



The Industry  
Advocate: Brian Berry  
preps SMEs for the  
challenges of 2024



Comment: Louise  
Walters of Designer  
Contracts on utilising  
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Show Preview:  
Futurebuild brings  
the retrofit agenda  
into sharp focus

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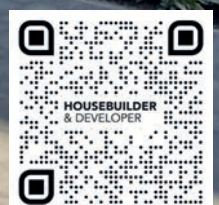
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024



## BUILDING A BRIGHTER LATER LIFE

Specialist developer Audley Villages is responding to the urgent need for better quality retirement living schemes with several projects, including the 156-unit Wycliffe Park in Buckinghamshire

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James Parker

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**HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER**  
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024



**BUILDING A BRIGHTER LATER LIFE**

Specialist developer Avelay Villages is responding to the urgent need for better quality retirement living schemes with several projects, including the 156-unit Wyville Park in Budegumstone.

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# FROM THE EDITOR

To paraphrase the funk and soul legend Edwin Starr, while robbing his lyric of a huge amount of its power, 'The Green Belt, what is it good for?'

Well, many including of course the former Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (now just the more sober-sounding CPRE, in a rebrand that you assume was to suggest they aren't the sorts to lie down in front of bulldozers), think it's fundamental to our survival. England's green spaces might be the greatest asset we have as a country, but the real issue is that a lot of the Belt isn't actually Green.

The General Election which will probably be held this year will see battles (possibly even literally) over this issue like never before. In a continued cost of living crisis, clinging to blanket Green Belt protection for what is really just an unremarkable bit of a town's outskirts as the reason not to build affordable homes seems almost criminal.

But I'd argue that many voters across the country put this polarising issue above many others, even including our fraught and increasingly terrifying international politics. That's why both Rishi and Keir will be claiming they'll be building millions more homes, without mentioning exactly how that needs to be done.

Different zonal approaches have been pursued as a way for building on brownfields, with some success. But the Green Belt has essentially never been touched – it now surrounds 14 of our major settlements, and represents 13% of the total available land. It's ridiculous; just slightly over that amount of the Belt itself constitutes trees and green space.

You might think the way out of this is a sliding scale/set of 'shades' of green, laying out exactly where will never be touched, and where there can be development, and what kind. Not just 'rural exception sites,' but an across-the-board set of parameters and permissions that loosen the belt fundamentally.

Will the Tories (or more likely Labour), be able to summon the courage to clearly lay out such dispassionate, but necessary, thinking before the voters this year? Highly unlikely.

In his regular comment piece in this issue, Patrick Mooney rightly pinpoints a potential new Government recipe for this dangerously hot political potato, signalling just how acute the problem is for preventing development and the associated commercial benefits.

As Patrick says, the new chair of the Office for Place within the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing, Nicholas Boys Smith, seems to be taking a much more agnostic approach to the Green Belt. He has been quoted as saying that land within the Belt which is of "low or no agricultural or amenity quality" shouldn't necessarily be protected.

Political suicide, or pragmatic sense? Time will tell.

*James Parker*

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# Untold Living submits plans for Eastbourne retirement community



Later living developer Untold Living has submitted plans to Eastbourne Borough Council for a 139-home integrated retirement community (IRC).

The retirement specialist, which is backed by Matter Real Estate, completed the acquisition of a prime 2.5-acre seafront site at Sovereign Harbour in November 2023 from Birch Limited.

Subject to planning consent, Untold Living will deliver an IRC comprising a range of one and two-bedroom apartments overlooking the English Channel.

The development will include a range of high-quality amenity spaces, some of which it intends to make available for use by the wider Eastbourne community.

The scheme, designed by architects Gaunt Francis, will provide “much needed high-quality, independent later living accommodation.” Homes will be available across a range of different mid-market tenures, including to buy, for rent and purchase via shared ownership.

Russell Jewell, CEO at Untold Living, said: “The urgent need for more purpose-built later living accommodation in the UK cannot be overstated, particularly in East Sussex, where the population of over-70s is growing more quickly than the national average.”

“Many thousands of older people are living in accommodation that is wholly unsuitable to their needs, which poses a serious risk to their mental and physical wellbeing.”

“Our scheme will not only offer round-the-clock care and support to residents

when needed, but also relieve pressure on local health and social services by lowering the frequency of residents’ hospital and GP visits. We are grateful to the people of Eastbourne for all of the valuable feedback we have received so far and look forward to announcing further details in due course.”

It comes after Untold Living launched a consultation to which members of the public, the council, and local interest groups were invited, to gather feedback on the proposed plans and to ensure it is designed to serve the entire community – not just the older population.

## Placefirst reveals new images of £35m scheme in Bolton town centre



Newly released images have revealed how a multi-million-pound development will “completely transform” Bolton town centre.

The computer-generated images have been unveiled by build-to-rent (BTR) developer Placefirst and depict its new £35m scheme, which has been officially named as Deansgate Gardens.

The development, located opposite the former Beales department store and a stone’s throw from Bolton’s Town Hall, will deliver 167 new high-quality, sustainable homes for long-term private rent, said the developer, plus “extensive public realm and commercial space.”

The name Deansgate Gardens takes inspiration from the area’s vibrant heritage and reputation as a major

commercial, retail and social hub during the 19th century. Placefirst also consulted with not only Bolton Council, but also members of the public to receive input into the name, during the summer’s Bolton Food and Drink Festival.

Placefirst worked with award-winning architect Levitt Bernstein and landscape architect CW Studio to design the 1.1-hectare scheme.

Construction at the site, which was previously home to a car park and several disused buildings, began in 2023 by main contractor, Caddick Construction. Building works are now well underway to transform the brownfield site into a vibrant new neighbourhood with rooftop terraces, resident gardens and courtyards.

Designed with the local community in mind, the neighbourhood will also include ground-floor commercial spaces, a spacious central square, communal green areas and pedestrian-led spaces.

Deansgate Gardens is projected for completion in summer 2025, with Placefirst remaining onsite to oversee the management and maintenance of the neighbourhood with professional in-house teams. The scheme forms a central component to Bolton Council’s £1bn masterplan to transform the town centre by blending high-quality buildings and carefully designed public spaces.

David Mawson, CEO at Placefirst, commented: “These stunning new images of Deansgate Gardens offer a new look into our first contribution towards a bright and brilliant future for Bolton town centre. We are immensely proud to be delivering such a transformative scheme, one which will deliver a community of much-needed new quality rental homes right in the heart of Bolton town centre. As placemaking specialists, our goal is always to create sustainable new neighbourhoods that people benefit from and take pride in – and we will achieve just that with Deansgate Gardens.”





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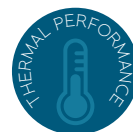
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# Homes England launches campaign to help SME housebuilders get funds

Homes England has launched a new awareness campaign aimed at helping small and medium (SME) housebuilders access funding and expert support.

To encourage a “more diverse, vibrant sector,” the agency is focusing its “We Fund It. You Build It” campaign on helping firms access the Government’s Levelling Up Home Building Fund.

A recent HBF study found that only 2,500 SME housebuilders are currently active, and delivering 12% of new homes – down from 39% in 1988.

The Levelling Up Home Building Fund has been designed to help change this. Administered by Homes England, it provides loans to SME housebuilders to kickstart projects from £250,000 to more than £10m, and is aimed at housebuilders that are struggling to access finance from traditional lenders.

Loans can be used to meet development costs of building new homes for sale or rent. The fund also offers financing to support community-led housing projects, serviced plots for custom and self-builders, and offsite manufacturing.

Gary Middleton, assistant director, development finance at Homes England, said: “Diversifying the housing sector, helping new housebuilders to establish themselves, and supporting mid-sized developers to grow is a key part of our remit. But we know how difficult it can be for SME developers to bring their projects to fruition, and that access to finance can be one of the biggest blockers they face.”

“We have regional experts across the UK that understand the local market and are ready to support SME housebuilders with their project. It is so important that housebuilders know this support exists.”

To help raise awareness of how it can help SME housebuilders, Homes England will be sharing stories from a range of developers that have successfully accessed this funding over the next six months.

## CASE STUDY: WINDYRIDGE

Windyridge Property Investments, which is based in the North West and the Midlands. As a first-time developer, the firm experienced numerous funding barriers before receiving support from the Levelling Up Home Building Fund in March 2022. With a £1.4m development loan, Windyridge was able to deliver its first housing scheme, Sienna Way, in West Bromwich. Completed in July 2023, Sienna Way meets the latest energy efficiency standards & provides a high-



quality living environment for first time buyers, key workers and young families.

Jatinder Singh Gakhal, managing director of Windyridge Property Investments commented: “As a new SME housing developer, we found securing development funding particularly challenging given the macro-economic factors affecting the construction industry. However, thanks to the team at Homes England, who provided exceptional support and guidance throughout the application process, we swiftly secured a development loan to fully fund our scheme. We look forward to delivering our first sustainable housing development to meet the needs of the local community in the Black Country and strongly recommend SMEs consider Homes England funding to help unlock their future development sites.”

## CASE STUDY: V & A HOMES

V & A homes is a family-run SME developer based in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. Waterside, a nine home scheme overlooking the river Nidd, was their second Homes England-supported development. The brownfield site, a former abattoir, is located on a steep waterside location which required complex groundworks to complete the build. Homes England worked closely with the team at all stages to provide both financial and specialist support. Following the success of Waterside, V & A homes are now working on their next scheme which will deliver 60 new homes in Sharow near Ripon.

Victoria Denman, managing director of V & A Homes said: “We first worked with Homes England after agreeing a land deal

to bring our first development to market. From the outset I found the experience of working with the team extremely supportive. I was guided with care and consideration through the process and given reassurance at all stages. We are now working on a scheme which will deliver 60 homes – our biggest project to date. We wouldn’t have grown as we have without the great partnership we have developed with the agency.”

## CASE STUDY: KINGSWOOD HOMES

Kingswood Homes, a mid-sized developer operating in the North West and South West of England, approached Homes England for support after struggling to build a pipeline of sites due to funding constraints. The phased nature of house building projects often means that sites become self-funding after around two thirds of the project have completed, as the builder can use the resulting sales income to repay the debt and meet ongoing construction costs. However, this means it is difficult for smaller builders to invest funds in their next project until the last house on a site has been sold.

Homes England provided development finance funding on four Kingswood residential schemes before developing an innovative new multi-site loan facility, which allows cash that would normally be used to repay debt, to instead be used to fund future costs, including site acquisitions.

With Homes England support Kingswood has grown from 36 homes per year in 2016 to 130 homes per annum and it is anticipated that with continued support to Kingswood, it will remain on track to meet the annual 200 homes target within the next three to four years.

Paul Jones, managing director of Kingswood said: “Kingswood has proven that with appropriate financial support, small housebuilders can grow into medium sized businesses and play a role in helping to address the sustainable quality housing requirements set by Government. Homes England has been brilliant in understanding the financial support that we needed in order to deliver that growth and enable Kingswood to potentially access corporate finance in future years.”

To find out more please contact one of Homes England’s regional specialists by calling 0300 1234 500, emailing them at [fundingenquiries@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:fundingenquiries@homesengland.gov.uk) or visiting [www.gov.uk/homes-england](http://www.gov.uk/homes-england).



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# A timber Phoenix set to rise in Lewes

One year after proposals were announced for the transformation of a 7.9-hectare brownfield site into the UK's most sustainable neighbourhood, the Phoenix development has been granted planning permission, taking this "visionary project" in Lewes a step closer to reality.

Designed to prioritise people over cars, the Phoenix will be a walkable, multi-use development on a former industrial site in the South Downs National Park. The mixed-income, multi-tenure development by developer Human Nature will provide 685 homes (30% affordable, made up of 154 homes at local housing allowance levels and the remainder as First Homes), creating "a place to start out in life and a place to stay," said the developer.

When complete, it's believed that the scheme will be the UK's largest timber-built neighbourhood, and "a blueprint for sustainable placemaking and social impact that can be deployed at scale," the developer added.

Human Nature positions itself as a "campaigning development company that designs, builds and manages intrinsically sustainable places which respond to the crises in climate, nature and health. Based itself in Lewes, the company, which was founded by former Greenpeace directors Michael Manolson and Jonathan Smales, promotes "exponential sustainability," which they define as "making it easy and enjoyable for people to live sustainably and well."

Human Nature is collaborating with leading UK architects, landscape designers and engineers plus local businesses and foundations to create "breakthrough models in sustainable placemaking, prioritising social value and impact." The Phoenix was masterplanned by Human Nature's in-house design team, alongside 'regenerative design agency' Periscope, and Kathryn Firth, who is director of masterplanning and urban design at Arup.



## CREATING A 'TEMPLATE FOR THE TOWNS OF TOMORROW'

An emphasis on "building connections and enabling interaction in shared spaces and facilities" runs through the design of the Phoenix. In addition to 685 highly energy efficient homes powered by renewable energy, the new neighbourhood includes public squares and gardens, dedicated community buildings (including a low-cost canteen) and a site-length river walk.

A 'co-mobility hub' will incorporate electric-car share, car hire and car club, electric bike service and a shuttle-bus facility – enabling a shift away from reliance on private vehicle ownership and creating safe streets for walking, cycling and wheeling.

In Parcel 1, the first homes designed in detail (by Ash Sakula Architects) are interwoven with play areas, communal garden plots and a shared cycle store intended to facilitate interaction and promote a culture of shared living. Designed in collaboration with Periscope, a central courtyard gives residents a place to "sit, pause, talk and play," and incorporates a rain garden providing protection against flooding – similar features will be found across the site.

In the wider plan, "climate-progressive innovations" include a data-driven renewable energy system set to enable 10 to 20% reductions in residents' energy bills (part of Human Nature's goal of 'radical affordability'), onsite recycling, waste-management and composting facilities, and an urban-farming and community-gardening strategy.

The Phoenix takes a holistic approach to sustainability. As well as considering operational carbon (emissions from heat and power) and embodied carbon (emissions from materials and

construction), the project has been designed based on its "whole-place carbon footprint," which includes emissions caused by transport and human behaviour on the site up to the year 2100.

Circular-economy principles are embedded into plans for design and operation. The Phoenix's buildings will be constructed from engineered timber including CLT (cross-laminated timber), with prefabricated cassettes made from local timber and biomaterials such as hemp – with local apprenticeships trained onsite in modern methods of construction, "one of the ways the project will maximise social impact," said Human Nature.

Where possible, existing materials from the site's industrial past – including cladding, steel trusses, bricks and buttresses – will be salvaged, and repurposed or "reconstituted."

## COLLABORATION, CONNECTION & COMMUNITY

The Phoenix team have worked closely with thousands of local residents, three dedicated community working groups and more than 60 businesses and stakeholder organisations to evolve the project in response to community needs.

Since the initial planning application was submitted in early 2023, there have been three rounds of consultation, resulting in a number of refinements to the initial plan including the relocation of the proposed neighbourhood health centre to a more accessible site in a future phase.

At the planning committee in February, members voted for a resolution to grant planning permission, subject to section 106 agreements and resolution of any outstanding issues with National Highways.





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# EDAROTH signs contract to deliver sustainable, affordable scheme for Bristol City Council



Sustainable housing developer EDAROTH, (Everyone Deserves a Roof Over Their Head, a wholly-owned subsidiary of AtkinsRéalis) has signed a development agreement with Bristol City Council to design and deliver 29 affordable homes – based on a new model created as part of Bristol's involvement in the UN Climate Smart Cities challenge.

