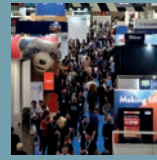




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Keepmoat's Tom
Dwyer on investing in
apprenticeships



Climate Challenge:
Will Temperley of
Fortis EV outlines
the challenges of car
charging for new devs



Show Preview:
The Installer Show
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HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

APRIL/MAY 2024



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Living shows how versatile modern methods of construction can be –
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James Parker

ON THE COVER



HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

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FROM THE EDITOR

For anyone in this industry, reading Peter Apps' outstanding but harrowing account of the context and results of the Grenfell Tower fire is another cause for some stark self-analysis.

Everyone is now familiar with the litany of testing and regulations loopholes which enabled questionable specification to occur, not only on Grenfell but a host of other projects. However, the inquiry which is attempting to tie blame to at least some parties (while its prosecution barrister described the entire process as a "merry go round of buck-passing") is apparently still unable to reach a conclusion.

Due to the amount of responses received by stakeholders, inquiry chair Martin Moore-Bick recently announced that its final report would now not be published before the seventh anniversary of the tragedy, as had been hoped. This is another bitter pill for the victims' families to swallow, and frustrating for everyone looking to see lessons shared to help prevent another tragedy.

The event fundamentally damaged the credibility of the construction industry, which in many areas it had worked hard to demonstrate. This extends to the construction media such as ourselves – who in good faith present the information which manufacturers give us – to the wider specifier market. This is largely based on trust that it is verifiable. We cannot investigate every building physics assertion, but if we think we can't stand behind unqualified product claims, we remove them.

Apps' account of the background to the tragedy, 'Show Me the Bodies' includes a good deal about manufacturers' product claims, and the confusing rules they work to – it is a key reference point as the sector looks to restore credibility. We trust in buildings to be safely procured, and to adhere to regulations which have been considered objectively, and not to benefit profit. Grenfell put all of this into question, and restoring that trust is an ongoing task, including within the industry.

All parties in the specification and cladding industry have some part to play in accounting for what happened, but so do successive Governments, including Cameron's administration 'waging war on the Health & Safety culture' in 2012.

Full disclosure and openness is now the name of the game, and this was behind the recent round table that we staged at the Building Centre, in partnership with sponsors JELD-WEN, Saint Gobain Interior Solutions, and Siderise. The in-depth discussion saw architects, IT experts, developers and project manufacturers looking at how the Golden Thread of design information in future high rise projects works in practice.

As well as the new project roles within the Building Safety Act, the other main outcome of the Hackitt Report is the Golden Thread concept of open data sharing throughout a project, including on the changes which may occur in specification. It's about taking responsibility, and it's fundamentally different from past practice. You can find a report on this discussion at <https://insights.netmagmedia.co.uk>

Editors of 'generalist business-to-business' titles such as ours tend to necessarily not be experts in all of the product areas they cover. We aim to achieve balance while supporting the industry as a marketing conduit, and protecting competitors (and brands' credibility). As organisations working with external marketing teams presenting information to customers, we are a fundamental part of the system that needs to protect specifiers from misinformation or even ambiguity. We rely on contributors providing us with the correct, verified information – in short, we're all in this together.

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Esh Construction completes £3m Sheffield affordable homes scheme

Esh Construction has handed over 20 new affordable homes at Fir View Gardens in Sheffield. Working on behalf of Great Places Housing Group, the development has been delivered on a vacant piece of land off Osgathorpe Drive, close to the Earl Marshal Recreation Ground.

The two and three-bedroom homes have been built for affordable rent and include associated parking and landscaping. A fabric first approach was used in both design and construction, with maximising energy efficiency being made a “top priority,” said the housebuilder.

Esh Construction’s operations director, Simon Woodward, said: “Fir View was the first contract we were awarded through the Innovation Chain North framework, and it proved a real success for Esh in delivering energy efficient homes while providing added benefit to the community through school engagement, volunteering and community funding.”

Fir View Gardens is one of the developments that Great Places Housing Group is delivering in South Yorkshire as part of the housing association’s commitment to build additional affordable homes in the area. Other projects include 50 homes at Riverdale Park in Doncaster and 51 apartments at London Road close to Sheffield city centre.

Commenting on the completion of the project, Nick Gornall, director of Development at Great Places Housing



Group, added: “We’re delighted to have worked with Esh Construction at Fir View Gardens, which is a great example of our continued commitment to provide high-quality, much-needed affordable homes. Through our partnership with Esh we’ve not only achieved this but also contributed significantly to the local community. The comprehensive social value plan has helped provide valuable employment and educational opportunities for residents and underscores our shared commitment to delivering additional social value.”

Through Esh’s Greener Communities programme – which helps communities become greener by funding carbon reduction, environmental improvement, and education projects – a combined £6,500 was donated to Wybourn Allotment and Orchard Project, located just three miles from the new development.

VIVID acquires brownfield site



Housing association VIVID has acquired land at Tipner East in Portsmouth marking an important step forward in its ambitious plans to transform the unused brownfield site into a “vibrant new waterfront community,” Victory Quay.

Tipner East is “one of only a few contaminated sites like this in the country to be actively moving forward, demonstrating the role housing associations play in regenerating large, complex sites and boosting economic growth,” said the firm.

Victory Quay will bring “much needed high-quality homes, green spaces and commercial, social and recreational facilities to the gateway of Portsmouth.” Working in partnership with Portsmouth City Council and Homes England, the new community will support economic growth, create jobs and invest in local projects, as well as deliver 850 new homes, including those for affordable tenures such as shared ownership and affordable rent.

Sustainability, ecology and landscaping are “at the heart of VIVID’s designs,” and the plans include enhancing the waterfront promenade for residents to enjoy, as well as improving the connectivity from the north of Portsmouth to the rest of the city. New flood defences will protect Victory Quay and hundreds of other homes in the area.

Mark Perry, chief executive of VIVID, said: “Our strong partnerships with the council and Homes England enable this regeneration to happen as the size, scale and complexity of this development can only happen when these partnerships combine. Together we have the expertise and financial strength to complete these types of projects which are vital to the region.”

VIVID is underway with extensive decontamination and remediation of the land, and has agreed a plan with Natural England and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust that once completed, the site will be a “haven for wildlife to thrive,” protecting ecology and significantly improving biodiversity.





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Talented 'newcomer' promoted to key PM role by Genesis



The potential shown by construction industry 'newcomer' Josie Scrimgour has been rewarded with a promotion to the key role of project manager at Genesis Homes. She was appointed to the position at Genesis after showing "great promise" since she joined the company less than two years ago.

The 21-year-old started as a trainee Land and Technical Administrator in May 2022, and she has shown great aptitude and enthusiasm which has prompted Genesis' management team to give her greater responsibility for daily operations.

As project manager, Josie will be more involved in land acquisition, progressing planning applications and managing all aspects of upcoming developments to the point of handover to construction and commercial teams.

Josie, who recently attended the two-day Home Builders Federation's Future Talent Conference, is heavily involved in the company's Corporate Social Responsibility programme, particularly raising funds for the company's charities of the year.

Genesis Homes' land and sales director, John Blue, said: "Since joining the company, Josie has impressed the team with her hard work and dedication to creating opportunities across the business. She has become an important member of our team as she strives to learn new things and develop her understanding of the industry, and we are excited to see how she continues to flourish with the extra responsibilities that come with the project manager role."

Insurer picks BoB as charity partner

Small business insurance provider blip has announced Band of Builders (BoB) as its charity partner, offering affordable insurance and support to its network of tradespeople from less than £10 a month.

blip is "built on community, providing affordable, tailored, and easy-to-understand insurance with a pioneering model where members share in the profits collectively." BoB, a registered charity that completes practical projects to help members of the UK construction industry and their families who are battling illness or injury, was "an obvious choice for a partner," said blip. They share a common mission for "removing stress and worry in times of crisis for tradespeople and offering peace of mind when starting or running a business," said the insurer.

The partnership will see blip support BoB through charitable sponsorship and by providing blip members the opportunity to donate the value of up to 10% of their premium to BoB through its pioneering profit-share model.

Green light for plans to turn Nottingham office into 200 apartments

Plans to rejuvenate the site of a derelict office building in Nottingham have taken a significant step forward as Rainier Developments has received planning approval for a residential project close to the railway station. Waterway House aims to "breathe new life into the area" with the creation of nearly 200 modern apartments.

Designed by BDP, the 0.62-acre site is being transformed into a highly sustainable, "community-led place," including an eight-storey residential block featuring 191 one and two-bedroom apartments. The development will contribute to the city's overall housing stock mix and meet the significant demand for homes in the city.

The design approach blends the surrounding urban and suburban



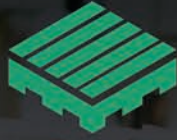
landscape and also incorporates a smaller southern block as a transitional element, which reflects the shift from city scale to suburban living. In line with Nottingham City Council's commitment to become the first carbon neutral city in the country by 2028, the new homes are designed to reduce carbon emissions in accordance with the Future Homes Standard which sets out the Government's pathway for net zero homes. Amongst other sustainable design interventions, the homes include green roofs, solar panels and air source heat pumps.

The integration of green spaces is inspired by suburban life in Nottingham and the connection with green areas nearby. Terraces "adorned with greenery" extend into a central courtyard, creating a "direct correlation between the built environment and the green corridor of Meadows Way, said Rainier. The project seeks a net gain in biodiversity through the inclusion of integrated bird and bat boxes and wildlife-friendly planting, protecting local habitats and species from the changing climate.

The "360° development" will enable residents living on the ground floor to have access to their apartments directly from street-level. The apartments are raised up to provide some privacy, offering views of the green space while enabling "active frontages" on Arkwright Street, Newthorpe Street and Waterway Street.

In respect of the local architectural character, Waterway House will utilise design features and materials that reflect and reference the nearby Victorian buildings, using inset windows, brick colours and details which are "reminiscent of the personality of central Nottingham."

With planning approval secured, Rainier Developments is poised to commence work in the first half of 2024.



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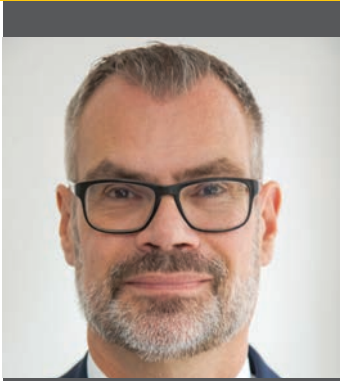
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Brian Berry

THE INDUSTRY ADVOCATE

A BUSY START TO 2024 & CONCERNS FOR WHAT'S AHEAD

Brian Berry, CEO of the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), summarises the last few months for SMEs and looks towards future challenges lying before firms this year

A tepid Spring Budget, a bold, if not detailed direction for housing from Labour, and the much-anticipated housebuilding report from the Competition and Markets Authority – it has been a busy few months for the UK's small housebuilders.

A BUDGET BEST FORGOTTEN

The Spring Budget could have been an opportunity to kickstart the housing market with building rates stagnant, but the Chancellor did nothing to spur on small housebuilders, or large for that matter. This was an opportunity to reform the planning system, boost local authority planning teams' capacities, and review the financial burdens the planning system places on smaller housebuilders, but again these much-needed reforms have been overlooked.

The Chancellor could have helped to close the construction skills gap ensuring the UK has the workers with the green skills needed to retrofit the UK's homes, and provided support to help small builders deal with the administrative burden of training apprentices. All these areas could have grown the economy, but instead the nation's small housebuilders were left behind.

SHADOW CHANCELLOR MAKES BIG PROMISES

In what was probably her most comprehensive speech yet, the Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves set out Labour's plan for a 'decade of economic renewal' at the Bayes Business School Mais Lecture. This was a rare glimpse at Labour's plans for their potential time in government, the party having been tight-lipped so far. There was a fair time spent on the planning system, which we all know doesn't deliver the homes we need. She made promises to employ hundreds of new planning officers and reintroduce mandatory housing targets.

These are all laudable ambitions and much needed by the sector, but will the UK's purse strings allow it? If we see housing as an investment in growth, which we should, this is

a great investment for the UK taxpayer, which will deliver dividends for the UK economy over time – we need to get Britain back to building.

CMA MARKET REPORT

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation into the state of the housebuilding industry concluded in February after a year of examining the sector. It rightly highlighted the planning system as a problem slowing down delivery of new homes. The CMA findings are a small step forward, especially with an acknowledgement that SMEs are disproportionately affected by the planning system.

However, the report does not provide enough nuance in such a complex market. The report demonstrates a very broad understanding of SME housebuilders – with very little definition given to the range of firms falling within this category, such as micro developers and custom house builders. There are also few international comparisons, which would have helped show that the UK isn't the norm when it comes to house building, with far too much reliance on new firms to deliver most of our homes. Where they did look at international comparisons, the findings are restrained, with little realisation for the potential of areas such as custom build, which makes up more of the housing market in similar countries around the world.

A GENERAL ELECTION LOOMS

We're now racing towards the General Election, with many political pundits putting their money on the Autumn and Labour pushing for one as soon as possible. But the parties are already in election mode with wedge issues, slogans and key policy areas being set out, with more of this to come over the next few months. Given housing is such a critical issue alongside the urgent need to kickstart the economy, let's hope all the political parties prioritise the building of much needed homes in their manifestos, and that words turn into reality!

THE UK IS NOT THE NORM – THERE IS FAR TOO MUCH RELIANCE ON A FEW FIRMS TO DELIVER MOST OF OUR HOUSES



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Tom Dwyer

THE IMPORTANCE OF BACKING APPRENTICESHIPS

As the sector battles an unprecedented shortfall in skilled workers, Tom Dwyer, group production director at Keepmoat discusses how apprenticeships are being embraced to fill the current gap, which amounts to an 30,000 extra construction professionals needed by 2026.

I began my career in the housebuilding industry by enrolling on a bricklaying apprenticeship in 1979. As a bricklayer, it's integral to have a keen eye for detail, and this is built upon in modern apprenticeship learning. When I was studying, it was a sink or swim type environment, and I learnt the power of proactivity and problem solving. I didn't always have someone on hand to ask, so I had to be solutions driven and grow my independence.

Team work, communication and time management were also fantastic transferable skills that I first began to hone as an apprentice bricklayer. Working on site and having set deadlines to complete my portion of the work broadened my understanding of the bigger picture, and also led to my first leadership experiences.

Ultimately, all these skills that were first practised as an apprentice are the bread and butter in my current role as production director at Keepmoat. Without having been able to build upon my independence, understanding of the wider working world and communication as an apprentice, my career would look very different.

WHY IS THERE A SHORTFALL OF SKILLED WORKERS IN THE INDUSTRY?

The construction industry has a notoriously ageing workforce, who are likely set to retire in the next five to 10 years. This, along with a dramatic fall in 16 to 30-year-olds entering the construction industry means there is a less agile and less digitally literate workforce, resulting in a need for skilled workers.

As a specialist in providing local employment opportunities and training to inspire careers in construction, Keepmoat is addressing the skills shortage head-on by educating young people on the exciting opportunities available via our school outreach and apprenticeship programmes.



Tyler Mudie, apprentice at Keepmoat Homes

The UK is also experiencing the ripples of an ageing population and the construction sector is set to see more skills leave the industry than any other area. By championing training and development and understanding that we have a clear responsibility to help deliver a sustainable future, apprenticeships prioritise hands-on education in a way that will inspire the next generation to choose a career in construction.

