling on the Twenties to be a "decade of action". Both the Irish and UK governments have committed to reaching Net Zero by 2050. But there is only so much that high-level intervention can achieve.

There needs to be bottom-up and mid-level engagement to support national and international strategies to limit carbon emissions, reach Net Zero commitments and craft a sustainable existence for centuries to come.



The residential sector holds the key to unlocking dramatic change; it is perhaps the area where individuals can make their greatest contribution, and where the total benefit is far greater than the sum of its parts.

By delivering a clear and simple path that people can easily, credibly follow to overhaul the environmental credentials of their homes, and by leading the charge against an established acceptance of energy wastefulness in our national housing, we can be the drivers of progress. By spotlighting a path of innovation and improvement – evident in the buildings we design, build and operate – we can spur the supply of the right products, services, and developments that transform our chances of tackling climate change. The opportunity is there. It is one we must seize.



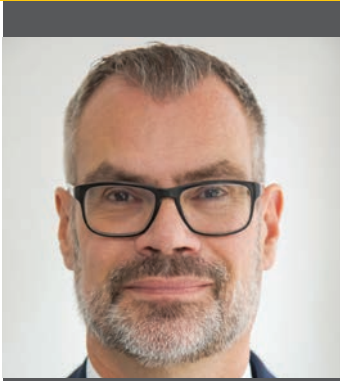
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Brian Berry

COMMENT

BACK TO BUSINESS

Brian Berry of the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), considers what the new Government must focus on, for construction to prosper as the dust settles.



Certainty has finally been restored after a summer with a caretaker government. The lack of direction over the last few months did no favours for small, local housebuilders who have a myriad of issues piling up, with costs being central to their worries. As economic woes set in, plans for growth must be big and bold, recognising the contribution of local housebuilders to regional growth.

The new Government needs to hit the ground running and deliver for an ailing industry, through what might be one of the toughest periods this country has faced for decades.

LIE OF THE LAND

Unfortunately, the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUHC) never

really had the chance to get motoring under the leadership of Michael Gove. He did have some ambitious plans for levelling up and housebuilding, but the Department's output never matched the ambition. What has been produced in the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill has merit, but doesn't do enough to boost the ever-declining housing delivery of small builders. I'll look to see what happens to the Bill under this new administration, perhaps they'll look more closely at SMEs – I can live in hope.

Simon Clarke is now in charge of DLUHC, he has in his earliest address to staff said that he'd push forward with the levelling up agenda. Despite some noting that this policy, which had been a pillar of Boris Johnson's leadership, would be phased out or renamed. At the time of writing, we are yet to find out

PLANS FOR GROWTH MUST BE BIG AND BOLD,
RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTION OF LOCAL
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who will be our twenty-second Housing Minister since 1997. As I've noted many times before, there has never been much certainty for the housing sector. What the industry needs at this pivotal time is stability. With the economy turning sour, and consumers becoming careful with finances, the nation's smaller builders are at the forefront of feeling the pinch. We've certainly seen the warning signs from our industry and beyond, so affirmative action to support the sector is a must.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

With Liz Truss as the new Prime Minister and Simon Clarke leading the charge in DLUHC, what does the new management

need to do? At the top of the list must be simplifying the planning system and ensure that it works for smaller developers. Currently it's complex, costly and stops FMB members from delivering homes. Small sites need to be prioritised and local councils need to be given the resources to identify them. This will mean that more housing, designed for the community and reflective of the local area will be delivered. But vitally, it means a healthier market for small builders; which will enable them to better absorb the cost impacts associated with the interim Building Regulation changes, Future Homes Standard, biodiversity requirements, and nutrient neutrality mitigation.

In the coming weeks, the FMB will be launching its annual House Builders' Survey 2022 which is the only survey of its kind to track the market for SME housing developers and this will provide the data on the latest issues hindering the sector. We will of course be using this in our engagement with DLUHC and with the new Ministers.

WHAT DO TRUSS AND CLARKE NEED TO DO?

As with all business, small, local housebuilders have not benefited from the stagnancy which gripped Whitehall. We now need to see delivery. Which is the new mantra of the Truss administration. I welcome the delivery of hard-hitting, ambitious policies and the cutting of so-called red tape where appropriate. This could help turn the SME housing sector around, but also enable net zero ambitions and levelling up.

What's clear is that local economies need boosting, and I would like to see local housebuilders at the forefront of driving this forward. They enable people in their communities to train locally and work locally which uplifts every town, village and city in equal measure. The new Government has an opportunity to make local growth a reality, and the industry is waiting to see what their idea of delivery looks like.





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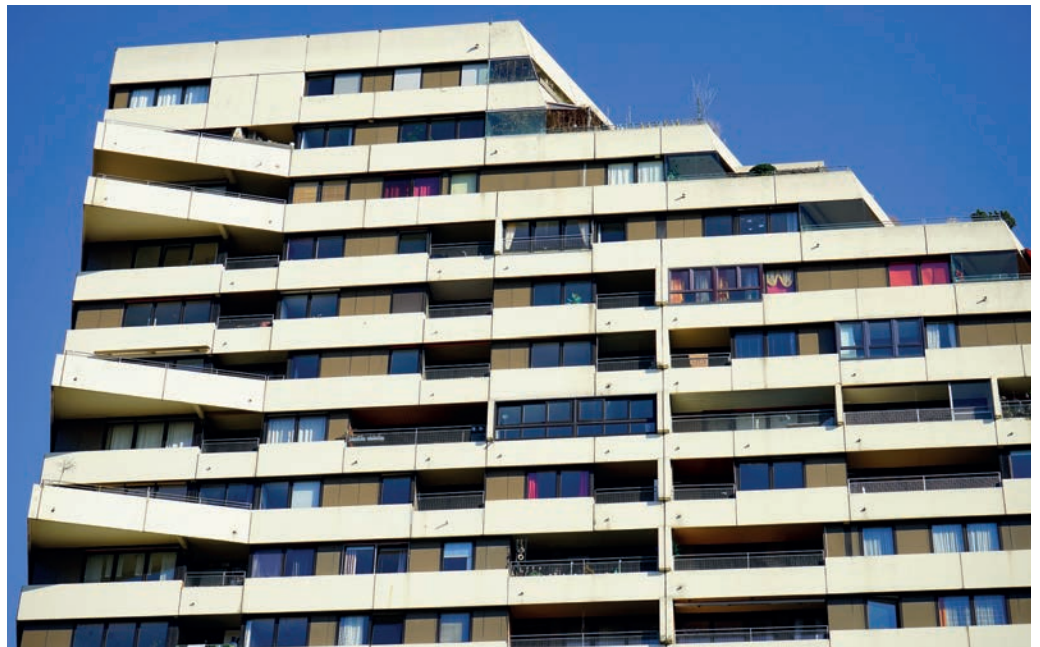


Patrick Mooney

COMMENT

ADDRESSING THE HOUSING EMERGENCY

Patrick Mooney argues that post-appointment of a new PM, the case for building more social and affordable homes for rent has never been stronger.



FAILING TO
ACT DECISIVELY
COULD
SPARK THE
CONDITIONS
FOR A
FULL-BLOWN
HOMELESSNESS
CRISIS

A review of official reports and statistics published over the summer has revealed the huge scale of pent up demand for new social rented housing, but as a topic it barely featured in the Conservative Party leadership contest.

The debates were dominated by differing approaches to tackling the cost of living crisis and boosting the economy. Whether the new Prime Minister will support a major investment in housebuilding by councils and housing associations remains to be seen, but the signs are not looking promising.

Failing to act decisively though could spark the conditions for a full-blown homelessness crisis with tens of thousands of families forced out of their homes and facing a very uncertain future, while unscrupulous landlords rake in millions of pounds in rent and other charges for unsuitable properties that are in poor or unsafe conditions.

At the end of March, some 95,060 households were staying in temporary accommodation, such as bed and breakfast

hotels or short-term lets in the private rented sector. This included 58,910 families with children.

During the previous three months a total of 74,230 households were assessed as homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, and owed a statutory duty for re-housing by local authorities. This represented an 11 per cent rise in three months, and a 5 per cent rise on the same period last year.

In the following three months another 3,405 households in the private rented sector were evicted from their homes by bailiffs in England – up 39 per cent on the previous quarter. Many of these families will be added to the homeless figures and allocated to some form of temporary accommodation.

The housing campaign group and charity Shelter is warning that the total number of eviction proceedings is now back at pre-pandemic levels, before the eviction ban took effect during the Covid lockdowns.

Additional research by Shelter found that with soaring costs across the board, almost

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DESIGN
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3 | SPATIAL
DESIGN
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4 | TECHNICAL
DESIGN
- 
5 | CONSTRUCTION
- 
6 | HANDOVER
- 
7 | USE



two in three private renters (64 per cent) said the current economic climate meant that, if they were evicted, they would struggle to afford the costs of moving.

LENGTHY WAITING LISTS

A year ago it was reported there were 1.19 million households on local authority waiting lists, an increase of four per cent from 1.15 million in 2019/20.

The National Housing Federation estimated the figures omitted around another 500,000 people hoping to be housed in the sector, while the Local Government Association thought the waiting list figure would rise to more than 2 million over the course of 2021/22.

We await the publication of the waiting list figures for this year, but it is fair to predict the total will be higher than 1.19 million. The past 12 months has seen both house prices and rents surge, with inflation at a 40 year high and record energy costs adding to the pressures on household budgets.

With housing benefit frozen at 2020 levels, Shelter has been calling on the Government to reverse this decision and to allow benefit levels to reflect real housing costs. It is difficult to see this happening given the billions of pounds such a decision would add to the welfare benefits budget.

There are just over 4 million homes owned and managed by social landlords.

Last year some 246,000 homes were re-let, a decrease of 20 per cent or 60,000 lets from the previous year. This continues a downward trend since 2013/14 when 396,000 homes were re-let across the sector.

With fewer social homes for rent becoming available each year, more families are being referred to private landlords, whose rents are nearly always much higher and where there is less security of tenure.

The Government's main body for

delivering new housing (mainly through providing loans, grants or land) is an agency called Homes England, and in reporting on its performance for last year, it revealed that it failed to hit any of its new housing targets.

MISSED TARGETS

Overall it aimed to support the completion of 44,275 homes, but only 37,632 properties were delivered – 15 per cent below target. Within the overall target figure, it aimed to support the completion of 34,349 affordable homes but only helped deliver 26,953, a shortfall of 21.5 per cent.

Affordable rent schemes saw the largest reduction in the number of starts on new homes, with just 5,606 started; a massive 48 per cent reduction on the previous year.

The agency supported 38,436 housing starts on site in the 12 months up to March 2022, but of these the number of social rent homes started in the past 12 months was just 1,981 – a 23 per cent decrease on the previous year's figure.

Affordable rents are normally set at about 80 per cent of the local market rents, whereas social rents are typically set much lower at between 40 and 60 per cent of market rents. Housing benefit payments will normally cover the whole of a social rent, but will rarely cover the full amount of an affordable rent.

Since 2020, social housing landlords in England have been able to increase rents by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rate plus one per cent each year. Last year, all major English housing associations raised rents by the maximum allowed.

But CPI is currently running at very high levels. It rose by 10.1 per cent in the 12 months to July 2022, up from 9.4 in June, with the Bank of England warning it could hit 13 per cent by the end of the year. If the upward trend continued,

councils and housing associations were in line to raise rents by double digit percentages from April 2023.

RENT CAP LOOMS

Amid mounting calls from charities, campaigning groups and representative bodies for the Government to freeze or restrict the annual increase in rent and service charges for social housing tenants, the Housing Secretary announced a quick consultation over limiting next year's rent increase to 3, 5 or 7 per cent.

While any limit on the rent increase will be welcome to tenants, it does create difficulties for social landlords who will have to look at savings to cut the gap between their income and expenditure – particularly as the consultation also seeks views on whether to set a further limit on rents in 2024/25.

Social housing landlords, whether they are housing associations or councils, have also been lobbying Ministers for greater freedoms and powers to build more homes. Councils in particular want to use all of their Right to Buy receipts to replace homes sold to sitting tenants.

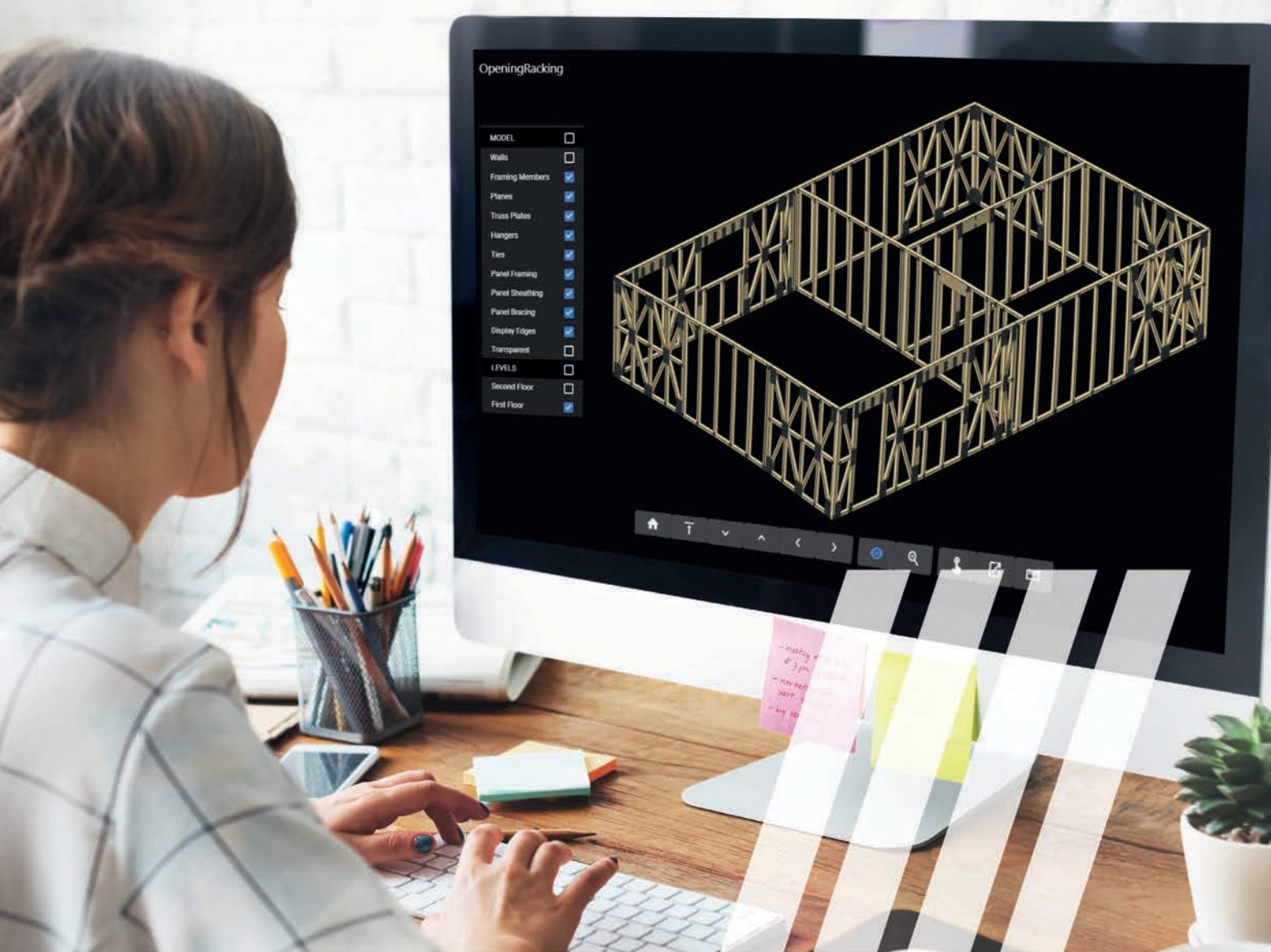
Since 2012, councils have sold 96,126 homes under the Right to Buy scheme and started building 32,901 homes. Assuming all starts are completed this represents a loss of around 63,225 social rented homes.