The new homes will be a mix of 13 houses and 16 apartments and will be constructed using offsite manufacturing methods to create low energy-use, net zero homes – which will “provide additional capacity for the housing market and directly tackle the housing crisis,” said EDAROTH.

Subject to planning approvals, the homes will be developed at six sites across Bristol on under-utilised land owned by the city council, including brownfield sites.

Central to the development agreement are the sustainable construction methods used by EDAROTH including:

- The majority of the building parts are manufactured in a UK factory before being transported and assembled onsite.
- The carbon impact of the development process is reduced and also ensures the homes will be delivered more quickly

compared with traditional methods of construction.

- There is minimal disruption to residents living near the development sites as a result.
- The new homes will be built to EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) A+, the highest efficiency rating possible to keep energy usage and carbon emissions low.

The agreement is based on an award-winning approach developed by the city council, and the One City team, with partners including the Housing Festival, AtkinsRéalis and EDAROTH as one of four winning projects in the UN Habitat Climate Smart Cities Challenge in 2022.

Part of the challenge involved the creation of a demonstrator scheme that “could prove how aggregating small sites for development, and overcoming systemic barriers, could unlock previously unviable sites to deliver truly affordable social housing,” commented the developer.

The new approach identifies small parcels of land for development such as brownfield or under-used garage sites, within existing residential areas, which is more effective in creating social value and cohesion as it enables those existing communities to thrive.

## Crest Nicholson launches 258-unit Suffolk development



Local housebuilder Crest Nicholson has launched its new Aspen Grange development in Stowmarket, Suffolk. The “highly anticipated” development will provide a mix of 258 new homes, offering a “range of options for first time buyers, second-steppers, up-sizers and downsizers alike,” said Crest.

Situated within walking distance of Stowmarket, Aspen Grange comprises two to five-bedroom properties which offer the “very best of semi-rural living,” said the firm. With a focus on sustainability throughout, Aspen Grange will offer electric vehicle charging and solar PV panels on all plots.

With the ultimate aim of creating a ‘Garden Village’ within Aspen Grange, the development will feature wildflower planting and ecological enhancements, along with offering an open play area for young children. Aspen Grange will also have both footpaths and cycle routes that connect the development to the wider area, providing easy and safe access to the local facilities within Stowmarket.

Karen Coulson, sales and marketing director at Crest Nicholson Eastern, commented: “We’re excited to welcome the local community to our new Aspen Grange development. As well as a variety of high quality, energy efficient new homes, there are exciting sustainable features throughout and fantastic links to the wider location and amenities.”





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# Barratt Redrow merger is response to challenging market

Barratt Developments plc has acquired Redrow plc for £2.5bn to create a new firm – Barratt Redrow – following a series of “challenges faced by both companies in the housing market,” including drops in completions and revenue during the latter part of 2023.

The new firm is targeted to construct approximately 23,000 homes per year, with an associated turnover of £7bn. The deal represents a “combined market value” of £7.2bn and received “unanimous support from both companies’ boards and key stakeholders,” reportedly including Redrow’s founder, Steve Morgan, who holds a 16% stake.

Shareholders will vote on the deal in mid-May, with regulatory approval also required for it to conclude. Completion of the deal is expected in late 2024. The combined housebuilder will face continued challenges, particularly related to pressures on house prices experienced over the past year driven by the cost of living crisis and higher interest rates.

Highlighting the strategic benefits of the merger, Barratt stressed the complementary offerings of the two firms in its half-year results statement. Barratt reported a 28% decline in new home completions in the third and fourth quarters of 2023 compared to the previous year. However, CEO David Thomas remained optimistic, citing early signs of improvement in reservation rates and buyer sentiment since January, driven by expectations of lower interest rates and more competitive mortgage rates.

David Thomas commented on the recent merger announcement: “This is an exciting opportunity to bring together two highly complementary companies to create an exceptional homebuilder in terms of quality, service and sustainability, able to build more of the high-quality homes this country needs.”

Matthew Pratt, CEO of Redrow plc, enthused about the merger against the challenging backdrop: “As with Barratt, Redrow’s 50-year success story is based on its people, products and supply chain

partners. Together, we’ll be in a much better position to offer a broader range of high-quality and energy efficient homes to customers.”

## Affordable 96-unit urban Passivhaus development in Salford nears completion

Construction of the largest Passivhaus affordable housing scheme in the north west is nearing completion.

The finishing touches are now being made at Greenhaus – a highly sustainable development of 96 homes, which is being built on Chapel Street in Salford, with the first residents expected to start moving in this spring.

The development is being delivered by The English Cities Fund (ECF) – a joint venture between nationwide placemaker, Muse, Legal & General and Homes England – alongside Salford housing association Salix Homes, and supported by Salford City Council.

In February, delegates from the Northern Housing Consortium (NHC)

paid a visit to Greenhaus, including leaders from housing associations across the north, to find out more about how sustainable and affordable homes can be delivered at scale.

The nine-storey development has been built to Passivhaus Classic certified standard, which is the leading low-energy design standard. The sustainable features at Greenhaus include triple glazed windows, the latest insulation technology, improved ventilation and airtightness, air source heat pumps and publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points.

The one and two-bedroom homes will be available in a mix of tenures including social rent, affordable rent and rent-to-buy.

Passivhaus homes offer a range of health benefits for residents. The airtightness, thermal comfort and improved ventilation help protect against airborne pollutants, reduce the risk of illness associated with living in cold homes, and minimise the risk of damp, mould and condensation.

Greenhaus is part of ECF’s £1bn, 50-acre Salford Central transformation being delivered in partnership with Salford City Council, and will take the overall percentage of affordable homes delivered by ECF to 25% across the Chapel Street area of the masterplan.

The homes are being built by lead contractor Eric Wright Construction and were designed by architect Buttress.

Salix Homes secured funding from NatWest, along with grants from Homes England and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to help fund the multi-million-pound scheme.







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# Bargate Homes and VIVID secure planning permission

Hampshire-based Bargate Homes and parent-company VIVID have secured planning permission from Havant Borough Council for 41 new homes in the spectacular grounds of Southleigh Park, a former stately home and parkland in Havant, Hampshire.

Located to the north-west of Emsworth, the 7.8-acre site already benefits from planning permission for the conversion of the original Grade II-listed house, and associated listed buildings, into 20 new homes. The approved final scheme offers 61 homes in total, consisting of 41 new-build homes and 20 conversion homes.

The restoration and conversion works to the listed buildings will be facilitated by the new-build development, which has been carefully designed to ensure a harmonious relationship.

The proposals will see the retention

of the majority of the existing trees onsite, alongside significant new planting, to allow residents and the wider community to enjoy a traditional parkland setting. Much of the site will comprise publicly accessible open space, including a formal lawn area and informal walking routes.

The new homes will range in size from one to four bedrooms, all with EV charging points as standard. The development will have three key character areas, with a variety of building types, consisting of Georgian villas and cottage-style homes, alongside the historic core. Resident and visitor parking spaces will be provided in accordance with local policy, with a range of driveways, on-plot garages, car barns, on-street bays and parking courts.

Mark White, managing director of Bargate Homes, said: "We are thrilled to receive planning permission for this uniquely exciting development within the grounds of Southleigh Park. We've spent years carefully adjusting the design to ensure mature trees are retained and the new homes are sympathetic with the heritage buildings, to both preserve and enhance the historical core of the site.

"This will be an outstanding development, not only for the new residents, but also for the established local community. Receiving unanimous approval from Havant Borough Council's planning committee is another positive step for Bargate Homes to consistently deliver hundreds of new energy-efficient homes per year within Hampshire and the surrounding counties."

# Hazel Adamek appointed as NHBC's East of England director

NHBC has appointed Hazel Adamek as regional director to lead customer relations with housebuilders in the East of England.

Hazel, who has worked at NHBC for 18 years, has extensive technical knowledge and customer relationship management expertise, with previous roles in claims, inspection, training and construction quality services.

Commenting on her appointment, Hazel said: "I am looking forward to bringing the knowledge and insight I have gained in 18 years at NHBC to my new role as regional director. I will continue to strengthen and build on the existing relationships I have with our builder customers in the East and support them in continuing to raise standards in house building."

Paul Edwards, NHBC senior regional director added: "I'm delighted to welcome Hazel to the regional directors' team to lead customer relations in the East. She brings a wealth of experience, a high level of commercial acumen, great depth of thinking and extensive build quality knowledge to the role, all of which will help NHBC achieve its purpose in the region."

Hazel began her new role at NHBC in February 2024.







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# Avant Homes to deliver first mixed use scheme in north west England

Avant Homes has secured its first mixed-use development site in the north west after exchanging contracts on 20-acres of land in Great Eccleston. Subject to planning, Avant Homes will build 115 energy efficient homes which will have a gross development value of £32m.

Called Oakview Quarter, the development will also benefit from a new primary school, medical centre and community centre as well as commercial and retail space.

Work on site is anticipated to start in April and the development will comprise a mix of two, three, four and five-bedroom homes.

Avant Homes acquired the site from Duchy Homes for an undisclosed sum with the benefit of a reserved matters planning permission and intends to submit a plot substitution application for its house types in March.

Operating from its North West office in Eccles, Salford, the company is considering further development opportunities within Greater Manchester, Staffordshire, Cheshire, Merseyside



and Lancashire.

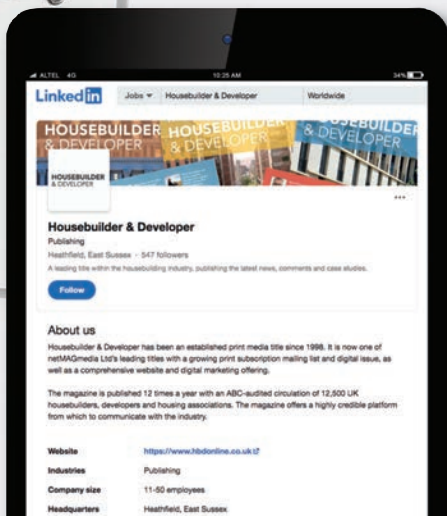
Avant Homes regional chairman, Mark Cook, said: "The North West presents us with a great deal of opportunity to further implement our multi-tenure expansion strategy, so we are very pleased to have secured our first site in the region. Great

Eccleston is an ideal location for us to deliver our inaugural North West mixed-use development. Oakview Quarter will allow us to showcase our range of attractive quality new homes, at a variety of price points, in an area that our customers want to live in."

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## Exploring Current Thinking On MMC



Housebuilding in the UK is suffering multiple crises at present, from rising costs, to low supply and a lack of skilled tradesmen. While not a new technology, modular housing is seeing a resurgence in this country, and many argue that it has the potential to address all these issues. With 40 per cent of housebuilders still having never used offsite methods, however, it appears the technology is not being utilised to its full potential. **Housebuilder & Developer's** research aims

to find out why this is, what housebuilders and developers currently think of the differing forms of offsite building, and what are its main benefits and barriers. To request your free copy of the white paper, visit the link below.

<https://bit.ly/3YWgwDi>

## Housebuilder & Developer website



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

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## THE INDUSTRY ADVOCATE

## LOOKING INTO 2024

Brian Berry, CEO of the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), looks at some of the major issues the industry is already confronting and tackling in 2024.

Brian Berry

**A**s we start to move through 2024, we can already start to see some of the main hurdles that the industry will have to grapple with. We've seen that interest rates may not be on the decline as early as we had hoped, with inflation still rearing its head. Therefore, the market remains uncertain, with the green shoots of recovery held below the surface for now.

Towards the end of last year, the FMB launched its annual House Builders' Survey, which takes a comprehensive look at the issues small, local house builders face. In this article I'll look through some of the main areas which are holding back housing delivery.

**PLANNING – THE PERENNIAL ISSUE**

When we asked our members to list the biggest barriers facing the delivery of new homes for them, the top issue was planning. This will come as little surprise to those in the wider construction industry, as it holds back far more than just new housing.

While there are technical changes to the system that need addressing, a lot of the remedies are simple fixes. Communication with local authorities is rated very poorly by small builders, very often we hear that a 30-minute conversation would have saved weeks, if not months of planning delays. Key to solving the issue of poor communication will be to resolve the lack of resources within these departments. Planning departments are stretched and there are too few planning officers joining the industry, and those that are can be lured away by private sector wages.

Then there is the cost of the system, which for smaller developers is a key burden owing to their reliance on a steady cash flow. Delays, unsurprisingly, add to cost, which given the poor state of communication are all too commonplace. Our members are also clear that complexity is a major cause of extra cost, often with expensive consultants required to solve a multitude of issues.

And last but not least, information requirements requested by planning teams; vast quantities of paperwork, that we're told are often unnecessary, which really adds to a small business' administrative burdens.

**ECONOMIC WOES HARMING DELIVERY**

In the last few years, the wider economy has been hurting delivery from smaller house builders. This was particularly clear in the latter stages of last year, with the lack of mortgage products stifling the delivery of new homes from SME house builders. It became such an issue that it was the second most significant barrier holding back new homes.

This isn't surprising given that a number of SMEs work as contractors for house building and will therefore be heavily reliant on consumer demand to generate work and their ability to pay for housing. This issue seems to be a snapshot of the economic problems of the last year or so, the origin of which can be pinpointed to the now infamous budget under the former Prime Minister Liz Truss.

**SMALL SITES – WHERE ARE THEY?**

A large group of our members reported that the number of small sites is decreasing and to make matters worse, many reported that obtaining planning permission for small sites is not getting any easier. Those reporting that small sites are being taken seriously by local authorities was also very low.

The data we've compiled doesn't paint a positive picture for small, local house builders to obtain small sites particularly as they face two sets of hurdles, first, to find the land they need and then, obtaining the planning permission needed for it. While the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been updated, once again, to strengthen the provisions on small sites, unless it's truly enforced, I fear not much will change.

**THE ROAD AHEAD**

So, plenty of hurdles, but what about solutions? Quite rightly, housing has catapulted up the political agenda. With the General Election on the horizon, let's see if the politicians take the bull by the horns and start articulating sensible answers to the nation's housing crisis. I know the industry is ready and willing to help.

A LARGE GROUP OF OUR MEMBERS REPORTED THAT THE NUMBER OF SMALL SITES IS DECREASING





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Louise Walters of Designer Contracts

# THE RENTAL REMEDY

The surge in the Buy to Rent (BTR) sector, in the context of rising numbers of unsold housing stock, offers new opportunities to not only investors, but the supply chain too. Louise Walters, commercial director at flooring contractor Designer Contracts, explains further.



In recent years, England has witnessed a notable increase in the number of unsold housing 'stock plots.' A phenomenon indicative of various economic, societal, and housing market factors, it is one which has seen many developers change tack. Instead of regarding unsold houses as an 'inventory surplus,' they are now marketing them as 'buy to let opportunities.'

To understand this strategic shift, it's worth looking first at the background to this rapidly evolving market.

Economic uncertainties stemming from global events such as the Covid-19 pandemic have left potential buyers cautious. Job security concerns, the increased cost of living and fear of another economic downturn have led many to postpone their plans to purchase homes.

Rising property prices and higher mortgage costs have played a part, resulting in a decline in demand, particularly among first-time buyers. In certain areas, developers are seeing excess stock that is taking longer to sell.

All this, plus an increasingly mobile workforce has led more people to opt for renting rather than buying homes. And builders have been quick to recognise that any unsold, or so called 'stock plots' represent a new opportunity for the BTR market.