HOW CAN APPRENTICESHIPS HELP REDUCE THE SHORTFALL OF WORKERS?

The construction industry needs a new generation of skilled workers to fill the skills gap and replace an ageing workforce.

KEEPMOAT IS ADDRESSING THE SKILLS SHORTAGE HEAD-ON BY EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE

Apprenticeships can be a great solution to help reduce the shortfall, by providing hands-on training, helping individuals gain practical experience and valuable skills that are necessary for success in the workforce.

Additionally, apprenticeships often offer a pathway to full-time employment, which can be especially beneficial for those who may not have pursued higher education or have had difficulty finding work in the past. Through apprenticeships, individuals can gain the necessary skills to become productive and valuable members of the workforce, helping to fill the current gap in the job market.

APPRENTICE CASE STUDY

Carla Wylie is a 28 year old single mother, who is currently undertaking her Level 4 site supervisor apprenticeship at Keepmoat's Farington Mews in Leyland. Carla has always dreamed of working



Keiran Frankland, Keepmoat apprentice on site

in construction, despite it being a traditionally male-dominated industry.

She started her training with Keepmoat by undertaking a one-month work

experience placement to get a better understanding of the site manager role, as well as the housebuilding industry as a whole.

During this placement, Carla spent some of her time working alongside the site management team, and this gave her an understanding of the responsibilities which are involved with working in site management, including an insight into the working day of a site manager.

Carla has tips for others looking to take up a similar role: "My advice to anyone currently undertaking an apprenticeship, or thinking about it in the future, would be that every day is a school day. Listen, learn, and don't be afraid to ask questions!" She continues: "It's important to have a positive attitude and to try to find solutions to problems that arise. Apprenticeships are a great way to earn whilst you learn, which has been essential for me so I can provide for my son."

WITHOUT BUILDING UPON MY INDEPENDENCE, UNDERSTANDING OF THE WIDER WORKING WORLD AND COMMUNICATION AS AN APPRENTICE, MY CAREER WOULD LOOK VERY DIFFERENT

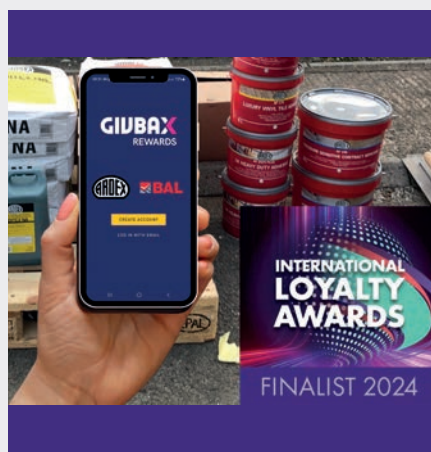
GivBax Rewards shortlisted for top international award

GivBax Rewards – the new loyalty programme from the ARDEX Group UK – has been named as a finalist for a prestigious international award. The programme – designed for users of BAL or ARDEX tiling or flooring products – has made the shortlist in the Best B2B category at the International Loyalty Awards.

ARDEX Group UK is up against global giants including Budweiser, Ferrero and ExxonMobil which is already proving testament to the success to date of GivBax Rewards and recognition of such a leading programme.

The International Loyalty Awards celebrate excellence, innovation and best practice in the loyalty industry from across the world. This iconic contest celebrates the loyalty industry's most exceptional projects on a global scale. Testament to the longevity of the awards, is the high esteem in which they are held across the world and the exceptionally high standards adhered to.

All categories are judged by an influential and respected judging panel, which comprises over 25 loyalty experts working in all markets and sectors. They have a wealth of experience working in loyalty and know what it takes to shine and succeed in our ever-changing competitive world. The judging is robust, credible and transparent including shortlisting, pre-scoring and a judging session over three days when the panel discusses each entry in



detail to select the winners.

GivBax Rewards has been recognised in this global shortlist due to both the ease-of-use member benefits provided by innovative receipt-scanning technology and cash reward redemption via ATMs, together with its success to benefit so many ARDEX and BAL customers in just six months.

Within six months of launch 8.8% of ARDEX Group UK sales have been logged within the program, with a 73% member engagement rate.

For the first time ever, the public will also be able to vote for their favourite loyalty

programme in a new category – "The 2024 International Loyalty Programme of the Year – As Voted by the Public." This will be open to all finalists in every category.

Voting took place in March, with the winners being announced in Dubai on 24th April.

David Hackett, managing director at ARDEX Group UK, said: "Being named as a finalist for this prestigious award is a testament to the innovative forward-thinking nature of the ARDEX Group UK – where we are always looking at ways to add-value to our products and services."

"Despite only being six months old, GivBax Rewards has already seen more than 17% of our total customer base signing-up and using the programme, with tens of thousands of pounds worth of redemptions being made – that is cash back directly into the pockets of fixers and floor layers across the country. GivBax members have been blown away by the programme, which is shown by the numerous positive reviews submitted as part of the award entry."

Check out ARDEX and BAL's social media accounts to find out how to vote for GivBax Rewards for "The 2024 International Loyalty Programme of the Year – As Voted by the Public." To find out more about GivBax Rewards or to sign-up to the program visit the website.

01440 714939
ARDEX.co.uk/givbax



Patrick Mooney

ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Patrick Mooney, housing consultant and news editor of *Housing, Management & Maintenance* magazine says the social housing market is in the doldrums, after a Budget which missed the opportunity for wider economic stimulus.

The domestic housing market is a notoriously fickle beast and it relies heavily on stability in the political world, the economy and financial markets in order to thrive. Levels of demand clearly affect prices, but they have much less of an effect on the supply side of housing than you might think.

My opening paragraph is the end of my 'All You Need to Know about Housing' tutorial, but needless to say it might explain why there is so much turmoil in the housing markets operating all over the country at the moment. Elections naturally create uncertainty and instability (except in countries governed by a single party or a despotic leader) and it is estimated that approximately half of the world's population is entitled to vote in general elections taking place this year. All of which means that our domestic housing market is being buffeted by events happening all across the globe, over which we have absolutely no control.

There are further complications in the provision of new social and affordable housing which is heavily reliant on a host of other factors, such as the level of need, the local planning framework and the availability and cost of land. But above all else it depends on the amount of subsidy which social landlords can put in and how much financial support they get from Homes England and/or a host local authority.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

The budget in March provided the UK Government with a golden opportunity to provide a lot of stimulus, investment and reassurance to domestic housing markets, but sadly it failed to do so. As a result, we are potentially facing a year when record low levels of new houses for sale and for rent are delivered. But this is not a new problem. For decades, governments of all persuasions have failed to build enough social homes (in particular) and every year we lose more than we build through right-to-buy sales and demolitions. Last year alone, there was a net loss of nearly 11,700 social homes, while 1.3 million households are stuck on social housing waiting lists in England.

This matters hugely because the housing sector is already failing to meet the needs of those on lower than average incomes.

Social rents are generally around 50% cheaper than private rents and these homes are the only genuinely affordable housing by design, as rents should be tied to local incomes. In human terms we are seeing young children being raised in temporary housing to the detriment of their life chances and a growing number of councils facing bankruptcy and budget cuts running into billions of pounds. Among the recent figures released on homelessness by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, are the following:

- The number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation hit a record high in England with 109,000 households in temporary accommodation which is up 10% in a year;
- Some 142,490 children are homeless and living in temporary accommodation with their families. This is another record high and it is up by 16,960 (14%) in a year;
- These figures include nearly 20,000 babies aged under one, nearly 9,000 infants aged between one and two and about 8,200 aged two to three, with over 40,000 children of primary school age in temporary accommodation, fractionally under 1% of all state primary pupils across England;
- An investigation into child deaths found that living in temporary accommodation was a factor in the unexpected deaths of 55 children between April 2019 and March 2023, with 42 of the deceased under 12 months of age.

To this rash of horrific statistics, we can add:

- The number of people sleeping rough in England has more than doubled since 2010 when the data started being collected – rising by 120%;
- The latest count shows 3,898 people were recorded sleeping rough on a given night in 2023, a 27% increase in one year;
- 26,311 households in England have been removed from their homes by court bailiffs as a result of Section 21 since the Government first promised to scrap no-fault evictions in 2019;
- In the past year 9,457 households were kicked out of their homes by bailiffs, up by 49% from 6,339 households in 2022;

THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL HOMES BEING BUILT HAS BEEN ON A DOWNWARD TRAJECTORY FOR YEARS, BUT HAS NOW REACHED AN ABSOLUTE LOW POINT



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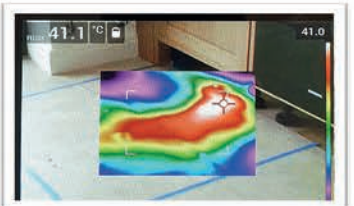
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- A further 30,230 landlords in England started Section 21 no-fault eviction court proceedings in 2023 – a 28% rise in one year.

As if these figures are not frightening enough, the housing charity Shelter has found that most renters move out before the end of their notice period to avoid the eviction claim going to court, so the repossession statistics only show part of a much bigger problem. Shelter adds that it takes a third of tenants (34%) longer than two months to find a new home the last time they moved,

The Government first promised to scrap no fault evictions back in 2019 and in May 2023, it finally committed to the policy by publishing the Renters (Reform) Bill. But more recently they said the ban will only be introduced after unspecified court reforms take place, threatening to deny and delay the change renters were promised almost five years ago, until some unspecified date after the election.

These are all symptoms of a supply system which is suffering from extreme stress, particularly in the under-provision of new social homes being provided by councils and housing associations. The number of social homes being built has been on a downward trajectory for years, but has now reached an absolute low point. In short, the situation is pretty dire.

A READY-MADE SOLUTION

Yet just before the budget, the National Housing Federation (NHF) and Shelter teamed up to submit a growth plan to the chancellor which could have delivered about 90,000 social (or affordable) homes and which more than paid for itself in just three years by providing a massive boost to the rest of the economy and in particular the construction sector. Jeremy Hunt could have been a hero by embracing this plan, but instead

he identified the need to cut benefits from those voters who would normally occupy these low rent homes and who he considered to be non-deserving. In deciding to take this line, he instead became the villain of the piece.

The plan showed that within just three years, the 90,000 social rent homes will have paid for themselves and returned £37.8bn back into the economy, largely by boosting the construction industry. It would directly support nearly 140,000 jobs in the first year alone. In addition the new social homes would generate huge savings for the taxpayer across multiple departments, as follows:

- £4.5bn savings on housing benefit;
- £2.5bn income from construction taxes;
- £3.8bn income from employment taxes;
- £5.2bn savings to the NHS;
- £4.5bn savings from reduction in homelessness; and
- £3.3bn savings to Universal Credit.

The total economic and social benefits of building 90,000 social rent homes would generate £51.2bn net over 30 years (which is £86.5bn gross), including a £12bn profit to the taxpayer. Given the state of the nation's finances, these figures are far too large to just be dismissed out of hand, yet Mr Hunt appears to have done just this.

INVESTMENT IS THE SOLUTION

Polly Neate, chief executive of Shelter, commented: "Homelessness is a political choice. By ignoring the vast number of people losing their homes, he is harming both the economy and people whose lives are being wrecked by homelessness. The Chancellor is right that investment is the best way to improve productivity. Had he invested in building 90,000 social homes a year he could end homelessness, save

the taxpayer money, boost jobs, reduce the burden of poor housing on our NHS and improve children's life chances.

"If this Government or the next is serious about wanting the economy to grow and people to thrive, investing in genuinely affordable housing is a no brainer. Building 90,000 social homes would pay for themselves and return an impressive £37.8bn back to the economy in just three years."

Alongside the Budget, the Government set out a vision for Leeds to unlock 20,000 homes, and in London, it is establishing the Euston Housing Delivery Group with plans to deliver up to 10,000 new homes. It is also stimulating housing delivery in 20 cities and urban areas, where housing delivery has dipped. Following on from the £188m allocated to housing projects in Sheffield, Blackpool and Liverpool in early March, the Budget allocated over £240m to projects in London, unlocking up to 7,200 homes in Barking and a new life sciences hub and up to 750 homes in Canary Wharf. The trouble is as impressive as these plans and funding allocations are, they will take time to have an impact and they are too late to help today's homeless.

One measure that could help local authorities to deliver more affordable housing, is that the Government increased the cap (from 40% to 50%) on the percentage of the cost of a replacement home that can be funded from right-to-buy receipts. But once again this could be deemed as being too little and too late. It will not have an impact on today or this year's supply of new social homes. The children living in temporary accommodation today will need to be patient if they are to benefit from this. But in the meantime their schooling will be badly disrupted. A 2023 study by Shelter found that over a third of the children placed in temporary accommodation had missed more than a month of school.

In closing Kate Henderson, chief executive of the National Housing Federation said: "Our research showed not only that the housing crisis can be solved, but that this can be done in a way that will save the taxpayer money, boost jobs and bring huge benefits to the wider economy.

Building more social homes is a win-win solution. It will immediately boost the construction industry, supporting thousands of jobs, and will save the Government and taxpayer money over the longer term. It also brings huge benefits to people affected by the housing crisis through reducing homelessness, increasing employment and boosting children's life chances." So, why has the Chancellor chosen to ignore the plan?

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THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE

Part S: Charged with the responsibility

Part S provides clear challenges as well as opportunities for the car charging industry, however while the solutions are available, the requirements for major housing developments remain somewhat mysterious. James Parker spoke to specialist charging firm Fortis EV to find out more.

Part S of the Building Regulations was introduced in 2022 as part of the new set of regulations intended to assist the UK housebuilding sector move towards the much lower carbon emissions that will be required from new homes by the Future Homes Standard, due in 2025. The aims are laudable, but rolling it out across our variety of new housing schemes, from detached dwellings to multi-occupancy, is going to take a huge amount of focus.

The requirements of Part S essentially mean that all new developments (as well as major renovations of 10 or more dwellings), are required to provide EV charging points for residents, but there are a series of issues in terms of the charging infrastructure needed both now and for the future which can make compliance complicated.

The minimum required by the new standard for new builds is that charging points must either be provided for all the parking spaces associated with the new dwellings, or the number of dwellings that a car park in a new scheme serves. Where there are accessible parking

spaces, at least one must have a charging point or a future connection for a point to be added at a later date. And if a scheme has surplus car parking spaces (ie more spaces than dwellings), then ‘cable routes’ can be installed for future charging points – this is a requirement for schemes over 10 dwellings.

Some of the factors for new schemes are unambiguous – charging points have to provide 7 kW ‘trickle charge’ as a minimum, and methods for installing single points per home are fairly established. The challenge is for firms focusing on developments over 10 homes, in terms of working out how much infrastructure for future EV charging they need to provide; covered car parks are a whole different story.

Developers therefore need to establish exactly what they are going to need for compliance, both now and in the future. This could create some confusion, and the guidance in Part S is not totally clear.

Finally, Part S brings in a price cap on EV charging point installation designed to ensure businesses and consumers are not unfairly treated as they switch to EVs – £3,600 per unit. But there are provisions in Part S for where this needs to be exceeded, arguably creating further confusion.

However, according to Will Temperley of charging point specialist provider Fortis EV, this budget constraint doesn’t provide an issue for basic installations: “It’s fairly straightforward, there are a lot of good systems out there now.” However, he adds “there are so many variants”; these include integrating solar and using it to charge the vehicle overnight if battery storage is present, or using Wi-Fi

voice control to turn a charger on and off as needed.

