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which transforms a group of listed cotton mills

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CONTENTS

02.25

NEWS, VIEWS & INSIGHTS

- 04 Industry News
- 12 **Site Lines:** Redefining modular timber
- 16 **Ask the Architect:** Matt Spinks of Johnson Design Partnership
- 20 International Focus
- 29 Futurebuild Show Preview
- 43 Appointments & Company News

PRODUCTS

- 44 Groundworks & Drainage
- 48 Structural Elements
- 50 External Envelope
- 57 Interiors
- 68 Heating, Ventilation & Services
- 69 Accessibility
- 70 Safety & Security



INDUSTRY VIEWFINDER

23 DESIGN CERTIFICATION FOR COMMERCIAL CLIENT ESG & ZERO CARBON STRATEGIES

A white paper report on research we conducted among architects to discover the drivers for clients pursuing sustainability certification for projects, and their methods of choice.

PROJECT REPORT

34 A BRIGHTER FUTURE

As a celebration of Manchester's cotton mill past, this major residential scheme by shedkm combines respect for historic fabric with striking minimalist additions to help catalyse regeneration. Stephen Cousins reports.

FEATURES

47 GROUNDWORKS & DRAINAGE: FLOOD PROTECTION PLACEMAKING FOR FLOOD RESILIENCE

To avoid surface water flooding, holistic urban design include the 'sponge city' concept should include sustainable drainage from the very start, explains Chris Hodson, consultant to trade body MPA Precast Paving.

53 EXTERNAL ENVELOPE: EXTERNAL WALL FINISHES & RENDERS BREAKING THE SPEC BREAKERS

Product substitution, otherwise known as 'breaking spec,' threatens building performance and raises lifecycle costs. David Grace of K Rend highlights how manufacturers can help protect specifications to ensure design integrity.

59 INTERIORS: BATHROOMS & WASHROOMS RUGGED GOOD LOOKS

Commercial washrooms endure heavy footfall, but as Amanda Mills of Kinedo highlights, bathroom wall panels can provide the necessary durability, maintenance and waterproofing characteristics, along with some glamorous aesthetics.

71 SAFETY & SECURITY: ACCESS CONTROL STRIKING A BALANCE

Darren Hyde of the Automatic Door Suppliers Association (ADSA), delves into the evolving landscape of access control, discussing how powered pedestrian doors integrate with modern security systems while ensuring accessibility and regulatory compliance.



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FROM THE EDITOR



Is Rachel Reeves bats to be getting out her wellies to stomp on the idea of preserving species in developments as being seemingly irritating blocks to ‘growth,’ when she could be trying to bring the green worlds of eco-conservation and sensible profit-making together in her goal of 1.5 million homes?

Fair enough, saying that she has been “genuinely shocked” at the slowness of the planning system was an important realisation for this still nascent Chancellor. But deciding the right response was to pander to both developers and middle England to stop worrying about “the bats and the newts.” The irony, of course, is that many in the country would be up in arms to have such natural habitats removed, particularly if they are on their doorsteps, so Reeves might not be charming as many people as she thinks with her recent speech.

There is a big difference between a glaring £100m for a tunnel for bats for HS2 – of course itself a story of spending that dwarfs most eco initiatives – and the small compromises that are required for housing schemes’ profit margins to enable biodiversity to happen.

However, taken in aggregate, there are a lot of issues, particularly for the smaller housebuilder and their architects, that can make biodiversity a nightmare. As ever, there are mixed messages from the Government, with the Chancellor on one hand saying ‘forget the bats,’ and on the other announcing that housebuilders will be asked to pay into ‘a nature fund’ if an impact on wildlife is identified at a potential new build site.

Reeves told *The Observer* the Government will launch a new ‘zoning’ plan which will place new build homes around train stations, to help commuters get to work in the post-pandemic world. “If it’s around a commuter train station, we want that development to happen,” she said. The big question is, will the upcoming Planning & Infrastructure Bill include concrete details on the planning allocations, or at least some formulas to make this a reality, and help to avoid more green belt battles?

The recent abandoning by Stockport Council of the Greater Manchester regional ‘spatial framework’ being developed to plan housing against need on a more holistic basis, brings the problems into sharp relief. You suspect that politics is partly at the root, with Stockport’s Lib Dem-run council railing against the Government’s revised framework’s potential to double the amount of homes in the Borough. But Stockport (who also feature in this month’s news pages with some major new schemes) said they were removing themselves to protect their green belt, with attendant biodiversity benefits. These are the major pushes and pulls resulting from reallocating development nationally which are what Reeves should really be worrying about, if she wants to drive growth.