Figures from the British Property Federation (BPF) say the number of completed BTR homes increased by 13% in 2022 to 88,100 units – despite market conditions slowing development activity. The result is more and more new builds being marketed directly at investors whose primary aim is to generate

rental income. And in order to do so quickly and efficiently, they require turnkey solutions to support their purchase.

As one of the more agile suppliers to the new build sector, offering not just flooring solutions but furniture and lighting packs and made-to-measure blinds and curtains, this evolving market is another opportunity for suppliers like ourselves to further develop partnerships with the new build sector.

More adept, customer-oriented businesses recognise that a one-stop-shop offer is a win-win solution for the developer who simply wants to sell its inventory – and the investor who wants a fuss-free financial transaction.

Also important to servicing this emerging buyer sector is having depth and breadth of immediately available stock. The BTR market is both swift and demanding: property investors need to conclude both the sale and interior fit out in rapid order so they can make the earliest possible return on their investment.

In short, it is in the interests of us all to work together to tackle the evolving dynamics of the property market so that developers, suppliers and investors all continue to thrive. Developers have already recognised that unsold houses can be marketed differently; savvy suppliers are spotting the opportunity for one-stop-shop solutions; and investors themselves are seizing the chance to add to their portfolio where easy picking packages are available.

It's a complex landscape, but one that we can undoubtedly navigate together, for everyone's benefit.

FIGURES FROM  
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Patrick Mooney

## THE SOCIAL NETWORK

# MOMENTUM GROWS FOR BUILDING ON THE GREEN BELT

Patrick Mooney, housing consultant and news editor of Housing, Management & Maintenance magazine, says there is a growing possibility we could build on Green Belts.



IN ENGLAND  
THERE ARE  
14 AREAS  
OF GREEN  
BELT – WHICH  
ACCOUNTS FOR  
AROUND 13%  
OF THE TOTAL  
LAND AREA

**I**n this General Election year it is inevitable that the nationwide shortage of housing will be one of the main topics fought over by the political parties, and yet there is a ready-made solution which most politicians shy away from even talking about.

Almost everyone agrees that we are not building enough homes for the population's needs, with a wide consensus that we should be building at least 300,000 new homes a year. Instead of which, we built around 200,000 homes last year (including conversions) and we have averaged just over 150,000 new homes annually in the past decade.

There are many contributory factors for this – a lack of materials and labour, the high cost of finance (including mortgages), planning

issues, land banking by developers, and so on, but probably the single biggest problem is the shortage of suitable land for building housing on. This is reflected in the price of residential land, which normally accounts for around 70% of the cost of new houses.

It is accepted that land is a finite resource and it needs careful management. The sight of flooded homes has shown us the foolishness of building on floodplains, particularly when our climate appears to be going through some pretty wild changes, including the increasing regularity of excessive bouts of heavy rainfall.

So surely it is time for us to rethink our approach to the Green Belts which surround many of our conurbations, and which are designed to prevent urban sprawl and





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## THERE ARE GLIMMERS THAT THE ANTI-DEVELOPMENT MOOD WITHIN GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE ABOUT TO CHANGE



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### RIPE FOR DEVELOPMENT, OR PRESERVED FOREVER?

In England there are 14 areas of Green Belt, which accounts for approximately 13% of the total land area. It amounts to 1.6 million hectares (almost a third of this is around the capital), and it does indeed provide valuable protections for farmland, forestry and nature reserves.

But it also includes a lot of unattractive scrub, brownfield sites (such as redundant farm buildings), and low grade agricultural land, as well as quarries and disused farms.

Is it right that such a valuable resource should be preserved in aspic and never considered for any housing development, even where there is local support for this?

Meanwhile there is limited appetite for the building of new towns (despite some support from Labour leader Keir Starmer), the modular building sector has suffered a series of existential setbacks and the conversion of former office buildings and retail sites is also proving to be problematic, not least because of the enormous cost of retrofitting them and providing them with modern facilities and infrastructure.

But we also have brownfield sites all across England that have been identified for redevelopment and which collectively could provide sufficient land for 1.2 million homes (about half of this already has planning permission) and which are largely lying dormant.

The countryside charity CPRE has analysed hundreds of brownfield land registers, looking at urban sites that have

previously been built on. The amount of land available for new housing covered 27,342 hectares, which represents just 1.7% of the combined Green Belt land.

### A BALANCED APPROACH

Surely the answer to our housing crisis lies in taking a balanced approach – to undertake both widespread development of brownfield sites, and complement this with limited development of the Green Belt. Developers could be offered incentives to invest in brownfield sites, which often needs a lot of expensive cleaning up and remediation work, while local housing needs should prevail over NIMBYism in the countryside.

A strong case exists for including Green Belts in the list of possible solutions to the housing crisis. Without this we are condemning hundreds of thousands of people, maybe even millions of our fellow residents, to lives without hope of ever attaining a secure and affordable home.

When the possibility of re-examining our approach to Green Belts is mentioned as part of a solution to our broken housing market, it is usually met with howls of indignation and accusations that a wicked minority of townies want to ‘concrete over’ the countryside. Indeed threats of rebellion among Conservative backbench MPs have been sufficient to cover several Prime Ministers and Secretaries of State from taking action.

However, there are glimmers that this anti-development mood within Government might be about to change following the appointment of Nicholas Boys Smith to run the Office for Place, within the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Its primary purpose is to help create beautiful, successful and enduring places that foster a sense of community, local pride and belonging. It has been tasked with helping draw up design codes for different areas that could speed up the planning process for millions of new homes by providing a fast track if builders stay in line with the codes.

Boys Smith has already been given the unofficial title of ‘building design tsar.’ Earlier in the New Year he gave media interviews in which he said that not all of the Green Belt – i.e. that “of low or no agricultural or amenity quality” – should be protected for ever.”

### BEAUTIFUL HOMES

Boys Smith is not advocating mass development, but instead a change of approach. “We have not built enough over the last five, 10, 15, 20 or 30 years. As a society, we have fallen out of love with the future and we have under both political parties failed to build enough homes.”

“Clearly we need to look at the quality of land within Green Belts and need to think about which of these should be preserved.” By implication, he is suggesting that lower quality land can and should be released for development.

Boys Smith also said he opposes more volume housebuilding that involves “chucking a cul-de-sac in a field.” He wants planning and design codes drafted with community and council involvement so the public can “require what they find beautiful and refuse what they find ugly.”

He may well receive valuable support from the Local Government Association, whose housing spokesperson, Councillor Darren Rodwell, said “People want their local area to have high-quality affordable homes built in the right places, supported by the right infrastructure, and councils stand ready to help the Government to tackle local housing challenges.”

The LGA’s position is that to help increase the speed of local plan-making and housing delivery, the Government should bring forward consultations on a revised National Planning Policy Framework and National Development Management Policies which will form the backbone of a new style of plan-making due in Autumn 2024.

All of which gives me some confidence that we could be moving towards a consensus which is capable of delivering much more housing, of a higher quality and built in a wider variety of spaces, with far greater public involvement in its design and location. This would be a notable achievement, but there is no time to lose and our politicians need to be open to adopting new policies which in the past they would have rejected.



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## PROJECT REPORT

# Building a later lifestyle



With increasing awareness of the need for good quality retirement developments, as our population ages, a new scheme in Buckinghamshire built by GRAHAM shows how to create communities which go way beyond simple places to live. Roseanne Field reports

**B**y 2040 it's estimated the UK population will swell by a further 5% to just over 70 million – and a quarter will be aged 65 or over. Despite this, the rate at which retirement developments are being built is lagging desperately behind.

In the 2022 Mayhew Review, it was estimated that if everyone lived in homes that were appropriately sized to their needs, 50,000 less starter homes would need to be built each year. Meanwhile, only 7,000 retirement units are currently being built – a figure that report author Professor Les Mayhew believes needs to be closer to 50,000 if

the UK is to meet the housing needs of the ageing population.

It's Mayhew's belief that against this backdrop, the housebuilding industry in general needs to place a much greater emphasis on building homes for 'later living buyers.' Not only will this benefit the older generation by providing them with suitable, comfortable homes, but it will in turn ease pressure on the care sector and free up suitable housing stock for younger families. In particular, the report highlights the need for integrated retirement communities (IRCs), providing communal facilities and onsite care services.





This scheme is the developer, Audley Villages', primary model, having completed 20 retirement villages in the UK to date. GRAHAM has recently completed Wycliffe Park, located in Horsleys Green, a hamlet in the Buckinghamshire countryside.

Wycliffe Park was funded by Royal London Asset Management and assisted by Salmon Property and constructed by GRAHAM. It's one of three Audley's villages that the contractor has worked on. "We were initially delivering three projects for Audley in tandem," says Pat O'Hare, GRAHAM's South England regional director, explaining that the contractor has already finished Audley Wycliffe Park and Audley Fairmile in Cobham, with Audley Scarcroft Park in West Yorkshire nearing completion. Audley are heavily involved throughout the process, from design through to completion, and are the operator of these retirement villages. The project was handed over to the client in phases, with the final handover completed in November 2023.

## AUDLEY'S "NUMBER ONE PRIORITY" IS RESIDENTS' WELLBEING

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### THE DEVELOPMENT

Wycliffe Park consists of 156 properties spread across five blocks on a 25 acre site. The apartments are a mixture of one and two bedrooms, and finished to a high standard. Owners have the option to upgrade certain fixtures and finishes, although a high quality German kitchen and quartz worktop, plus top of the range appliances, and high end sanitaryware are all included as standard. Non-slip porcelain floor tiles are specified in the kitchens, bathrooms and ensembles, and ceramic wall tiles in kitchens and bathrooms. Rooms within the apartments are spacious and corridors wide to ensure full accessibility.

High end apartment finishes aside, O'Hare asserts that Audley's "number one priority" is residents' wellbeing. At the centre of Wycliffe Park is the clubhouse, housing a number of facilities. "That's generally the hub of the village," says O'Hare.

The clubhouse includes an array of amenities – a health and wellbeing centre, home to a pool, sauna, steam





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room, relaxation area and fitness suite, a bistro and restaurant (with a private dining room), a bar, lounge, library, and a hobbies room. The five apartment blocks – which vary between three and four storeys – are grouped around the clubhouse. The grounds include hard and soft landscaping, providing residents access to the full 25 acres, and allotments to the rear of the site. There are internal walkways and lifts within the blocks, and most also feature external walkways and verandas enabling residents to walk right around their perimeter.

The site was previously occupied with the existing buildings demolished prior to construction. “There was an element of cut and fill,” O’Hare explains, meaning a certain amount of excavation. There was also nothing hugely out of the ordinary required from a drainage perspective, he adds, with only a few standard SuDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage) features required.

Planning was achieved through a very collaborative and practical relationship with the local authority throughout the project, ensuring all conditions were discharged successfully.

The semi-rural location near High Wycombe could have been a potential issue in terms of deliveries to site, O’Hare explains. “The further outside London the more difficult it is, but we’re lucky to have a really good, robust supply chain,” he says. “We had a really strong team.”

The scale of the project in itself presented some challenges to the team, requiring rigorous planning and management to ensure the desired quality was maintained across the development. “We were, and always are, diligent in how we manage our subcontractors, ensuring they work collaboratively to get the standard required and maintain this quality throughout the project” says O’Hare.

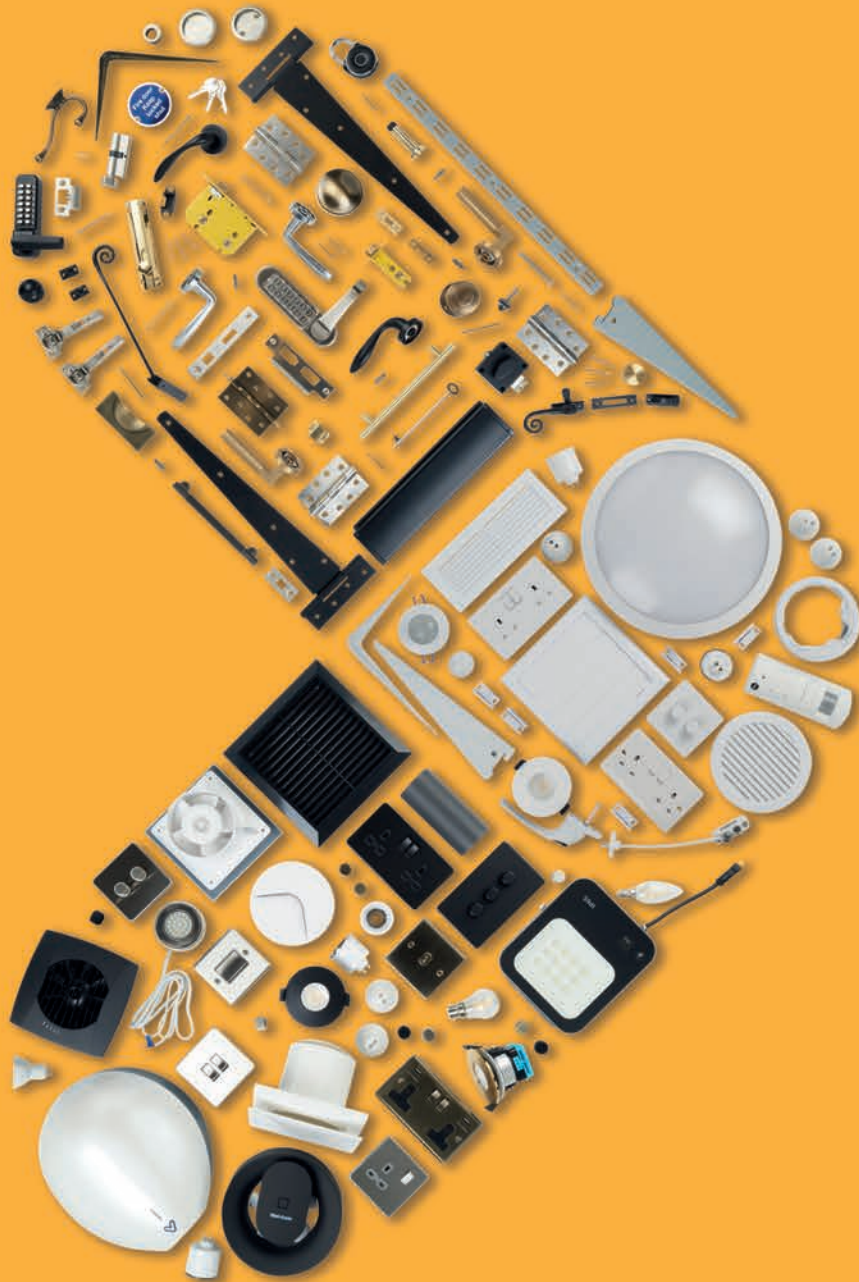
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#### MATERIALS & AESTHETIC

Audley tends to follow a similar design approach across their projects, centering on a traditional aesthetic. The buildings are finished with a mixture of brick facade and black non-combustible weatherboard cladding plus pitched clay tile roofs. "It's very traditional but really high quality from a retirement village point of view," O'Hare says. "The roof has a 60 degree pitch so it's almost like a chalet aesthetic."

The external walkways around the first floor feature ornate metal detailing, and balconies are finished with a black metal balustrade. Some of the taller blocks feature apartments within the roof structure, which have inset balconies also finished with a metal balustrade. Within the brick itself are some darker patterns which create further visual interest. Patio doors lead out from each apartment to either a balcony or on the ground floor or a veranda.