Housing associations rely more on private loans and their own resources to build new homes for rent, but they are facing a squeeze caused by new building safety requirements, a huge bill for retrofitting energy efficiency works and pressures from their lenders and credit agencies.

Without more assistance from the Government, it is difficult to see how social landlords will be able to contribute newly built homes in the numbers required to make any meaningful impact on the homeless and waiting list figures.

While solving the affordable housing conundrum has not been at the top of the new PM's in-tray, Shelter's chief executive Polly Neate has warned: "Too many people are losing the battle to keep a roof over their heads. The housing emergency was already tipping thousands of people into homelessness before the cost of living crisis took hold."

"Our frontline services hear from families every day who've got nothing left to cut back on. High housing costs are a major part of the cost of living crisis, but they are being ignored. To pull struggling renters back from the brink of homelessness, the new Prime Minister must unfreeze housing benefit so people can afford their rent. But to end homelessness for good, building decent social homes with rents pegged to local incomes is the only answer."



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NEW DEVELOPMENTS

£89m investment announced by Kebbell

Kebbell has revealed the details of three new developments in Berkshire, Hampshire and Buckinghamshire, totalling an estimated investment value of £89 million, spanning first-time buyer one-bedroom homes in Iver to a flagship development in Ascot.

£35 million Cholbury Place in Ascot will comprise 18 three-bedroom, 1800 to 2900 sq ft apartments with contemporary design and a high level of specification. Carpentry will be a focus of Cholbury Place, including handmade Charles Yorke kitchens, extra tall doors and as well as 2.8m (9.2ft) ceiling heights. The development offers a 13m (43ft) high atrium in the communal halls, a lift and a living wall. The principal bedroom suites include large dressing areas with spacious bespoke wardrobes and luxurious ensuite bathrooms. The apartment sales prices are expected to be in the region of £1.5 to £2.5 million.

These homes will be within walking distance of Ascot high street and the racecourse, as well as being an easy drive to Wentworth Golf Club or Heathrow, with train line connections and easy access to the M4, M25, M3 and the A30. The site is completely surrounded by a canopy of trees including big American Redwoods with a view from all apartments. The homes will benefit from basement parking, a lift and car charging points and will reportedly be highly energy efficient.

Andrea Fawell, sales and marketing director of Kebbell comments: “We expect these beautifully crafted apartments to be attractive to downsizers and empty nesters who may be selling substantial homes in the area but don’t want to compromise on the high quality they are used to. The penthouses, in particular, will be quite extraordinary and we believe offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Construction has started and we are 12-18 months off from having a show apartment but already have huge levels of interest from people wanting a private priority preview. We expect to complete in 2024.”

Following the success of Heatherfields in Bordon, New Hampshire development, Alderbrook is set in Petersfield in the South Downs National Park and will comprise 82 contemporary and energy-efficient two, three and four-bedroom houses, including social housing for rent and shared ownership. Set in a wooded environment and next to playing fields, Alderbrook is a five-minute walk to the market town centre of Petersfield. Designed for families or individuals who now need that all important home office space with ultra-fast broadband.

Work on the £32 million development has started on site with a show home expected to be open in spring 2023 and completion is anticipated to be in 2025. The homes will range from 960 to 1974 sq ft and prices will be in the region of £500,000 to £995,000.

Andrea Fawell says: “The anticipated purchaser profile is aspiring families, young professionals and downsizers who want to live near to the buzzing town centre of Petersfield whilst being close to the area’s beautiful national park. We expect potential buyers to come from London and other large urban areas as hybrid working and the desire for space looks set to remain. Kebbell has a legacy of building homes at Herne Farm in Petersfield and we have already had enquiries from existing Kebbell owners in the area who would like their next home on this new Kebbell development!”

£22 million Meadow Court in Iver in Buckinghamshire comprises 39 two-bedroom apartments. Set in a courtyard formation, these homes will include basement parking, a lift, communal electric charging points and direct access to the green belt. The 750 to 1250 sq. ft apartments will be on the market for between £450,000 to £650,000. Meadow Court is 1.8 miles from Iver’s train station which is on the Elizabeth Line, walking distance from Iver itself and is also just outside the M25 in South Bucks and close in proximity to the M40, M4 and Heathrow. Meadow Court is near to the Grand Union Canal which benefits from pubs, walks and cycleways, offering residents semi-rural connected living.

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CASE STUDY

Chelsea Hotel vibes



Shreen Gupta of GRID Properties talks to Housebuilder & Developer's Jack Wooler about their luxury development with Marriott International in Chelsea which serves up a meticulously detailed, high-spec offer.

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In August 2022, developer GRID Properties (part of global financial services firm Gulf Islamic Investments), announced the first fruits of what it says is a “unique collaboration” with Marriott International, the leading global hotel brand.

The Lucan is the result – the new scheme of Autograph Collection Residences in Chelsea, and which has already come to market via Savills and Strutt & Parker. The development comprises 31 luxurious one, two and three bedroom homes, “designed exclusively” by fashion/interior design label Rive Gauche and with impressive dimensions ranging from 780 ft²-1900 ft².

Off the celebrated Sloane Avenue in Chelsea – with all the amenities that the area has to offer – the site, which originally housed Chelsea Police station – has been a major influence on the design of the new homes. They have been



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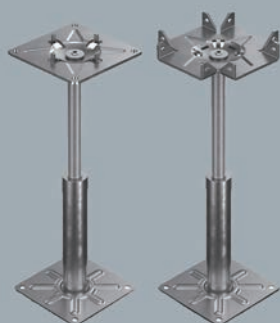
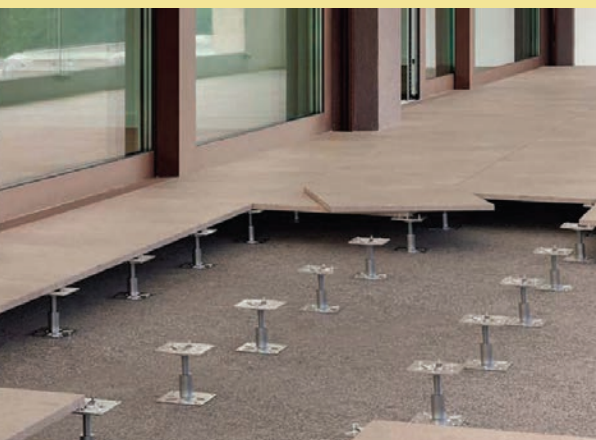
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created to reference the architectural culture and character of Chelsea, alongside “unique finishes emblematic of a Marriott International Autograph Collection Hotel,” said the developers.

The link between the two companies goes beyond aesthetics – The Lucan will also be managed by Marriott itself, and offer hotel-style services to residents. These include a 24-hour concierge, a state of the art gym, porter services, and “extensive à la carte services,” including housekeeping and maintenance.

The seven-floor development is projected to complete in 2024, and a marketing suite will be available soon to meet customers.

ACQUISITION

The site was acquired by Gulf Islamic Investments five years ago, with the firm considering several potential solutions for the development. They were keen to ensure that the result was right for the location, authentic to their vision, and right for the brand and community.

“We decided to manage the development through GRID properties, our own property business,” explains Shreen Gupta, CEO, because it has a “strong focus on quality and collaboration.”

According to Gupta, Gulf Islamic Investments initially had a vision to create “a whole new way of living in London,” intended to encapsulate the most desirable luxury services within the privacy of their own homes.

“As a company,” he says, “Gulf Islamic Investments strives for investment

opportunities that reflect their tangible core values: global reach, diverse opportunities, trusted expertise, and bespoke solutions.”

As such, Gupta says the developer saw the chance to focus on these attributes when the opportunity arose to develop The Lucan. Their aim from the start was to match the “thriving community meets timeless appeal” character of Chelsea, designing the properties to echo the style of a traditional Chelsea mansion house, updated with modernised aspects for 21st century living.

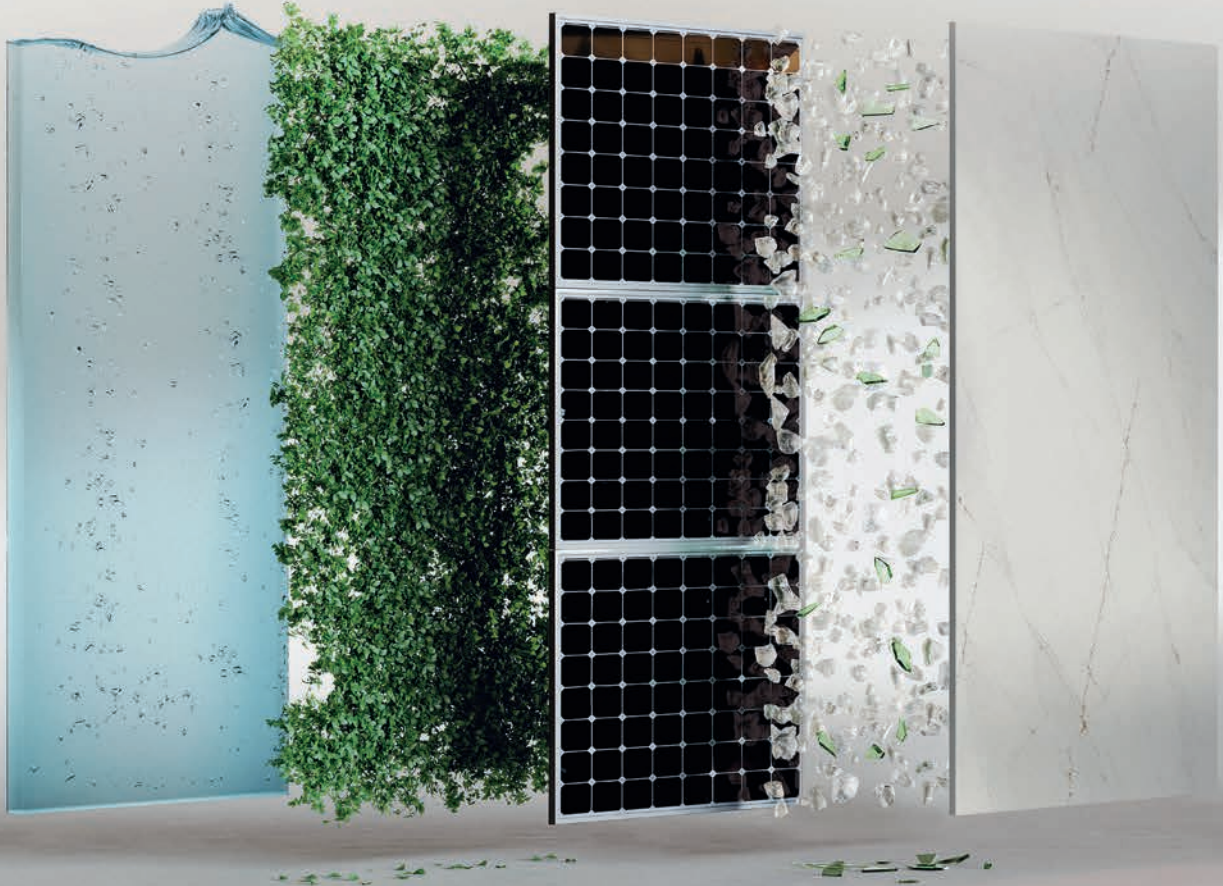
“This development will enhance that already-persuasive mix,” he says. “We combine exceptional quality of life with the highest international benchmarks for luxury real estate, bringing long-term value for residents and shareholders alike.”

A SENSITIVE PLAN


The Lucan is located in the affluent Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea – benefitting from its transport connections and its position as one of the capital’s most highly-regarded retail hubs. Due to its busy location, a thorough, sensitive construction management plan was necessary to minimise traffic concerns in the surrounding area, in addition to an essential focus on a visual coherence with the area.


“As with any development, engaging with local stakeholders, planners and the local authority is critical, and we believe that we have achieved this aim,” says Gupta. “We were also keen to ensure that the development relates to


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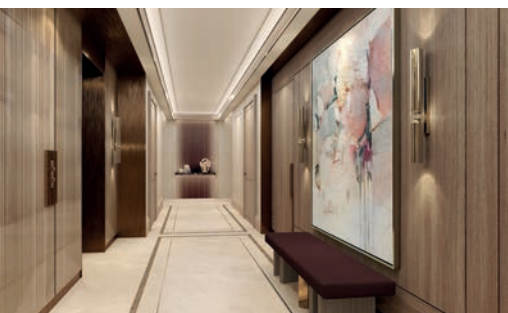
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its surroundings – hence our intricately detailed design of a traditional Chelsea mansion block.”

Alongside the homes, the developer is also committed to delivering social and community uses within its development, which will be designed with nursery provider Kido (formerly Safari Kids) and specialist education and care provider, Mom’s Belief, both of which will occupy the property at a subsidised rent.

Working closely with the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and the other stakeholders to bring the vision to life, planning permission was granted in winter 2019, with demolition works commencing in March 2020. Forward funding was granted from London Wall Company in December 2021, and construction now well underway.

THE BEST INTENTIONS

Gupta tells me that, as a company, GRID Properties looks to only collaborate with “best-in-class experts.” This was demonstrated at their previous development – the ELIE SAAB Residences at Hyde Park launched in March this year. He explains how The Lucan adopts the expertise gathered on this project, with Marriott International “fusing world-class customer service and amenities with the signature hallmarks of the Autograph Collection Hotels brand.”

Continuing this trend in the construction and design of the building, the firm engaged with international architectural practice Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF) to design the project, alongside luxury interiors studio Rive Gauche for the interiors.

According to Gupta, the architects’ brief was to take the “very best elements” of Chelsea’s historic architecture, and combine it with contemporary design to create “some of the best residences available today not only in Chelsea, but across London.”

A UNIQUE APPROACH

Approaching the new building, contemporary bay windows have been specified to provide “a unique appearance from the street,” while also bringing good levels of natural light into the interiors. On the lower floors, coloured terracotta will frame the windows and doors, “providing a richness and texture,” as well as referencing local detail found in the nearby Grade II listed Michelin House.

Heading inside, unique entrances will feature bespoke artwork by local artist Jodie Carey, alongside individually cast tiles which form a patchwork effect. This symbolises community, and the coming together of different people, cultures and ideas, which echoes the character of London more generally.

Gupta explains that comfort and light are paramount here, with bespoke elements “woven into the vernacular space of the lobby ‘The Luminary’”, casting light on the marble floor, polished wall panelling, and tones of gold brass and cream – “the chandelier inviting people into its warmth and illumination.”

Beneath this grand lighting, the lobby will also feature a 24/7 concierge and residential manager employed by Marriott International. “whether it be housekeeping or travel, a nanny, personal training or dog walking, florist services or a chauffeur,” as well as arranging exclusive experiences, such as private dining with a top London chef or a personal design/shopping service.