SPARKING INTEREST

In terms of the charging points themselves, Regulation 44J sets out the minimum standards that must be complied with in order to pass Building Control under the new Part S.

As well as being able to power each parking space they cover, and be compatible with all vehicle types, each charging point has to run on its own dedicated circuit. This, plus the fact they are covered by Part P of the Building Regs governing electrical safety, means that they must be installed by a qualified electrician with the appropriate training and certification. The work done has to be inspected and approved by either a registered ‘competent person,’ or local building control, who will then present the installation with a Compliance Certificate.

There are ‘tethered’ and ‘untethered’ charging points – the former have charging cables permanently tethered to the station, but the latter are also termed ‘universal sockets’ and are the required solution under Part S. The Regs allow for tethered points in exceptional circumstances, but only when the vehicle requirements are explicitly clear. They offer versatility for users to charge different cars at different times, if they have different connection types.

FORTIS EV – EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE

In founding Fortis EV in 2020, Will Temperley was moving into a new sector from civils and foundations specifically, having seen the opportunity to apply Fortis Foundations’ experience to deliver charging points in both commercial and domestic markets. Fortis EV doesn’t design the products, but selects from a range of different solutions from providers to present a customer with a workable solution, and installs it.

Temperley says that from the firm’s experience thus far in the housebuilding sector, while installing a single charging point to the outside of a house, or a charge point system for refurbishments, is relatively simple, the overall picture in terms of what needs to be installed for the future in larger schemes is “a bit of a minefield.” While the requirements are





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fairly clear up to 10 car spaces, “above that it’s not really clear what’s going to be happening.” Retrofit of course brings its own share of issues, in particular homes lacking off-street parking, but solutions are available such as underground charging points, and taking the feed from lampposts.

He says the new build challenges become more apparent when it comes to larger dwellings and larger developments where there may be multiple car parking spaces. He says that the “infrastructure needs to be put in place, for future proofing schemes.” Temperley adds that while he is aware that cable ducts and routes are being installed for future installations, “not a lot of (developers) are doing more than they need to at this stage.” He says that the actual commissioning of the charging points will be down to whoever is going to manage those facilities on completion, or once they are sold on.

According to Temperley, the biggest issue is “who’s paying for the electricity,” where the installations are in the forms

of car parks rather than individual spaces for individual homes. In this scenario it tends to be the EV providers themselves, who already operate charging points in major car parks; he believes “you’re going to need an external company,” but says that this is “very much in its infancy.” The challenge is the problem in multi-occupancy of the allocation of points to the correct person, to avoid the scenario, says Temperley of: “my neighbour’s been parking in my spot and using my electricity meter, who’s paying for that?”

Fortis is currently tendering for some larger developments in partnership with major electricity suppliers, after providing full ‘turnkey’ projects for a variety of housing schemes, building on its expertise in the commercial sector. A large amount of their work on domestic installs is burying and capping off cabling infrastructure for future charger installations.

Will believes that in multi-occupancy projects, a charge point station will be required to charge per hour, with designated logins or cards. “People are

going to have to share systems, and ‘buddy’ systems are starting to come in.”

The company is now looking at the realities of multi-occupancy homes and larger developments, as does the whole industry if we are to provide the EV infrastructure hoped for. The best-case scenario of battery storage and PV providing power for both the home and a vehicle may be some way off for such schemes, but the industry is developing practical solutions.

Despite the Government watering down several of its net zero goals, the zero-emission vehicle mandate means there remains a target for 80% of all new car sales to be electric by 2030. This means that developers, electricians and the EV industry generally need to get together now to discover best practice, and the Government needs to focus on increasing industry capacity to an unprecedented scale to deliver the installations.

Will Temperley is founder of Fortis Foundations

PART 5 BRINGS IN A PRICE CAP ON EV CHARGING POINT INSTALLATION DESIGNED TO ENSURE BUSINESSES AND CONSUMERS ARE NOT UNFAIRLY TREATED



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Setting up base



An ambitious project in Gosport demonstrates how utilising modern methods of construction is possible for all kinds of developments, as VerdeGO Living's David Craddock explains to Roseanne Field

Portsmouth is a city known for its naval history. Since the 15th century it's been a key hub for Navy activity, with various bases around the city's waterfront. One such base is Priddy's Hard, located near Gosport, overlooking the Historic Dockyard and Gunwharf Quays across the harbour.

Priddy's Hard was an ordnance depot, established in the mid-1700s. It was a naval fortress and produced munitions for the Navy until being decommissioned in the 1980s, at which point it was passed to Gosport Borough Council, before being passed on again to the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust, who also own the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The brownfield site is within a Conservation Area, and contains a number of listed buildings and structures, as well as being a listed Scheduled Ancient Monument, meaning it has been identified as a nationally important archeological site and is protected from "unauthorised change." It also borders a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Ramsar Site – a designated wetland of international importance under Ramsar Convention.

Despite the dilapidated state of the historically significant site and buildings – several of which were on the Buildings at Risk Register – getting to the stage of being able to make use of the site and

save the decaying buildings was anything but easy, as David Craddock, founder of low energy housebuilder VerdeGO Living discovered.

He first bought part of the site in 2016, and has since bought more of it in phases. The first phase consisted of the construction of nine modern units in collaboration with John Pardey, and received recognition from the RTPI for its architecture.

Craddock has an extensive background in the construction of low energy buildings, having worked with closed timber panel systems for many years, as well as being a founding member of the Passivhaus Trust. "I've been very much involved in sustainable low energy buildings for a long time, looking at all forms of MMC and different types of renewable energy sources and ways in which we can heat and ventilate and cool our buildings," he explains. "Not only from the end use for the customer, but how we can improve our construction processes."

A COMPLEX CASE

It was following the construction of the initial nine units that things started to get a little more complicated. The Trust had the opportunity to obtain grant funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and so discussions about developing sections

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of the site began between them and VerdeGO. In order to receive the funding, the Trust needed to match the amount, from their own funds or by raising funds by selling parts of the site.

VerdeGO put forward a proposal to build within the confines of the site, as well as convert one of the Grade II listed buildings, and have one delisted in order to demolish it to facilitate new houses. “It was hugely complex,” says Craddock. “There was a huge amount of stakeholders, the vagaries of our planning process, and the amount of consultees we had to engage with.”

The Environment Agency were involved due to the site’s location on the shoreline meaning there were issues with flooding and water ingress. Ecologists and Natural England were also involved as the site is home to overwintering birds, great crested newts, badgers and slow worms. There were also complications to navigate due to the SSSI and Ramsar site.

One of the more complicated matters was the Scheduled Ancient Monument listing. “It’s probably more complex than dealing with a Grade I listed building, because it’s purely the shape of the landscape so if you even put a shovel in, it changes the shape and integrity of the monument,” Craddock explains. The site’s history meant there were Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) surveys

to do, plus issues with nitrates, and the usual planning obstacles relating to architecture, style, and mass. “It was layer upon layer of challenges – everything you don’t want on a site you had on that one,” says Craddock.

Historic England were initially concerned about the harm that would be caused to the site as a whole. “It had to be balanced with the benefit of taking a lot of buildings off the At Risk Register,” Craddock explains. “We had to take people down a journey and engage them, to demonstrate the value of what we were doing.”

Some of the reluctance stemmed from the nature of VerdeGO’s proposal – housing, and more specifically the size, number, types and style. There was also initial apprehension from locals, although Craddock believes the understanding that the derelict, dilapidating site would be rejuvenated won people over. “To see impactful change was really good for the area,” he says.

Despite the extensive challenges, they gained unanimous approval when the application was finally submitted, and the Trust was able to secure the funding. The application was for both VerdeGO’s housing and the Trust’s refurbishment of the listed buildings, which the funding was used for. Refurbishments included the conversion

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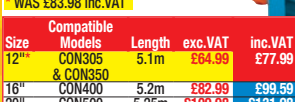
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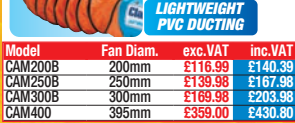
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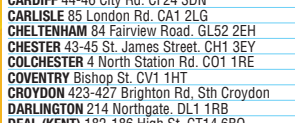
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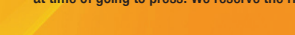
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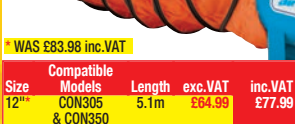
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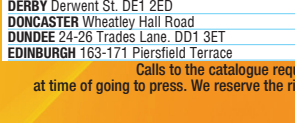
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Landscaping was treated delicately due to the Scheduled Ancient Monument listing, with archaeologists overlooking everything

of one into a brewery and one into a pub. “The local economy has benefited from this,” Craddock explains. “We’ve also built a flood defence that protects over 200 homes from flooding, so there’s a big community benefit.”

THE DEVELOPMENT

The project was split into three phases including the construction of the initial nine houses; phase two consisted of 21 houses, and the final phase of eight which is currently being finished. This includes a mixture of new builds and conversion of existing buildings: Ordnance Yard, nine contemporary homes; Moat House, a modern house linking old and new; Cook House, a terrace of four three-storey houses; Cartridge Close, a selection of three and four bedroom homes over three floors; Canary Yard, four two bedroom houses within the converted Grade II listed former Shell Painting Room; and Cordite Way, three contemporary houses within the confines of the old Rampart.

“Everything is very different,” Craddock says. For example, within the converted homes vaulted ceilings highlight the original iron work. Others feature undercroft parking, and some having living rooms on the top floors to maximise on the views across the site and over to the Spinnaker Tower, Gunwharf Quays and Historic Dockyard.

Landscaping was treated delicately due to the Scheduled Ancient Monument listing, with archaeologists overlooking everything.

MAXIMISING ON MMC & SUSTAINABILITY

All of the houses utilise modern methods of construction (MMC). “You’ve got this real juxtaposition of the very old historical setting with very modern, forward-thinking processes and systems,” Craddock says. MMC wasn’t part of VerdeGO’s plan from the outset, although it was something very much on Craddock’s radar. It came about when he realised they could utilise one of the derelict buildings on the site to set up their own timber frame manufacturing facility, that could be used not only to construct these houses but also for future projects.

Craddock was – and still is – determined to research and develop different types of timber frame construction designs to find the most efficient system. “This was really about creating a facility which has low costs in terms of capital setup, and the machinery required, while still being scalable and allowing the building of very high quality homes in an efficient and cost effective way,” he explains. It was important to him the capital cost remained low, in order to keep the required volume moving through the factory low and therefore viable.

David Craddock’s background in sustainable construction meant as well as his knowledge of closed panel systems, he had a lot of experience using a range of efficient and sustainable products. He wanted to bring all these elements together to create the most efficient houses possible and streamline the whole

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process, looking at offsite manufactured foundation systems, offsite manufactured superstructure, offsite sub-assemblies like doorsets and prefinished skirting boards, intelligent home management systems, infrared heating panels, battery storage, inverters, PV panels, and fractional hot water cylinders. “I wanted to bring all those bits in to simplify the whole thing, reduce the amount of time spent onsite, and increase the quality of the product,” he says. “You need to demonstrate it in practice so people sit up and take notice.”

The PV panels maximise on each house generating as much energy as possible which is distributed through batteries and infrared heating panels, while the hot water is managed by fractional hot water cylinders. Figures from the completed homes show the heating accounts for only 20% of the energy consumption and the hot water 40%, and what Craddock describes as “unregulated” elements such as TVs and washing machines the remaining 40%. These statistics are another important element, Craddock says, in demonstrating the benefits of utilising these construction methods and technologies.

Aside from sustainability, one of the other major draws for Craddock is the speed of construction. “I look at things with a fairly forensic approach, and break it down into 30 minute segments as to how quickly we can build a building,” he explains. Part of this includes looking at

how soil can be repurposed as aggregate, to minimise muck away and what needs bringing in. At Priddy’s Hard, a NUSpan foundation system manufactured offsite and craned into position was used, which enabled them to do the foundations of 17 houses in two days.

Finding the right foundation system was crucial as they had to be careful how much digging they did into the Scheduled Ancient Monument. “We tried to keep everything as it is, put piles in and build on top of those, being as least intrusive as possible,” Craddock explains. They then put the timber frame system directly on top, which required no insulation or screed, meaning the stairs could go straight in.

Having the house weathertight so quickly meant external brickwork and internal finish works were able to take place at the same time. No tiling was used, with VerdeGO opting instead for a Fibo wall panel, which Craddock says not only helped with the sustainability calculations but also negated the need for a trade, making it more efficient all round.

The doorsets were all factory finished, arriving as a whole package including architraves, intumescent strips, and all ironmongery. “It means the quality of the first is the same as the last, you get continuity,” says Craddock. “It reduces the amount of snagging you’re likely to do.” They used a timber effect board made



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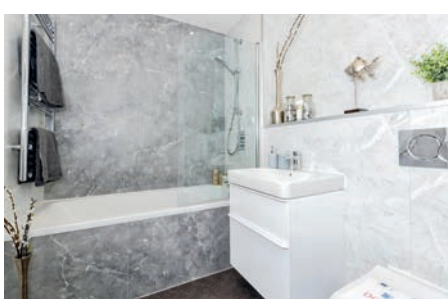
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They also make use of spray plastering, which is quicker to apply, dries faster and requires less painting over. Everything used on the project are things Craddock says developers may be using already in isolation: "The difference is we've combined all of them with a very efficient build system and process," he says. The speed at which builds can happen is an element the industry needs to be prepared for, he believes, so as not to get caught out with procurement. "You need to reshape your procurement and programmes to improve the process and output and maximise on the value of MMC," he says.

The new owners of the homes have embraced the technology installed, which Craddock says is simple to use. "People can make it out to be complex but it's just a change of mindset." Not expecting too much from the buyers was part of the reason they opted not to aim for Passivhaus certification. "I didn't want to put MVHR in because for it to be efficient, filters need to be changed; the house needs to be operated and sealed in a certain fashion. This way they don't need to live their life in a different way," he says.

RECOGNITION & AWARENESS

As well as using it for their own developments, the factory manufactures frames for other developers, contractors and housing associations. It encompasses a showroom of sorts, as well as the manufacturing element, which showcases various products VerdeGO offer and use. "We use that as an educational facility to talk people through the whole process, all the different products that we use, and the output you get once you use them," Craddock explains. "It's not just about buying a frame, it's about trying to educate people about sustainable, low energy, low carbon building."

Building small local factories as part of large scale developments also keeps the money within the local community – another of Craddock's drivers. "I want to build local homes for local people using local labour," he says. "You're also educating and training people in new skills."

Craddock is passionate about the industry catching up with what he calls "building in the 21st century." He believes the construction industry is bogged down by the way things have always been done, because of familiarity and ease, and while

these methods will always have their place, MMC is the future. "We're being so much more mindful now of our whole house carbon emissions," he says. "By having these projects, it shows it can be and is being done, and it can be scalable."

He believes that MMC actually derisks the whole build process. "You still have that A to Z of construction – you start with an open field and hand over a set of keys – but it's reshuffling it," he says. "You concertina jobs into one, reducing the number of items and therefore the element of risk."

The company is currently looking at a development of 49 units near Cambridge, and are working with a housing association on supplying the superstructure for a development of 80 houses.

To really get people to consider MMC, he believes recognition and awareness is vital. The project has won several awards, including WhatHouse? Awards 2021 Best Small Housebuilder and Best Sustainable Development, and the British Homes Awards 2021 Sustainable Development of the Year. It also helped form part of the Future Homes Standard specification. "Recognition is important," says Craddock. "It enabled us to create a demonstrator model that others can look at and reference."