As with any retirement development,

safety and security was a top priority. The apartments are fitted with active fire and intruder alarm systems, all of which are connected to a central monitoring system. Each of the five blocks also features its own security system in order to access the building. The entire village is monitored via CCTV, with Audley staff on hand 24/7. Each apartment also features an emergency call system. "Although it's quite easy to use, it's high tech," says O'Hare.

Despite the potential benefits of modern methods of construction, O'Hare explains that as part of the aim of creating a traditional 'village' feel, they opted for more traditional construction methods. "Even though we're using modern building products, to get the aesthetic that's required we stick to a brick/block built structure with a timber truss, slate roof," he says. "It gives a more traditional aesthetic, as opposed to maybe a more stark, commercial-type finish."



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#### ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

As with most modern developments, sustainability formed an important driver for the project. The site is located within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so a delicate approach to the landscaping was crucial. “We implemented an empathetic landscape-led approach to the design,” O’Hare says. “Environmental considerations were prioritised at every phase, from design through to construction and operation.”

There were a lot of mature trees on the site and these were retained as much as possible – “It’s really good when you see the end product,” he says. The site features a lot of green space, with walkways and paths throughout to encourage residents to utilise the space and socialise. “It’s very much designed to create a community, with allotments to allow people to garden and maintain outdoor activities.”

#### SUSTAINABILITY

Wycliffe Park has achieved a BREEAM Very Good rating. The design measures that contributed to this partly stemmed from a focus on climate change adaptation. Both thermal comfort within the blocks and clubhouse, and the measures taken for minimising flood risk, were designed with an allowance for the possible impact of future climate change. Local air quality benefits were maximised with ‘no NOx’ systems specified, and low flow fittings were specified for water outlets resulting in a 25% reduction in water use against the BRE baseline.

Reducing carbon was a priority from the outset, so through careful planning the site was connected early on to the grid, and a renewable energy tariff procured. “Two temporary building supplies were installed which provided the site with 2.096 MW of 100% renewable electricity,” O’Hare explains.





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## THE HOUSEBUILDING INDUSTRY IN GENERAL NEEDS TO PLACE A MUCH GREATER EMPHASIS ON BUILDING HOMES FOR 'LAST-TIME BUYERS'

This was certified by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) and resulted in 405 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> being saved over the duration of the build.

GRAHAM also invested in using hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) on the project – a 100% biodegradable product that can offer a 90% reduction in net CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. In total, 52% of the fuel the contractor used onsite was HVO which resulted in eliminating 204 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. The project team also worked closely with a waste management contractor to ensure all non-hazardous construction waste generated throughout the project was diverted away from landfill.

### LIFESTYLE

Arguably one of the most crucial differentiators for Audley is the clubhouse and the benefits it offers residents. "It allows people to mingle with others within the community," explains O'Hare. "That is at the heart of everything that Audley does." As well as the facilities

themselves, various organised events and activities are scheduled such as arts and crafts sessions and fitness classes. The landscaping has also been finished in a way that encourages socialisation and external activity among the residents.

With some residents already moved in, the reaction has been very positive. "The client is extremely happy with the quality and what they've got," O'Hare says. Alongside the amenities, residents are also offered peace of mind with the various care and assistance packages available – whether regular or as and when required.

The overall 'package' offered by the development is about much more than just a place to live, and is something O'Hare believes is not only an aspiration, but crucial for such schemes. "It's the sort of thing everyone who works aspires to, to have a quality of life beyond your working life," he says. "The more people are able to enjoy their retirement this way, the better."



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## Beko Appliance Partners' parent company, Arçelik, secures inclusion in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index

**B**eko Appliance Partners, the specialist appliance solution provider to housebuilders, build-to-rent operators, developers and contractors, have announced that their parent company, Arçelik, have received the highest CSA score in their sector in the 2023 S&P Global Corporate Sustainability Assessment for the 5th consecutive year.

Arçelik is once again the highest scoring of the 46 companies assessed in the S&P Global Corporate Sustainability Assessment (CSA) in the DHP Household Durables Category, with a score of 86/100 earning the company a listing in the highly coveted Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI).

The CSA is an independent evaluation of some of the world's largest companies, assessing their sustainability performance and their environmental, social and governance (ESG) efforts. Performance in the CSA is then used to determine inclusion in the DJSI, that serves as a shortlist of the highest-scoring companies in the ESG criteria based on a number of global, regional and country benchmarks.

Beko Appliance Partners continue to take inspiration from their parent company's example while on their own sustainability journey. From specifying products with

higher energy-efficiency ratings, to working on improving efficiency across their local operations, the company are committed to reducing the carbon footprint for themselves and their partners whilst aspiring to encourage sustainable lifestyles.

While discussing Arçelik's consistent inclusion in the DJSI, CEO Hakan Bulgurlu said; "It is a privilege to have achieved the highest score on the DJSI for the fifth consecutive year – this recognition is a significant accolade for our business. Arçelik's efforts towards building a more sustainable future, not only for our company but also for our customers, are consistently evolving. Sustainability is

deeply ingrained in every aspect of Arçelik's value chain."

Arçelik is aiming to become a net-zero company by 2050, taking a more ambitious step to set long-term targets according to the Science Based Target Initiative (STBi). With an impressive ESG score and ongoing commitment to sustainability, Arçelik continues to set high standards and lead by example, inspiring other companies to prioritise environmental responsibility, social impact and good governance practices.

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## Knauf introduces plasterboard recycling scheme

**K**nauf UK and Ireland are pleased to announce their new partnership with Encore Environment to deliver an enhanced waste management service to reduce plasterboard waste. The landmark scheme looks to move towards a circular economy by taking waste plasterboard and reintroducing it to the local supply chain.

According to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), plasterboard can make up to a third of all waste from a fit out. And with plasterboard banned from landfill, the need to effectively manage this waste is critical.

Knauf isn't new to plasterboard recycling, having pioneered a recycling partnership directly next to their Sittingbourne factory. "The existing factory and recycling service is fantastic. However, with this partnership we're able to really tap into on site recycling and

ensure as much goes back into the supply chain as possible." Explains Jon Watts, National Client Development Manager UK & Ireland.

Contractors that use Knauf products and opt into the Take Back Scheme will be connected to local and vetted recycling companies via Encore's nationwide network. These dedicated skips will be sent to their site and, once filled, are collected and brought to specialised local centres. "This is critical, we don't want plasterboard being taken all over the country. It's broken down locally and then gets distributed back to plasterboard manufacturers" continues Jon.

The latter process is critical to creating the basis of a circular economy. "We already have something similar at Sittingbourne for local contractors. The Encore partnership opens it up nationally."

The scheme also provides contractors with valuable insights into their waste management, as Jon elaborates: "As an industry we are always trying to find ways to improve waste management. The new Knauf Take Back Scheme offers our customers in-depth reports into their waste output. This includes project specific carbon data and insights into waste hotspots to promote future waste reduction improvements. This data is available via an online portal to make access easy. Our new Take Back scheme is aimed at promoting the increased use of a circular economy and reducing carbon through the remanufacture of materials while also



providing social value."

While this data reporting process is standard for Encore, this added insight will prove invaluable to Knauf to help the business meet its sustainability goals. Thanks to their expertise in waste management, Knauf can effectively start tracking circularity and design out waste for future projects.

What sets Encore Environment apart from traditional waste management services is their dedication not just to waste reduction, but social value too as Stacey Bee, Key Account Manager at Encore explains. "First and foremost we're a social enterprise. That means our efforts aren't just on reducing the number of skips on site by designing out waste, but by supporting local communities via our social value initiatives ProjectDIVERT and Waste Wise Kids. From donations to home-grown initiatives, it all supports the social value contribution of a site, while contributing to a company's ESG and sustainability credentials."

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## Exciting times ahead for Reginox UK



**Reginox UK** is pleased to announce the appointment of Joe Arnold as Area Sales Manager for the South West region. Joe, who brings a wealth of experience and in-depth knowledge of the KBB industry, says he is ready to hit the ground running and is looking forward to introducing the acclaimed style and innovation of Reginox's wide-ranging array of sinks and taps to the B2B market

in his region. Dave Mayer, Commercial Director of Reginox UK, says: "I am delighted that Joe has agreed to join the Reginox team and we are excited about the potential his appointment creates for us as we look forward to making 2024 another successful year for the business."

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## Housebuilder & Developer website



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

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

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



## Titon wins Domestic Ventilation Product of the Year Award

**Titon** are thrilled to announce that their newest MVHR unit, the HRV4.25 Q Plus, has won the Domestic Ventilation Product of the Year category at the Energy Saving Awards 2023. The Energy Saving Awards celebrate the very best professionals, products and projects across the Plumbing, HVAC and Energy Management sectors. The awards were created to acknowledge the important work that has been achieved by manufacturers, installers, contractors, suppliers and organisations to reduce carbon emissions and become more energy efficient. The HRV4.25 MVHR unit is part of Titon's new HRV4 Q Plus Range and boasts cutting-edge technology and exceptional energy efficiency capabilities, making it an industry leader in sustainable ventilation solutions. One of the standout features of the HRV4 Q Plus Range is its highly efficient heat exchanger, achieving up to 91% heat recovery. This outstanding recovery not only ensures superior ventilation but also aids in reducing energy consumption and associated costs. The new HRV4 Q Plus Range measures 600 mm (w) x 602 mm (h) x 477 mm (d), providing a compact and space-saving design for ease of installation in various building layouts and offers the convenience of Left or Right Hand on-site configuration, allowing for adaptable placement according to specific requirements.

0800 970 4190 [titon.com/biglittlemvhr](http://titon.com/biglittlemvhr)

## Glidevale Protect covers all solar roofing needs with 15 year product warranty

**G**lidevale Protect has unveiled a new 15 year product warranty on its pitched roofing underlays and ventilation products when used as a complete system where integrated in-roof photovoltaic (PV) panels are installed, offering quality assurance across its range.

The warranty extends to Glidevale Protect's full range of vapour permeable and impermeable pitched roof underlays plus its high and low level ventilation products. Under the warranty, Glidevale Protect will replace any products that are verified to be defective on a like for like or nearest equivalent basis for up to a period of 15 years, offering added reassurance to the industry.

Matt Neary from Glidevale Protect commented: "Roof designs can be complex, for example with the increasing popularity of integrated in-roof solar PV panels. It's imperative that the correct underlay and ventilation strategy is implemented, to minimise the risk of harmful condensation forming and therefore the potential of rotting roof timbers. Our technical team is able to offer guidance on a full roof ventilation strategy to suit the specific parameters of each project, drawing on our range of high quality products, which are made here in the UK. Our new 15 year product warranty provides the assurance that our roofing



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materials are manufactured to the highest quality and are designed to last the lifetime of the roof, provided they are correctly installed in accordance with our fixing instructions."

Glidevale Protect's complete range of roofing underlays covered under the 15 year warranty includes their latest product, Protect A1 Solar, a heavy duty type HR impermeable roofing underlay designed to reduce condensation forming on the

underside of integrated in-roof solar PV panels.

Terms and conditions apply. For more information about the 15 year product warranty and the company's range of roofing and ventilation products, visit [Glidevale Protect](http://Glidevale Protect). Follow [Glidevale Protect](https://www.linkedin.com/company/glidevale-protect) on LinkedIn.

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# ARE WE READY FOR THE FUTURE HOMES STANDARD?

The task of decarbonising our new building stock cannot be underestimated. REHAU UK's Martin Hitchin says a new industry survey and white paper shows that construction needs to step up to achieve compliance with the Future Homes Standard when it's implemented in 2025.

Ever since its announcement in 2019, the Future Homes Standard (FHS) has been regarded as a potentially transformational force within the Building Regulations landscape. The amendments it proposes concerning property ventilation and energy efficiency – covering Part F and Part L of The Building Regulations respectively – have sparked ongoing and vital discussions within the housebuilding sector.

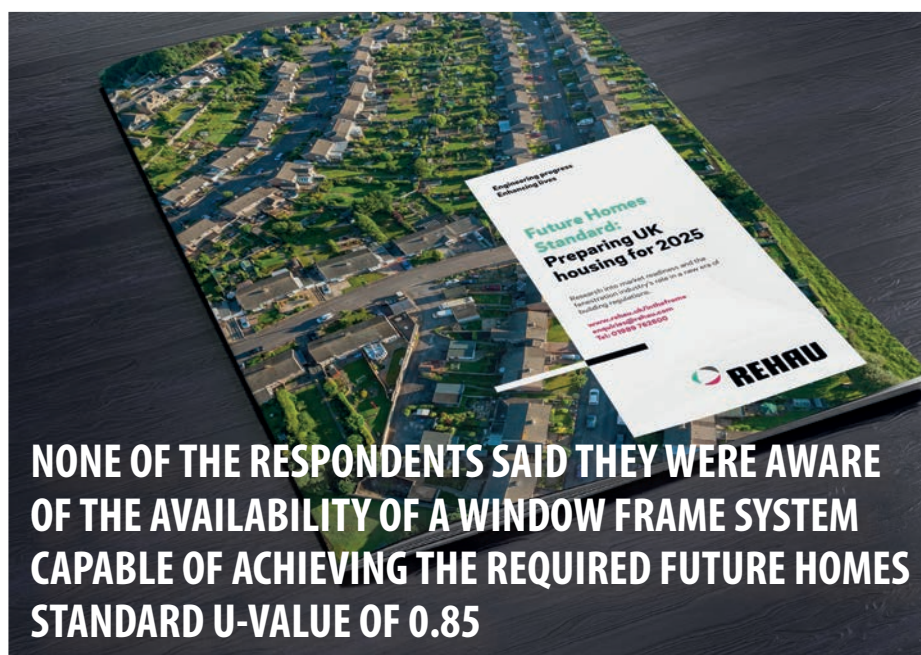
Industry debate has further intensified following the introduction of substantial adjustments to these regulations in 2022, and the publication of a further consultation document on the standard in December 2023. This most recent update contains potential changes that will affect practices across the whole construction industry, as well as its progress to meeting important net zero targets by 2050.

Such new measures represent a sea-change for housebuilders and developers, and all parties involved in the housing construction and retrofitting must adapt their practices ahead of the FHS' introduction in January 2025.

## NEW BUILDS & RETROFITS

Undoubtedly, this will add a further layer of scrutiny on a sector under pressure to deliver the Government target of 300,000 new properties built annually by the mid-2020s. Yet it cannot be denied that the objectives behind the FHS are commendable. Its primary goal of ensuring all new homes emit 75-80% less carbon than previous benchmarks is a key part of the housing sector's efforts to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

But a focus on new-builds alone risks missing the woods for the trees. Indeed, it must be noted that most housing stock in England alone was built before 1919, and 80% of current buildings will still be in use by 2050. Any decarbonisation plans that do not account for these



properties cannot truly be regarded as fit-for-purpose. Bringing these existing homes into the picture, however, will undoubtedly pose further challenges for developers carrying out retrofit works.

## REPORTING ON A CONCERNING LACK OF CLARITY IN THE INDUSTRY

Given the scale of the task in hand, close collaboration will be required across the supply chain to build or upgrade new and existing properties to meet decarbonisation targets. But as the countdown to 2025 continues, it is disconcerting to see that over two-thirds of the sector appear unprepared for the imminent changes mandated in the FHS. This concerning statistic is set out in the 'Future Homes Standard: Preparing UK Housing for 2025,' the latest market readiness report from polymer solutions provider REHAU.