The lobby then leads onto the elevators – some of which are private to selected residences – that can take residents to their homes, 24/7 valet parking in an underground private space, or the gym. The latter features calming tones of timber and limestone surrounding state-of-the-art equipment.

A GRAND LIFE

Much like the exterior, inside the apartments the interior design continues to follow the inspiration of the architecture, materiality and detailing of the renowned area. “We created a modern, elegant, and subtle interior by layering beautiful finishes, such as handcrafted textural materials, with true attention to detail and a natural oak floor,” explains Gupta.

“The material palette showcases neutral tones, bringing in rich earthy reds and greens as colour accents across the architectural elements and soft furnishings,” he continues. “Vertical elements were implemented throughout to add height and grandeur to the spaces, and lighting was carefully considered to produce the feeling of natural light.”

Similarly opulent, the kitchens will offer stone worktops with bronze and mirrored splashbacks, alongside other

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detailing such as handpicked, ornate door handles.

Each master suite will also offer a spacious walk-in wardrobe, while ensuite bathrooms will feature underfloor heating, ornate patterns and marble mosaic floors, with buyers also having the ability to select bespoke finishes throughout from the developer's atelier.

WHAT LUXURY MEANS

Gupta says the level of specification achieved sets the apartments apart from other luxury properties. "The word 'luxury' is used too easily; it can just simply be an excuse for 'expensive'. We decided that for buyers who want true luxury living, every detail needs to be considered and catered for."

"The location goes without saying - on Chelsea's doorstep, with all that the borough has to offer," he says, but the architecture takes it up a notch. "Mirroring a traditional Chelsea Mansion block, the ceiling-to-floor windows admit light from all angles, illuminating materials of the highest specification, as well as the large and interesting floorplates."

Gupta adds: "For the service and the amenities, we teamed up with Marriott not simply to provide club membership benefits, but to manage the residences themselves actively with the superlative customer experience for which they are known." He says that an "even more luxury à la carte menu of enhanced experiences and services is available," including private chefs, nannies and personal styling. "That is truly luxurious living."

INNOVATION WITH PURPOSE

With the construction process now well underway, Gupta also considers the environmental performance of the building, which is intended to match the high specification of the rest of the project.

"We at GII believe in 'innovation with a purpose' and sustainability, which are core principles of our investment philosophy and a requirement of any Shariah-compliant financial partnership, where both profits and risks are shared," he says.

He believes that the Chelsea development is the "perfect embodiment of these values," with the firm seeking to install highly efficient air source heat pumps for heat, hot water and cooling, and MVHR units for ventilation, and to minimise heat loss.

Beyond this, he expects that the facade's solidity will provide good U-values for thermal comfort and energy efficiency. "Through a combination of fabric and building services efficiency

"WE DECIDED TO MANAGE THE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GRID PROPERTIES, OUR OWN PROPERTY BUSINESS"

measures, we aim to reduce carbon emissions significantly against Part L building regulations, and are minimising material consumption to reduce embodied carbon," he continues.

"Aside from aspirations to get as close to 'net zero' as possible, we are also considering our social impact carefully, and are providing subsidised social and community uses for our development, in partnership with specialist education/care and nursery providers at the property."

THE BEST OF ALL WORLDS

According to Gupta, the reaction to the project has already been "overwhelmingly positive."

"Within a week," he says, "we served a quarter of the whole development - such is their uniqueness and appeal to buyers who want the prestige of owning a beautiful part of Chelsea, combined with the comforts of home and the convenience of a plethora of services and amenities at hand."

He believes that, with the UK having seen a blending of the high-end residential and hotel sector for some time now, prime residential schemes like this must reflect the value of amenity and concierge-style services, arguing this is no small part of the project's success.

"Today's discerning buyers have ever-increasing expectations from genuinely luxury developments. They want the best of all worlds - a place to call home, but with the service and amenities that they would expect from a luxury hotel."

He concludes: "We are becoming known in the UK market for our quality and unique residential offers. After ELIE SAAB Residences at Hyde Park earlier this year, this collaboration further cements our ability to collaborate effectively with prestigious global brands to offer customers luxurious, quality central London homes."

"We believe that this will start a myriad of similar ventures across the capital and beyond, as developers and homeowners alike recognise the need for sublime residential property and convenient hospitality to be aligned more formally." ■



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CASE STUDY

Out of office



Caledonia Housing Association explains how it's redeveloping a vacant brownfield site in the north of Glasgow, and transforming a disused office into affordable apartments

Eight new affordable homes are under construction at 68-78 Townhead in Cowgate, Kirkintilloch, with developer Caledonia Housing Association transforming a vacant office building into modern apartments for rent.

Caledonia will manage and maintain the new homes, in what is the first 'restoration' development of its type for the housing association in East Dunbartonshire. According to the HA, the Cowgate area continues to be in severe need of additional homes, but its new properties will be rented out at "affordable rates" to help meet this need.

The project has been enabled in part by grant funding from the Scottish Government, with the Government and East Dunbartonshire Council. The latter approved the development noting the project's contribution to one of its key housing objectives, namely, the repurposing of town centre buildings into domestic dwellings as the identity of high streets continues to shift.

As the first of its type for the HA in the area, it was key that the office's refurbishment was led by those with expertise in this area, as well as knowledge of the locality and how to respond to it.

EXPERIENCE

In October 2018, Antonine Housing Association transferred their engagements to Caledonia Housing Association – the transfer of engagements approved by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to give Caledonia full responsibility for the homes and services that were previously provided by Antonine.

Today, Caledonia Housing Association is one of Scotland's leading providers of high quality, affordable housing, managing over 4,600 properties across eight local authority areas, with a further 512 socially rented homes owned and managed by its subsidiary Cordale in the Renton area of West Dunbartonshire.

Despite this wealth of experience and expanding stock, the HA has largely focused on new builds in recent years.

THE PROJECT CONTRIBUTED TO ONE OF THE COUNCIL'S KEY HOUSING OBJECTIVES, NAMELY, THE REPURPOSING OF TOWN CENTRE BUILDINGS INTO DOMESTIC DWELLINGS

This will in fact be the first time in nearly a decade that Caledonia has worked on a renovation project of this type, and the very first in this area.

In part because of this, it was an objective for the HA to achieve not only its usual requirements, including “best value” maintenance and efficient procurement, but to also gain expertise on refurbishment projects. It also “recognised that lowest cost will not always represent best value.”

CONSTRUCTION

Meeting all the housing association’s requirements, the construction of the project has been led by the established local firm Sim Building Group, who aim to complete the properties by February 2023.

Established in 1957, the central Scotland-based contractor was reportedly selected due to their reputation for quality of work, and “traditional values,” while maintaining the highest standards of health and safety, all key aspects noted by the HA during the project.

As a company with a base in Kirkintilloch, Sim Building Group was reportedly “proud to support Caledonia in delivering more affordable housing for the town,” with its managing director hailing the works as “an exciting project” for the team to work on.

With Sim having experience in both commercial and retail development including building new steel frame buildings, and extensions to offices and refurbishment works and new affordable and private housing schemes, Caledonia was confident it would be well placed to take the role of principal contractor.

THE HOMES

According to Caledonia, the housing association’s principles are central to its business’ practices, with a priority placed on “people, value and quality.” In order to realise this, the HA cites its three guiding principles, including simple and effective customer service, “person-centred solutions that multiple routes for access of services and communication,” and “empowering staff.”

Aiming to achieve all the above, the development is intended to provide homes and services that make the residents lives better and provide for any in the community, with the homes designed to cater for diverse needs – including families, couples, single people, and a range of ages. Each property in the two storey building has two bedrooms, and there are 15 off-street parking spaces shared between all the apartments.

As is the case with all Scottish Registered Social Landlords, Caledonia have their performance on these metrics

reviewed by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The HA no stranger to this process – the SHR currently ranks the housing association as being of “systemic importance, with an “engagement status” rated at medium.

TENANT PARTICIPATION

Alongside the homes themselves, it was important that both the development process and the continued support after completion were considerate of the tenants living in or around the area.

Throughout the redevelopment of this project, the housing association intended to ensure that tenants were able to influence the decision-making, so that its customers were involved in shaping all the services they receive.

As such, In consultation with members of its tenant steering group, Caledonia has developed a Tenant Participation Strategy – which frames how it engages with tenants on both an individual and a collective basis.

This strategy has been used across the new project, encouraging tenants to communicate with the HA, and in parallel providing them with opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills, “enhancing the community around them and maintaining it.” The overall aim is to “increase tenant satisfaction and value for money,” said Caledonia.

CONTINUED GROWTH

Moving forward, Caledonia intends to further extend its mission and the guiding principles that led to this project, in a “growing operational context,” but putting tenant’s needs and concerns front and centre throughout.

The HA believes the project, its wider developments, and these tenants are enabling the company to ensure resilience in all areas of its business, creating a strong base for its continued growth.

Andrew Kilpatrick, director of assets at Caledonia Housing Association, comments: “The demand for social housing continues to increase all over Scotland for a variety of reasons, including homelessness, separations and people who choose to downsize. The Kirkintilloch development is an integral part of our ongoing commitment to build more affordable homes in East Dunbartonshire and across Scotland.”

He continues: “We have a really strong working relationship with the government, council and Sim Building Group who have all supported us in purchasing and transforming the vacant office block. This is the first time in more than eight years that Caledonia has been involved in a repurposing project of this kind, and the first in the East Dunbartonshire area.” ■



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RESPONDING TO CHANGE –

THE IMPACTS OF THE AMENDED PARTS L AND F

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With over one in five homes in the country being first constructed over 100 years ago, the UK has the oldest – and arguably most inefficient – housing stock in Europe.

In no small part because of this, at present it is estimated that over 20% of the UK's carbon emissions are produced by the housing sector, and, with extreme heat events already becoming more frequent and severe, it is clear that the Government, and the sector itself, needs to do more.

While such action on retrofit at present appears woefully inadequate – with the Green Homes Grant argued to be but a flash in the pan by many – when it comes to new houses and new additions at least, the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is moving forwards.

As part of the Government's commitments to achieving Net Zero by 2050, in a major step for the construction industry – involving a number of consultations and revisions – The Future Buildings Standard now requires that new homes in England must produce around 31% less carbon emissions compared to the old regulations, as an interim measure towards 75-80% less by 2025.

Achieving this through changes to Parts L of the Building Regulations – with updates to Part F upgrading the ventilation requirements to support these tighter, more efficient homes – this is an important move towards supporting the many proven technologies available today that can vastly reduce the emissions of a home.

Whether it's reducing energy consumption through insulation, subsidising energy use through solar panels, or heating a home with low-carbon alternatives, the conservation of power and heat, and the ventilation to match, has never been easier, or more effective.

In our research of 119 housebuilders and developers – 71% at director or equivalent level, and the vast majority being smaller firms building under 50 homes a year (78%) – our respondents cited a wide range of benefits they expect from the new changes and the expansion of these technologies, from the contribution these moves will make towards the UK's journey to Net Zero, to reducing fuel poverty and closing the performance gap.

Of course despite these lofty aims, innovation often comes at a cost in time, skills and finance, and many housebuilders – or perhaps more importantly, homebuyers – do not believe they can glean the value necessary to justify the investment.

While it is hoped by some that the changes to Part L and F introduced will 'level the playing field' for eco conscious builders, many housebuilders are especially fearful of rising costs – not least smaller firms. By far the most common concern among our respondents, 65% believe increased construction costs are the biggest challenge to the adoption of the standard, on average expecting building costs to rise by an average of £10k per unit – with the majority (77%) set to pass these costs onto the consumer.

Beyond this, many of our respondents were also fearful of the array of other challenges the standards pose, largely focussed on a lack of skills, experience and homeowner awareness.

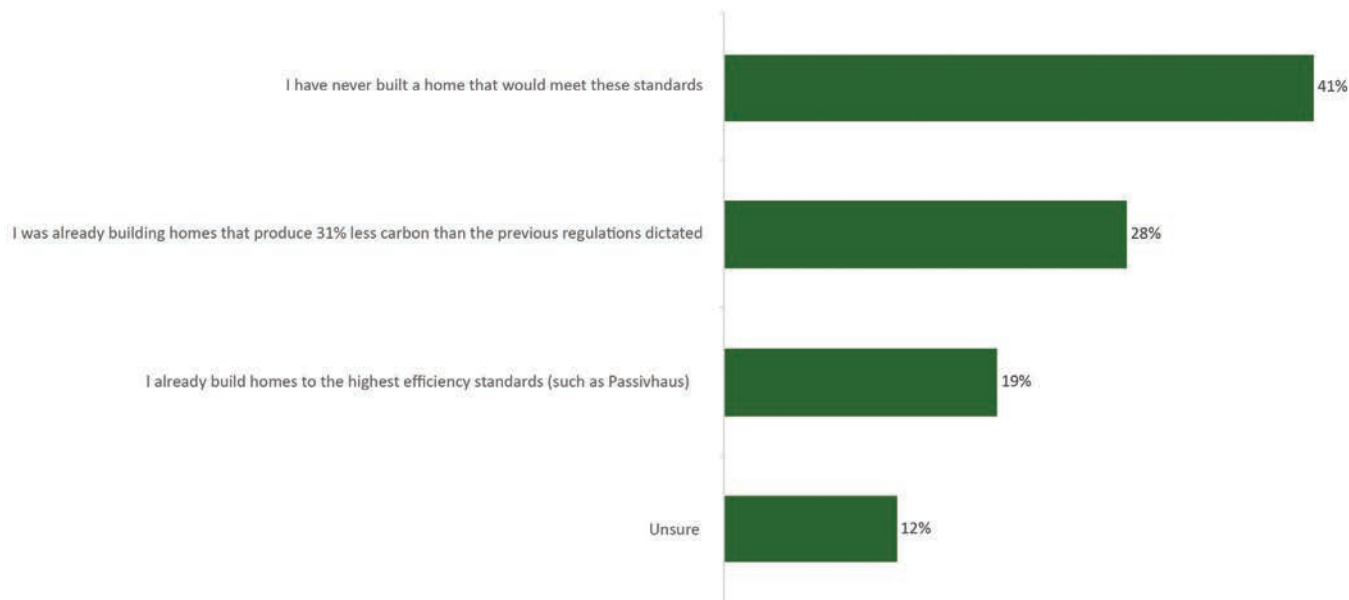
In this research, Housebuilder & Developer intends to delve deeper into how our respondents are adapting to these changes, how well the changes are understood, and the wider impacts they expect the regulations to have on their businesses – including more detailed, qualitative commentary from housebuilders Springbourne Homes, Stonewood Partnerships and Hayfield Homes.

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INTRODUCTION

How often have you built to these standards before?



THE FUTURE HOMES STANDARD

In 2019, the Government launched its first consultation on strengthening the building regulations, which would pave the way for the Future Homes Standard.

During this process, the consultations discussed realistic measures that could be undertaken here to drive down the carbon footprint of homes built after 2025.

Such measures discussed included a range of new ventilation and efficiency requirements, as well as proposals to encourage the use of electric technologies such as air source heat pumps or the latest generation of solar panels, as well as the move to phase out certain gas boilers and other fossil fuel heating systems in new homes.

As part of the consultation process, it was decided that in order to reach the standards desired by 2025 – in which homes are expected to produce 75-80% lower carbon emissions compared to current levels – interim measures would be necessary to ensure the industry is ready for the next stages.