Further validation has come from a report by Leeds Beckett University and independent assessor Build Test Solutions, which found that VerdeGO timber frame houses performed up to 22% better on in-use energy performance versus that predicted by SAP. This is compared with "traditionally built homes" which the test found performed 59% worse than SAP predictions. In addition, energy bills on the timber frame VerdeGO houses were 50% less than a house with an air source heat pump, according to the Heat Transfer Coefficient study, which was undertaken over a three week period in winter.

The overall area has benefitted from the project with the addition of the flood defences, as well as the creation of the brewery and pub. The current residents are very happy, and with the final phase's residents set to be the first to have walked in the area since 1750, Craddock says overall it's a "special place. It's such a unique spot."

With the project nearing its end, Craddock looks back on it fondly. "It's been a really long journey, but one that I'm eminently proud of," he says. "We've been able to demonstrate that using MMC and being aware of sustainable housebuilding systems and technologies is something we can all do. This is a standard everyone can aspire to, and everyone can benefit from." ■

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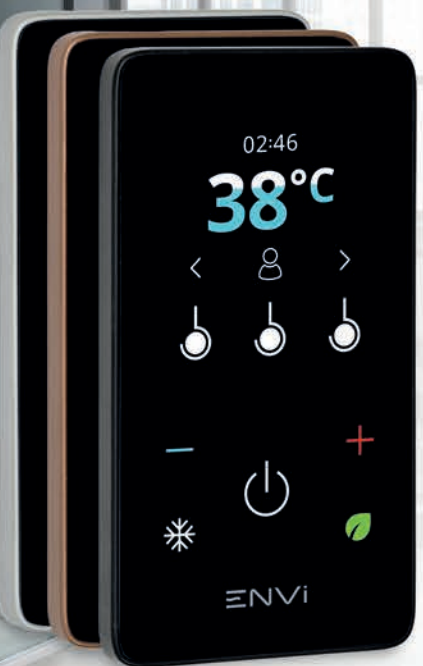
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SHOW PREVIEW

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SHOW OF STRENGTH

InstallerSHOW, the UK's biggest event focusing on the sustainable delivery of heat, water, air and energy for all those responsible for decarbonising our built environment, returns to the NEC, Birmingham from 25-27 June, bigger and better than ever!

The show will be 50% larger than last year, with 20,000 visitors enjoying more features and theatres designed to educate and inspire, with content created for local authorities, housing associations, developers, architects, energy managers and building services engineers. The 10 content streams will cover both domestic and non-domestic buildings, as well as kitchens and bathrooms, solar energy, smart buildings and the electrification of heat.

After a successful launch at last year's InstallerSHOW, the Housing Hub will be returning for 2024, with a programme of content designed for housebuilders and housing associations, as well as those working in the supply chain delivering energy efficiency to homes. Our facilitators for the Housing Hub will be journalists Rachel England and Jim McClelland.

Our content partners for the Housing Hub include the National Retrofit Hub and the National Home Improvement Council. We'll be addressing topics relevant for both newbuild and refurbishment projects, all designed to help our audience make homes healthier, more energy efficient and affordable. Sessions will include the Future Homes Standard, taking a fabric first approach to retrofit, designing low carbon homes and the Building Safety Act. Speakers will include Cala Homes, Longhurst Group and Siemens.

We'll also have a session from the Welsh Government, talking about its Optimised RetroFit Programme and how it might be adopted by other housing organisations looking for a whole house, pragmatic, approach to decarbonising existing homes, that takes into account the fabric or materials homes are made from and the way we heat and store energy.

OVER 600 EXHIBITORS

The exhibitors will offer a huge selection of products and solutions to help deliver sustainable buildings. Sectors represented include heating and plumbing, renewable energy, electric vehicle infrastructure, kitchens and bathrooms, energy storage, software and digital solutions, ventilation, water efficiency and more. Some of the names you can expect to see are Vaillant, Polypipe, Heat Geek, Ford, E.ON, Aico, Climalife, Danfoss, Haier, Nesta, Kingspan, Mixergy, Passiv UK and Wilo UK. Many exhibitors will be offering demos and taster training sessions, with the chance to get hands-on with the latest products and speak to the firms. Check the new products section of our website for the latest on launches at InstallerSHOW 2024.

The Invent area is dedicated to new inventions from forward-thinking companies. The products featured range from ingenious tech devices powered by data, to cutting edge digital solutions – it is a glimpse into the next generation of industry innovations.

The goal of InstallerSHOW is to ensure that every visitor's experience is both enjoyable and worthwhile – whether their priorities are to network with the supply chain, enhance their knowledge, get hands-on with new products, or meet up with their peers. There is truly something for everyone at InstallerSHOW. What's more, parking and entry are free.

Michael Costain, managing director at organiser Lyrical Communications, comments: "InstallerSHOW has grown in size by almost 600% since 2021, reflecting the appetite for knowledge around the journey towards net zero. At its heart, though, it retains the sense of community and togetherness that has made it a staple on the calendar for installers and specifiers alike. A visit to InstallerSHOW is undoubtedly a smart move on a professional level, but it's also a whole lot of fun."

Article Supplied by Installer Show



All the latest news on InstallerSHOW 2024 is available at
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Marmox hat trick at InstallerSHOW

This year's InstallerSHOW being held at the NEC Birmingham (25-27th June) will see waterproofing and insulation specialist, Marmox joining some 600 other companies as it showcases a selection of proven products, including its Showerlay and Minilay solutions, on Stand 4D27.

The Kent based company will also be exhibiting its widely specified Multiboard range, able to waterproof and insulate wetrooms, bathrooms, and kitchens. Available in varying thicknesses from 4 mm to 60 mm, or as bath panel kits, niches and pipe boxing, the versatile Multiboard can be used on floors, walls and ceilings to help create an effective tanking solution.

Visitors will meanwhile be able to see the functionality of Marmox Showerlay, which is used to create a stylish wetroom floor – comprising pre-sloped flooring panels with integral drainage used to create 'level access' tiled shower area. When specified with Multiboard, an exceptionally stable 'decoupling' surface is created to tile over. The combination therefore provides thermal insulation and a completely impermeable barrier to water, while offering excellent load-carrying capacity for accessibility.

To complete the hat trick, the Minilay option provides the flexibility and freedom to transform any concrete substrate into a tiled wetroom floor. Marmox Minilay units are supplied with a choice of 705 mm long stainless steel linear grate or a 120 x 120 mm stainless



steel square grate.

With up to 20,000 visitors expected at this summer's InstallerSHOW, Marmox is aiming to connect with many more installers, specifiers and property owners, where its experienced

team will be on hand to offer advice and project specific guidance.

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Schlüter-Systems showcasing the best in tile installation systems

Schlüter-Systems is highlighting some of the company's most popular products at this year's Installer Show. Among the products on display will be: KERDI-200 waterproofing membrane; Low height, linear drainage set KERDI-LINE-G3; KERDI-TS waterproofing strip for bathtubs and shower trays; KERDI-BOARD-NLT prefabricated niche with LED lighting; LIPROTEC illuminated profiles and DITRA-HEAT electric underfloor heating system. In addition, the team will be performing product demonstrations to highlight the best practices in waterproofing, featuring the NHBC-compliant KERDI-BOARD, a tileable, waterproof backerboard. Visitors will be able to find out more about the company's established, market-leading training days, while also exploring how to become a Schlüter-approved Installer. Installers can also enter a daily "Quickest installation" competition to see who can fit the DITRA-HEAT Peel & Stick underfloor heating system in the quickest time possible! Their portfolio ensures durability, performance, and aesthetic excellence in a wide range of commercial and residential projects. As well as its comprehensive and well-illustrated website, Schlüter-Systems offers a technical advisory service able to give project specific guidance on product specification and installation.

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Protect FrameSafe FR has been independently fire tested by an external laboratory both free hanging as well as part of a system in an end use application, fixed over A1 and A2 substrates using Protect FR tape, which is also available to seal laps. It is fully compliant with the test methods contained within EN 13501-1, making it the perfect solution for higher risk buildings as defined in the 2022 Building Safety Act, including student accommodation, schools, hospitals, offices and care homes as well as being suitable for many developments in London where there is a combustible material ban on external walls of buildings. In addition, the product can be used for housing developments where the property wall has a minimum separation distance of 1m to the relevant boundary.

Suitable for use on a wide range of residential and commercial developments, Protect FrameSafe FR provides strong UV



stability and up to six months exposure before being covered. It is ideal for modular and offsite construction projects, for use on both steel and timber framed buildings as well as on high rise buildings with full rainscreen cladding systems.

Produced in the UK, Protect FrameSafe FR is both UKCA and CE marked with full independent fire test certification. For further product details please visit

glidevaleprotect.com/framesafe or for all recommended mechanical fixings and full specification guidance contact Glidevale Protect's technical team at technical@glidevaleprotect.com.

More information can be found on the website or follow Glidevale Protect on LinkedIn.

info@glidevaleprotect.com
glidevaleprotect.com



Marmox 'goes round the houses' at Futurebuild

Visitors to this spring's FutureBuild exhibition were drawn to the Marmox stand D26 by a diverse mix of products. The renowned UK manufacturer had its knowledgeable sales team on hand to explain the merits of its debutant fire-rated insulation panel. Fireboard is the new high performance internal and external wall insulation (XPS) board which shares Marmox's honeycomb surface structure with Multiboard to create an A1 non-combustible certified render-backer which is weatherproof. Importantly, it can be used internally across walls or ceilings to take a plaster finish, while providing sound absorption as well as thermal insulation. Fireboard is 'Resistant to Fire' with the following accreditation: BS EN 1182, EN 1716 and EN13823. Marmox's marketing manager, Grant Terry, comments: "We saw a very positive response from contractors, consultants and other specifiers to the new Fireboard which offers a practical and economic answer to multiple challenges in both new build and refurbishment situations and there was similar enthusiasm for our recently extended Slicedstone range, which presents thin veneers of natural sandstone on a stabilised backing, which makes it simple to install either internally or externally as a very versatile finish. Our team have returned from the show with a lot of new contacts and dozens of leads to follow up."

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



CCF appoints new Head of Customer Sustainability

Insulation, drywall, and ceiling product distributor CCF has appointed Phil Monkman to the newly created role of head of customer sustainability as part of its ongoing commitment to improving environmental and operational efficiency within the supply chain. As head of customer sustainability, Phil will build on CCF's commitment to developing practical solutions to help customers meet their own targets for a lower carbon future. It's a role centred around innovation – he'll be developing new ways of working collaboratively through the entire supply chain, looking at the key issues of reducing carbon emissions, increasing recycling and supporting waste management, to deliver tangible results for its customers. One of the key initiatives that CCF has introduced in the last 12 months is its new carbon reporting service. Currently in its first phase of development, this new tool will help improve the carbon footprint of the distribution link in the supply chain as well as making the materials delivery process as energy efficient as possible. In his new role, Phil will collaborate with CCF's development team as well as customers and suppliers to unlock future innovation and best practice that will benefit the entire supply chain. For more information about CCF's products and services, please visit the website.

www.ccfstd.co.uk www.ccfstd.co.uk/content/sustainability



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AeroBarrierUK headlines Future of Airtightness event at the Building Performance Hub

AeroBarrierUK, a trailblazer in air-tightness solutions, took centre stage at the Building Performance Hub event held on Wednesday, 10th January. This event, attended by devolved government representatives and UK government advisors, highlighted AeroBarrierUK's Connect Sealing System as a groundbreaking innovation, demonstrating a significant leap towards scaling low-energy, low-carbon homes through reducing draughts.

The Future of Airtightness event also showcased a number of industry innovations, with AeroBarrierUK headlining the days with a live seal of the Building Performance Hub's Training Suite. This demonstration culminated in an impressive draught reduction two-thirds to achieve outstanding low-energy airtightness

results of 1.23 ACH50, providing EnerPHit-standard airtightness results. Furthermore, AeroBarrierUK's award-winning system achieved this in under one hour of sealing time, with its targeted and scientific sealing system using less than 1.5 litres of material – reducing on-site waste, improving delivery speed and guaranteeing improved energy performance.

AeroBarrier Connect, the revolutionary sealing system at the core of AeroBarrierUK's success, guarantees a specific level of air tightness. Using patented technology, the system employs a modified blower door test, pressurizing buildings and applying a non-toxic mist coat to seamlessly seal any leaks. Real-time monitoring of air-tightness levels ensures predictability, repeatability, and reliability for both domestic and commercial projects.

The AeroBarrier System addresses gaps as minuscule as the width of a human hair up to 12 mm, achieving air-tightness ratings ranging from the UK building standard of 5 m³/hm² to outstanding Passivhaus levels of 0.11 m³/hm². Its efficiency, proven to be at least three times faster than traditional methods, mitigates concerns about human error and test failures during construction, enhancing overall quality assurance.

Utilizing a blower door test, the AeroBarrier team analyses real-time data readings to track the distribution of the sealant in the space.

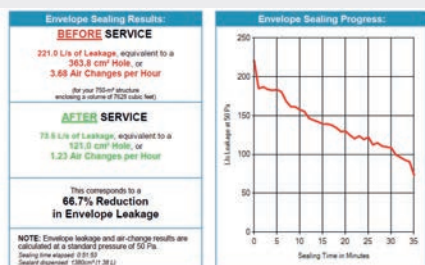
The Building Performance Hub Training Suite – sealed during a live demonstration by AeroBarrierUK. © BCTA Group



Once the desired air-tightness level is achieved, the sealing process concludes, followed by a final blower door test to verify the results. Post-sealing cleanup takes mere minutes, allowing other site work to resume shortly thereafter. Clients receive a Certificate of Completion detailing pre- and post-leakage results for the work undertaken.

AeroBarrier's sealant, a water-soluble organic compound, is proven safe with ultra-low volatile organic compounds (VOC) and GreenGuard Gold certification. Its inactive nature eliminates the need for chemical reactions to form a seal, ensuring no off-gassing or airborne release of harmful chemicals into building envelopes, maintaining the designed indoor air quality.

01432 513 499 www.aerobarrieruk.co.uk



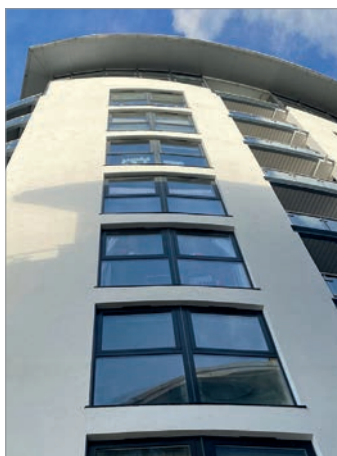
Envelope Leakage Report from the Building Performance Hub – 2/3 of all draughts removed in under 60 minutes. © AeroBarrierUK



Wraptite® offers protection for innovative ecological house

The Wraptite external air barrier system from A. Proctor Group has provided the significant benefits of airtightness, enhanced build quality and protection from the elements for a sea loch facing property on the isle of North Uist in the Outer Hebrides. 7-22 Systems Ltd, an ecological construction business has built a small house and artist's studio utilising its unique, ecological, prefabricated offsite building system. The key requirements for the project at 27 Lochport, North Uist, included the speed of assembly, excellent insulation values, lots of natural light and the efficient use of space. Alex Durie, architect and co-founder of 7-22 Systems Ltd explained: "Using Wraptite, 7-22 Systems could pre-apply the breather membrane to each prefabricated component in their dedicated controlled workshop setting. The A. Proctor Group pre-cut the rolls to match the sizes of the external faces of each component, and then Wraptite tape was applied on-site to lap between the components. Wraptite has enabled 7-22 Systems to build to even greater quality, add another facet to their prefabrication, and provide the system with the breathable construction." The Wraptite air barrier system is a safe and simplified membrane system. It provides a fully self-adhered vapour permeable air barrier certified by the BBA and combines the critical properties of vapour permeability and airtightness.