Taken from a survey of 200 decision-makers spanning various sectors within

the housing industry and conducted by our independent research partner Censuswide, a concerning 79% of respondents expressed that meeting the current FHS timeline would be 'somewhat challenging' or 'very challenging.' While these findings are valuable for establishing sector preparedness, the continued scrutiny the housebuilding sector faces around property shortages may further magnify any concurrent issues in housing construction, including this.

Adapting to meet FHS standards is therefore imperative for sector stakeholders, necessitating awareness of all components that comprise housing design, and their roles in meeting the upcoming regulations. Yet despite this need for awareness, other findings from REHAU's latest white paper demonstrate further challenges. Notably, none of the respondents said they were aware of the availability of a window frame system



capable of achieving the required FHS U-value of 0.85 W/M<sup>2</sup>K, with 65% saying 'no' when asked and 35% stating they were uncertain.

#### WORKING BETTER WITH THE SUPPLY CHAIN STAKEHOLDERS

In response to these challenges, housebuilders and developers must recognise the evolving sector landscape and proactively engage with experts in their supply chain to identify best practices and solutions ahead of 2025. These collaborative efforts extend beyond the direct stakeholders involved in new build and retrofit projects to a wider range of professionals.

Architects, specifiers, and key component suppliers play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between existing housing stock and FHS compliance. Leveraging third-party expertise during the design stage also allows for thorough and precise specification practices. In turn, this can instil greater confidence that required thermal performance levels can be met before site works commence.

But to make this consultative and collaborative approach a reality, housing sector stakeholders must conduct thorough research into their current supply chain. As a non-negotiable baseline requirement, housebuilders

and developers should assess whether organisations within it can be relied upon for high-quality components. This is especially the case when it comes to window specification, where compliant, high-performance frames may stand to have an outsized effect on whether newbuild or retrofit projects can meet the FHS's stricter thermal requirements.

The stringent criteria for compliant products in housing construction require a proactive approach means this is a must if potential pitfalls are to be avoided. For instance, certain window systems that claim 'high performance' may not necessarily align with the FHS due to external factors such as inadequate building structure surveys, or the removal of existing frames. Engaging experts throughout the building and upgrading process can help identify and address these potential issues.

#### WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE

Though the findings from REHAU's report expresses concerns about readiness when it comes to the FHS, this does not indicate shortcomings or reluctance on the sector's part. Instead, it simply underlines just how transformative the FHS will be. The pronounced uplifts set out in the standard will undoubtedly lead to difficulties around what constitutes best

industry practice, especially with these increases required to happen within very compressed timescales.

Yet as the 2025 deadline looms, a collaborative approach becomes imperative for achieving the ambitious objectives the FHS sets out. Housebuilders and developers currently stand at a critical juncture, and the proactive measures taken today will shape its ability to meet the challenges and commitments into 2025.

To read REHAU's report 'Future Homes Standard: Preparing UK housing for 2025,' please scan the QR code below.

Martin Hitchin is CEO of REHAU UK



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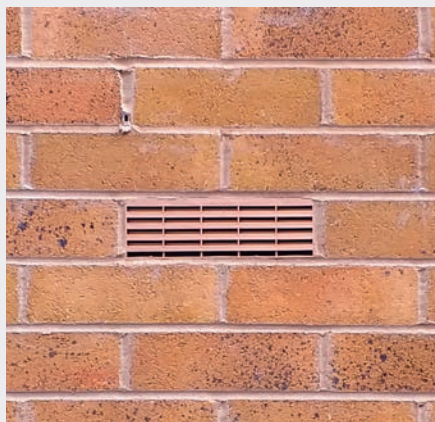
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## Innovation from Timloc facilitates large cost saving for housing developer



**A**dapt-Air units have been installed by one of the UK's leading housebuilders on a new housing development in Wombwell, South Yorkshire.

Adapt-Air is the ducting to airbrick adapter designed and manufactured by Timloc Building Products, one of the UK's leading manufacturers of a wide range of sustainable building products from ground level up to the roof ridge.

The ventilation kit has been designed to be easily built in as part of the brickwork package and connects directly to internal extraction.

Adapt-Air removes the re-work of cutting through brickwork and the need for unsightly and noisy gravity flap vents. The pre-assembled ducting to airbrick adapter also helps to meet Building Regulation Part F.

Utilising Adapt-Air delivers a significant cost-saving by eliminating the need for core drilling and external fitters. This particular development consisted of approximately 150 plots and the use of Adapt-Air facilitated a phenomenal cost saving of approximately £40,000 for the housebuilding company.

Adapt-Air eliminates the mess, time and potential safety issues associated with core drilling, as well as the hassle of on-site kit assembly. The site manager was thrilled with the practicality of the Adapt-Air units, easing the typical hassle of installing ductwork:

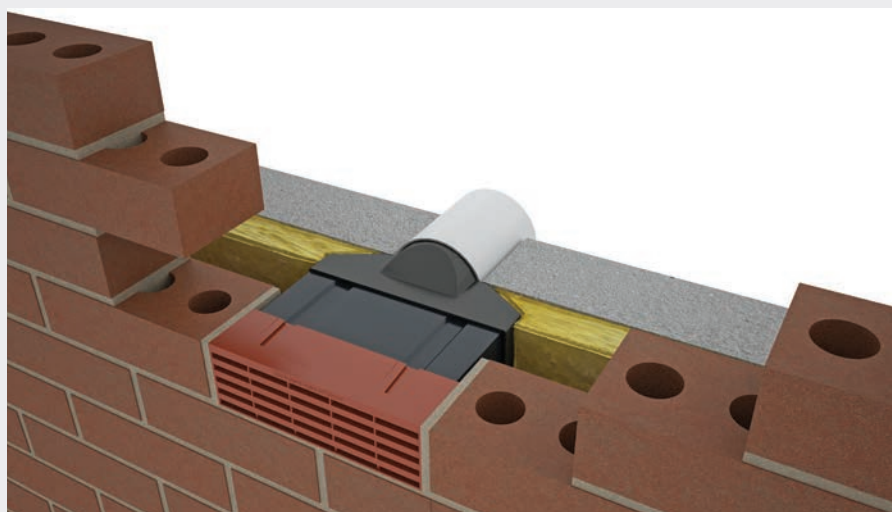
"Adapt-Air has removed a health and safety problem for me on-site with core drilling and you can't put a price on that" – Site Manager

The cost-effective Adapt-Air is delivered pre-assembled, ready to fit straight out of the box – saving time, reducing costs and minimising the need for external fitters, core drilling and specialist tools. Adapt-Air also promotes best practice for the installation of cavity trays as the work proceeds.

Kirsty Harrop, marketing manager at Timloc Building Products, comments: "We are proud to be able to deliver cutting-edge solutions like Adapt-Air to help streamline and elevate the housebuilding process. Through continuous product innovation we have been able to develop a product that not only advances existing practices but also mitigates safety issues on site, which is of fundamental importance."

Adapt-Air can be used at floor level voids and through external walls and is suitable for round and rectangular rigid extraction ductwork from Bathrooms, WC cloakrooms, Utility rooms and Kitchens.

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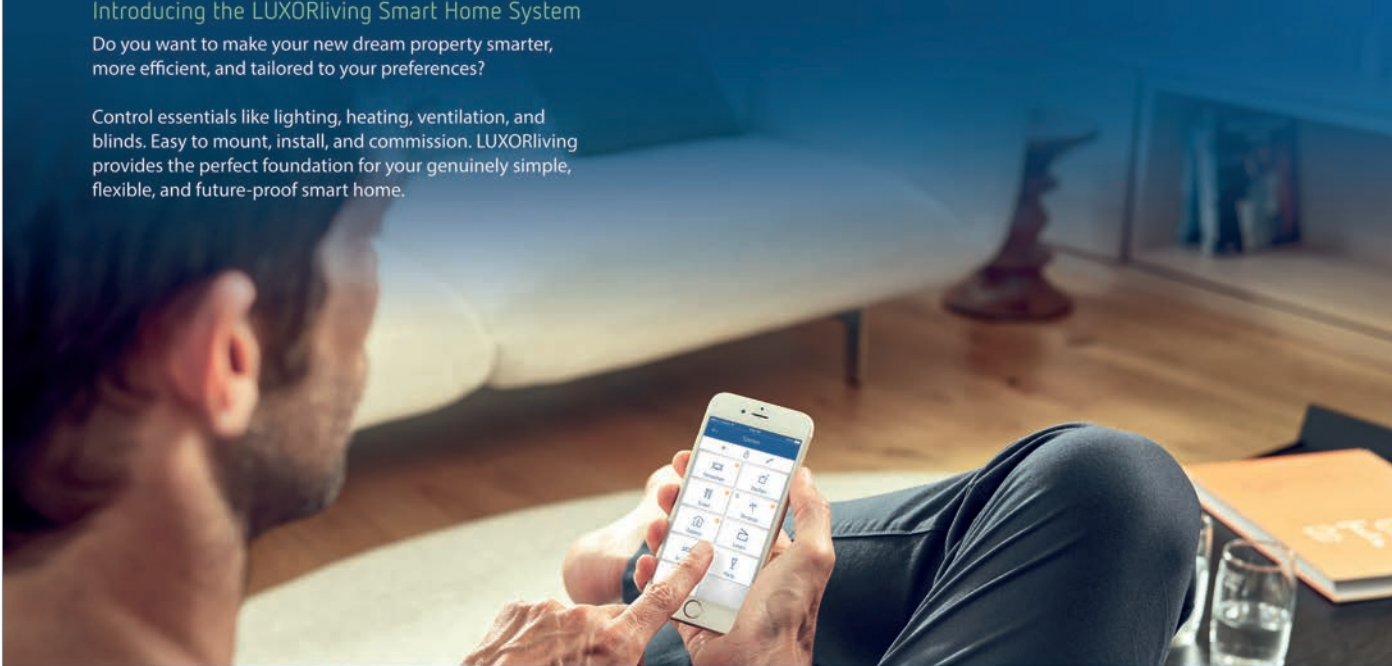
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## SHOW PREVIEW

5-7 MARCH  
EXCEL, LONDON

# FUTUREBUILD 2024 UNITES TOP INNOVATORS & COLLABORATORS

**F**uturebuild, the built environment's most influential event for innovation and collaboration, returns 5-7 March 2024 at London's ExCeL. Promising to be the most transformative yet, it will carry on its mission of taking a stand for a better built environment with 'take a stand for change' as this year's key theme.

### PUSHING BOUNDARIES

The Futurebuild conference, curated by The Edge and sponsored by Soprema and One Click LCA, is a highly respected gathering of influential innovators and collaborators tackling the industry's problems head on. The three daily themes are: Pathways to change, Levers for change and Sharing visions for change. Featuring a line-up that's a who's who of the built and natural environment; guests for 2024 include: Smith Mordak, chief executive of UKGBC; Muyiwa Oki, president of RIBA and Sara Edmonds, co-director of National Retrofit Hub, to name just a few.

The conference will cover a multitude of topics, reaching every corner of the industry. Key seminars include: Net zero housing: the quality-affordability conundrum, chaired by Catherine Adams, director of Building Systems and Net Zero at the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; Retrofitting our existing homes at scale chaired by Simon McWhirter, deputy chief executive at UK Green Building Council and Board Member, National Retrofit Hub, and How to design built assets that are future-fit: healthy, regenerative and socially equitable, chaired by Chaline Church of 540 World.

The full programme can be found on the website with speaker details and biographies.

### MORE THAN JUST A CONFERENCE

As well as the two conferences, Futurebuild is the industry's largest exhibition, featuring over 400 innovative brands and six stages that will host 500+ industry-leading speakers

across sections FutureX Innovation, Buildings, Energy, Materials, Sustainable Infrastructure and Digital.

Each section contains its own seminar stage, addressing the biggest challenges facing the built environment and spotlighting the latest trends. The Materials section, sponsored by Aggregate Industries, contains the latest solutions in material efficiency, while the Buildings seminar programme, sponsored by Steico, covers all aspects of building including new build, refurb and retrofit.

The FutureX stage, sponsored by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Innovate UK and Carbon Trust, allows visitors to discover the newest developments and innovations in the built environment. The Digital stage, sponsored by Cemex, will examine the process, outcomes and benefits that digital construction provides the industry, and visitors will have the chance to meet those behind the cutting-edge technologies. The Sustainable Infrastructure stage, sponsored by ACO, has been created in response to visitors' needs, and will include all aspects of infrastructure including green, blue, grey and social infrastructure solutions. Lastly, the Energy section, sponsored by Kensa Group, will provide the latest technologies and solutions for decarbonisation of heat and the delivery of a smart and flexible energy system.

The knowledge programme has been made possible with the help and support of our event sponsors and 80 partners. The full list of sponsors can be found on the website.

### EMBRACING INNOVATION

As the industry platform for innovation, Futurebuild has continued to partner with game-changing brands. Follow our Innovation Trail to meet our Innovation Partners: Advantage Austria, NexGen, MKc Training Services, Bauder, the Concrete Centre, Tepeo, Sugastune UK Ltd, SDS, Quantum, Mixergy, LKAB Minerals, Glen Dimplex Heating and







Ventilation, Curv360, Aico, 540 World, and Kensa.

The Future X Innovation section, sponsored by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, The Carbon Trust and Innovate UK is an exciting zone that showcases start-ups and SMEs innovative ideas and technologies that will make net zero possible.

The Big Innovation Pitch also returns for 2024, and will highlight the newest and brightest solutions to built environment challenges in an exciting 'presentation battle,' taking place in front of a live audience.

#### ACCELERATING HIGH-QUALITY RETROFIT

For the first time, Futurebuild has partnered with The National Retrofit Academy to launch The National Retrofit Conference, which will take place

## THE NATIONAL RETROFIT CONFERENCE WILL BRING TOGETHER VISIONARIES AND INDUSTRY LEADERS TO FOCUS ON THE CRUCIAL MISSION TO DECARBONISE THE UK'S EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

alongside Futurebuild 2024. Sponsored by Sustainable Building Services UK, the National Retrofit Conference will bring together visionaries and industry leaders to focus on a crucial mission –

decarbonising our existing housing stock.

The three-day conference will focus on Skills, Innovation and Policy and provide the practical solutions that attendees can take away to drive their retrofit programmes forward, with a line-up of speakers that includes thought leaders from inside and outside of the sector.

Futurebuild 2024 invites industry leaders, visionaries, and enthusiasts alike to join us, and share ideas, embrace innovation and help create the blueprint for a better tomorrow.

For more details and exhibitor enquiries, visit [futurebuild.co.uk](https://futurebuild.co.uk)

Don't miss out on Futurebuild 2024. Visitor registration is now open, please scan the QR to register today!

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manufactured and installed, Rolec continues to serve EV drivers with its innovations in charging hardware and software. Chosen by major UK housing developers as the ideal residential and shared charging solution for Part S Building Regulations. Rolec is taking a stand at Futurebuild for the future of greener transport. Visit them at Stand No. J24.

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## dMEV-NICO fan for new build homes



Domus Ventilation has launched a new Decentralised Mechanical Extract Ventilation (dMEV) fan, dMEV-NICO, to provide continuous background extract ventilation for new build properties. Designed to remove waste and moist air from a single wet room, such as bathrooms and kitchens, dMEV fans continuously extract the waste air at both low trickle or boost speeds which, in the case of the new dMEV-

NICO, is automatic thanks to a built in monitoring device which detects occupants' operation. For housebuilders, dMEV-NICO provides a cost effective extract solution that has been built to achieve the ventilation rates as set out in the latest edition of Part F and L Building Regulations.