INTERIM CHANGES

At the time of writing, these interim measures are now in place, with new developments starting after the 15th of June 2022 having to produce 31% lower carbon emissions. Existing homes are also subject to changes too, with extensions, replacements and

repairs all now requiring higher standards of energy efficiency.

These reductions in emissions are being achieved through interim uplifts to Parts L (volumes 1 and 2) and F (volume 2) of the building regulations.

Part L amendments, for instance, introduce new principal performance metrics to measure energy efficiency. Termed 'primary energy,' the metric specifies the maximum primary energy use for a dwelling – with primary energy described by the BRE as "energy from renewable and non-renewable sources which has not undergone any conversion of transformation process."

The Government has also encouraged a fabric-first approach here. Though the new U-values have been criticised by some as 'unambitious,' sufficient insulation and airtightness will be vital to meet the new requirements, allowing for reduced energy consumption of the technologies employed to heat and cool spaces.

The changes to Part F are focussed on ventilation strategies, covering the prevention of indoor air pollution, and a minimum air supply rate of 0.5 l/s.m².

NET ZERO BY 2050

Now, the sector is watching as more and more projects fall under the remit of the interim standards, to see how housebuilders are coping with the changes so far, how businesses

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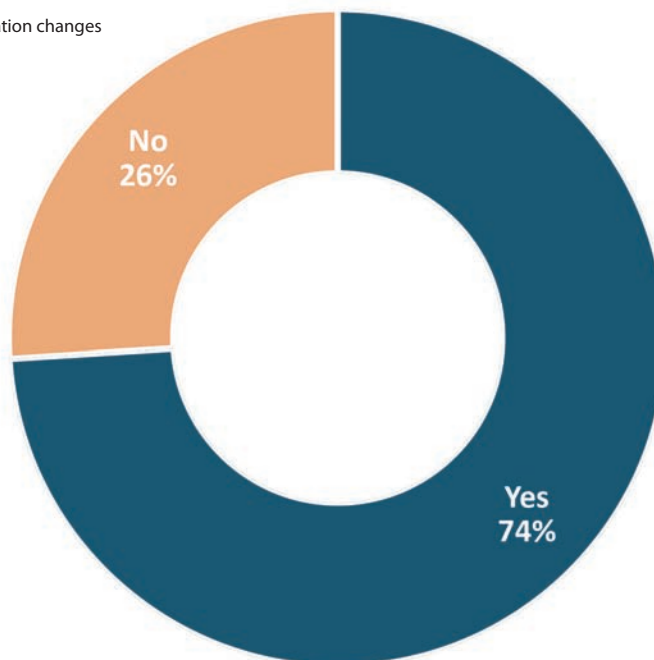
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Had you heard of the recent Part L & F regulation changes prior to this research?



are being affected, and to find out how ambitious certain aspects of the 2025 Future Homes Standard really are.

This will be a challenge for many. While 28% of our respondents are already building homes that would meet the new standards, and 19% already exceed them (with standards such as Passivhaus), almost half (41%) have never built to the interim standards before (with 12% being unsure), and a shocking 26% of our respondents had not even heard of the

changes to Part L and F prior to this research.

Despite these major hurdles, it is hoped that by jumping them now, the industry will have developed the supply chains and skills necessary to meet the ever higher hurdles to follow.

With this in mind, below this study will investigate how this is going so far, and the challenges and benefits our respondents foresee in the future.

INDUSTRY VIEW

Only one of the three housebuilders that we interviewed for the qualitative data in our research has so far worked with the new changes.

John Dally, tech manager at Hayfield Homes, says the housebuilder is already building homes that produce 31% less carbon than the previous regulations dictate, with "some planning approvals demanding similar carbon reduction targets."

He says that the company is "still making plot starts prior to 2023," however, so their current projects have not fallen under the new regulations as yet.

Sam Smart, managing director of Stonewood Partnerships, says the company's standard specification currently "far exceeds" the new and future requirements under part L, so these changes and stricter parameters "have not affected" the delivery of its units.

He does note however that while they will also suffer no immediate impact of the changes to part F as they have already installed intelligent air handling systems, "the requirement to provide photographic evidence will become a draw on managers and resources keeping the documentation up to date."

Lee Harris, chief executive officer at Springbourne Homes, was the only of the three who had worked on a project that fell under the remit of the new changes, though even this was still in the planning stage.

He notes however that the firm was already building projects to the equivalent of the new carbon targets – the company always being "proactive rather than reactive," having already changed all its residential sites to air source heating.

"The protection of expended energy through insulation is essential in the same principle that you wouldn't leave your front door open to let the heat out," he adds, "so why would you not insulate the best you could."

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PROBLEM ASSESSMENT

WHY ARE THE CHANGES NECESSARY?

When considering the challenges posed by the interim standards, it is important to understand why they are being introduced, and to ascertain whether housebuilders and developers can see any benefits of their introduction.

Encouragingly, an array of benefits were listed by our respondents, the most common being ‘making a major contribution to the UK’s journey to net zero emissions,’ at 44%.

This was closely followed by ‘reducing fuel poverty through better building fabric’ (41%) – understandable given the looming cost of living crisis at the time of questioning – then ‘a useful stepping stone towards more stringent standards’ (39%), the latter following the trend of the most popular option.

Then, listed by less than a third of our respondents, were an ‘improved reputation for the building industry’ (27%), ‘levelling the playing field for eco-conscious builders’ (26%), ‘closing the performance gap’ (23%), and finally, ‘satisfying major consumer demand’ (14%).

Despite falling last among the biggest benefits of the changes, positively, our respondents noted that issues around reducing the carbon footprint of their homes has become a ‘big factor’ for 38% of their customers, with this increasing slightly (34%) or a lot (31%) for the majority of our respondents in recent years.

INDUSTRY VIEW

When asked what our interviewees thought were the biggest benefits of the new standards, as with our quantitative respondents, the most common answer was its contribution to the UK journey’s towards net zero.

John Dally of Hayfield homes, for instance, noted that the changes are “helping to lead the industry in the right direction, sooner.”

Similarly, Sam Smart of Stonewood Partnerships believes that, “as well as reducing carbon emissions and energy requirements, the changes will lead to a high level of building control, as new buildings will be made fit for the future.”

Lee Harris of Springbourne Homes said: “We are all responsible and accountable for our actions, with buildings having long term impacts on what materials are used, how they are manufactured, applied and adopted by the end user.”

AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

Despite the awareness of these benefits, the introduction of the interim regulations was not warmly welcomed by all our respondents, with a lack of awareness and understanding of the changes being clear.

As noted earlier, almost a quarter of our respondents had not

even heard of the recent Part L and F regulation changes prior to this research. Of those who had heard of it, only 13% ‘completely understand’ them, with 29% mainly understanding them, 23% slightly, 32% partially, and 3% not understanding them at all.

This is perhaps understandable, considering that when asked how the Government has performed in engaging the following stakeholders of the upcoming changes, the majority believed they had done so ‘quite’ or ‘very’ poorly to buyers (78%), builders (71%), developers (60%), and planners (52%) – with only manufacturers believed to have been informed quite or very poorly by less than half of our respondents (39%).

INDUSTRY VIEW

Lee Harris of Springbourne Homes echoed our respondents, noting a need especially for homeowner reeducation:

“Building regulations are generally an unknown entity for customers, therefore they have no knowledge of how alterations will be implemented.”

“We are all being driven to reduce CO₂, and the heating systems are the largest contributor. Air source heating may well be part of the solution, however the operational models are so different to gas or oil fired systems that the homeowner needs re education,” he continues.

“The operating temperatures differ significantly, therefore the heat is less intense and takes longer to react. The timer cycles require activation for longer periods and this goes against their previously learnt methods. The heating contractors have been slow to react and therefore the commissioning is often challenging as is fault finding.”

COMPLIANCE – IN THEORY OR PRACTICE

As noted above, with the interim standards only applying to new developments starting after the 15th of June 2022 – and our survey being held in August 2022 – only just under a quarter (24%) of our respondents had worked on a project that’s fallen under their remit when surveyed.

Of those that had, when asked how hard they have found compliance to be, the vast majority found it to be hard to some degree, with 21% saying extremely, 17% quite, and 34% a little – though 28% reported they haven’t found it any different (perhaps reflecting some of those who were already building to as high, or higher standards previously).

Slightly more challenging, when asked how hard they had found measuring their carbon reductions across the whole site, 31% said extremely, 38% quite, 14% a little, and 17% had seen no difference.

Of those who had not worked on a project under the changes’ remit yet, the estimations followed reasonably closely to

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reality – with only 12% expecting it to be extremely hard, but an increased 32% quite hard and 37% little, and a lower 19% expecting to see no difference.

Similarly, when asked how hard these respondents believe it will be to measure their carbon reductions across the whole site, John, Sam, and Lee expected significant challenges.

INDUSTRY VIEW

When considering how hard it will be, or has been, to measure their carbon reductions across the whole site, John, Sam, and Lee expected significant challenges.

“Measuring carbon footprint is a long, enduring process that is resource hungry,” says Lee Harris of Springbourne Homes. “Organisations that have larger resources will adapt and evolve – SMEs will have to learn quickly with less resources and are likely to make more mistakes.”

While Sam Smart of Stonewood Partnerships has already started to measure carbon reduction across their sites, he notes it “appears to be manageable but at a cost and a drain on our resource.”

John Dally of Hayfield Homes adds that it will be especially difficult for those “building more than just houses.”

REMAINING BARRIERS

As well as understanding and engagement, there were a variety of other barriers listed by our respondents in adopting the interim standards.

Unsurprisingly, when asked what the biggest barriers to meeting the changes were expected to be, increased construction costs came front and centre – listed by 65% of our respondents.

Drilling into these costs, almost all our respondents expected

to see some increase – with just 7% expecting no increase at all, 3% under £1k a unit, 22% £1-5k, 34% £5-10k, 21% £10-20k, 11% £20-30k, and 3% over £30k, an average estimation of £10k. Despite this, as indicated earlier, 77% expect to be able to price this into the home – indicating further house price growth is incoming.

Following costs, the barriers listed, in descending order, were a lack of skilled workers (41%), a lack of experience with low-carbon technologies (34%), a lack of homeowner education/awareness 30%, a lack of financial incentives for builders (27%), having to measure carbon reductions across the whole site (26%), having to change suppliers (25%), an inability to price construction costs in to the finished product 24% and a slowed pace of building 24%.

INDUSTRY VIEW

When it came to the costs they expected to incur, John, Sam, and Lee had varying estimations.

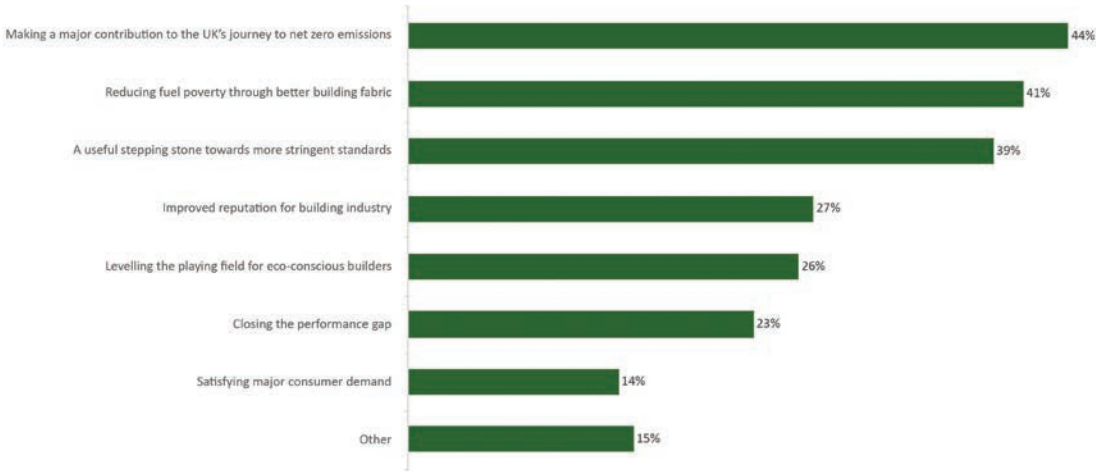
John Dally of Hayfield Homes, for instance, expected the firm’s building costs to increase by £1-5k per unit with the interim changes, and does not believe that they will be able to price this into the cost of the home.

Sam Smart of Stonewood Partnerships, on the other hand, expects “no increase at all” in their building costs. With the company already building to higher standards such as Passivhaus, there will be “no impact” on its cost base.

Finally, Lee Harris believes the interim charges will increase Springbourne Homes’ building costs by £10-20k.

“New tech is more expensive to make, the R&D is yet to be recovered, it takes longer to make, assemble and install – the compound cost increase is difficult to measure accurately,” he says. “However, change is necessary and the customer will have to carry the increase in cost.”

What do you believe is the best benefit the changes will bring about?



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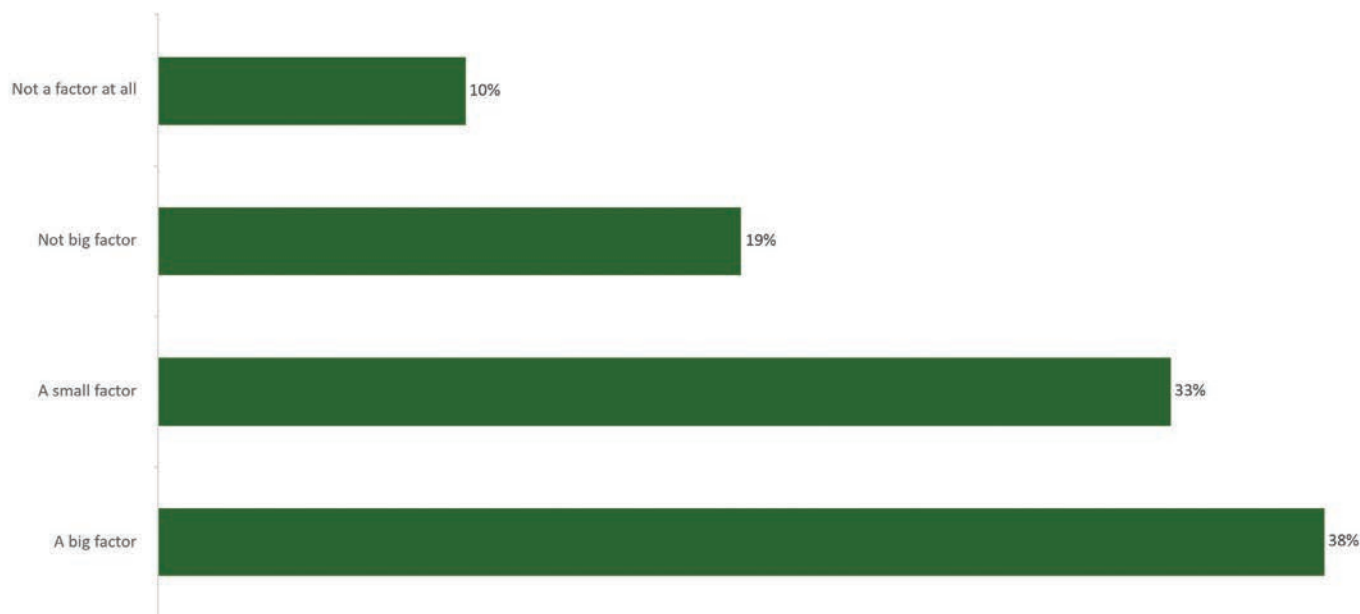
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CONCLUDING SUMMARY

How important are issues around reducing the carbon footprint of homes to your customers?