01250 872261 www.proctorgroup.com



Sto creates fire compliant facades across multiple residential buildings

An external wall insulation system manufactured by Sto has optimised fire protection for a multi-block residential development. The project's first phase comprised two buildings which had the StoTherm Mineral K EWl system specified to meet the required fire rating while maximising thermal performance. BBA-certified, StoTherm Mineral K features A1 mineral fibre insulation boards and the system is classified with an A2-s1, d0 reaction to fire in accordance with BS EN 13501. Specialist surface finishers, One & Maike was responsible for installing StoTherm Mineral K on behalf of principal contractor Osprey, a facade remediation specialist. The insulation boards were fixed directly to the existing concrete substrate avoiding the need for a cavity. StoLevell Duo Plus, a strong mineral adhesive, was applied to the back of the insulation boards, and additional fixings were also used to secure the insulation boards to the substrate to suit wind load conditions. Sto-Glass Fibre Mesh was then embedded into the outer surface of the reinforcing coat providing crack resistance to the system. The system was finished with StoSilco K1.5, a silicone resin render ensuring high levels of water repellence and protection from harsh weather conditions. This was applied across an area totalling 2,500 m² creating elevations featuring various colours, including white, terracotta and blue.

0330 024 2666 www.sto.co.uk

EnviroVent celebrates double award win!



EnviroVent is celebrating winning two prestigious regional business awards: The Yorkshire Post Excellence in Business – and the Insider Media Made in Yorkshire awards. Judges praised EnviroVent for the company’s dynamic approach to increasing manufacturing capacity, after the business recognised

demand in the social housing and new build sector and moved to its own purpose-built expanded factory in Harrogate. This enabled the company to ramp up production by 31% within six months and output continues to rise. Judges also recognised EnviroVent’s commitment to innovation, which led to it extending its product range to meet market demand, expanding its staff numbers significantly and investing in employee multiskilling.

01423 810 810 www.envirovent.com

Vent-Axia celebrates Global Recycling Day



Vent-Axia celebrates Global Recycling Day, which took place on 18 March 2024. This year the theme for Global Recycling Day was ‘Recycling Heroes’. Vent-Axia is committed to reducing its environmental impact and has set clear sustainability targets including that 90% of the plastic it uses in its own manufacturing to be from recycled sources by the end of FY2025. Currently this figure is already at 83%

and the company is on track to hit the 90% figure. Vent-Axia has achieved this by leading the way in the ventilation sector with a market transformation to manufacturing from recycled material to improve indoor air sustainably. A wide range of Vent-Axia’s products are now manufactured using recycled material this includes its award-winning Lo-Carbon Multivent MEV range.

0344 856 0590 www.vent-axia.com

Maintaining u-value with SXP fasteners



SFS Group Fastening Technology has launched an innovative new range of single ply membrane fasteners, in three sizes featuring a unique self-coring washer design, with a choice of two head drives and hardened drill points plus two types of slimline drive bar and other benefits; all aimed at giving the installer full

confidence in securing the widely used, triple layer, insulated panels. SFS’s new SXP range is being introduced in three variants with the 25 mm SXP2 intended to secure panel overlaps, while the 35 mm SXP5’s proportionately longer point is for drilling into light-gauge steel, and the 47 mm SXP14 delivers the greatest drilling capacity to tackle heavy gauge steel.

uk.sfs.com

IronmongeryDirect’s new catalogue is out now



IronmongeryDirect has launched its latest catalogue, featuring 230 new and exciting door hardware solutions from exclusive and trusted trade brands. The catalogue is a ‘must-have’ for tradespeople on the move – ensuring they can get what they need, when they need it for a variety of projects. Kelly Wing, senior category & direct sourcing manager at IronmongeryDirect said: “We’re delighted to launch our new catalogue which showcases the best of our extensive range, plus

hundreds of new quality products. As part of our Trusted to Deliver promise, we’re continually focussed on ensuring customers have access to a wide choice of solutions to suit all projects and budgets.”

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ROOF WINDOWS HELP CREATE QUIETER HOMES

The best house developers aim to create quality homes that are quiet, as well as secure and energy-efficient. Success in this area starts with the roof windows, as Altaterra's Mhairi McDougall explains.



There are various elements that reduce the possibility of noise reduction when selecting roof windows.

CHOOSE TRIPLE GLAZING

Single glazing, once the only choice for windows, is now rarely used in developments due to the below-par insulation, noise reduction and energy efficiency it offers. Double glazing is clearly a better choice but professional window installers always recommend housebuilders choose triple glazing. A more expensive option, it nevertheless elevates the quality of any home for a host of reasons.

The three panes, each with a layer of gas between, means triple glazed windows are more insulative than double glazed. It's harder for heat to escape in winter, and for heat to enter in summer and means lower heating bills. This also counts for glazed roof windows in attic rooms.

Particularly helpful for houses near busy roads, three panes offer greater noise reduction, making it more difficult for sound to pass through the glass when the windows are closed. The best windows can lead to 50% more noise reduction than standard windows.

The improved thermal efficiency of triple glazed windows reduces the risk

of condensation. By helping to keep the internal temperature up, moisture in the air is less likely to condense on the glass.

SECURE DESIGN

Look out for features to make a secure and quieter design: laminated internal panes, toughened external panes, strong and solid locks that leave no gaps when closed, reinforced hinges and a glued pane which means would-be intruders can't remove the glass.

SUPERIOR GLASS

Always choose laminated glazing which is especially effective when paired with a toughened external pane.

INSTALLERS ALWAYS RECOMMEND HOUSEBUILDERS CHOOSE TRIPLE GLAZING, WHICH ELEVATES THE QUALITY OF ANY HOME FOR A HOST OF REASONS

Laminated glazing is made with two plies of glass bonded together with interlayers, making it shatterproof meaning the home is safer and securer.

Toughened glass is often used on the external pane of security roof windows. This glass is much harder to break. If it does shatter, it breaks into larger, more blunt pieces that are safer than 'standard' glass shards.

GET THE RIGHT GAS

When it comes to window glazing, ensure your double or triple glazed windows have cavities filled with either argon or krypton gas. Argon is a form of inert gas meaning it doesn't undergo a chemical reaction when conditions such as temperature change. The thermal conductivity of Argon is 33% better than air.

Argon gas is an inexpensive option so will keep the cost down while still providing good thermal insulation.

But if you're looking for a highly efficient window, look for one that uses krypton as the cavity gas. Krypton is even more effective than argon, and thus more expensive. The insulative effect of krypton is 40% better than argon and 65% better than air.

Either gas will help to keep energy bills down and reduce CO₂ emissions.



KNOW YOUR ENERGY RATINGS

The most commonly used window glazing energy rating is U-value. U-value defines how much heat is lost through the glazing, sometimes known as the heat transfer coefficient, or thermal transmittance coefficient. The lower the U-value, the more energy efficient a window is.

U_g is the U-value of the pane specifically. U_w is the U-value of the window as a whole. A U-value of 1.4 W/m²K is required by Building

Regulations but the best have a value of 0.5 W/m² K.

SHUT OUT THE NOISE

Thick curtains can help to reduce road noise in a home, look out for ones specifically designed to reduce sound.

When trying to reduce noise in an attic room, you'll need to look into roof window blinds for your pitched windows (curtains obviously won't cut it). Blinds are limited in how much sound they can reduce, but a shutter is much more effective.

Shutters created specifically for roof windows provide a much more robust roof window cover that will make a noticeable noise difference in the home. Shutters also add high-quality protection – as well as thermal insulation – to the roof window. They cover over the external side of the window so potential intruders can't access any part of the window itself.

CHOOSE ECO-FRIENDLY

Look for the most eco-friendly roof window on the UK market and you will find a product that's likely to also be safe, secure and noise-reducing as it features all of these benefits.

Mhairi McDougall is European region manager at Altaterra

Hardie® Architectural Panel chosen for Go Modular project

Beam Contracting, the high-end construction firm, has chosen to utilise the Hardie® Architectural Panel, a product from James Hardie, the world leader in the manufacture of high-performance fibre cement and fibre gypsum building solutions, as part of its construction of ten modular flats in Poole in conjunction with Go Modular Technologies (UK) Ltd, the modular building manufacturer.

The decision to choose the Hardie® Architectural Panel was based on the fact that it is easy to install and delivers a cost effective, low maintenance solution with the assurance of an A2 fire rated performance. Vivalda, the independent distributor of cladding panels, supplied the materials for the project, fabricating the panels in phases to coincide with the construction schedule. Smooth sand, one of the available textures, was chosen to match the planning specification in three of the core panel colours (Arctic White, Anthracite Grey and Cobblestone), giving the project a modern and contemporary look, and reflecting the coastal location.

Steve Hawes, project director at Beam Contracting commented: "This was the first time that we've used the Hardie® Architectural Panel and we were really pleased with how easy it was to install - so much so that we have subsequently added the panel as a standard specification option for Beam Contracting."

Lee Bucknall, UK sales manager at James Hardie, added: "Modular buildings are becoming



an increasingly popular solution providing construction firms and clients with lower project costs, sustainability benefits and significantly reduced build times. Hardie® Architectural Panel is perfectly suited to supporting modular

building methods providing a sustainable solution that is durable and easy to install."

0121 311 3480
www.jameshardie.co.uk/en

RAISING THE STANDARD FOR ROOFING IN 2025

Lisa Grosse of Cedral discuss the impact the Future Homes Standard could have on current facade and roofing trends when introduced next year



Discussions around sustainability, futureproofing and a fabric first approach, which have been taking place across construction generally, have become increasingly prominent for housebuilding. Designing to achieve greater thermal efficiency will become more of a priority to comply with the new Future Homes Standard (FHS). This will require all new homes built from 2025 to produce 75-80% fewer carbon emissions than present. While many architects, developers, contractors and manufacturers involved in residential construction have been proactive in making modifications to reduce carbon emissions, there is much more to do.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & THERMAL PERFORMANCE

As many of the new FHS requirements specifically concern ventilation and energy use and for new build homes to be an efficient fabric, this has a direct impact on decisions about facades, roofing and insulation. Options for the facade include timber, stone, vinyl, metal, weatherboard, fibre cement, concrete and glass. Fire safety, aesthetics, durability, ease of installation, impact on thermal

control and indoor air quality, acoustics and cost (both the initial expense and over the product's lifetime) are all part of the equation. We often see a combination of materials on the facades of housing developments. A very large proportion of housebuilders, for instance, will use a render on the exterior of the ground floor and then a cladding material such as Cedral on upper floors.

One of the trends we are seeing for the exterior is more natural products such as fibre cement cladding. A strong, versatile and sustainable material containing cement and fibres, it uses fewer raw materials and less energy in its manufacture and produces less waste than some traditional building materials. When specifying, durability under extreme temperature changes, low maintenance and in particular, having an A2 fire classification rating, have been key and fibre cement cladding offers these benefits.

Optimising the performance of the roof is also central to the house's energy efficiency as one quarter of all heat energy in a home escapes through the roof. Currently the Government is not mandating the installation of rooftop solar panels on all new homes, but it

is logical to plan a roofing system that makes it possible.

For roofing, the most commonly available materials are concrete tiles, terracotta tiles and fibre-cement slates. There has been growth of fibre cement slates in the market because they are sustainable, have a good U-value, have an excellent fire classification, are lighter, and also for their aesthetics.

THE OPTIONS & BENEFITS AVAILABLE FOR FHS COMPLIANCE WITH INSULATION

As a result of the new building regulations, new homes will have to be better insulated to reduce heat loss and mitigate against overheating. The question is whether to put the insulation on the outer or inner walls, and there are pros and cons of both options. For exterior insulation, boards are fitted to the outside of the walls, before covering the facade with rainscreen cladding such as timber, metal or fibre-cement weatherboards. The advantages of ventilated rainscreen cladding are that it increases energy efficiency, extends the lifetime of the facade, helps reduce condensation and humidity and helps reduce structural movement.



Typically for interior insulation, we see mineral or wool rolls being used in between wooden battens. With interior wall insulation, the finished building will keep a more stable interior climate, there is no impact on the external appearance of the house, it's less expensive and it's possible to use a wide variety of insulation material. The downsides are a loss of internal space and many types of insulation material require a fire-rated covering.

Some points to consider before making the final specification are the thermal resistance of the insulation method, the overall insulation gain, how fireproof and how safe the materials are, the expected lifespan and whether they can be easily recycled. Additionally, whether a property has a warm or cold roof, there are measures that need to be taken to ensure the long-term energy efficiency of the building. The key for roofers is to ensure that the ventilation in the roof space is well planned and constructed.

AN INCREASING COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Our research has shown us that people in various roles think about sustainability in very different ways. An architect, for instance, is very process-driven and concerned about metrics, performance, and ultimately accreditation.

RIBA's most recent ethics & sustainability survey conducted in 2021, showed how a commitment to sustainability and low-carbon design had become even more important to its UK members, and how more homeowners are also thinking about the eco-credentials of their homes and about how to reduce their energy costs.

Now manufacturers have to address an increasing number of questions about sustainability with housebuilders and developers. They want to know where the materials have come from, if they have a high 'second use' content, and how a facade will improve their carbon footprint.

We believe that advancements in sustainable construction will continue at a rapid pace, transforming home design. And manufacturers can help in the path to sustainability by improving circularity and environmental impact.

Lisa Grosse is brand manager at Cedral

Unique solar roof tile launched by Breedon Group collaboration

A unique solar roof tile has been launched in a collaboration by UK construction materials group Breedon.

Breedon Generon is a premium whole roof concept comprising a 3.2 mm monocrystalline tempered glass PV cell discreetly integrated with a Breedon Elite 330 mm x 420 mm base concrete roof tile which is laid in sequence with matching standard roof tiles. Interconnecting cables then link the Generon tiles to create an overall solar output based on the number of tiles fitted. Typically, 260 tiles are required to generate a 4 kW PV system – the benchmark for family homes.

Fitted by roofing contractors in an almost identical way to traditional roof tiles, the Generon system then simply connects to



the remaining PV infrastructure to generate safe, reliable and renewable energy. This combination delivers a seamlessly integrated solar roof, without compromising aesthetics – a key attribute specifically designed to appeal to architects/specifiers and homeowners who, when questioned during research, wanted their home to generate solar energy but disliked the appearance of traditional solar panels, or even the more recent integrated solar systems.

To develop their innovative solar tile, Breedon partnered with Terran, a leading European roof tile manufacturer. A third-generation family-owned business, Terran has been at the forefront of roofing product innovation since 1920, and over the past five years has successfully developed and distributed the Generon roof tile across Europe.

Unlike traditional solar panels, Generon solar roof tiles offer a sleek and seamless design that blends in with the rest of the roof, whilst delivering high levels of performance. They also eliminate the need for separate contractors to install solar panels and their associated mounting materials as they can be easily installed by a roofing contractor using storm clips in sequence with the standard concrete roof tiles, thus reducing the time and overall cost of installation.