03443 715523 [domusventilation.co.uk/catalog\\_products/dmev-nico/](http://domusventilation.co.uk/catalog_products/dmev-nico/)

## Castle Green Homes chooses Vent-Axia



Castle Green Homes has selected Vent-Axia's dMEV units to be installed in its homes as its chosen solution to meet the amended Part F and Part L of the Building Regulations. Vent-Axia is supplying its highly efficient Lo-Carbon NBR dMEV C units to be installed in 500 homes a year, across North Wales and the North West of England. The aim is to ensure homes have good indoor air quality to help protect

homeowners' health and meet the new airflow rates set out in Part F. "The Lo-Carbon NBR dMEV C was designed to achieve new Building Regulation ventilation rates while improving indoor air quality, using the lowest number of installed fans, and the most efficient and quietest fans on the market," explains Steve Pearce, product manager at Vent-Axia.

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

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## DF2E downflow fan heater launched



Consort Claudgen's new DF2E downflow fan heater offers many features including a seven day timer with six temperature settings daily, open window detection, a digital lock, a large LCD screen, a digital variable thermostat, and a reliable battery backup to keep the clock running, during power outages.

The heater continues its heating programme after power is restored. The heater offers quick warmth and allows you to choose between 1 kW or 2 kW heat output during the installation. For safety, the DF2E has an automatic safety cut-out and will stop operating if the fan or temperature sensor malfunctions. The DF2E heater makes an excellent choice for bathrooms and kitchens.

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## Domus Ventilation launches dMEV-NICO fan



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dMEV-NICO provides a cost effective extract solution that has been built to achieve the ventilation rates set out in Part F and L Building Regulations.

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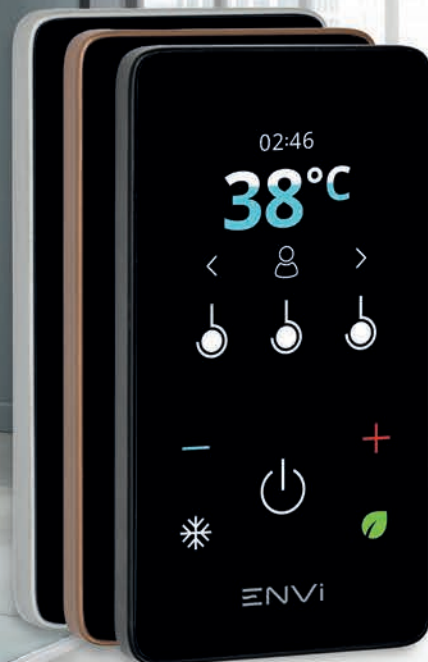
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### Managed user access

The Zaptec Pro has OCPP options such as Tap Electric which enables free payment management for shared parking.



# HOW TO SPOT A QUALITY VENTILATION SYSTEM WHEN YOU SEE IT

Paul Williams of Domus Ventilation looks at why quality is more crucial than ever in specifying whole ventilation systems for domestic schemes, and how to identify it.

**T**he word 'quality' gets bandied about all over the place. Let's face it, no sane company is going to say their products and services aren't good quality. When it comes to ventilation, it's no different: everyone seemingly makes good quality ventilation products and systems. But how do you define quality, and is it actually important?

## QUALITY MATTERS

In the world of ventilation, quality really does matter. Using poor quality products will most likely result in a ventilation system that is unable to deliver the air flow required to comply with Building Regulations, and make for an uncomfortable environment in which to live. But that's not all; it could also make for a noisy system and one that leaks condensation onto walls and ceilings, leading to the formation of mould which is not only unsightly but can be hazardous to health.

## PRODUCT: MAKE OR BREAK

With whole house ventilation systems featuring Mechanical Extract Ventilation (MEV) and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) as the main means of meeting the revised Part F Ventilation of Building Regulations, the quality of these units can make or break a system.

A good quality unit will have a low Specific Fan Power (SFP), which reduces energy consumption and directly impacts on a property's Dwelling Emission Rate (DER). In the case of MVHRs, the heat exchanger is a key component so be sure to check its proficiency. The heat exchangers featured within our Domus HRXE range of MVHRs enable up to 95% of waste heat to be recovered, making it highly efficient.

Important features to look for in MVHR units are a thermal bypass which automatically activates when the air temperature reaches a pre-set



## QUALITY DOES COME AT A COST AND THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A BALANCE BETWEEN THESE TWO FACTORS

level, allowing in cooler, fresh, filtered air without warming it through the heat exchanger; and integral humidity sensors which automatically changes the extract speed from background to boost as the level of humidity increases. The units must be listed on the SAP Product Characteristics Database (PCDB).

If MEV and MVHR units are seen as the heart of the ventilation system, they can only function efficiently if the arteries – the ducting – is of a similarly good standard. Unfortunately, this is where the majority of problems arise, as ducting quality is often forsaken on the grounds of price. If you want your mechanical ventilation system to function correctly, it's imperative to invest in quality ducting

that has been designed to work in harmony as part of a system and has been third party tested for end-to-end system performance. A good quality ducting system will have exacting tolerances and push fits together for minimal air and moisture loss and maximum system efficiency. It's easy to spot poor quality ducting as the channel or pipe bows, or looks like it is concave, or the wall thickness appears uneven.

And remember, never use flexible duct work in place of rigid ducting as it causes a lot more air resistance and can be crushed easily.

A quality ducting system will also come with a range of useful accessories to help you meet site circumstances, such





as ducting silencers, aerodynamic bends and pollutant filters. In addition, it should be accompanied by dedicated ducting insulation, and firestopping products.

#### START WITH THE 'BUILDING BLOCKS'

Of course, you can have the best ventilation products in the world, but if the system design is not up to scratch,

then it won't lead to the results you expect. So quality matters here too.

While some might think the ventilation unit should be the starting point, it's actually the ducting drawing that needs to come first; before unit specification and before the other services (gas, water pipes etc) going in, as otherwise you will need to add more duct work to get around

these obstacles. Doing ducting drawings is not easy, but 'quality' manufacturers will be able to provide these for you, so be sure to take advantage of this service.

#### INSTALLATION: DON'T CUT CORNERS

Over the years we have seen just about all the mistakes that could be made onsite, from installers trying to simplify duct runs to save time and money; using flexible duct work at final connections or around obstructions such as steel beams; using the wrong size air bricks and incorrect size air valves; not using ducting insulation, and a whole lot more.

With the revised Building Regulations 'Approved Document F, Volume 1: Dwellings' (ADF1), which came into effect in 2022, the ventilation rate calculations have been considerably simplified and reporting has been tightened up to drive compliance and, ultimately, system quality.

Quality does come at a cost and there will always be a balance between these two factors. But quality ventilation products are often designed with easy – and therefore quick – installation in mind. Opting for lower cost products may well end up being a false economy.

Paul Williams is product manager at Domus Ventilation

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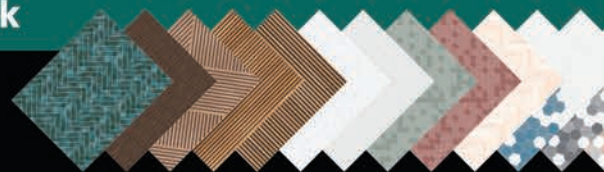
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# RADIATORS ARE MUCH MORE THAN APPLIANCES

Offering a wide range of designs and features, radiators can have a major role as part of the decor, rather than simply heating. Stelrad's Chris Harvey says take a closer look at the options available to specifiers.

Until maybe a decade ago, radiators tended to be the standard 'compact' design – basic but clean cut, sleek and invariably white, and found in every room of a new house. There's a trend now however for radiators to be upgraded – designer or decorative radiators – particularly in a new property's bathroom and kitchen and sometimes in the main living room or the main bedroom and ensuite. And of course the advent of vertical radiators has seen the arrival of vertical options in hallways and on landings, and in nooks and crannies around a new home. Where a horizontal radiator might take up too much wall space, or where the wall space simply isn't there.

Contrary to popular belief, while underfloor heating is growing in popularity for downstairs spaces in new build homes, radiators are still very much the favoured option upstairs – whether heated by traditional boiler driven heating systems, or modern renewable systems like heat pumps. Radiators work equally well with heat pumps as with boilers – but as with any new homes, it's important to size the radiators properly at the outset.

If the levels of insulation are adequate, then radiators will happily provide the levels of heating needed for comfort in a new home. You may need to specify slightly larger radiators or you may decide to take a closer look at the K3 radiators available in a number of designs – offering three panels and three sets of fins to ensure you get an extra 50% of the level of heat from the radiator as you would from a similar sized standard K2 design with just two panels.

The choice of designs for new radiators has burgeoned in recent years with flat fronted, vertical and horizontal lined casings, flat tube and traditional column style radiators – there is a look that will complement pretty much any style of new home on the marketplace. And not just in standard horizontal styles. Vertical radiators are growing in popularity,



and the most recent style choice is to go for coloured radiators. No longer only available in white, radiators are now available from some suppliers in a number of colours, and anthracite grey seems to be the number one choice when it comes to colours around the home. It's a colour that can mix and match with decor colours very happily.

The selection of a ladder style radiator in the bathroom and ensuite has been an option for many years although the number of styles and designs has increased hugely in recent years. As well as operating as a towel warmer, the radiator needs to offer enough heat to make the bathroom or ensuite a warm and cosy place in colder months so be sure to size the radiator properly to get the levels of heat you need in these rooms.

As well as the traditional radiators, it's worth taking a closer look at electric radiators as an option for new homes particularly if residents are off the gas mains and out in the country. Electric radiators offer a selection of interesting designs that will enhance the home but also offer a variety of options that include fan assisted heating to up the ante on the heating front. There are a wide range of electric models available, and it's worth considering these for any future extensions, conservatories and added rooms that

might need heating so residents don't have the expense of extending the existing heating system with a new boiler or heat pump sized to expand the system to heat additional radiators.

For new homes with elderly, very young or vulnerable residents, it's worth considering low surface temperature (LST) radiators that are designed so the casing never exceeds 43°C. These radiators are designed so even all the incoming and outgoing piping is covered, and comes with easy to use 'arthritic controls.'

There are also a number of heavy duty radiators available for areas around the home that need more robust radiators and can take hard knocks better than a standard radiator. And Compact Extra Protection options for wet rooms and areas of the home that may experience moisture and condensation.

Radiators have been designed to be 'fit for the future,' and are part of the UK's heating sector standard of solutions to share heat around the home. Whether standard, designer, decorative, white or coloured – horizontal or vertical – radiators are here to stay and ready to deliver heat where people need it.

Chris Harvey is head of marketing at Stelrad Radiators



# Vicaima opens the door to fresh inspirations for construction in the AI era



It's a common exercise in any sector of activity – to foresee macro-trends, understand phenomena and draw up plans to respond to those same expectations of a future that is always more innovative, challenging and non-linear. The complementary worlds of architecture, construction and design are no exception and are the forerunners of boldness and disruption of norms, an attitude that brings them closer to the frontier between the beauty of evolution and the power of change.

As one of Europe's major players in the design and production of cutting-edge solutions for interior doors, technical doors, frames, wardrobes, panels and furniture pieces, Vicaima identifies some of the focal priorities that are already being followed by professionals in the field and whose relevance is expected to increase this year.

One point will be common to all sectors – the transformative power of artificial intelligence (AI). Whether for interior design and decoration or in construction processes and software, disruptive technologies will have an influence on the efficiency within the different phases of a project, from the generation of 3D models, integrated project management or the selection of decorative elements, enhancing the creativity and uniqueness of spaces by combining the analytical capacity of digital tools with the aesthetic and functional sensitivity of the human insight.

How can we go even further and understand what lines will shape the future of these sectors? Let's go through, in detail, the features, concepts and movements that promise to make 2024 a transformative era.

## SUSTAINABILITY FACTORS WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY AN ESSENTIAL ROLE

This year, sustainability will play a role in more than the choice of a decorative product, through elements that reflect the appreciation of local culture, proximity to communities and consideration for future generations.

In the construction sector, the inclusion of products with FSC® (Forest Stewardship Council®) certification, the organization that

promotes responsible forest management, is almost a prerequisite, as specifiers seek to look beyond, sourcing and specifying products from organisations who take a more holistic approach to their ESG (Environment, Social and Corporate Governance) obligations.

In addition, the rehabilitation of existing buildings will become even more important, adding to the value that restoring historical heritage can bring. In the interiors, thermal insulation will be one of the key factors in reducing energy consumption, while guaranteeing comfort for users, maintaining the constant priority of natural lighting for users by providing a warm and appealing environment.

At the same time, acoustic insulation will also be relevant, an important factor when silence is the most audible response to today's demand for tranquility and comfort. Among several growing sectors, 2024 foresees an increase in university residences, which are increasingly necessary in urban centers, where soundproofing is essential for the comfort of young people who use these places to study and work.

## DOORS AS A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT OF PERSONALIZATION

The selection of styles, tones and surfaces has risen to an archetype that promises to become the next design revolution. Today, there is a growing demand for doors with customized designs and finishes adapted to specific needs and aesthetics, a factor leveraged by AI when it comes to analyzing data, lifestyles and preferences.

In this panorama, the authenticity of the choices promises to be revealed in the choice of door finishes, developing surfaces in which texture can be the differentiating factor. Among Vicaima's wide range of options, this creative wave is already reflected in the Dekordor® 3D range of door finishes, which stand out for their modern look and pronounced texture. In total, it offers an exquisite palette of fifteen on-trend designs, in light and dark tones.

In fact, it's precisely the effect of tone and colour that reigns in highly customized

projects, as Pantone's choice for 2024, Peach Fuzz, translates in all its essence, which can stand out as a differentiator in any decor. A true invitation to the smooth and profound assimilation of welcoming spaces, symptomatic of the contemporary dynamism that embraces historical tradition with vibrant brushstrokes for a perfect canvas of what tomorrow might look like.

In 2024, spaces will be increasingly "ours", mirroring the personality of those who use them. In buildings designed for housing, hotels, commercial services, healthcare or schools, the details that emanate a familiar and welcoming feeling will be highlighted. For projects looking to develop settings with a tailor-made concept, one of Vicaima's many solutions can be found in the Wardrobe Transform range – a highly personalized offer that appeals to the senses and imagination of customers looking for a touch of exclusivity.

## NEW THEMED PROJECTS EMERGING, FROM HOTELS TO HOMES

Rooms associated with an iconic character from a movie or an animated element from a TV series are a throwback to a nostalgic childhood, but they are freeing themselves up as inspiration for themed projects, a growing trend in which physical spaces are also a feeling. Not only in housing, but also in the hotel sector, designs evocative of literature, elements of nature or cities will be less and less uncommon. Creativity will continue to blur boundaries, driving disruption in a new dimension of interior design that is very much present in the Vicaima Infinity line.

In an era defined by AI, the different trends indicate that emotion will not cease to exist, but will prove increasingly decisive, responding to the demand for authenticity and connection. As a whole, these are the building blocks for architecture, construction and decoration that will continue to create modern and attractive spaces with sustainability and uniqueness.