Climate change is here. All we can do now is reduce our carbon output to help minimise any further warming, and uplifting the housing sector will be a huge part of this.

Ageing standards have left the industry building homes that contribute far too highly to our carbon emissions, and it is past time that we utilise the already-existing technologies available to remedy this.

While our respondents looked towards the uplifts to Part L and F as making a major contribution to the UK's journey to Net Zero and as a useful stepping stone towards more stringent standards, the majority expected, or have already experienced, significant difficulty in meeting them – with rising costs a clear concern for many, as well as a lack of skills and both industry and buyer awareness.

Only time will tell how the sector copes as more projects come under the remit of these changes, but if this early data is indicative of what's to come, the ever-higher hurdles are going to come at an increasing cost for most smaller developers at the very least, which will only be passed on to consumers.

In a time of both a housing and cost of living crisis, this study indicates that the Government will need to do more in order to support builders and buyers to achieve its laudable environmental aims without doing more harm than good.

INDUSTRY VIEW

Finally, our interviewees considered how important the issues of climate are with their customers, and how this will impact the road to a greener future.

John Dally of Hayfield Homes says that previously, issues around reducing the carbon footprint of homes to their customers was but a "small factor."

He argues however that this is "rapidly increasing thanks to fuel prices" and "rising bills."

Similarly, while "very few" of Springbourne Homes' customers "appear interested" in carbon footprints, Lee Harris notes that the cost of operation is now key, with the adoption of air source heat pumps "provoking interest."

Lastly – and unsurprisingly for the eco-builder – Sam Smart of Stonewood partnerships says that the company finds these issues are "extremely important" to its customers, which he too says goes "hand in hand with rising energy costs."

"As more sustainable methods of construction become available, they become more important to our customers," concludes Smart. "As such, our USP is to deliver energy-efficient sustainable homes, which are unrivalled in the industry at volume."

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AND BRIEF
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Constructionline Gold Membership secured



Architectural product manufacturer, **Neaco Ltd**, has strengthened its procurement credentials after securing Gold Level Membership of Constructionline, the UK construction industry's leading register for pre-qualified contractors and consultants. A long-established member of Constructionline, Neaco has completed a rigorous audit process to achieve an upgrade in accreditation which demonstrates to buyers that its organisation has been subjected to enhanced scrutiny around governance and risk management. Gold status will allow Neaco to bid for an even wider range of projects and secure specifications for a diverse product portfolio which includes multi-purpose architectural grilles, decking, adaptive bathing aids, balustrade and balcony systems.

neaco.co.uk

Windows fit for future homes



Stuart Judge of **Tradelink** examines what the new Part L of the Building Regulations mean for the glazing industry: Windows are an easy target when it comes to pointing a finger at thermal inefficiencies: arguably, they form the biggest 'hole' in a building's facade. This is why the glazing industry works incredibly hard to achieve the best possible U-value requirements for windows and doors. As a consequence of continuous innovation, the majority of the market should find it relatively easy to comply with the new Part L of the Building Regulations: conservation of fuel and power. Some may see the new Part L and the demands that will come with the Future Homes and Buildings Standard as onerous, but as a manufacturer we can, within reason, achieve what the customer wants.

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New AliDeck "Ultra" Balcony Kit offers huge savings to balcony manufacturers and steel fabricators

Due to the present building safety crisis, thousands of new homes are in high demand. With a backlog of new build projects across the country, there is an ever-increasing demand for compliant and quick-fit innovations. Post-Grenfell, it is imperative that architects and specifiers are seeking the most up to date and cost-effective solutions. We spoke with Richard Izzard, managing director of AliDeck to see how their new "Ultra Balcony Kit" is revolutionising the market once again.

Construction in the UK has remained extremely buoyant across the turbulence of the last few years, particularly within the housing industry. Continual efforts are being made to increase mid- and high-rise developments, with new build projects popping up all around the country in urban areas.

Designers and specifiers are therefore hunting for ever-more practical solutions to enhance their vision as we continue to build upwards. In that vein, AliDeck recently launched a simple and quick-fit solution in the form of their Ultra Balcony Kit.

The AliDeck Ultra Balcony Kit is a new product offering, tailor-made for steel balcony manufacturers working on new-build projects across the UK. The kit consists of the AliDeck Ultra Board, their latest aluminium decking option, AliClad Flow soffit-cladding, and AliRail Vertical Infill Balustrade System, all supplied in kit-form to meet the demands of each customers bespoke specifications, enabling a quick and easy installation.

Richard Izzard, managing director of AliDeck, said "The use of the AliDeck Ultra Board to the balcony flooring, with its integral drainage channel, is a key upgrade and an innovative step forward. The Ultra Board delivers simple specification of a drained decking system, with



only a drainage gutter being required to the board ends to capture the diverted water from the deck."

The extra-wide Ultra Board has a 175mm top surface, as well as a 60mm wide fixings channel in the centre of the board allowing for lifting eyes to be inserted with all decking boards fixed in-situ. It's then a simple operation for the fully constructed balconies to be craned into position on site without leaving any decking boards missing. All that remains then is to simply add in

the fixing channel cover clip.

The AliClad Flow soffit cladding on the balcony would usually function as a water management system but since the drainage is handled at the deck level, this isn't required. The use of AliClad Flow on the Ultra Balcony Kit, installed to the steel frame underside laid level, is simply intended to seal the balcony and conceal the balcony structure from view for an attractive and aesthetic visual impact.

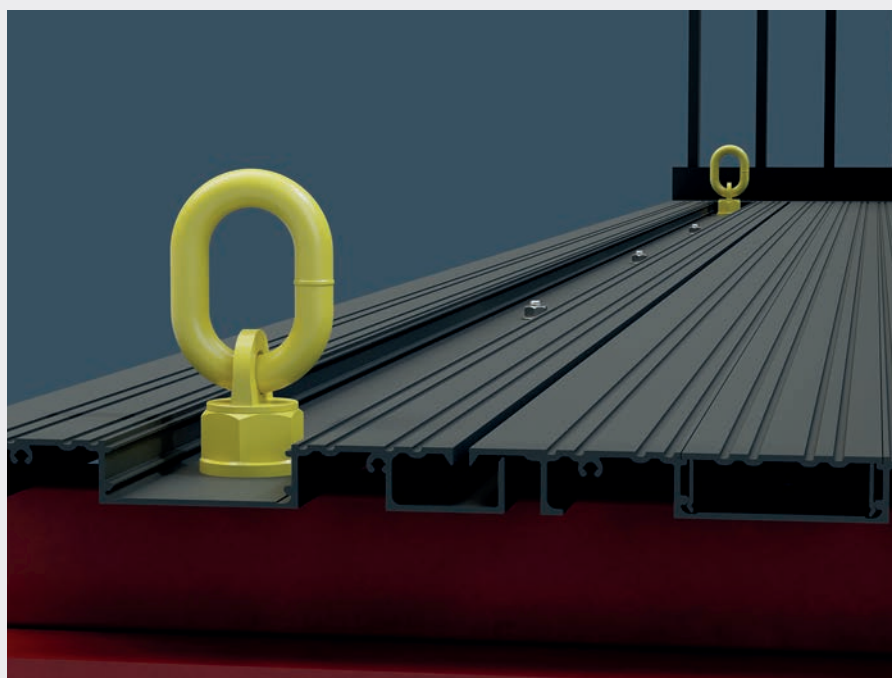
"Our Balcony Kits have so far proven to be an extremely popular solution for many across the market, with a great level of interest being shown by our customers," continued Richard. "Those already using our kits have shared positive feedback, while some architects are beginning to amend their designs to accommodate our modular balcony and modern balustrade kits."

There are savings available of 50% or more in total weight by using aluminium balcony components, such as aluminium balustrades, decking, and cladding. AliDeck's modular balcony kits have also benefited from excellent cost savings due to the increasing prices of steel, which has proved a key factor in the uptake of AliDeck's modular balcony kits.

AliDeck offer their customers high-quality product design and trail-blazing innovations coupled with first-rate service delivery, all of which has allowed them to establish their reputation as the leading aluminium decking and balcony component manufacturer within the UK. You can be rest-assured your project success is in safe hands with AliDeck.

To find out more about the Ultra Balcony Kit, please call or email AliDeck.

01622 534 085 info@alideck.co.uk



Rebranding highlights Epwin Window Systems' credentials

Two of the biggest PVC-U window and door systems in the commercial sector, Spectus and Optima from Profile 22, are to be rebranded to highlight their status as Epwin Window Systems' brands. From now on, the systems will be recognised as Spectus from



Epwin Window Systems and Optima from Epwin Window Systems.

Gerald Allen, Head of Marketing at Epwin Window Systems, said: "Spectus and Optima are brands of the biggest names in window and door manufacturing. By rebranding and streamlining the market message, we can highlight the strengths, depth and breadth of our commercial market offer and the formidable credentials that Epwin Window Systems offers the commercial sector."

Epwin Window Systems' impressive 40-year track record of working with public and private sector organisations speaks for itself. Across new build and refurbishment contracts, its multiple PVC-U systems are specified for housing developments, social housing projects, hospitals, educational establishments and more.

The products are chosen because they have an impressive set of commercial credentials.

From an environmental perspective, Epwin Window Systems windows and doors are all designed to maximise thermal efficiency and meet regulatory requirements, helping specifiers to meet environmental targets. The company was also the first UK systems house to achieve the VinylPlus® Product Label, the labelling scheme that makes it easy for customers and markets to identify the most sustainable and high-performance PVC-U products.

The company offers next-level technical and specification support service as standard. This



service helps ensure the exacting standards of every aspect of a window and door schedule are met.

There is also an Approved Commercial Partners scheme that provides peace of mind that approved manufacturers have the expertise and experience to take on the biggest commercial projects.

Gerald concluded: "The quality of our multiple systems combined with our size and strength make us a reliable and value-added partner. We help our customers deliver cost-effective and inspirational projects that protect homes and buildings and the people who live and work in them."

0845 340 3968
www.epwinwindowsystems.co.uk

Senior helps revolutionise Newcastle's former industrial area

Senior Architectural Systems has supplied the full fenestration package for a new mixed use scheme in Newcastle, providing a combination of its high-performance aluminium windows, curtain wall and door solutions.

Created as part of the wider regeneration of the former industrial area of Ouseburn Valley, Lower Steenberg's Yard is a four-storey development comprising ground floor commercial office space and 28 residential apartments on the floors above. Benefiting from stunning riverside views of the Ouseburn, a small tributary of the River Tyne, the scheme

has been designed by Xsite Architecture and constructed by Esh Construction for developers Pfp igloo.

The architectural style of Lower Steenberg's Yard has been informed by both the neighbouring Victorian-era industrial buildings and Scandinavian design elements, with the latter inspired by Mr Richard Steenberg, the Danish industrialist who established a number of businesses in the area throughout the 1850s. As a result, clean lines and the extensive use of natural light are key features of the scheme. This has been achieved to great effect using Senior's slimline aluminium fenestration systems which

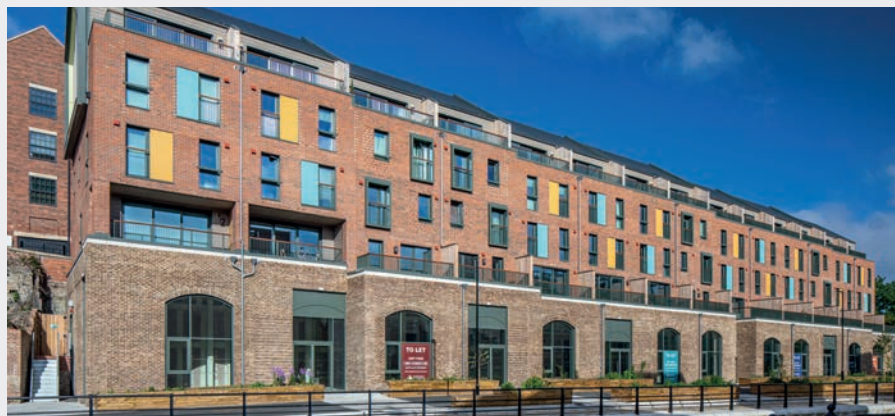


have been fabricated and installed by Crown Doors and Shutters.

Each of the apartments feature Senior's low U-value PURE® aluminium windows, specified as triple-glazed tilt and turn style units to provide safe and secure ventilation and ease of maintenance. Senior's thermally-efficient PURE® SLIDE and PURE® FOLD patio doors have also been installed to provide access to private terraces which overlook the river. As well as helping to maximise the use of natural light, Senior's fully Part L compliant PURE® aluminium windows and doors will also help improve energy efficiency, reduce fuel costs and contribute to lowering the overall carbon footprint of the building.

The ground floor retail units also benefit from Senior's PURE® casement aluminium windows, with further daylighting achieved through the use of Senior's slim profile SF52 aluminium curtain wall system to the main entrances. Senior's robust SPW501 commercial doors have also been installed to provide safe and secure access.

01709 772600 www.seniorarchitectural.co.uk



A VIABLE SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE

There are multiple considerations when comparing polymer and aluminium windows, especially when it comes to sustainability, performance, and design flexibility. Here, Steve Tonkiss of REHAU addresses the debate head-on.



As we approach government decarbonisation targets for 2030 and 2050, and with the recent introduction of the Future Home Standard, pressure to comply with new regulations for thermal performance and sustainability is mounting. Consequently, more energy-efficient windows consisting of recycled materials are becoming more attractive to homebuilders and developers.

Additionally, raising awareness around the need for sustainable products means consumers' expectations have changed and they now expect greener options. Scrutiny has therefore increased around window materials.

POLYMER VS ALUMINIUM

The sleek, modern-looking finish of aluminium windows may suit certain home styles, but not others. By contrast, polymer is more adaptable for both modern and traditional-looking properties, with indistinguishable wood 'facsimiles' and foils in multiple colours available, alongside traditional white.

Additionally, PVCu tends to be more cost-effective – aluminium flush fit casement windows can be up to three times more expensive – and offers greater thermal efficiency, whereas metal's thermal conductivity leaves windows susceptible to condensation. Though this can be resolved by installing polymer

thermal breaks, further issues can arise from incorrect installation.

HOW SUSTAINABLE ARE THE MATERIALS?

Aluminium has been recyclable for decades – around 75% of the material ever produced remains in circulation today – and its recycling process uses 5% of the energy that it takes to produce new aluminium, making it sustainable. As it needs to be re-smelted at temperatures above 600°C, aluminium recycling is energy-intensive however, with an average equivalent of 0.5 tonnes of CO₂ emitted per tonne of material recycled gate-to-gate. Extraction of raw materials like bauxites – including mining and

refining – is also energy-intensive, producing higher levels of CO₂.

The polymer recycling process separates old frames into different materials, creating 'clean' PVCu pellets for manufacturing new windows. Because the process is less energy-intensive than aluminium recycling, its carbon footprint is roughly one-fifth smaller. While new polymer production has relatively high embodied carbon, it is less than half that of aluminium.

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Millions of new windows are installed in the UK annually, meaning many old frames are scrapped. To reduce the amount of polymer going to landfill, suppliers must commit to the circular economy.

Part of REHAU, PVCu collects and separates polymer windows and door frames, directing recyclable materials back into window manufacturing processes. This reduces polymer going to landfill, enabling a more sustainable business model and products.