Generon has been designed and tested to be highly durable and withstand harsh weather



conditions, including heavy rain, hail and high winds. Such solar roof tiles typically have longer lifespans than traditional solar panels and require less maintenance over time, owing to the securely integrated nature of their design.

Sleek and smooth in situ, the Generon system carries a 20-year performance guarantee, and has a dedicated home owner app to track real-time data about its energy production.

Breedon Group commercial manager Mark Morris said: "The Generon system offers building owners the opportunity to capitalise on the growing renewables market and specifiers the chance to help their customers to meet Part L of the Building Regulations."

"By investing in Generon, we have committed to becoming a leader in this new market by delivering the first roof top solar system which delivers cheap renewable energy, whilst maintaining the aesthetic integrity of the house."

Growth forecasts for Generon are therefore very promising, with many industry analysts predicting double-digit annual growth for the adoption of solar systems for the next decade.

01332 694000 www.breedongroup.com

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NAVIGATING THE PATH TO BUY-TO-RENT FINANCING

Peter Wade of specialist development finance lender BLG sheds light on what developers need to know when looking to access buy-to-rent financing.

Build to Rent (BtR) is increasing with record growth last year despite the economic headwinds. In part, this can be explained by funds moving away from commercial developments and into residential developments, alongside the attractiveness of rental growth underpinned by housing shortages.

Many specialist lenders lend in this sector, although there are clear differences to a standard residential development in that the exit is not a sale but a rental and thus needs to attract a different target customer.

In what is an ever-evolving real estate landscape, developers seeking to pursue projects in the UK's buy-to-rent market must navigate a complex financial terrain. As the demand for rental properties continues to rise, understanding the intricacies of securing financing for such projects becomes paramount.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Before approaching lenders, developers must conduct a comprehensive market analysis. Understanding local demand, rental trends and demographic shifts is crucial. Lenders will be more inclined to invest in projects backed by thorough market research, showcasing the potential for sustained rental income.

ROBUST BUSINESS PLANS

A well-crafted business plan is the backbone of any successful financing endeavour. Developers should articulate their vision, project details, and financial projections with clarity. Highlighting the long-term viability and profitability of the buy-to-rent project instils confidence in potential lenders.

ESTABLISHED RELATIONSHIPS

Building strong relationships with lenders is essential. Developers should cultivate connections with banks, mortgage brokers, and private equity firms



experienced in buy-to-rent financing. Establishing trust and credibility can significantly enhance the chances of securing favourable financing terms. However, having one strong lending relationship has its own risks if that lender suffers a downturn or reaches lending capacity.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & INCENTIVES

Developers should stay abreast of Government initiatives and incentives designed to promote the construction of rental properties. Utilising schemes like the Build to Rent Fund or seeking opportunities under Government-backed financing programs can provide a competitive edge.

RISK MITIGATION

Lenders are inherently risk-averse, so developers must present robust risk mitigation strategies and backup plans. This includes contingency plans for potential market downturns, vacancy challenges, or unforeseen construction delays. Demonstrating a proactive

approach to risk management enhances the attractiveness of the investment.

SUSTAINABLE & INNOVATIVE DESIGN

In the era of eco-conscious consumers, incorporating sustainability into the project design can be a powerful differentiator. Lenders may look favourably upon developments that align with green building standards and energy-efficient practices.

LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Compliance with local regulations and legal requirements is non-negotiable. Developers should be well-versed in the legal landscape, securing all necessary permits and adhering to building codes. A project that meets regulatory standards is more likely to gain financing approval.

In conclusion, success in accessing buy-to-rent financing in the UK hinges on meticulous preparation, strategic relationships, and a clear understanding of market dynamics. Developers who embrace these considerations position themselves not only to secure financing, but to thrive in a burgeoning buy-to-rent sector that promises long-term growth and stability.

Peter Wade is chairman of BLG

DEVELOPERS SEEKING SUCCESS IN THE UK'S BUY-TO-RENT MARKET MUST NAVIGATE A COMPLEX FINANCIAL TERRAIN



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Garador launches a new robust transmitter



Leading garage door manufacturer, **Garador**, has introduced a new robust hand transmitter designed for use with its GaraMatic operators.

With a rubber coated surface, it offers greater resistance to damage and will last longer than others currently available. The new form factor is extremely robust with a solid casing that is drop proof. It is also weather resistant.

Large buttons offer full functionality making it easy to use even when wearing gloves; perhaps after gardening or cycling.

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ECO 1



All **Althon** headwalls are manufactured using a trademarked eco1™ concrete mix design. The standard eco1™ concrete mix, which is a Cement & GGBS blend, significantly reduces CO₂e emissions by 50% when compared to a standard CEM1 concrete mix. In addition to eco1's™ environmental credentials; it achieves Design Chemical Class 4 and Design Sulphate Class 4 making Althon headwalls suitable for use in aggressive environments. Althon headwalls can also be manufactured using other proprietary mix designs for even greater carbon savings. CO₂e, which stands for Carbon Dioxide Equivalent, is a unit of measurement used to express the amount of greenhouse gasses emitted because of human activity.

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Domus Ventilation provides practical advice



Having provided ventilation solutions for over 35 years, **Domus Ventilation** will be sharing its extensive knowledge with visitors to select Specific Mechanical Services events this year, enabling them to implement effective ventilation solutions for their projects. Starting on the 28th May in Nottingham, Domus Ventilation will also be attending Specific events in Glasgow on 10th June and Newcastle on 17th September. Domus Ventilation personnel who specialise in supporting specification will be on the stand, ready to impart knowledge on the latest, cost-effective ventilation solutions available for residential and light commercial applications that enable compliance with Building Regulations Part F (ventilation).

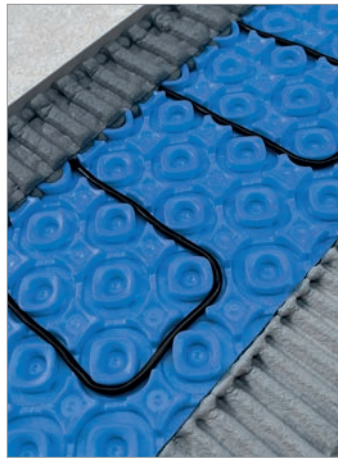
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Manthorpe publishes first EPD



Manthorpe Building Products are proud to be one of the first in the industry to have an independent fully verified Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for three versions of their GRS Radiator Pipe Guide & Seal, made with recycled content. The EPD discloses the complete environmental impact of the GRS products – from material sourcing through production, transportation, use, and end-of-life. With detailed data on energy, water, waste, and emissions, they are empowering architects, contractors, and other partners to select lower carbon options. Manthorpe will be expanding its EPD programme as part of its commitment to net-zero through the Genuit Group of companies.

01773 303 000 www.manthorpepb.co.uk



Rapid-fit Mapeheat Membrane Maxi joins Mapei range

Mapei has introduced new Mapeheat Membrane Maxi – a waterproofing, uncoupling anti-fracture heating membrane. Ideal for electric underfloor heating systems – as well as tile and stone installations – the patented membrane promotes a fast, easy installation of tile and stone in bathrooms, shower rooms, kitchens and living areas. It can also be used as a substrate for mosaic tile, wood and resilient floors. Featuring a light-weight construction and thin profile, Mapeheat Membrane Maxi is suitable for multiple sized cables – from 2 mm to 5.5 mm – and helps prevent transmission of in-plane substrate cracks up to 3 mm. Heating cables are easy to install and minimal roll memory helps to promote a rapid, flat and secure installation. Once heating cables are set within Mapeheat Membrane Maxi's reliefs, tile adhesive or levelling/smoothing compound can be applied immediately. When installing with ceramic tiles, the use of a minimum class C2 EN 12004 adhesive is recommended. For a complete underfloor heating solution, Mapei's range also includes Mapeheat, with technology from nVent RAYCHEM. The Mapeheat system comprises three components: NEW Mapeheat Membrane Maxi, Mapeheat Cable and Mapeheat Mesh, used in conjunction with three thermostat options.

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Althon Headwalls

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Colours shown are approximations of our colour mix in a typical concrete using mid grey Portland cement and having an as-cast surface. The final colour is affected by many influences.

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Gaia install underfloor heating for high-profile developments

Part of the wider regeneration of Watford, The Eight Gardens is a residential and commercial development from Berkeley Homes, featuring studio, one and two-bedroom apartments surrounded by landscaped gardens and art installations.

Due to Gaia's long-standing relationship as a trusted supplier for Berkeley Homes, they were asked to provide pricing for The Eight Gardens project (Block S3 and S6).

The original design involved wet underfloor heating through Heat Interface Units with a gas energy plant room or air-source heat pumps.

However, Gaia proposed using exclusively electric underfloor heating for the scheme.

This would reduce the need for heat pumps and energy plant rooms, therefore lowering capital costs for the developer. Also, it would minimise maintenance costs for homeowners,



and provide quicker heat-up times.

Following their proposal, Gaia managed the entire electric underfloor heating design and installation process. Their team levelled the structural slab with latex before installing thermal insulation boards and electric underfloor heating systems, finished with a latex screed on top to achieve an SR1 finish.

By delivering their services from design to completion, Gaia provided a single point of accountability and streamlined the process for the client.

This is just one case study within an extensive portfolio of underfloor heating projects Gaia has completed across London and the surrounding areas.

The underfloor heating experts worked with Telford Homes to deliver a customised

underfloor heating specification for the former Elizabeth Arden factory site - which is being transformed into a new mixed-use development, with the majority of space allocated to residential properties.

Gaia provided the complete design, installation and commissioning of wet underfloor heating systems throughout the 374 apartments.

Also, as part of a long-standing partnership with Woodford Heating, Gaia provided full design, supply, installation and commissioning of Polypipe wet underfloor heating systems for High Street Quarter in Hounslow - a £210 million scheme featuring 528 residential properties.

01359 242400
gaia.co.uk

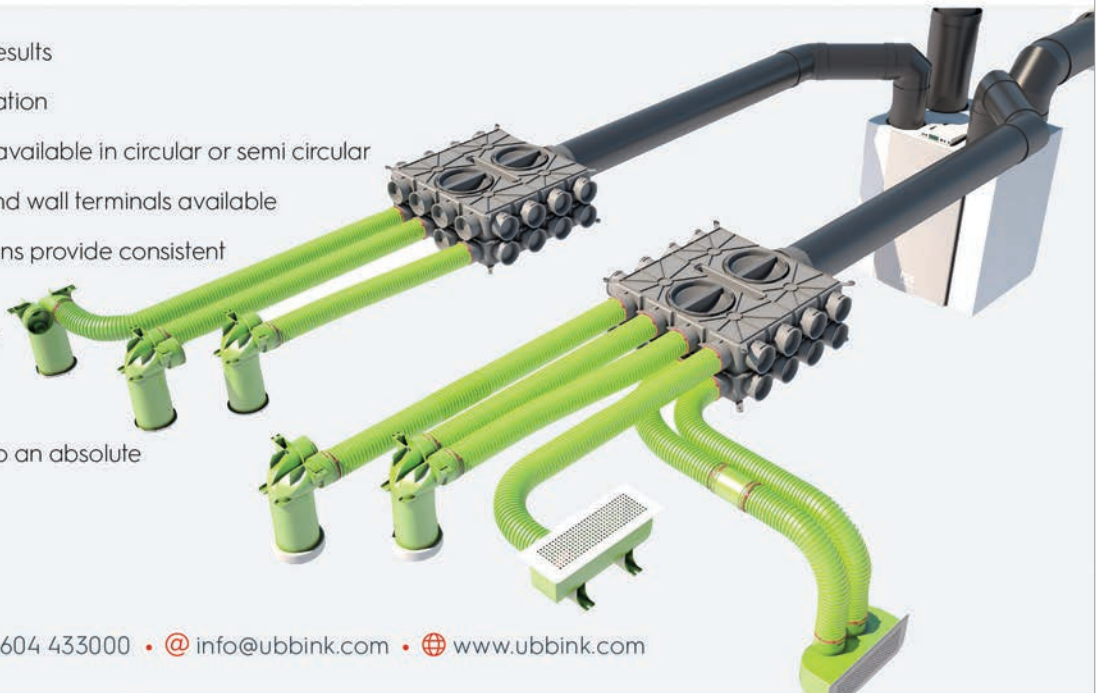


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Altecnic launches Apartment Control Assembly Plus™

Altecnic, a leading supplier in hydronic solutions and part of the Caleffi Group, has launched the brand new 'Apartment Control Assembly Plus™'. The valve assembly offers a combination of functionality and efficiency to allow the easy monitoring and control of water supply to a range of residential and commercial multi-occupancy developments.

The Apartment Control Assembly Plus™ has been designed to ensure seamless water management with three interconnected monoblocs:

- **Pressure Control & Isolation:** Featuring an isolating ball valve, a high-performance pressure reducing valve (PRV) with a tamper-proof cover, a gauge port, and a strainer, this monobloc provides robust isolation and pressure regulation.
- **Water Meter & Carrier:** Equipped with a water meter carrier and isolation capabilities, this monobloc facilitates accurate monitoring and measurement of water usage.
- **Backflow Prevention & Isolation:** Incorporating a double check valve with a test port, a high-quality isolation valve, and a rotatable 360° drain cock on two axes, this monobloc ensures efficient water flow and maintenance.

Available in six configurations, including various options of water meter with wireless MBUS



connectivity, the Apartment Control Assembly Plus™ can seamlessly integrate into a wide range of residential and commercial developments. The use of wireless MBUS connectivity opens the potential for remote communications from the water meter adding another layer of flexibility for installers and contractors.

The Apartment Control Assembly Plus™ streamlines installation and servicing with built-in mounting brackets and user-friendly features,

making it a preferred choice for installers and contractors alike. By consolidating multiple functions into a single assembly, it reduces the number of connections required during installation, thereby saving time, money, and mitigating the risk of leaks.

In addition, the pressure & backflow monoblocs are made from a dezincification resistant low lead brass alloy to BS EN 12165 CW724R, which is 4MS compliant, ensuring installations are futureproofed against regulation changes.

With WRAS and KIWA Reg 4 approval on the Series 539H monobloc, customers can trust in the quality and safety of the Apartment Control Assembly Plus™. Additionally, the new valve assembly comes with a five-year warranty, providing customers with peace of mind and assurance. The warranty underscores Altecnic's commitment to delivering products of the highest quality and reliability, backed by industry-leading support.

Gary Perry, managing director at Altecnic, commented: "The Apartment Control Assembly Plus™ offers a comprehensive solution that simplifies water management for multi-occupancy buildings. Each component of the assembly has been designed to put flexibility into the hands of installers, whether in new-build or retrofit, and whether installing or performing maintenance."

sales@altecnic.co.uk
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Not so noisy neighbours



Rick Clarke, product manager from NIBE Energy Systems Ltd

Heat pumps are the heating system of choice for new builds, with a clear preference for this technology outlined in the Future Homes Standards. When building multiple properties, or upgrading densely packed housing stock, noise is often mentioned, particularly by heat pump detractors. Despite the fact that heat pumps are fairly quiet, housebuilders must consider resident concerns. Rick Clarke, product manager from NIBE Energy Systems Ltd, looks at the facts around heat pump noise and the options to quieten the hum.