01793 532 333  
www.vicaima.com



## 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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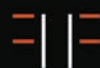
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## Avoid failures in bathrooms and wetrooms with BAL Waterproof 1C

**W**hen tiling in wet areas such as bathrooms, showers, wetrooms, pools, etc. it is vital to make the correct product selection to avoid costly failures.

Ensuring your wetroom, bathroom or shower installation is fully waterproof is perhaps the most important part of any developer's work, because tiles, tile adhesive and tile grout on their own will not inherently protect against water damage.

Did you know that the British Standards (BS 5385) and NHBC Standards 2023 both state, that in wet areas or areas of repeated or persistent wetting, backing surfaces should be protected by a suitable tanking system.

BS 5385 Part 4 states that the use of a ceramic tile together with an impervious tile grout and tile adhesive are NOT a substitute for a tanked or waterproofed bath, shower or wet room installation. The effects of water damage are well known and documented.

Therefore, using a suitable waterproofing (or tanking) product – such as new BAL Waterproof 1C – is a prerequisite for a wet room installation, either within the building structures or ideally on the substrate surface prior to the application of ceramic or natural stone tiles.

Waterproofing on the substrate surface is often ideal as this ensures water is prevented from tracking through a screed for example into other areas.



In a wet room, waterproofing should be specified on both walls and floors.

Available now, BAL Waterproof 1C is a ready-mixed tanking solution that can be used without priming on most common substrates\* and is ready to tile after only two hours!

Formulated with fibre-strand technology

for improved strength, it can be applied in one-coat on walls and floors with a brush, roller or 4mm notched trowel.

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

01782 591100 [www.bal-adhesives.com](http://www.bal-adhesives.com)

## Bjelin unveils striking Contrast Collection

**B**jelin has launched a new range for the UK market within its revolutionary hardened wood flooring portfolio.

The new Contrast Collection comprises a palette of five different colourways – Desert, Vapor, Silver, Ivory and Granite. These leverage the existing hues and tones within the wood to create stunning contrasts, while blending with the existing hardened wood 3.0 range. The new range is available in the XL size in Spačva oak. This type of oak, which is sustainably sourced from Croatia with FSC certification, is renowned for its stunning beauty and distinctive grain.

This vibrant new range was created through the fusion of technology and ageless craftsmanship and suits both residential and heavy-traffic commercial environments.

Utilising its access to the state-of-the-art R&D department belonging to sister company Välinge Innovation, Bjelin has pioneered a cutting-edge approach to enhancing the wood's natural structure. The ground-breaking Woodura™ surface technology brings hardened wood floors to life, making it possible to use a sophisticated array of nine precision-engineered brushes to seamlessly integrate contrasting pigments into the surface, highlighting the natural grain of the oak.

Woodura™ surface technology makes hardened wood floors three times stronger than traditional engineered wood options, giving enhanced resistance to water and dents. When it is combined with the leakproof 5G Dry™ floor locking system, the Contrast Collection ensures



lasting durability and boasts a superior class 33 pro matt lacquer – Bjelin's toughest to date.

"This striking collection gives both commercial and residential users a new and exciting option," says Simon Darbyshire, managing director of Välinge Innovation UK Ltd. "Our hardened wood flooring products

are already generating widespread interest. The new Contrast range redefines the game in residential and commercial design, injecting a sleek, tech-savvy edge that screams innovation."

[uk-sales@bjelin.com](mailto:uk-sales@bjelin.com)  
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## Kinedo launches stunning new Kinewall panels



No ordinary panel, Kinewall by **Kinedo**, is a fantastic new range of decorative bathroom wall panels that can transform not just a shower space, but a whole bathroom, cloakroom or utility room. Offering a revolution in materials, a revelation in designs and a remarkably simple installation process, Kinewall offers an abundance of choice

to create the perfect bathroom. If a customer is looking for a specific design for their space, there are several options available to bring their vision to life. Whether they prefer an industrial chic, classy panelling, a natural look or an eclectic design, single pattern panels can be used to offer consistency in style, or panels can be mixed and matched to suit their preference.

020 8842 0033 [kinedo.co.uk](http://kinedo.co.uk)

## Designer Contract's new window of opportunity



**Designer Contracts** has launched a completely new anthology of plain and patterned curtain collections. It is also introducing an updated blind studio range. The new 'window of opportunity' comes as more and more developers introduce window and flooring incentives to 'seal the deal' for increasingly hesitant buyers in a more challenging market. Said

commercial director Louise Walters: "We have completely refreshed and updated our entire window dressing collection with a comprehensive range to suit all tastes and budgets." She continues: "With prices a fraction of the cost of typical custom-made curtains we believe our service takes away all the hassle from the sourcing and selling curtains and blinds."

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



## The fine quality of Riviera Home indoors or out

Renowned for its fine-quality handwoven carpets, **Riviera Home** has launched two new ranges made from premium TufStrand yarn. Suitable for outdoor and indoor use, TufStrand is an all-weather yarn that's stain-resistant and bleach cleanable. Soft enough to be comfortable and luxurious indoors yet durable and practical enough to resist the elements, the yarn brings unity between indoor and outdoor living. Thanks to TufStrand, these new carpets are protected from household spills, easy to clean and represent great value for money. Part of Riviera Home's Italian inspired collection, Livorno is handwoven from 100% TufStrand polypropylene. Incorporating two distinct designs: a wilton textured basketweave and a flatwoven herringbone, each in two complementary duo-tone colourways, Livorno adds elegance to any home. With Livorno, homes can seamlessly flow from open plan living to outdoor relaxing with the comfort and luxury that comes with Riviera Home. Medina is also from Riviera Home's Italian collection, this time presenting wilton textured basketweave and flatwoven herringbone designs in three multi-tonal colour combinations. The carpet's rich design makes it a statement in style and the multi-tonal yarn also helps to disguise dirt and spills more readily before cleaning.

01299 871446 [rivierahomeuk.co.uk](http://rivierahomeuk.co.uk)



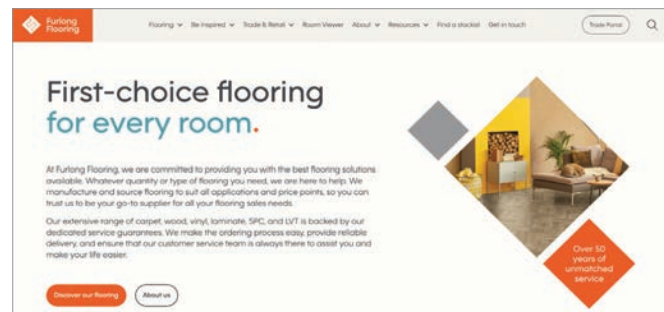
## Form an instant bond with new Mapecontact Plus

**Mapei** has introduced Mapecontact Plus – a new solvent-free, double-sided reinforced adhesive strip for fast-track installation of accessories, resilient and textile flooring.

New Mapecontact Plus provides an instant bond and a secure, tough hold, eliminating waiting time. It is ideal for installing textile and resilient flooring onto steps and curved surfaces, and accessories including coving, skirting boards, rubber and PVC profiles. It can also be used to install angular pieces and protective profiles onto steps and other sharp edges.

As well as providing a fast, sustainable and clean installation, Mapecontact Plus has improved resistance to moisture, plasticisers and ageing, for greater longevity. Mapecontact Plus is ready-to-use and available in 25 mm, 40 mm and 85 mm widths. It is certified Ecodecode ECI Plus by GEV.

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



## Furlong Flooring launches new website

**Furlong Flooring** is delighted to announce the launch of its brand new website – [furlongflooring.com](http://furlongflooring.com). Featuring outstanding design, content and functionality this new online resource offers comprehensive information about its innovative and trusted flooring solutions. The new website has been redesigned and rebuilt on a new technology platform. With a fresher, modern look and feel, the website features new functionalities and content, and sections dedicated to new products and innovations. In addition, a 'Room Viewer' visualisation tool is designed to allow people to see exactly what each type of flooring will look like in their own rooms or offices. The new website presents and categorises Furlong's extensive flooring range which includes new and updated collections and product offerings. This includes the ground-breaking new EcoSense range of 100% recycled yarn carpets, and the luxury Beyond Wool® ranges to give customers more choice than ever before. Other new flooring products include durable and easy-to-clean vinyl flooring options with stylish designs and enhanced slip resistance, making them ideal for busy households and commercial spaces. There's also a wealth of useful information and resources for retailers, housebuilders and flooring contractors.

01322 628700 [furlongflooring.com](http://furlongflooring.com)



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## F. Ball launches RAG 2024



**F. Ball and Co. Ltd.** has unveiled the latest edition of its industry-leading Recommended Adhesives Guide (RAG®), which sees new adhesives recommendations for floorcoverings launched by manufacturers over the past 12 months now added to the guide. The RAG® enables contractors and specifiers to quickly check the compatibility of F. Ball adhesives with over 6,000 branded floorcoverings from over 200 leading international floorcovering manufacturers – offering flooring professionals the most comprehensive guide to floorcovering-adhesive compatibility available. In addition to the annually updated A5 printed book, a continuously updated version of the guide is available on the F. Ball website, and as a mobile app, which is free to download from the Apple App store or Google Play.

01583 361 633 [www.f-ball.com](http://www.f-ball.com)

## New winter floorcovering wonders



**Designer Contracts** has added four carpet collections – including its first ever 100% recycled polypropylene – and a new click-LVT range with built-in underlay to its comprehensive portfolio of floorcoverings. Eco-Glade is a stain resistant, two-ply carpet made using 100% recycled polypropylene yarn. Rapture and Cleveland

are aimed at the growing market for easy-clean carpets, offering 'better and best' options in 100% stain resistant polypropylene. Hampstead Classic and Supreme offer a robust heavy duty domestic carpet in 80/10/10 pure new wool while Alpha is a new LVT range suitable for heavy commercial use.

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

## Extension to composite sink portfolio



Three new composite sinks designed with smaller kitchens in mind have been added to the already impressive portfolio offered by sinks, taps and accessories manufacturer and supplier, **Reginox UK**. Named Avignon, Toulon and Valence, the compact trio are a mix of designs and styles that primarily aim to bring a touch of class and practicality to kitchens with limited space. The new models showcase a perfect

blend of contemporary design and space-saving ingenuity. Each one is meticulously crafted to provide a stylish and practical solution, catering to the diverse needs of modern homeowners and kitchen designers.

01260 280033 [www.reginox.co.uk](http://www.reginox.co.uk)

## Keller Magazine; providing inspiration



Pictured: New Country Kitchen

**Keller Kitchens** has launched a new, own-branded magazine specifically for retail and contract customers. The 72-page publication is full of inspiration and news from the company and covers topics such as trends for 2024, new product launches, new colours, sustainability updates, and recipe ideas. Keller is launching

an extensive new range of doors, handles, lighting some of which are typified in five new kitchen styler roomsets, starting with Vogue Vibes. Keller is well known for offering the widest range of colours (2,050 NCS) and finishes in the kitchen furniture market – along with a vast range of cabinet options, all produced by the most sustainable means possible.

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



## Biodiversity Net Gain Management by Meadfleet

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regulations are now in place, affecting all new planning applications of 10+ units. What are the key challenges and how can **Meadfleet** help housebuilders meet them? BNG requires a minimum 10% biodiversity enhancement from pre-development scores. Delivery of the gain will ideally be onsite, where this is not possible, offsite options may be explored and as a last resort, BNG credits can be purchased. Housebuilders must ensure they seek a management solution to deliver the gains over a 30-year period. There will also be an additional challenge in managing the expectations of customers who will be living closer to more biodiverse habitats. Meadfleet are already delivering the principles of Biodiversity Net Gain across our portfolio and can provide the long-term management solution to deliver the 30-year covenant with an award-winning lifetime adoption model taking legal responsibility for POS & BNG management. As part of their service, Meadfleet offer experienced in-house ecologists trained in BNG calculation and delivery, ongoing support throughout the planning process, customer and community engagement to positively promote biodiversity and both annual customer contribution and commuted sum options.

enquiries@meadfleet.co.uk [www.meadfleet.co.uk](http://www.meadfleet.co.uk)



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# THE HOTTEST KITCHEN APPLIANCE TRENDS FOR CUSTOMERS IN 2024

The kitchen remains the heart of the home, and Beko plc Appliance Partner's Mike Beech looks at how appliances are adding value within this space, and the key trends which are emerging from home buyers in 2024.



It stands to reason that new home buyers will focus their attention on the kitchen, with a stylish and multi-functional space likely to help in inducing a commitment to purchase. In order to create dream kitchens, housebuilders and developers will be looking to balance timeless features with a modern aesthetic, complemented with practical and stylish appliances designed to save homeowners time and money. Understanding current trends, lifestyle preferences and priorities are key to specifying suitable appliances to aid convenient living and ensuring products remain fit for purpose throughout their lifecycle.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

A recent survey has indicated that 90% of Brits consider energy efficiency a top priority when it comes to their home appliances as fuel bills spiral and users become more aware of their personal

impact on the environment. Providers of new homes should be looking for appliances with favourable energy saving ratings, featuring innovative technologies and enhanced functionality to further improve efficiency and water consumption. This becomes all the more relevant as we move towards the Future Homes Standard on the road to net zero, with housebuilders and developers faced with the challenge of reducing their carbon emissions by 30% while also looking to improve their homes' ongoing energy efficiency and water consumption. As well as satisfying these ambitious targets to secure planning approval, consideration must be given to homeowners' concerns surrounding rising energy prices alongside an increased desire for responsible living.

## INTEGRATED APPLIANCES

The rise in popularity of open floorplans has cemented the kitchen

as a multi-purpose focal space for entertainment, fuelling a desire for appliances to blend seamlessly into the sleek lines of a modern kitchen rather than standing out as statement design pieces. Integrating built-in appliances within the design of a kitchen allows a clean and stylish aesthetic to be achieved without compromising on usability. Whatever the style of the kitchen, and however homeowners choose to personalise their spaces post-occupation, integrated appliances will stand the test of time as trends come and go.

## SPACE-SAVING SOLUTIONS

Slimline and multi-purpose appliances provide practical solutions to maximise usability where space is at a premium. According to a recent study by the National Kitchen and Bath Association, 87% of specifiers and designers have mentioned the importance of supplying appliances with more than one function



to satisfy customer demand for increased flexibility and versatility. Multi-purpose appliances eliminate the need for purchasing additional bulky freestanding products, saving valuable countertop space in the kitchen. Meanwhile, stackable washing machine and tumble dryer combinations offer a practical space-saving solution, providing the functionality of a side-by-side setup while only taking up the space of a single appliance.

#### ENHANCED CONVENIENCE

Busy lifestyles demand helpful technology to simplify day-to-day activities, and homeowners are increasingly looking for products designed to make their lives easier. Quick cycles on washing machines allow users to wash large loads up to 12 kg in just 28 minutes, while crease-reducing technology eliminates the need to spend hours ironing clothes after a wash cycle.

A host of easy cleaning solutions in cooking appliances translate to less time scrubbing, with helpful features such as pyrolytic self-cleaning technology and easy-clean induction hobs ensuring maintenance is hassle-free. Dishwashers already provide the ultimate time-saving solution, and fast programmes enable a full load to be washed in just 45 minutes,

## ACCORDING TO A RECENT STUDY, 87% OF SPECIFIERS AND DESIGNERS HAVE MENTIONED THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPLYING APPLIANCES WITH MORE THAN ONE FUNCTION TO SATISFY CUSTOMER DEMAND

while higher spec options feature performance-enhancing technology with intensive cleaning zones where even the dirtiest pots and pans will be cleaned to perfection. Home appliances play a significant role in modern domestic living by streamlining household functions, and users will be looking for advanced features designed to make home routines more efficient.