RECYCLING PROCESS

Before recycling processes improved, polymer window profiles were primarily manufactured using mono-extrusion methods. Multi-layer co-extrusion instead combines recycled and virgin polymer using two dies concurrently,

TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF POLYMER GOING TO LANDFILL, SUPPLIERS MUST COMMIT TO THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

with window cores being 100% recycled polymer and outer skins made from virgin materials. This enables suppliers to keep valuable raw materials within the circular economy.

Importantly, using recycled polymer in frame cores does not impact window performance. Instead, the aesthetic appeal of virgin polymer is retained alongside durability and thermal efficiency levels.

Currently 55% of salvaged polymer frames are converted into material used in our products. We aim to increase the amount of good-quality polymer being reused to 70% through further enhancing PVCu's processes.

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

Housebuilders and developers are mainly familiar with polymer's green credentials, but suppliers must foster greater awareness and educational opportunities to make recycling the material more commonplace.

The overall aim must be to ensure homebuilders and developers use more recycled polymer windows, and that supply chains provide scrap windows materials, including whole frames and off-cuts, to facilitate this. Partnerships with homebuilders, developers, fabricators and installers to arrange local delivery of scrap polymer for recycling are therefore required.

GREATER TRANSPARENCY, GREATER SUSTAINABILITY

Attitudes to sustainability are shifting, with homebuilders, developers and consumers concerned about the eco-friendliness of windows, including their use of recycled materials. Traceability can prove a useful tool for housebuilders and developers looking to allay these concerns.

In conclusion, advancing polymer window technology, alongside its ability to realistically mimic aluminium at a more cost-effective price point, has long made PVCu an appealing choice for housebuilders and developers. This, combined with its significantly lower embodied carbon level and reduced recycling footprint means the material is likely to grow in prominence as sustainability becomes a bigger priority for everyone.

Steve Tonkiss is head of sales (south) at REHAU



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Samsung's new training manager Scott Young

Samsung Climate Solutions are delighted to welcome Scott Young (TMIET) to lead our expanding training programme. With over 30 years' experience as a qualified gas engineer for boiler and controls manufacturers, and 18 of those as a training manager, Scott brings valuable insights to delivering industry leading training programmes, particularly for those much needed engineers upskilling to install heat pumps. Speaking on what attracted him to the business, Scott Young commented: "Samsung's commitment and drive to being the market leader in many different technology categories was one of the main attractions to being offered an opportunity to work with Samsung Climate Solutions. With the big push to reduce CO₂ emissions complemented by changes to UK building regulations, moving to Samsung has given me the opportunity to be at the forefront of this drive towards change".

samsung-climatesolutions.com

Charging ahead with Sevadis & the MaxiCharger



With EV charging points now a mandatory feature for new developments, **Sevadis**, one of the UK's leading providers of EV charging solutions is powering the future with its MaxiCharger. Recently, the MaxiCharger won the prestigious Red Dot Design 2022 Award for its aesthetics and optimal functionality

– a testament to the hard-work and diligence amongst the teams involved in the design and development of the MaxiCharger. Craig Slater, MD of Sevadis said: "This is an exciting time for Sevadis, we have some fantastic projects with housing developers in the pipeline and look forward to working with organisations alike to support the nation's road to Net Zero."

0330 058 7144 sevadis.com

Housebuilder & Developer website



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

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

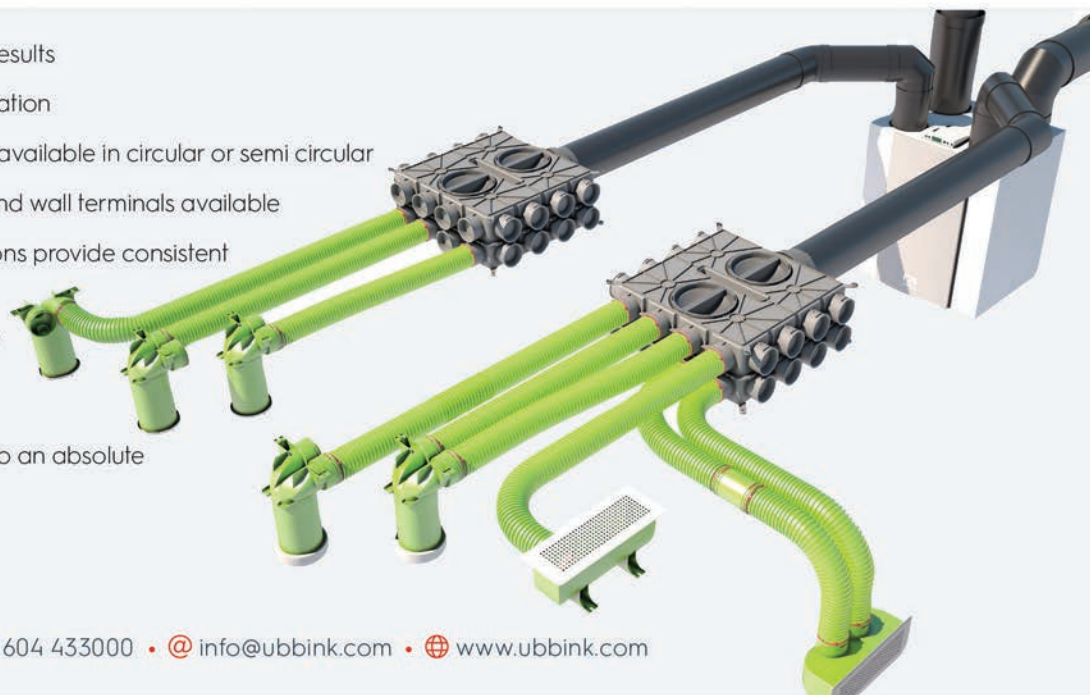
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SHOW PREVIEW

HOMES UK 2022 IS BETTER THAN EVER

Hailed by organisers as an “unmissable event for developers and sustainability professionals,” Homes UK returns on the 23-24 November 2022 to the ExCeL in London



Now in its eleventh year, Homes UK is claimed to be the largest free-to-attend conference and exhibition of its kind. Bringing together over 4,000 housing sector professionals to discuss how to build and maintain high-quality, sustainable homes.

This year, housing providers face unprecedented pressure on business plans to simultaneously address net zero targets and building safety regulations, while boosting housing supply, tackling repair, and supporting tenants.

Homes UK is designed to help asset management, development and sustainability professionals rise to the challenge and is a “must-attend” for all those working in housing.

UNLOCK NET ZERO

Co-located with Homes UK and new for 2022, Unlock Net Zero Live will bring together sustainability professionals across housing, finance, transport and energy under one roof to “build the foundations of net zero together.”

The organisers continue: “The housing sector faces the dual challenge of building new low carbon homes at pace and scale, while ensuring existing homes reach net zero emissions by 2050. Discover innovative solutions from the entire supply chain at our dedicated exhibition, and benefit from practical sustainability and net zero learning on our largest ever stage.”

Unlock Net Zero Live will enable visitors to “identify the technology, infrastructure and behaviour change required to enable net zero homes and places that work for all. We need action, and we need urgency.”

EVENT OVERVIEW

Attendees will have “six stages of learning” with 70 hours of sessions addressing key topics such as net zero targets, boosting affordable housing supply, tackling disrepair, building safety regulations and supporting tenants.

Over 250 speakers will include more “out of sector speakers than ever to bring you fresh ideas and insight that you may not otherwise encounter.” Headliners include David Olusoga OBE, British historian, writer, broadcaster and film-maker, and George Clarke, architect, TV presenter, campaigner and founder of construction and design education provider MOBIE.

Say the organisers: “We have introduced a new networking zone with a dedicated programme of hourly events to make connections with key audience segments. Connect with like-minded professionals and grow your network in drink receptions, ‘hackathons’, workshops and even World Cup themed socials!”

GETTING THERE

ExCeL London is just minutes away from central London on the new Elizabeth line, and now is the perfect time to book your train tickets to get the best rates.

To make the most out of your time at the event, the organisers have secured exclusive discounted rates at all surrounding hotels to give visitors the opportunity to continue their networking pre- and post-event.

See below for details on how to register to attend free of charge.

Register free* at the Homes UK/Unlock Net Zero Live site:
www.homesevent.co.uk

*HOMES UK and Unlock Net Zero Live is free to housing associations, local authorities, public sector, housebuilders, master developers, funders, architects, planners and BTR landlords, student accommodation, retirement living and extra-care providers. Fees will apply to other commercial organisations.

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Pumping station selection



The provision of a pumping system is becoming more common in many developments as gravity cannot always be deployed and a pumped solution would be critical to the success of the scheme. Pumping stations fall into 3 main categories: Package Pumping Stations for small to medium applications; Adoptable Pumping Stations for medium to large housing estates; Larger bespoke pumping systems for drainage, flood control and foul schemes. Strong consideration to the environmental performance of pumping stations is

key, with emphasis on energy consumption, reparability, life expectancy and recyclability. Contact **TT Pumps** for more information.

01630 647200 www.ttpumps.com

Domus Ventilation's new interactive website



Domus Ventilation, manufacturer of market-leading ventilation systems that save energy and improve indoor air quality, has launched a new company website – featuring an innovative interactive 'show home' which enables visitors to see product solutions

for types of properties and individual rooms. domusventilation.co.uk has been redesigned from the bottom up, with completely new navigation and a modern, striking new look. It provides clear, easy access to the most popular content, including Domus Ventilation's comprehensive product range, and has introduced new sections providing an overview of the company's specific ventilation solutions and services for residential and light commercial properties, developers and merchants.

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and the most efficient fans on the market. Developed for housebuilders, it has been tested to the new SAP 10 performance requirement and listed in the PCDB with its exceedingly low Specific Fan Power (SFP) values as impressively low as 0.08 w/l/s and provides near silent operation independently tested as low as 7.4 dB(A).

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Solis Air Brick Wins awards



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A HOT TAKE ON THE SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

Looking at the Government's consultation on the proposed Future Homes Standard and also the Heat and Buildings Strategy, Dennis Milligan of the British Flue & Chimney Manufacturers Association says that it's easy – but incorrect – to assume that there is no place for wood burning stoves and fireplaces in the homes of the future.

By 2025, the Government plans to introduce the Future Homes Standard for new build homes to be futureproofed with low carbon heating and world leading levels of energy efficiency, as part of the journey to achieve net zero by 2050.

The recent consultation set out what the government thinks a home built to the Future Homes Standard will be like. They want an average home built to the Standard to have 75-80% less carbon emissions than one built to current energy efficiency requirements (Approved Document L 2013). The plan is that this will be achieved through very high fabric standards and a low carbon heating system. The focus is on heat pumps, triple glazing and standards for walls, floors and roofs that significantly limit any heat loss.

A low carbon heating system will be integral to specification to the Future Homes Standard and the anticipation is that heat pumps will become the primary heating technology for new homes. BEIS is looking for sustainable low carbon heating solutions that can be rolled out across the country. Stoves are regarded as secondary heating and not scalable at the national level. For many homeowners stoves are a source of primary heating, particularly in the spring and autumn when it is not cold enough to justify turning on the central heating. Heat pumps work best when they are used in a steady state. Stoves can complement heat pumps as an efficient and sustainable way to boost heat quickly and give heat security in a cold snap.

BEIS is not opposed to wood burning stoves and believes that their use should be governed by Defra's policy on emission limits. The Environment Act, published last year, sets out more stringent emission limits for wood burning stoves. All new appliances must now comply with the new efficiency and emission limits. There



is always a proviso and that is appliances placed on the market for sale before 1st January, 2022 can still be sold. The new limit for particulate matter (PM) is 55% lower than for the previous Defra Exempt stoves, which were the gold standard for many years. The Stove Industry Alliance has initiated an independently verified scheme called Clear Skies. This scheme identifies stoves that not only meet the emission limits required by Defra but also stoves that produce fewer emissions. Increasingly stoves are becoming more efficient and are producing fewer emissions.

One of the ways in which stove manufacturers have reduced emissions is to retain the 'products of combustion' in the fire chamber for longer before releasing them into the flue. This needs to be factored into a chimney/flue design as this can reduce the velocity and temperature of the flue gases as they enter the flue. Most residential chimneys/flues rely on natural draft, the pressure difference between cold and hot air, to draw the flue gases up the chimney to the atmosphere. A potential reduction in velocity and temperature could reduce the draw of the chimney or flue. A straight chimney is always the best solution but where this is not possible, due to the construction of the dwelling, the number of bends should

be kept to a minimum and not exceed more than four. The angle of the bends should be no greater than 45° from the vertical.

The lower emission limits could spell the end of the traditional open fire. It has been common practice to include 200 mm flues and a standard fire opening in detached houses, leaving the choice of the appliance to the homeowner. Wood burning stoves require a smaller flue diameter, typically 150 mm. Installing a smaller diameter flue also has the benefit of substantially reducing the air loss calculated in SAP. The general opinion is that new open fires will not be able to meet the new emission limits. HETAS, the largest competent persons scheme provider for solid fuel, have advised their installers to check the emissions test results before installing a new open fire.

The current and future versions of SAP do not include secondary heating in the 'notional building.' This does not mean that a stove with a chimney/flue cannot be added to the house design and as already mentioned using a smaller diameter will significantly reduce the air loss calculation.

Work is continuing at a pace on replacing natural gas with hydrogen. It will be 2030 before a final decision will be made. In the meantime, a mix of 20%

STOVES CAN COMPLEMENT HEAT PUMPS AS AN EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE WAY TO BOOST HEAT QUICKLY AND GIVE HEAT SECURITY IN A COLD SNAP

hydrogen and 80% natural gas is being trailed. The good news is that the network including flues can handle this without modification. Moving the percentage of hydrogen beyond 20% will require flues to be tested and certified for use. Work has already started on this in the development of product standards.

Wood burning stoves continue to be popular with house buyers and the steps that are being taken to improve efficiency and lower emissions should mean that they are fit for future use. They may not be officially part of the Government's strategy for heating future homes but they can still be part of that equation.

Dennis Milligan is president of the BFCMA

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SHORT CHIMNEY = CHIMNEY FAN

Traditional chimney design required a minimum flue height of 4.5 m. In theory, this was enough to ensure sufficient natural flue draught to clear the products of combustion from a wood-burning stove.

Unfortunately, the chimney draught was never guaranteed and the provision often resulted in unsightly tall chimneys when appliances were installed in single-storey buildings and orangeries.

A recent change in chimney design (see source) states that a chimney can be designed using the calculation method in BS EN 13384-2005 which allows for the installation of shorter chimneys, provided sufficient chimney draught can be proved. A chimney fan will guarantee this chimney draught even on a shorter flue design.

"[...] the calculation procedure within BS EN 13384-1:2005 can be used as the basis for deciding whether a chimney design will provide sufficient draught."

Source:
Document J Building Control
Combustion appliances and fuel storage systems
page 30 - §2.8 - "Height of flues"

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RADIATING 'CARBON INTENSITY' BENEFITS

Joanna Crown of WMS Underfloor Heating assesses the 'carbon intensity' of underfloor heating versus traditional radiator systems and explains why radiant technology ticks the boxes when it comes to embodied carbon reduction.

There are many factors to consider when assessing the carbon intensity of a home heating system – from meeting the demands of new build regulations, to maximising efficiency and ensuring all the technologies specified work in harmony.

CARBON INTENSITY COMPARISON

Following the low water temperature update to the Building Regulations and Part L (June 2022), the housebuilding industry is going through some huge changes and challenges.