Heat pump noise seems to be a particular concern of UK residents; people in the UK search for information about 'noisy heat pumps' on Google more than any other country in the world - over four times as much as the second location on this list (which is incidentally the US). The rest of Europe looks so infrequently for heat pump noise related issues that it barely registers in Google's global search traffic data.

It seems that the odd heat pump end user (or neighbour of a heat pump owner) that has an issue with noise makes the headlines, used as a tool by the heat pump naysayers to discredit the widescale viability of this technology. There are actually only around 100 noise complaints for every 300,000 installations – a rate of 0.03% – according to a survey by

noise experts cited in a research paper by Apex Acoustics.

But, with heat pumps being deployed on a grand scale in new housing stock in particular, and changes to permitted development in the pipeline, including scrapping the rule that an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) unit must be one metre from a neighbour's boundary, the potential for dissatisfaction could rise, making noise reducing products and correct installation all the more important.

QUIET BY-DESIGN

A modern heat pump, installed properly, shouldn't make any more noise than a refrigerator – or a boiler! NIBE S2125 is one of the quietest heat pumps on the market and also boasts a flow temperature of up to 75°C, ideal for high-end developments.

It's not just our premium range that benefits from low noise – all NIBE Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) are equipped with a Silent Mode, allowing the system to operate more quietly at night, for example. NIBE's ranges feature ASHPs and Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP), with options for all types of properties.

QUIET INSTALLATION

Under MCS rules, the sound pressure level of a

heat pump at normal operating speeds should be equal to or lower than 42 dB. If a sound assessment shows noise is likely to be higher than this, then planning permission is needed.

Apart from choosing the quietest heat pump, installation best-practice is crucial. Avoiding barriers near the heat pump, such as brick walls or fences, can reduce the sound pressure levels that reach neighbouring properties. Minimising the number of reflective surfaces that surround the heat pump will also reduce the sound pressure.

When installed, the heat pump unit must be sited on a secure base. NIBE provides ASHPs with adjustable feet as standard, as well as additional antivibration mounts for floor standing units to reduce noise levels.

EVOLVED TO MEET THE UK MARKET

There's sometimes a view in the UK that heat pumps are 'new'; they're not, they're well-established and highly evolved with the versatility to meet the needs of all manner of housing and customers. Heat pump noise is a manageable challenge that nine times out of ten becomes a non-issue with the right product, system design and installation.

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WHY CHOOSE NIBE?

End-to-end solution: NIBE offers an end-to-end solution for your projects. From initial design work, training and installation support through to aftersales care and bespoke marketing support, NIBE will provide support the entire way.

Peace of mind: NIBE provides sustainable climate solutions, allowing your projects to be completed with full compliance to local building regulations. Whether new build or retrofit, our heat pumps can offer the solution. Your customer will also receive a two-year warranty.

Innovative product: Our air, ground, and exhaust air heat pumps, combined with a fully integrated smart home system, provide industry leading solutions. From multi-source PV-T installations, to our innovative indoor-only S735 exhaust air heating, hot water and ventilation module, NIBE can provide the solution.

Global sustainability experts: NIBE is an established global company, with over 70 years' experience developing energy-efficient and sustainable building services solutions. Headquartered in Sweden, but with operations in the UK and across the world, we are one of Europe's leading heat pump brands. By combining renewable energy with smart technology, NIBE delivers the ultimate in low carbon, user friendly home heating, ventilation, hot water and cooling, creating perfect indoor climates with minimal environmental impact.



Save time & promote safety with Mapei Topcem

Mapei has developed a range of rapid-drying screeds that perform to the highest technical standards in fast-track installations, while also providing a safe and sustainable application. To speed up moisture evaporation in Portland cement-based screed, Mapei has formulated a special binder which incorporates admixtures in powder form. The binder reduces the amount of mixing water needed, increases mechanical strength and reduces shrinkage and drying time. Products featuring this technology include Mapei's best-selling EMICODE: EC1 Plus-certified Topcem and Topcem Pronto. Mapei Topcem is a specialist hydraulic binder for normal setting, fast-drying and shrinkage-compensated screeds. It can be used to form bonded, unbonded, floating screeds – including those with piped underfloor heating – on new and existing concrete prior to floor installation – inside and outdoors. Mapei Topcem Pronto is the ready-mixed, rapid-drying formulation with high thermal conductivity, ideal for heated screeds. Both screeds set to light traffic after 12 hours. Ceramic tiles can be laid after 24 hours, natural stone after two days and, within four days, the finish is completely dry and can accept moisture sensitive floorcoverings, including resilient and wood flooring. In addition to new applications, Mapei Topcem and Topcem Pronto are also ideal for patching, repairing and time-sensitive screed replacement.

info@mapei.co.uk www.mapei.co.uk



Italian inspired woven luxury from Riviera Home

Riviera Home, a leading brand in luxury carpets, is known for its handcrafted approach and commitment to refined quality. The new Turin design is no exception, starring as part of Riviera Home's Italian inspired wool carpet ranges. Turin features the effortless look of a beautiful basketweave design, expertly crafted in a Wilton weave. Turin's timeless style in the classic look of a basketweave pattern will transform homes with a carpet that's exquisitely made for a luxurious and elegant finish. It uses the resilience and natural appeal of 100% New Zealand wool to create a highly tactile carpet that adds a feeling of sophistication. Wilton weaving lets Riviera Home create a variety of loop and cut textures for its Italian inspired ranges, which also includes other woven basketweaves in Livorno and Medina and the diamond of Genoa. Complementing flatwoven styles in the collection and bringing resilience and longevity, the traditional weaving technique produces carpets of the highest quality, something that's clear to see in Turin. In Turin, Riviera has created an elegant palette of four elevated neutral tones that will complement the aesthetic of refined interior spaces. The high-quality woven texture and wool yarn give a premium feel, as well as providing a practical and durable carpet to be enjoyed in homes for years to come.

01299 871446 www.rivierahomeuk.com

Changing water infrastructure

By 2050 the UK water deficit is anticipated to be 4017 mega litres per day!

Since this announcement in January 2022, major water companies have been developing plans to upgrade the UK's water supply and reduce current usage from 150 litres per person per day to 110.

Smart meters are seen as a significant part of the solution to reducing domestic water usage. Thames Water have recorded post installation savings of 12-17%. Now United Utilities have announced their plans for Advanced metering infrastructure, all new connections or meters will be replaced with the latest generation of smart meters.

NEW METER LOCATION POLICY

United Utilities have recently announced that the most effective method of installing the advanced metering infrastructure is to use Groundbreaker's water management system. This locates the meter above ground, providing a better environment for smart technology over traditional underground boundary boxes, extends signal transmission and allows easy meter exchange.

DESIGNING OUT LEAK PATHS

The unique location of the Groundbreaker water management system future proofs the network and minimises the risk of developing future leaks. The position of the meter allows for an unjointed water supply, hence maintaining

the integrity of the supply. The use of an uninterrupted supply has been recognised as best practice by Water UK and the Home Builders Federation.

Steve Leigh, managing director of Groundbreaker commented: "Portsmouth Water have demanded surface mounted meter housings as the standard required for all new properties for over 15 years. Working with them we have established the effectiveness and reliability of Groundbreaker." He continued, "With the need to maximise the effectiveness of smart metering programmes, I can't see that there is a viable alternative – putting smart technology in a hole in the ground just does not work."

WATER EFFICIENT HOMES

United Utilities have recognised that water efficient homes are the key to reduce consumption further. In all new properties, developers will be encouraged to design in water conservation measures, including the installation of a flow regulator. These modulate the flow entering customer premises, so limiting the amount used by the customer. Without a degradation of service or any behavioural change, there is a 'natural' reduction in consumption. As these products are fitted to the main water supply, and not each individual outlet they remove any risk of consumer interference and ensure that minimum standards of water supply are maintained as specified within the Water



Industry Act and Water Fittings Regulations.

Groundbreaker supply two products. In properties with a meter Groundbreaker's NRv2 LoFlo can be installed between the water meter and manifold in any water meter enclosure. For unmetered properties, the LoFlo InLine is fitted on the main water supply pipe, normally just after the main stop tap.

In either unit, several flow modulation ranges are available which enable the perfect balance between usage reduction and service provision. As an added benefit, the Groundbreaker's LoFlo Check Valve systems have the unique property of providing whole site protection against contamination by back flow (up to fluid category 2) as standard. Groundbreaker products are compliant with all Regulations and defined criteria and are used extensively across the whole of the UK water supply network – whether that be North of Scotland or the Channel Islands.

01379 741993
www.groundbreaker.co.uk

LVT INSTALLATION NEEDS A FLAWLESS FINISH

Neil Sanders of F. Ball & Co explains the steps to ensure a flawless finish when installing this ever-popular choice of floorcovering.



Styccobond F49 Hybrid PS pressure sensitive vinyl adhesive is designed for installs in areas with extreme temperature fluctuations from solar gain

The increasing quality and variety of luxury vinyl tiles (LVTs) and their suitability for a wide range of settings has seen their appeal continue to grow. Given the high expectations for such installations, ensuring a long-lasting, visually attractive flooring finish is essential when installing them. In line with BS 8203:2017 (Installation of resilient floor coverings – code of practice), this should involve following basic principles of subfloor preparation, as well as taking precautions to avoid common causes of floor failure. Selecting the optimum installation products at each stage of the process will also help.

The first step in any flooring installation should be to check that the subfloor is suitably sound, smooth and dry. To avoid costly floor failure, any laitance (fine particles appearing on the surface) and contaminants should be mechanically removed before installation.

GUARDING AGAINST DAMP

At this stage, a moisture test should be conducted to determine if the subfloor is dry enough to receive floorcoverings. Excess subfloor moisture, whether

GIVEN THE HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF LVT INSTALLATIONS, ENSURING A LONG-LASTING, VISUALLY ATTRACTIVE FLOORING FINISH IS ESSENTIAL

residual construction moisture or rising damp, is the leading cause of floor failure, resulting in costly recalls and delays.

The only method of measuring subfloor relative humidity levels with certainty, and the method advocated by British Standards, is to use a calibrated hygrometer. Where subfloor relative humidity (RH) levels are higher than 75%, a moisture management solution will be required to prevent moisture attacking flooring adhesives and causing resilient floorcoverings to blister and lift.

Liquid waterproof surface membranes are available that will isolate excess subfloor moisture where relative humidity values are up to 98%, with a single coat

application, and fully cure in as little as three hours.

PRIMING

In most cases it will be essential to prime a surface before applying a smoothing compound. This promotes the optimum performance characteristics of the smoothing compound and, when used over absorbent subfloors, such as concrete, prevents moisture being drawn from the smoothing compound, which will lead to a reduction in the working time. For time saving purposes, smoothing compounds are available that can be applied directly over old adhesive residues without the need to prime beforehand.

General-purpose primers are available that can be used over both absorbent and non-absorbent surfaces. There are also specialist primers for use over non-absorbent surfaces, and primers designed for calcium sulphate screeds.

CREATING A BASE

A smoothing compound should then be applied over the subfloor to create a perfectly smooth and level surface



F. Ball's 'Fast-Track' Stopgap F78 waterproof surface membrane



A calibrated hygrometer – for measuring subfloor relative humidity



A smoothing compound is recommended to create a perfectly smooth base

onto which LVTs can be installed. This ensures that the visual appearance of the floorcovering is flawless and not compromised by imperfections in the subfloor showing through.

In heavy-duty areas, where installations will be subject to heavy loads or high foot traffic, the use of an appropriate heavy-duty smoothing compound is recommended. The high compressive strength and excellent self-smoothing properties of these smoothing compounds will create the perfect base for the installation of LVTs.

When working over subfloors of plywood or steel, the application of a flexible smoothing compound is advised to accommodate movements in the subfloor and prevent cracking in the

smoothing compound affecting the finished appearance of an installation.

ADHESIVE SELECTION

Pressure-sensitive adhesives are often the best choice for installing vinyl tiles or planks. They form an instant grab upon contact, so contractors don't need to worry about tiles or planks moving about when they are working, making them ideal for where intricate designs or patterns are being created.

It is important to remember that some adhesives require rolling with a paint roller that has been coated with the adhesive to flatten the ridges formed by application with certain kinds of trowel. This is to reduce the incidence of these trowel serrations shadowing

through thin vinyl floorcoverings and affecting the appearance of the finished installation.

COMPATIBILITY CHECK

Finally, it is highly recommended that contractors always check the compatibility of particular floorcoverings and adhesives. To do this, you can consult the floorcovering manufacturer's guidelines or alternatively, F. Ball produces a Recommended Adhesives Guide (RAG), which lists adhesives recommended for use with over 6,000 floorcoverings produced by over 200 manufacturers.

Neil Sanders is technical director at F. Ball & Co. Ltd



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The new Entero concrete vessel basins.

Bristan refreshes bathroom offering with brand-new taps for Spring 2024

Bristan, the UK's largest supplier of taps and showers, has expanded its portfolio of bathroom products with the introduction of two new tap ranges this Spring.

The two new tap ranges, Molida and Cruzar, have been designed with housebuilders in mind and crafted to the highest standards – in true Bristan fashion.

As Bristan expands its trend-driven offering, the new ranges will provide housebuilders with more choice for their development projects – demonstrated through the unique knurling pattern on the handles of both ranges, the Molida's European-inspired design and the Cruzar's timeless, industrial feel.



Both ranges include a basin mixer, bath shower mixer and bath filler and will include matching showers which will be introduced to the market later this year.

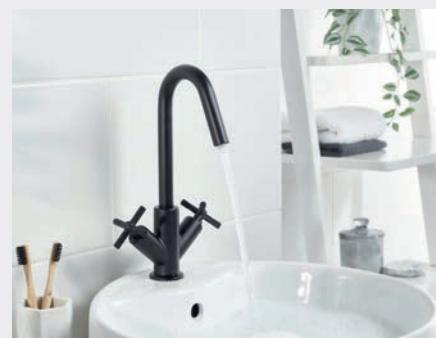
The Molida basin mixer also features Bristan's Eco Start technology. This technology ensures that hot water is only activated when the tap lever is moved from the central position, therefore reducing demand on hot water heating systems.

Taps featuring Bristan's Eco Start technology are estimated to save approximately £80 per year on energy bills, helping homeowners to save up to 10% on energy usage.

Both designs are available in a range of trend-led finishes, including matte black, brushed brass and Bristan's signature hard-wearing chrome. They also come with long-life ceramic cartridges and Bristan's 10-year guarantee – meaning housebuilders can buy with confidence knowing these ranges have been built to last.

Bristan's finishes have been developed and rigorously tested to meet the highest standards – as a result, they are corrosion and chemical resistant and can withstand everyday life in a modern home.

Jonty Cook, product manager for Taps at Bristan, says: "At Bristan we're committed to maintaining our reputation as the go-to product choice for housebuilders. So, we're excited to



introduce the new Molida and Cruzar ranges to our product offering."

"We value the feedback and opinions of our customers, and this forms a key part of our new product development. With Molida and Cruzar, we're delighted to have designed two ranges that offer housebuilders a wider choice of well-priced products and enable them to cater to the evolving tastes of homeowners."

"As with all of our products, these designs have been rigorously tested, are supported by our exceptional guarantees and award-winning customer service."