#### SMART TECHNOLOGY

Further supporting convenient and modern lifestyles, smart technology is playing an increasingly pivotal role

within our lives and homes, with research suggesting that almost half of home chefs now expect control over their ovens and hobs through their mobile phones, allowing users to schedule appliance activity remotely. Washing machines or dishwashers can be timed to suit users' daily activities, with appliances automatically choosing the most efficient cycle based on soil level. Homeowners can now also be afforded the freedom of changing their oven temperature from their fingertips, and for peace of mind are able to ensure cooking appliances are turned off, even when away from home.

In order to attract homebuyers in a challenging economic climate and to maximise kerb appeal, current trends should be carefully considered when making appliance selections. Choices must stand the test of time, with guarantees of up to 10 years available on selected products demonstrating expected lifespans. With ongoing usage and operational costs in mind, housebuilders and developers will be looking to futureproof their homes by specifying timelessly-styled, yet highly functional products with innovative features designed to support modern living.

Mike Beech is National Contracts Specification Manager at Beko plc Appliance Partners



### Gilberts helps protect twin towers

An "iconic" site that has been transformed into high rise, high specification living for young professionals is a showcase for the latest in modern methods of construction – including its fire protection. The Coventry development comprises two separate buildings including a 17-storey tower containing a total 200 apartments. M & E contractor on the project Excelsior Services (Residential) commissioned smoke control specialist Baiceir to design the most efficient means of protecting the towers. Baiceir recommended installation of a **Gilberts Series 60** smoke damper into the fire shafts on each floor (30no in total), with fan skids on the roof of each building to accelerate smoke evacuation. Gilberts' Series 60 is believed to be the only vent of its kind designed and manufactured in the UK. It has been tested to- and passed- all relevant tests (EN 12101-8 and EN 1366-10 and classified to EN 13501-4). Delivering up to two hours' fire integrity, the damper combines a low leakage rate and high free area through parallel linked blades when open to deliver high smoke evacuation rates. Activation (by powered motor) is triggered to open the damper on the fire floor for smoke evacuation, whilst all other dampers fail-safe close to protect the rest of the building. Series 60 simply slots into the shaft opening, with the installation finished by fixing the fascia grille.

01253 766911 info@gilbertsblackpool.com



### Marmox Thermoblocks specified on Wigan PassivHaus development

The final phase of a PassivHaus development is just getting under way in Wigan with high performance Thermoblocks from the range of **Marmox** being used to counter cold bridging beneath a highly insulated timber frame construction. The St. Mary's project is being undertaken for Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council by principal contractor, Tyson Construction with Pozzoni Architecture being the lead architectural consultant and BTP Architects gilling the roll of specialist PassivHaus assessor. All of the Thermoblocks in 100 mm and 140 mm widths, along with boxes of the special Marmox 360 adhesive are being supplied by Travis Perkin's Blackpool branch. The scheme to provide much needed affordable and easy to heat new homes has been part-funded by the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. The Site Manager for Tyson Construction, Matt Horrocks, commented: "For fitting the timber frame soleplates it is necessary to do a 'setting out' course across the block-and-beam, with the dense concrete block serving to contain the screed. The 140 mm Thermoblocks are laid beneath all the external walls, followed by a 140 common brick course and then the standard blocks. This is repeated for the internal and party walls, but with a course of 100 mm Thermoblocks creating the fully insulated barrier."

sales@marmox.co.uk www.marmox.co.uk

# PERMEABLE RETROFIT IS A WAY FORWARD FOR SUDS

A new era for SuDS management begins this year, so says Jamie Gledhill of Brett Landscaping. Here he explains why permeable paving is key for futureproofing high-risk developments, and what developers and housebuilders need to know.



**T**here is wide consensus across the higher echelons of the construction industry and government that the enactment of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in 2024 is an important step for the sector. For this to be successful, it will require regular collaboration across a range of regulatory and civic bodies, so housebuilders and developers need to ensure they are working with all partners to find satisfactory solutions to mitigate the risks of flooding on every high-risk development.

This is a significant challenge. The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) report to the Government in November 2022 identified that there are currently

325,000 properties within England that are in a High Flood Risk area that have more than a 60% of being flooded in the next 30 years. A further 500,000 houses have been identified as being at risk of flooding within the next 100 years.

As a result of the NIC recommendations the Government is following Wales in enacting Schedule 3 of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 in 2024. This will require all new developments to introduce SuDS approaches to mitigate their impact on the drainage network and absorb surface water as close to source as possible.

However, this will also have an impact on developments that require a retrofitted solution to address previously unforeseen issues, or to improve upon the existing

SuDS provision on the site.

This is because as well as addressing the UK's increasing extreme weather events, and issues like water scarcity, SuDS installations will now also need to increase water quality and add features that mimic nature to developments, enhancing biodiversity.

Achieving these new standards does not require reinventing the wheel. It actually allows housebuilders and developers to return to some tried and trusted solutions with the confidence to know that they will help to meet all the new requirements. Take the use of permeable paving, for example.

While there may be some concern that it doesn't present as 'green' to the naked eye, it is arguably the best SuDS system





we have for minimising disruption to residents. Permeable paving works by allowing water to pass through it, rather than running off onto the surface and into the sewer system. Immediately, this decreases the amount of water flowing into a sewer system, reducing overflow.

Permeable paving can also help to improve water quality by reducing the amount of pollutants that are washed into the sewer system. This is because permeable paving allows water to filter through the aggregate packing and silt, which helps to remove pollutants.

There are several different types of permeable paving available, including porous asphalt, concrete pavers, and interlocking concrete pavers. The type of permeable paving that is best for

a particular application will depend on a range of factors, including the amount of traffic that the paving will be subjected to and the climate, and that correct installation is key to success. If it is not installed properly, it may not be effective in preventing sewer overflows or improving water quality.

Finally, because we are living in a time where project managers are under pressure to carefully manage budgets, retrofitted SuDS systems are a good way to help save money by reducing the need for expensive installation of conventional stormwater drainage systems, which can often involve ground engineering.

When done well, SuDS can help to reduce the risk of flooding from rain and stormwater on a site and the

risk of sewers being overwhelmed, by reproducing natural processes for irrigating water. The new requirements placed on housebuilders and developers from 2024 means there has to be more thought about how water moves around a site, and how it can be controlled, but the systems and expertise are already on hand and ready to assist the approach to a new era of SuDS management.

A good recent example is Brett Landscaping's work with Severn Trent Water on a £76m project to reduce the flood risk on residential estates in Mansfield. Severn Trent and local authorities are working on retrofitting a series of SuDS measures across the town including bioswales, detention basins, raingardens, and approximately 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> of Omega Block permeable paving.

Part of the sustainable flood resilience project involves retrofitting permeable paving, within highway land such as residential parking areas on residential estates to tackle the runoff of surface water. The permeable paving has been designed as either infiltrating with a geotextile base or non-infiltrating with an impermeable liner with a return to the sewer system.

Jamie Gledhill is engineering technical manager at Brett Landscaping



## Wraptite® is the solution for Dundee young persons' home

The Wraptite external air barrier system from the **A. Proctor Group** has been chosen for its high performance airtight insulation for a new home for young people in Dundee, Scotland. Robertson Construction Tayside secured the project as part of a direct award through Places for People Procurement Hub Framework. The specification created by Dundee City Council Architects for the project was to use materials to achieve high value performance and help achieve good airtightness. Robertson Construction Tayside appointed Robertson Timber Engineering as the timber frame manufacturer and supplier for the project. Nicola Jackson, net zero projects lead at Robertson Group explained: "We fitted the Wraptite membrane in our factory in Elgin. A very helpful toolbox talk and practical demonstration was delivered by the A. Proctor Group representative to operatives and the design team prior to developing detailed design information." "Installing the product at low level in the factory allowed the membrane to be more easily applied and avoided the risk of working at height. The factory installation also enabled the product to be installed in completely dry conditions to ensure full adhesion in a quality-controlled environment to deliver the required airtightness requirements. The product is very durable and provides excellent protection, reducing any risk of damage on site."

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



## Mapei protects new homes in historic building conversion

A **Mapei** waterproofing membrane & watertight concrete system has been designed by Lainton Services, Stockport as part of a sympathetic conversion of a former medical Centre in Altrincham, Cheshire. The Mapei system was installed within basement areas, by Lainton Services, with components supplied by Kestral Construction Products. Two Mapei pre & post applied HDPE (High Density Polyethylene Geomembrane) waterproof membranes were used to protect the underground structure of the building: Mapeproof AL AP was applied before concrete was poured and Mapeproof AL 1200 AP was applied afterwards. The robust membranes are highly resistant to puncturing, tearing, natural elements and UV rays, and they provide a barrier against groundwater, soil moisture, radon and methane gas. On contact with concrete, the system forms a permanent, tough bond. The system also included Mapei's watertight concrete admixture Idrocete KR 1000: a powder admixture made from special hydrophilic components that reduces the permeability of hardened concrete which was supplied by Cemex – along with Mapeproof Liquid Membrane: a two-component polyurethane elastomeric, thixotropic, liquid waterproofing membrane.

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# BEST PRACTICE FOR HOME LIFE SAFETY

When it comes to Home Life Safety, it is vital that systems specified for domestic properties are as reliable as possible. Here, Phoebe Beddows of Aico details best practice for achieving fire protection in developments.

**C**hoosing the right fire detection devices (system) for domestic properties starts with finding the correct sensors for the appropriate rooms.

Primarily, smoke sensors should operate in circulation spaces and habitable living areas such as the living/dining room and bedrooms. Fires caused in these areas are often slow and smouldering, involving wood, cotton and plastic, and so, the smoke sensor is most appropriate.

Heat sensors should be installed in kitchens, as opposed to smoke alarms, as the fires which occur in the kitchen are more often a result of cooking, which produces fast flaming fires and increased temperatures. With the use of a heat alarm, false activations will not be caused by cooking fumes.

## CATEGORIES OF PROTECTION

British Standard BS58396:2019+A1:2020 states that the level of protection to the occupants needs to be directly related to this fire risk. The standard lists three categories of system, including where and how many alarms should be installed.

Category LD1 demonstrates a high level of protection, in all areas where a fire could start. This includes all areas with the exception of the bathrooms and WC. With Category LD2, medium protection is demonstrated in escape routes and high risk areas, such as the kitchen, living room, hallways, landings, and lofts (where electrical equipment is installed, boilers, PV systems etc). A Category LD3 system shows minimum protection, including hallways and landings. Across all categories, alarms should not be installed within toilets, bathrooms or shower rooms.

## ALARM GRADES

The operational elements to each individual alarm place them within a 'Grade', as follows:

- Grade A – Separate detectors, sounders, central control and indicating equipment with back-up power supply.



- Grade C – A system of fire detectors and alarm sounders (which may be combined in the form of smoke alarms) connected to a common power supply, comprising the normal mains and standby supply, with central control equipment.
- Grade D1 – A system of one or more mains powered detectors, each with a tamper-proof standby supply consisting of a battery/batteries.
- Grade D2 – A system of one or more mains powered detectors, each with an integral standby supply consisting of a user-replaceable battery or batteries.
- Grade F1 – A system of one or more battery powered detector powered by tamper-proof primary battery.
- Grade F2 – A system of one or more battery powered detectors powered by a user-replaceable primary battery or batteries.

## BEST PRACTICE APPROACHES FOR EACH PROPERTY TYPE

In rented properties (new build or existing), British Standards recommend a Grade D1 Category LD2 system, with smoke detectors installed in the living room, landing and hallway, and a heat alarm in the kitchen.

Within existing sheltered housing, a Grade D2 Category LD2 system should be installed in individual dwellings. Where the property is being upgraded, electrical work is undertaken, or smoke alarms are replaced, a Grade D1 Category LD1 system should be installed in the individual dwellings. In communal areas, a Grade A Category L4/5 should be installed. In new/ materially altered sheltered housing, individual dwellings should operate a Grade D2 LD1 alarm system, with the communal area as Grade A Category L4/5.



Short term lettings should follow a Grade D1 LD1 alarm system for optimal detection, all areas except the bathrooms and WC.

Existing Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) (one or two storey) should have a Grade D1 LD2 system installed. A heat detector should be installed in every kitchen, with a smoke alarm in the principal habitable room. Where more than one room may be used as the principal habitable room, a smoke detector should be installed in each of these rooms.

In a new build owner occupied a two or three storey house, British Standards suggest a Grade D2 Category LD2 system. As with the case of HMOs, a heat detector should be installed in every kitchen, with a smoke alarm in the principal habitable room. Where more than one room may be used as the principal habitable room, a smoke detector should be installed in each of these rooms.

#### ALARM INTERLINKING

Interlinking the alarms in a system is effective in the sounding of the system if an activation was to take place. When all alarms in a system are interlinked, all alarms will sound when one alarm is triggered, meaning the residents will hear the nearest alarm to them and be able



### IT'S VITAL TO HAVE THE CORRECT SENSOR TYPES IN THE CORRECT ROOMS AROUND THE PROPERTY

to react to the activation as soon as it happens, no matter where they are in the property. This can be achieved through wiring or wireless radio frequency connection depending on the alarm chosen.

#### ALARM SITING

Fire alarms need to be installed in the correct locations for the quickest response.

In hallways and landings, an alarm should be located less than 3 metres

distance from any bedroom door, away from the bathroom door, within 7.5 metres of the area to be protected, and at least 300 mm from walls, light fittings or obstructions.

Stairways should have an alarm centrally on the ceiling in the ground floor hallway, and an alarm centrally on the ceiling, on all subsequent floors. Alarms should not be sited on the wall or any sloped ceilings.

Kitchens should have the heat alarm sited centrally and on the ceiling, covering a 5.3 metre radius, and 300 mm from walls, light fittings or obstructions. Devices should not be sited directly above any cookers or hobs. We are siting alarms at least 1 metre from cooking appliances or basins to avoid nuisance alarms.

In other rooms such as the living room or dining room, smoke alarms should be sited centrally on the ceiling, 300 mm from walls, light fittings or obstructions, and less than 7.5 metres from the edge of the coverage area.

It is vital to have the correct sensor types located in the correct rooms around the property. Not doing so can result in increased false activations and potentially less coverage.

Phoebe Beddows is marketing executive for Aico

## Builders threshold solution



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## Triton Systems used in underpinning old Kent water mill

One of **Triton Systems** most experienced installers has employed a package of its waterproofing products, while carrying technically challenging improvements to the basement and substructure of a 19th century watermill in Kent. Archer Specialist Treatments was called in by the South African based owner of the scenic residential property near Ashford, owing to it suffering continuing problems of water ingress as the floor level lies nearly two metres below the surface of the old mill pond. Paul Halliwell a Chartered Builder and Director of Archer Specialist Treatments, recounted: "In the two decades or more we've been using Triton, we have come to depend on the product range's quality and reliability for all types of residential projects in different ground conditions. On a regular basis we employ their cavity drain systems – the TM3, CM8 and CM20 – the injection chemicals for damp-proofing and the TT55 cementitious waterproofing additive as well as the fungal and dry rot chemicals. It is a very good relationship we have with the company." Triton Systems offers a wide range of well proven products to cover damp-proofing problems, timber protection, structural repairs, condensation control and the penetration of gases such as radon and methane.

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