Aside from meeting the needs of regulations, assessing the embodied carbon of a heating system requires various factors to be considered, from product lifecycle, material volume and the carbon impact to manufacture each product. When taking these factors into account, underfloor heating systems have been shown to be 93% less carbon intensive than traditional steel radiators.

This dramatic statistic was calculated using a Government report relating to the carbon impact of manufacturing building materials, which states that the manufacture of iron and steel products have a 7.1 MTCO₂e (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent), compared with plastic products, which have a 3 MTCO₂e – 58% less than iron and steel. It's clear to see that plastic underfloor heating pipe is significantly better from a carbon point of view to produce when compared with steel and the benefits don't stop there."

MATERIAL VOLUME IN THE SPOTLIGHT

When calculating and comparing material volume, in a house with 10 rooms over two floors, a standard steel radiator system would require 222.6



kg of material, whereas the equivalent underfloor heating system would require 42% less material (129.4 kg).

However, to meet the recently introduced standards for new builds, low flow temperature radiators will need to be much larger than traditional products. So, as well as taking up more wall space and creating interior layout headaches, the volume of material required for these larger steel radiators would be significantly more than their traditional counterparts, creating a stark contrast to the minimal volume of material required to complete an underfloor heating system.

PRODUCT LIFECYCLES

Considering the carbon impact of property means not only looking at products selected for the initial build itself, but also over the lifetime of the building.

Traditional radiators have a relatively short lifecycle and are only expected to last for around 25 years. So, as well as being less efficient than underfloor heating when insitu – once decommissioned, they become a waste product in a relatively short space of time. While they can be recycled, the carbon produced during the recycling process is extremely high.

AS UNDERFLOOR HEATING IS BY NATURE A LOW TEMPERATURE SYSTEM, IT PAIRS PERFECTLY WITH HEAT PUMPS WHICH DELIVER THE MOST EFFICIENT (COP) LEVEL WHEN RUNNING AT 35-45°C



On the other hand, underfloor heating systems can last three times longer, with most offering at least a

75-year guarantee, providing additional reassurance that it will likely outlive the lifetime of the building. Good quality

underfloor heating pipe, which is made from superior quality, sustainable PERT (polyethylene of raised temperature resistance) can also be melted down safely at the end of its life and reused, further enhancing the sustainability credentials of a property.”

EXTRA BENEFITS

As underfloor heating is by nature a low temperature system, it pairs perfectly with heat pumps which deliver the most efficient (COP) level when running at 35-45°C. By design, hydronic (water based) underfloor heating can easily achieve this, however, it's crucial for the whole system to be considered to deliver the most efficient design, rather than suppliers working on designs in isolation.

If the system is not designed and installed accurately, it simply won't reach the required efficiency and energy bills will be sure to increase. To avoid any miscalculations, specifiers are advised to seek out specialist suppliers, who can provide the right expertise and are willing to collaborate with other contractors to ensure seamless design, installation and operation of the finished system.

Joanna Crown is marketing director at WMS underfloor

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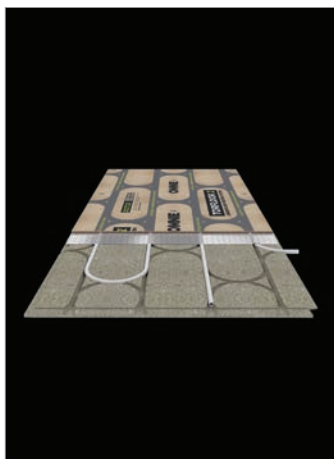
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TorFloor 2° takes integrated underfloor heating to a new level

While many in the industry believed that the original TorFloor panel represented the optimum in terms of integrating underfloor heating pipes into a quick-to-install structural flooring panel, UK based manufacturer OMNIE has taken both the practicality and the performance to a new level with the introduction of TorFloor 2°. The new generation TorFloor 2° evolves from the market-leading TorFloor® predecessor by adding a 6 mm thick chipboard upper panel with pre-foiled aluminium heat diffuser. Crucially both panels feature matching routed channels to perfectly align around the 12 mm water pipe, while the printed upper face clearly indicates the pipe's position and the points where screws can be safely fixed. Not only does this arrangement greatly reduce the risk of the pipe runs being accidentally damaged when floor coverings are installed or replaced, but the location of the routed channels places the warm water pipes closer to the surface: delivering faster warm-up times. This design means that an output of 50 W/m² can be achieved with a flow temperature of 41° Centigrade, making TorFloor 2° ideal for coupling with the air or ground source heat pumps offered by OMNIE, while a 500 Centigrade flow will raise the output to 84 W/m².

01392 363605 www.omnie.co.uk



Altecnic launches Heat Network Design guide

The **Altecnic** Heat Network Design Guide aims to ensure specifiers, consultants, and contractors achieve the designed system performance post build, with a look at how maximum energy savings from HIUs can only be achieved if the system is designed, installed, and commissioned correctly.

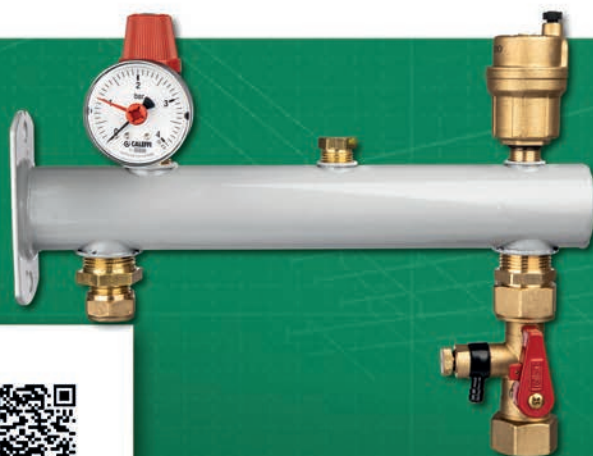
To provide context for the advice given, the guide begins with a review of the latest independent resources and best practice for heat network design, including: CIBSE CP1 (2020) Heat Network Code of Practice; UK Standard for Heat Interface Units; SAP Rating; Low Return Temperatures; Building Regulations Considerations; BSRIA Guide Information. The guide makes recommendations for HIU selection, primary pipe-work layout and sizing, primary flow rate calculations, radiator valves, and recommends particular system components. These are all provided with the best practice of installation and product selection.

As a further tool, the guide details system sizing and HIU selection, including distinguishing between direct and indirect HIU's, for specific building types. As well as this, it provides advice on the commissioning of a heat network, and how to ensure that optimal efficiency is maintained.

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XL-ent floor tiling with new BAL XL Floor One

BAL – market-leaders in full tiling solutions – have launched a new and improved flexible thick-bed tile adhesive for large format floor tiles.

Replacing BAL Pourable One on its range, BAL XL Floor One is a significant upgrade with XL-ent extended open time and XL-ent working time – taking some of the stress out of large format floor tiling.

Extended open and working times of the gel rheology of XL Floor One mean the adhesive remains wetter, smoother and creamier for longer – making for XL-ent workability.

BAL XL Floor One is easy to work with and apply and with an extended pot life of 90 minutes and open time of 60 minutes, fixers can confidently spread over larger areas for ease – have plenty of time to adjust tiles as they work – and ensure they have no product wasted by going off.

A true “overnighter”, BAL XL Floor One can be grouted in 6 hours, ensuring fast track project completion the next day.

Mixed with a reduced water content of just 4 litres per 25kg bag, BAL XL Floor One holds its high-gel shape when trowelled with ribs sitting proud even up to 25mm without any slumping – yet ribs will collapse easily when tiles are vibrated or twisted for solid bed coverage.

Crucially this means that back-buttering is not always required with flat backgrounds and tiles!

If needed, BAL XL Floor One can be built up to 25mm bed depth for levelling small areas or

patch repair – while also making it perfect for uncalibrated natural stone where consistent bed depths can't always be achieved.

With a flexible and strong bond, BAL XL Floor One is also suitable for laying BAL Rapid-Mat or BAL Flexbone VARIED uncoupling mat when spread with a 4mm notched trowel.

EXTERNAL PORCELAIN

Water and frost resistant, and with large bed-depths, BAL XL Floor One is BAL's recommended tile adhesive for laying porcelain, ceramic or natural stone on external concrete beds.

Even on tamped concrete, BAL XL Floor One provides excellent coverage for 20mm porcelain pavers and other external tiles.

Alex Underwood, Head of Marketing, said: “After listening to our fixers and contractors, we have developed a new floor tile adhesive that provides better workability when tiling large format floor tiles and panels which are seemingly getting bigger year-on-year.

“The improved working and open times give fixers that bit longer to trowel, move, install and adjust large tiles and panels – without worrying that the adhesive may skin over on the floor or go off in the bucket. This may seem minimal – but in reality, this makes a huge difference within installations.

“BAL XL Floor One can be used up 25mm bed depths if necessary for small levelling or patch repair, while back-buttering is not always necessary either saving significant project time



and costs.

“Smoother and creamier to use, contractors have praised the workability and usability of the product compared to other thick-bed floor adhesives – making for easier and quicker large format tiling.”

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BATHROOMS & KITCHENS

Supplement



Introducing the new Quooker CUBE



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to install and takes up less under-sink space. It also boasts a state-of-the-art touch screen digital display panel that will show how much sparkling water is left, alerting users when cartridges and filters need replacing. The new CUBE also boasts an improved water flow for the chilled water mode.

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Tap offering hot's up with latest addition



Reginox is turning up the heat with its hot tap offering after launching its Amanzi II range. The Amanzi II is an instant 3in1 boiling water tap that offers instant boiling water up to 98 degrees (available across six pre-sets) and has a safety handle and insulated spout that include anti-scalding features. The Amanzi II includes a 2.4L tank, plastic/carbon fibre filter, 360 spout rotation and is suitable for all plumbing systems. Available in three colour ways – Copper (coming soon), Chrome and Brushed Nickel, it delivers a completely safe flow of water from the spout without any of the dangerous 'spitting' that is sometimes associated with 3 in 1 taps. Amanzi II replaces the need for a kettle, enabling homeowners to save both space and money and also comes with a 5-year guarantee.

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A PANEL DISCUSSION

With the market for wall panels growing, Lidia Cetrangolo of Multipanel explains why wall panels can be the sustainable option for bathrooms.

Wall panels have been around for decades, traditionally used as an alternative to tiles in bathrooms. Thanks to modern innovation and design, today's wall panels are high-performing products, and have become a considered choice for bathroom projects, rather than simply an alternative.

The benefits of wall panels are extensive – a good wall panel will save time on installation (up to 21 hours), providing a watertight interlocking joint which removes the need for messy and time-consuming grouting. Modern wall panels also offer a range of aesthetic and trend-led styles to suit every homeowner's taste.

One of the key benefits of wall panels, however, is that they are a sustainable option for housebuilders, developers and customers. Sustainability is a priority for every housebuilder and developer, and customers will more often than not, want assurance that their home is being built in the most environmentally friendly way possible.

While ensuring that the development and building of homes are completed with as much consideration to the environment as possible, there are some easy alternatives that can be considered to increase sustainability in developments; including wall panels.

MADE FROM SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

Many wall panels are made from materials such as plywood, timber or MDF. Opting for a wall panel that uses sustainably sourced materials will ensure that your bathroom project is as environmentally friendly as possible. Most manufacturers of wall panels that use sustainably sourced materials will have their certifications listed, making it easy to opt for wall panels that meet their sustainability goals.

One of the main certifications to look out for is the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC(R)) emblem. The Forestry Stewardship Council is an international, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting responsible management of the world's forests. FSC's certification system, which is the world's most respected and widespread forest certifi-





cation, enables both businesses and consumers to choose wood, paper and other forest-produced materials that support responsible forestry.

LONG SHELF-LIFE

Another advantage of using bathroom wall panels is that they stand the test of time, lasting up to 30 years while maintaining a high-performing, watertight surface that doesn't require maintenance and re-grouting.

The fact that bathroom wall panels have such a long shelf-life means that housebuilders and developers can be sure that they are opting for a sustainable, long-lasting material for their next bathroom installations, reassuring their customers that they won't need to be replaced.

RECYCLABLE

Many wall panels will be able to be recycled after they are no longer needed. Although, as mentioned above, wall panels last up to 30 years, meaning tastes may change, and homeowners may want to renovate their bathroom. At this point, many materials that are used in housebuilding may go to a landfill.

Wall panels have an advantage in that they can be recycled, giving them a new lease of life after they are no longer needed. A good wall panel manufacturer will ensure that 100% of its wall panels are recyclable. Additionally, many wall panel manufacturers recycle 99% of post-production waste into Biomass materials and other products –

reducing landfill and contributing to the circular economy.

MADE IN BRITAIN

Choosing wall panels that are made in Britain (even better if they are Made in Britain certified) is a great way to increase sustainability for your next bathroom project. Being manufactured in Britain means that the wall panels have had a shorter journey to get from the site of their production to their final destination, meaning less carbon dioxide has been produced.

In a time of such uncertainty within

THE FACT THAT BATHROOM WALL PANELS HAVE SUCH A LONG SHELF-LIFE MEANS THAT HOUSEBUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS CAN BE SURE THAT THEY ARE OPTING FOR A SUSTAINABLE, LONG-LASTING MATERIAL FOR THEIR NEXT BATHROOM PROJECT

the global landscape, choosing products that have been made more locally also provides additional security in terms of supply chain issues, and will often mean completion times are further reduced with a faster turnaround.

Products that are made in the UK generally have a higher level of transparency over the production process and are considered to have been produced at a high level of quality. Therefore, wall panels made in Britain provide quality assurance as well as increased sustainability in comparison with imported products.

Lidia Cetrangolo is marketing manager of Multipanel





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HOMEBUYERS SAY 'COME DINE WITH ME' POST-COVID

The pandemic meant greater visibility of kitchens due to Zoom calls, and since Covid the outbreak there's been a return to the age of the dinner party with homeowners looking to spend social time with friends and family. Dave Mayer of Reginox looks at how these factors are affecting kitchen design.

An industry survey stated that three-quarters of consumers are planning home improvements over the next 12 months, and we are already seeing a considerable demand for products across retail and housebuilder sectors, which is an encouraging sign.

Further research revealed that there was already a 24 per cent year on year increase in kitchen renovations in the last 12 months, so this is clearly an area of growth that's set to continue. When looking at the key drivers for people renovating or simply updating their kitchen, it's no surprise that many people cited the potential increase in the value of their property being the main factor for completing the work. According to the research, a new kitchen can increase the value of a property by anything between £6K-£10K.

Unsurprisingly, other key factors in changing the kitchen include improving functionality and eliminating inconvenience and upgrading to meet the family's needs and personal lifestyle. These certainly reflect the concept of kitchens becoming multifunctional spaces now and people wanting to style it to accommodate the new demands placed on the centre of the home – the kitchen.

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE KITCHEN INDUSTRY?

Kitchens have always been considered as the heart of the home and the focus point of every house, but in the new climate the kitchen has come under the increasing spotlight as people welcomed their colleagues into their home, and parents they welcomed children's classmates and teachers via the likes of Zoom and MS Teams video calls. So, with this unexpected 'extended invite' into people's homes – attention quickly turned to transforming the space and making it look its best.

INVESTMENT PIECE

Investing in a kitchen not only adds value to your house when considering



selling it, but will no doubt increase the value of the room to your everyday life due to the amount of time you will spend appreciating and benefiting from the modifications completed. When considering changes within a kitchen – people need a clear plan of what they are wanting to achieve as this will dictate some key purchases for example the 'white goods,' and fixtures and fittings including the sinks and taps. One of the biggest pressures is on space – so space-saving kitchen essentials are likely to be welcomed.