0330 0266 273
www.bristan.com/products/bathroom-taps

Creak-free flooring from West Fraser



West Fraser's CaberFloor P5 is a high-performance particleboard which is widely specified by developers, architects and self-builders due to its stability, durability and ease of installation. The high-density panels come in thicknesses of 18 or 22 mm, in both square-edged or tongue and grooved

profiles; the latter features profiles on all four sides to offer maximum flexibility. The precision-engineered edges ensure smooth and speedy installation while the tight-fitting joints eliminate creaking. Choosing T&G CaberFloor P5 removes the need for intermediate noggins, while 'secret' or hidden nailing or screws can be employed within the joints.

uk.westfraser.com

Misty magic from Keller Kitchens



The fresh, timeless Misty Grey kitchen design from **Keller** creates a modern minimalist, country-styled space with the mist finish reflected in both the in frame style and worktop. Pictured here are shaker doors which are available in melamine in model Cascada; or Nottingham in veneer if a lacquer finish

is selected. The Mist colour comes from Keller's Master Collection and the designer can choose from melamine, silk gloss, structured matt and high-gloss lacquer. The accent front model is Bronx in greige oak. 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

Quooker introduces the new COMBI+



Quooker introduces the new COMBI+, the world's first A-rated kitchen boiler, saving homeowners up to 4,500 litres of water annually. Maximising every drop of water, COMBI+ provides 7 litres of instant boiling water or limitless hot water at 60°C from a hot and cold feed. Ideal for eco-conscious homeowners looking to reduce their carbon footprint and save money on energy bills, the COMBI+ is one of the most energy-efficient ways of supplying hot water to the kitchen. With the addition of a Quooker CUBE

accessory offering sparkling and chilled water, this is the only system in the world to be able to offer so many water modes on this scale.

enquiries@quooker.co.uk www.quooker.co.uk

BNG Management by Meadfleet



Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regulations are now in place, affecting all new planning applications. 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. Housebuilders must secure

a management solution to deliver the gains over a 30-year period whether this be on or offsite. **Meadfleet** provide long-term expert management to deliver the 30-year covenant with an award-winning lifetime adoption model they take legal responsibility for POS & BNG management.

Experienced in-house ecologists are trained in BNG calculation and delivery and offer ongoing support to developers throughout the planning process.

enquiries@meadfleet.co.uk www.meadfleet.co.uk

Building a sustainable future for the UK's hedgehogs



Hedgehog Highways from Timloc Building Products are currently being installed across all new residential housing developments by one of the UK's leading housebuilders, Bellway plc.

Timloc Building Products is a CO₂ neutral manufacturer of sustainable building products designed for the fabric of a home, from ground level right up to the roof ridge. As part of their continued sustainability efforts, Timloc Building Products, part of Alumasc Group plc, produced the hedgehog highway to help tackle the declining number of hedgehogs across the UK.

The Hedgehog Highway is designed to frame fence holes to highlight their purpose in connecting gardens, enabling hedgehogs to roam freely and forage for food and shelter.

Hedgehogs are classified as vulnerable to

extinction in the UK, primarily due to habitat loss and an increase in road-related incidents. A hedgehog can travel up to 2 km and consume as many as 100 invertebrates in a single night, so facilitating hedgehogs' access to green spaces is vital.

Bellway has already installed Hedgehog Highways across over 15 sites around the UK. Simon Park, head of sustainability at Bellway, comments: "Better with Bellway' is our new sustainable approach to business practice, aimed at putting people and the planet first. Biodiversity is one of our priority areas with the aim of protecting and preserving nature. As part of our work in this area, we will be installing Timloc's Hedgehog Highways in customers' gardens which will allow these animals to roam across our developments."

With every purchase of a Hedgehog Highway,

a donation is made by Timloc Building Products to hedgehog charities across the UK to help them continue their fundamental work. Timloc has already donated over £2,500 to hedgehog rescue organisations and charities so far.

A recent non-profit organisation to receive a donation is Thorne Hedgehog Rescue. Lisa Steward, founder and owner of Thorne Hedgehog Rescue CIC, comments: "We often get calls about abandoned hoglets which need a lot of care, warmth and regular feeds to give them a chance of survival. The rescue is extremely grateful for the generous donation by Timloc Building Products and it is great to see the manufacturer promote the importance of highways."

The Hedgehog Highway by Timloc is available in black, brown, grey and yellow colour options and in both single and multi packs.



timloc
building products



01405 765 567

timloc.co.uk/products/hedgehog-highway

BESPOKE GARDENS FOR BIGGER MARGINS

With 2024 likely to continue being a challenging year for sales, Ben Warren of Marshalls explains why bespoke and 'templated' gardens will help housebuilders unlock extra income from their developments



It's the question so many in the industry are asking: how can housebuilders make new homes more desirable and secure all important sales, in a time of such uncertainty?

At the tail end of 2023, orders for new houses fell for the fourth month in a row. And although house prices in December were 1.8% lower than at the same time the previous year, increased borrowing costs are continuing to slow down demand. Teamed with the scrapping of the Help-to-Buy scheme in March, many would be forgiven for having a less-than-positive outlook for the year ahead.

However, Marshalls recently undertook research which showed the answer could lie in what's outside a property, rather than within it.

LUCRATIVE LANDSCAPE DESIGNS

The findings of the research, which questioned 2,001 adults in the UK, show that housebuilders and property developers could not only attract more buyers if they offer premium garden

options, but they could also increase their profitability and speed up the time it takes to secure a sale.

According to the research, over half (51%) of people would be more likely to consider buying a new build home if it had a landscaped back garden. More importantly, nearly a quarter of people (23%) said they'd be willing to pay more for a new build if they got to choose from a choice of templated gardens, and the work was done before they moved in. A further 16% said they'd be willing to pay more for a new build if they were able to opt for a bespoke garden and have it ready for their move-in date.

For those who would like to choose from a range of move-in ready templated garden designs, three out of five (60%) would be willing to pay up to 20% more of the overall property price. For those who would like a bespoke garden, 58% would be willing to pay up to 20% more.

Delving into those findings, we can estimate that just a 6% increase in property value would equate to between £12,000 and £32,000 in additional

revenue, depending on the property's location. This is purely for offering the buyer the opportunity to have their garden of choice created before they move in.

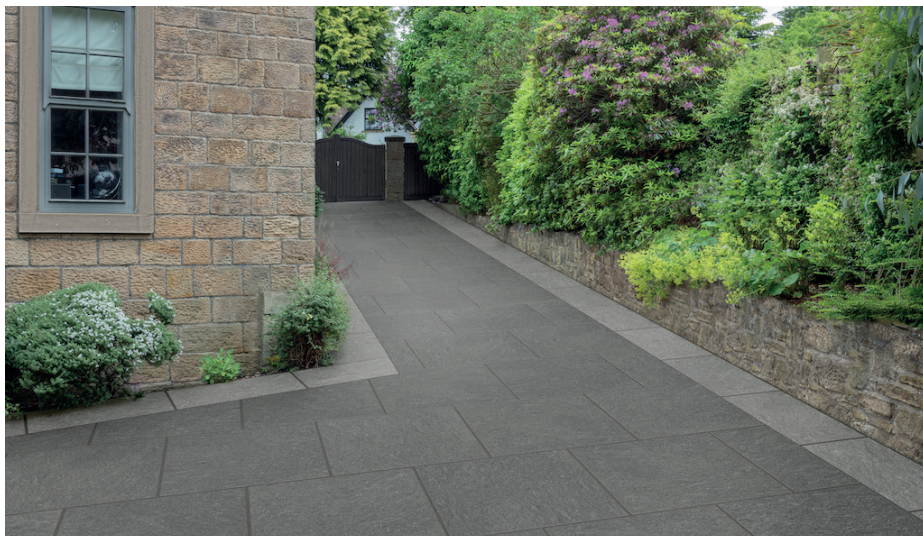
It's long been common practice for housebuilders and property developers to offer their customers a choice of other features like kitchens, bathrooms and flooring. Why has the same approach never been applied to outdoor spaces? Doing so would certainly speed up sales, according to our findings. They also showed that nearly two-thirds (60%) of people make up their minds about whether they want to live in a property within one minute of seeing the outside.

BIODIVERSITY & BEAUTY BRING IN THE BUYERS

Biodiversity tops the bill when it comes to the features that appeal to prospective buyers – which has the potential to work hand-in-hand with newly introduced biodiversity net gain requirements.

Planters, hanging baskets and real grass areas (21%), as well as trees (20%),

NEARLY A QUARTER OF PEOPLE (23%) SAID THEY'D BE WILLING TO PAY MORE FOR A NEW BUILD IF THEY GOT TO CHOOSE FROM A CHOICE OF TEMPLATED GARDENS



wildlife gardens (17%), raised bedding areas (15%) and bird baths (14%) are what house buyers are most likely to look for, followed by new driveways (14%), bin storage (13%) and privacy screening (12%).

And in an age when social media and image are driving so many buying decisions, it's perhaps unsurprising to find that kerb appeal is playing a role in property sales too. More than two-fifths (43%) said they care more about the appearance of the front of their home

now – including their garden, driveway and features like the front door – than two years ago. Why? Reasons vary, from people simply wanting to improve their home's appearance from the outside (44%) or increase its value (29%), to wanting to keep up with neighbours (10%). The savviest of housebuilders will use this knowledge to their advantage, using clever designs to show just how to achieve that perfect exterior finish to improve their sales.

Castlethorpe Homes is one developer

which has seen a strong connection between buyers' reactions to the exterior of their developments' properties and subsequent buying decisions. Chris Warner, managing director at the firm, said: "The exterior of our properties and the wider development are undeniably important in the buying journey, because the quality of how they look on the outside puts faith in the quality of the interior. The feedback from our customers is that they've bought a home because the specification from the landscaping and externals to the internal finish and look, are all as one. But people often see the outside before they see the inside, so when we set the bar high with the external aesthetics, they feel reassured that they are buying a quality home. From our experience, if you don't do that, you're less likely to get the sale."

When the commercial opportunities from creating thoughtful garden landscapes are so abundantly clear, housebuilders and developers should begin rethinking their approach to new builds' gardens today, to secure a competitive advantage in what predictions say will be a tricky market for months to come.

Ben Warren is managing director of landscape products at Marshalls



Stylish Evolve decorative light switches and sockets from BG Electrical

The Evolve range of decorative switches and sockets from BG Electrical is proving a winner for electrical installers as they combine end user demand for style and value with easy, quick fitting and 'no-return' reliability. This award-winning range is suitable for both domestic and commercial applications and the range is the perfect way to ensure all essential power points enhance décor rather than detract from it. Aesthetically attractive, the slimline switches and sockets are designed with screwless face plates which easily clip on and off to make decorating easier. Launched by leading lighting and electrical brand Luceco under its specialist wiring and accessories brand BG Electrical, the Evolve range boasts eight different colours including brushed steel, black chrome, and matt blue as well as satin brass, polished copper, matt black, matt grey, and pearlescent white. The range includes switches, sockets and power points including fast charge USB sockets, Wi-Fi range extenders, cooker controls, shaver sockets, dimmer switches as well as Grid range extension and Euro module range extension combining power, data, TV, telephone, and audio. There are 25-year warranties, and the range design ensures a 'right first time' approach to any wiring installation. BG Electrical is part of the Luceco Group, which also includes the Luceco Lighting and Masterplug brands.

01952 238 100 luceco.com/uk



Wykamol launches ultra-thin ISO-THERM retrofit insulation

Wykamol has launched an innovative, patented textile-based thermal wall insulation which is ideal for creating dry and warm walls, primarily in retrofit situations, with the potential to save energy and protect properties from penetrating damp. ISO-THERM is an ultra-thin – approximately 4 mm thick – specially woven polyester-based material which, due to its flexibility and ease of use, can quickly be cut around light switches, sockets, radiator brackets, architraves, skirting boards and even complex shaped decorative mouldings. This therefore avoids the disruption and cost of employing additional trades such as electricians, plumbers or carpenters. The ISO-THERM membrane is secured to the brick or block substrate with Wykamol's unique ISO-THERM Adhesive, applied at a thickness of approximately 5 mm using a notched trowel. The ISO-THERM is then simply rolled into the glue before receiving a plaster skim coat, affording an overall finish of approximately 10 mm. The ISO-THERM material is both waterproof and vapour permeable, so resists lateral damp transference to prevent natural surface nitrates and chlorides forming as efflorescence and therefore does not support the growth of surface mould, instead allowing the wall to breathe. Available in 1 x 7.5 metre-long rolls, ISO-THERM is stable enough to accommodate a multitude of wall finishes and can even be applied to sound plasterboard.

01282 473 100 www.wykamol.com

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

www.hbdonline.co.uk

SterlingOSB Zero PrimedPlus for city scheme



A construction and property company based in the East Midlands has used SterlingOSB Zero PrimedPlus, from **West Fraser**, for the hoardings around one of its latest residential projects, close to Derby City Centre. Aside from the practicalities of the ready-to-use panels offering time-savings when erecting a safe and secure site hoarding, INCO Construction & Development Consultants cited the smart and professional appearance of West Fraser's new product as being a primary reason for moving away from the use of standard OSB or plywood. With a 30-metre stretch along the main elevation and returning around two other sides to the site, the SterlingOSB Zero PrimedPlus was screw-fixed to a timber frame braced off the scaffold rails.

uk.westfraser.com



Mapei provides watertight boundary solution

A **Mapei** watertight concrete & membrane system has been used to create a protective boundary at Chartist Garden Village, Gwent – a development of 123 new homes by Lovell Partnerships, for Pobl Group. The warranted waterproofing system was designed by Phil Hewitt Associates in consultation with the Mapei specification manager, Mapei technical department and Grays (Consulting Engineers) Limited. The Mapei specification incorporated waterproofing of a foundation slab and precast L shaped retaining wall, spanning over 70 m in length and 3.5 m high. The retaining wall was designed to retain earth on the sloping site whilst protecting the new development from the ingress of groundwater. In consultation with Mapei's technical team, a warranted design including a complete system of Mapei products was put together for Lovell Partnerships by Phil Hewitt Associates. Site support was then provided throughout the project by Mapei's admixture, waterproofing and technical department teams. The comprehensive specification included Idrostop, a hydrophilic expanding waterbar, 70 m³ of watertight concrete using Idrocrete KR1000 – a powder admixture made from special hydrophilic components which reduces the permeability of hardened concrete – and Mapeband TPE flexible sealing and waterproofing tape to seal movement joints.

info@mapei.co.uk www.mapei.co.uk

New Marmox Fireboard offers ideal EWI and IWI substrate



Building on the broad benefits of its widely specified Multiboard, insulation manufacturer **Marmox** introduced in January a highly versatile Fireboard into its range for both internal and external wall insulation (IWI/EWI) applications. The Marmox Stone Wool based product shares the unique Marmox honeycomb surface structure with its XPS forerunner, Multiboard, to create an A1 non-combustible certified render-backer which is weatherproof. It can further be used internally across walls or ceilings to take a plaster finish, while providing sound absorption properties, as well as thermal insulation. The 600 x 1,200 mm Fireboards are available in thicknesses from 20 mm, 50 mm and 100 mm and with the polymer modified mortar honeycomb coating applied to both faces. With a nominal density of 150 kg/m³ the boards' core material offers a compressive strength of 90 tonnes/m². The 20 mm Fireboard is ideally suited for external window and door reveals, ready for renering. As detailed in a newly available A5 technical brochure which can be downloaded, Marmox Fireboard has been tested to prove compliance with BS EN 1182, EN 1716 and EN13823 (Resistance to fire test) conducted by UKTC, along with other testing completed by the BRE.

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