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

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

MAKE A STATEMENT

Taps are the most used appliance in any kitchen, so why not turn them into a 'feature'? Brass is hugely popular at the moment due to the 'industrial' look being

in vogue, matched with other kitchen design elements including door handles, cupboard door knobs and even sinks.

THE COVID EFFECT

One of the main impacts of Covid-19 has been the 'awareness of touch' – spreading germs – and the need to keep surfaces clean. Surfaces cluttered with accessories and equipment is simply an invitation for visitors to touch them, pick them up and potentially spread germs. By removing as much as possible from workspaces – it removes the chance of germs being passed around – and enables the more thorough cleaning of surfaces to take place.

One example of tackling this is the introduction of a '4-in-1' tap which removes the need for a kettle and water filter jug straight away!

Similarly, another area that has seen significant change in is the material choice for kitchen equipment and accessories. Choice of materials in terms of kitchen appliances is becoming increasingly important due to their cleaning qualities.

THE FUTURE

Kitchens are going to continue being used as versatile spaces, with people opting to use their kitchen as combined dining, school, work and relaxation space. However, there is a real sense that the kitchen will reclaim its position as the heart of entertainment with family and friends, the theme for kitchens is certainly stylish and functional.

Bold colours will make a comeback; there's already increased demand for striking blues and greys. By inserting a pop of colour, the crisp white look that so many have opted for can be broken up to show some of the owners' personality.

The demand for minimalism and space saving both visually and functionally is certainly continuing. Minimal furniture and household appliances are favoured, such as the '4-in-1' tap.

Dave Mayer is commercial director at Reginox



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Finding green products that protect the building structure as well as the environment over their whole life cycle can be quite challenging. As net-zero and compliance with sustainable building emerges in the construction industry, XPS solutions with verifiable environmental footprint become all the more relevant.

Directly tileable wedi elements not only come with their own Environmental Product Declaration (EPD certificates) but are also renowned for their BBA accredited excellent thermal (0.036 W/mK) and loadbearing (133kg/m²) capabilities setting them apart from other foam tilebackers on the current market. All products are characterised by the ease of their customisation and being extremely lightweight that means less transportation weight and lower carbon footprint as a result.

Behind every product there is mindfulness & craftsmanship. Due to its close collaboration with industry professionals since 1983, having

invented countless bathroom solutions, wedi have become the pioneer of the XPS industry. Practical and secure wedi XPS product solutions don't only offer peace of mind for the installer, reduce labour and dust, but speed up the project completion and improve health & safety conditions on site.

wedi is the only XPS manufacturing company whose products have received the European Technical Approval for 'sealing of floors and walls in wet rooms' and as a result no additional tanking or special elements outside the system are needed. Complemented by its new product line of seamless surface finishes, wedi's floor-to-ceiling system solution now offers protection not only at substrate but also at surface level. Thanks to their modular design, perfectly coordinated wedi components allow for unlimited freedom in design whilst providing all-round protection against mould & fungi.

From manufacturing with 100% green energy through using recycled materials

for both its XPS substructure elements and seamless design surfaces to the comprehensive insulation its sealing systems offer – the foundation of the brand lies in innovation, technology and sustainability.

Equally suited for refurbishment and new build projects, wedi products deliver environmental and cost-saving benefits, giving enhanced performance and functionality for the user.

High-quality installations however depend not only on great products but also on knowledge and experience using them and so, in order to deliver the systemised sealing solution, the brand is renowned for, wedi offers training sessions and even on-site training for qualifying projects. Bespoke flat-packed bathroom PODs are also available on request – get in touch to discuss your project by emailing enquiries@wedi.co.uk.

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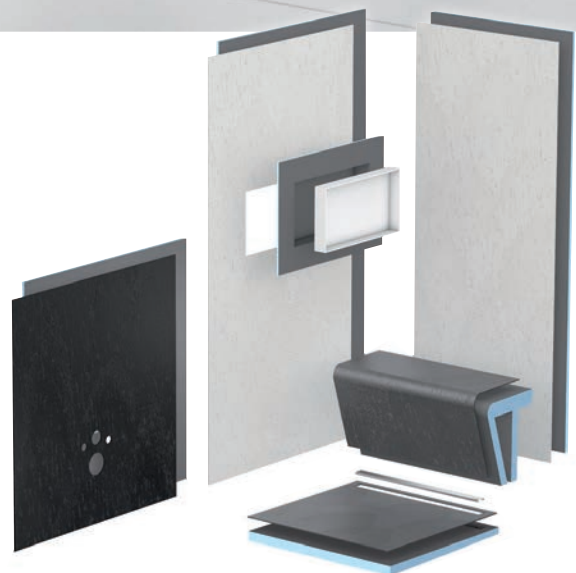


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There are many benefits for homeowners when they decide on the **BLANCO UNIT**. Flexibility – customers can choose items from the BLANCO range to suit their kitchen style and budget. Drinking water systems – anything from the FONTAS-S II filter tap to the clever

EVOL-S Pro 4-in-1 smart tap having this addition will prove not only eco-friendly but will add that extra high-tech element to the kitchen. Hygiene – everything is in one area. When chopping up chicken or vegetables, the risk of spillage is removed when carrying the chopping board from A to B as the bin is right there. Multi-functional – with these clever combinations, everything above the work surface becomes a multi-functional sink area that works beautifully, is easy to use and keep clean.

blanco.co.uk/unit

New Rituals in the kitchen with Keller



Pictured is the Dark Rituals kitchen from Keller.

The popularity of the industrial-style kitchen continues apace and **Keller** has, once again, come up trumps with the newest addition to the collection, Dark Rituals. The overall scheme incorporates, and combines, weathered materials, black, metal and stone. The door fronts used in the Dark Rituals model are the Nottingham in matt black oak along with the new Bolton door in stainless steel – for the ultimate in industrial chic. The kitchen has been designed in sympathy with the surroundings and with function in mind. The feature bookcase stands tall over the island, while the worktop wraps down partly covering the sides of the island to integrate the textures and colours of the work surface further into the kitchen. For a smaller kitchen, the same look can be created with a corner design or a smaller island.

www.kellerkitchens.com

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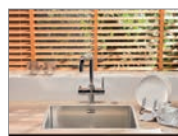
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Reginox updates Tribezi range

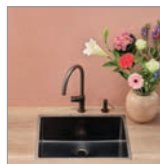


Reginox UK is updating the Tribezi tap range following its huge success. The Tribezi, now available in Chrome, Brushed Nickel and Matt Black, is the ultimate tap that not only saves time, but also energy and space with its compact design. The Tribezi is a brass hot water tap and the perfect accessory to

any sink. This stand out product not only operates on 5 volts instead of the standard 12 volts, but it also has a unique ceramic thermos rod which means the water heats up quicker and stays hotter for longer. On standby, it typically uses 1-watt vs the standard 6 watts which makes it highly energy and cost efficient. With seven pre-sets to choose from, boiling water is available on demand therefore saving both space and money.

01260 280033 www.reginox.co.uk

Reginox extends successful New York range



Reginox UK has extended its stainless-steel sink range – the New York. The New York is crafted from premium quality stainless steel with a matt inox finish. It's available in a wide range of different bowl sizes, all of which include an integral strainer and comfort waste as standard. Featuring an easy to clean design with tight corners with 10mm radius, the New York is easier

and quicker than standard sinks to fit and is visually minimalist in style. Now available in Copper, Gold and Gunmetal, the New York can be fitted in three different ways – undermounted, flush with the work top or simply inset (surface mounted) installation – making it an incredibly versatile product and suitable for any modern kitchen.

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uk.westfraser.com

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Comprising a total of 404 new homes, commercial space and public realm spaces, Southmere Village Phase 1B will bring to life an area of former economic deprivation. **IG Masonry Support** provided many of its products to brickwork contractor Landmark Brickwork and main contractor Durkan,

to help achieve the architect's vision. IG Masonry Support was able to provide bespoke designs with a quick turnaround. Durkan and Four Point Architects were highly impressed with the level of detail in the technical details provided by IG Masonry Support.

01283 200 157 igmasonrysupport.com



Praising appearance of Marmox niches

A prestige housing project in New Romney, Kent, has seen a leading developer make extensive use of the prefabricated wall niches which have recently been added to the range of bathroom and wetroom specialist, **Marmox**: saving time and cost while facilitating the completion of luxurious interiors for the properties' new occupants. Mulberry Place is a beautifully landscaped development of 150 new properties by Pentland Homes. As a highly experienced contractor and developer, Pentland is always seeking to adopt new technologies which can help deliver schemes on time and to budget and is installing more than 250 of the Marmox units in two different size options. The Site Manager for Pentland Homes, Glynn Pogue, commented: "The Marmox niches are being well received by the purchasers who like the appearance and the usability of the recesses for storage. They have definitely been a success from that point of view."

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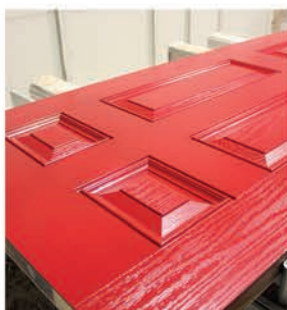
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KEEPING A COOL HEAD

With climate change already noticeably taking effect, housebuilders and developers must consider landscape design in this context, and get materials spec right. Jamie Gledhill of Brett Landscaping offers his insights

The extreme heatwaves which characterised the summer of 2022 brought a level of risk and damage to urban environments and infrastructure which had never previously been seen in the UK.

Unprecedented temperatures led to wildfires which damaged numerous homes, and leading to evacuations in Dagenham, while another blaze reached the edge of the A2 dual carriageway near Dartford, causing major disruption.

These wildfires, caused by extreme heat, can be more common and are managed in rural areas, but should give housebuilders and developers pause for thought in the coming years. With periods of extreme heat likely to be a feature of UK summers, consideration will need to be given to materials used and landscape design practice that can prevent housing estates from becoming unwitting tinder boxes.

COOL THINKING

Housebuilders will need to look at the materials that are used for landscaping and at the layout of estates to find ways to minimise and manage the worst effects of extreme heat. There are already products available, and research underway, on how to adapt to the changing nature of the climate at key parts of the year.

While the majority of research and innovation has been focused on sustainable drainage, and how to improve water management to mitigate large, unexpected volumes of water, there is also research focusing on how to keep paving cool and reduce the negative impact of the 'Urban Heat Island' effect.

Industry body Interpave is looking at ways in which Concrete Block Permeable Paving (CBPP), already in wide use and a well-established SuDS technique can be harnessed to keep paving cool during the driest points of the year.

Although more research is required, the guiding principle is that porous pavements allow water to drain through rainstorms and evaporate during hot weather. Evaporation keeps the pavement cooler because heat is pulled out from the



pavement during hot weather.

For these systems to be effective housebuilders and developers may need to specify a more sophisticated paving system and installation methods to harness the benefits. The aim is to keep a suitable volume of water, absorbed and attenuated within the paving voids. Additional interventions and flow control can be introduced to the system to create a 'cooling zone' at the base of the pavement during prolonged periods of dry weather, to supply a small reserve of water for evaporative cooling.

Housebuilders can work with SuDS design specialists and manufacturers to develop a dynamic paving system that can adapt to the climate by managing water during heavy downpours, but maintains a volume of water for cooling the pavement. These CBPP systems can be integrated with other green design measures such as draining planters and tree pits to use the excess irrigation for cooling.

Furthermore, concrete block paving is a better product for 'cool paving' in comparison to conventional asphalt street surfaces often installed over the

original road base. Taken from locations where managing extreme heat is near the top of design challenges, there are some approaches that UK housebuilders can apply.

In the city of Phoenix in Arizona, USA, where temperatures at the height of summer average 40°C, with minimal rainfall, the City of Phoenix Street Transportation Department and Office of Sustainability have been piloting a cool pavements programme since 2020. The one-year results, presented in September 2021, demonstrated that light coloured, reflective pavement surfaces will lower the temperature of the pavement considerably as the heat is reflected rather than absorbed, as occurs with other surface options.

Techniques developed to reduce the heat of highways in places such as Arizona are now to be found in use in projects across London, including The Bridget Joyce Square, and the Australia Road project. Concrete block paving can also be an easier product and system to use with layout alterations or reinstatements, reducing carbon footprint and whole life costs.



COOL & CLEAN

In addition to managing the weather, permeable paving systems can assist in reducing the harmful pollutants that leave large paving areas exposed during extreme heat. Research conducted in 2004 by the Construction Industry Research and Information Association has shown that permeable pavements can remove between 60% and 95% of suspended solids and up to 90% of hydrocarbons.

HOUSEBUILDERS WILL NEED TO LOOK AT THE MATERIALS THAT ARE USED FOR LANDSCAPING AND AT THE LAYOUT OF ESTATES TO FIND WAYS TO MINIMISE AND MANAGE THE WORST EFFECTS OF EXTREME HEAT

The research demonstrated that the permeable paving systems which were looked at were more effective in removing pollution from rainwater run-off than attenuation tanks. The same research also showed that permeable pavements can remove a wider range of pollutants than oil separators.

This means that permeable paving effectively cleans the water as it goes through the system. Tyre residue on road surfaces causes a considerable amount of plastic pollution which can end up in the drainage system along with hydrocarbons, detritus, silts, and microplastics. All of these pollutants can be captured by permeable paving.


Larger particles are stopped at the surface, while finer materials, hydrocarbons and heavy metals are trapped as they penetrate the supporting layers. Organic materials, once trapped, break

down over time, reducing the amount of contaminants that reach watercourses.

The result is that the water which infiltrates into the ground – or is drained to the next stage of a water management system – is of a considerably higher quality than if using an impermeable surface, relying on attenuation tanks.


With more extreme weather during all seasons expected to be the trend for UK climate over the coming decades, housebuilders and developers can turn to concrete block permeable paving as a useful tool to keep the carriageways, pathways and driveways of their estates cooler during extreme heat, productive in storing rainwater during heavy downpours and practical in assisting with the filtration of pollutants.


Jamie Gledhill is engineering technical manager at Brett Landscaping





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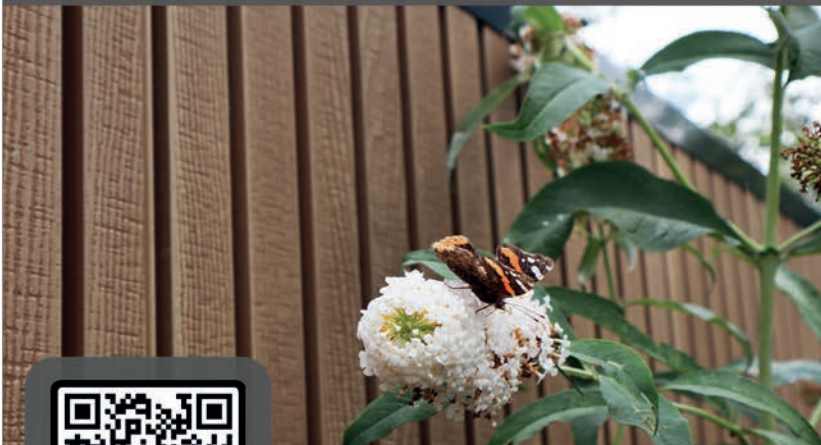
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