James Parker, Editor

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ON THE COVER...

Crusader Works is a 10,200 m² development made up of 123 owner-occupied flats anchored around a communal courtyard
Cover image © Daniel Hopkinson

For the full report on this project, go to page 34

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RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Green light for Fosters' two towers

Foster + Partners' designs for a pair of 28 and 38 storey residential towers in south west London have been given the go-ahead.

The plans, including a seven storey podium building, for St William (part of the Berkeley Group), have been granted detailed planning permission as phase four of the King's Road Park masterplan. It comprises 357 homes and 1.9 acres of new parkland and public open space.

The two residential towers and podium are located on the eastern side of the masterplan. New homes face onto the park, which is located at the centre of the wider development and features a restored Grade II* listed gasholder. Apartments are dual aspect – providing ample daylight inside every home – with corner balconies that offer views across London and the park. An additional residential garden, on the roof of the podium, is covered by a louvred canopy to provide protection from the elements throughout the year.

By removing one of the towers (there were three in the outline scheme) and increasing the size of their floorplates,

the design reduces the development's embodied carbon, meets future fire safety requirements, improves views of the development, and "significantly increases the amount of daylight entering the park," said Fosters. The distance between the two towers is also maximised to expand the park and enhance connectivity between King's Road and Imperial Wharf station.

The towers have a "slender vertical language," emphasised by extending the facade elements from the ground to the highest levels of the buildings. Terracotta panels clad the middle section of the buildings' facades, providing additional depth and responding to the local vernacular within the design district.

The new open landscape, designed by Gillespies, evolved in collaborative design with Foster + Partners and includes a new community park, public square, children's play areas, walking routes and welcoming natural habitats for people and wildlife to enjoy. This will form a key part of the "ambitious six-acre network of open landscape" being created at King's

Road Park, which is expected to create a biodiversity net gain of approximately 112%, said the architects.

The design and placemaking strategy for phase four were developed through engagement with Hammersmith & Fulham Council's planning team and local stakeholders. This included a pre-submission design review panel and a series of detailed pre-application meetings with LBHF officers.

Giles Robinson, senior partner at Foster + Partners, said: "We are delighted that our design has been given the green light. The scheme will provide the highest quality homes that overlook one of London's most spectacular new public parks. Responding to St William's brief and working closely with the landscape designers, Gillespies, our design complements the historic urban surroundings and enhances connections with nature, by significantly increasing the amount of green space at the base of the towers and extending the experience of the park onto the podium's rooftop."



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HEALTHCARE BUILDINGS

Stanton Williams wins research facility commission at St Mary's Hospital

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has announced that Stanton Williams has been won its competition to design the new Fleming Centre, a research and public engagement facility to be built on the St Mary's Hospital campus in Paddington, London.

The Fleming Centre is part of the wider Fleming Initiative, established jointly by Imperial College Healthcare and Imperial College London to find solutions to antimicrobial resistance (AMR) at a global scale. The Centre will provide a space to bring together researchers, policymakers, clinicians, behavioral experts, commercial partners and the public to combine their shared networks, expertise and skills in the fight against AMR. It will also be part of a global network of centres in strategic locations around the world, aiming to catalyse worldwide action.

The selection follows a competitive RIBA design competition and a three-day design exhibition in November, showcasing five concept designs from five shortlisted architects including AHMM, Allies and Morrison, Grimshaw and Wilkinson Eyre with White Arkitekter. Feedback from over 300 visitors and 100 written responses helped guide the final selection, ensuring that the winning concept reflected excellence in both design and functionality and is a real asset to the local community.

The next phase of the project will involve detailed design development, public consultations, and the submission of a planning application in collaboration with Westminster City Council.

The Centre is intended to be integrated into a full redevelopment of St Mary's Hospital which is included in the Government's New Hospital Programme. The Centre is due to open in 2028, marking 100 years since the discovery of penicillin at St Mary's by Sir Alexander Fleming.

Stanton Williams' concept design for the Fleming Centre "embraces the heritage of its proposed location on the site of The Bays," said the practice. These former industrial warehouses, dating back to around 1850, were originally used for



transport and distribution before being incorporated into the hospital in 1983. Their approach retains and adapts The Bays as a vital link to Paddington's industrial past while inserting new elements, including the Fleming Discovery Centre, to showcase cutting-edge science and research.

The design proposes features such as renewable energy systems, including a water-source heat pump and photovoltaic panels, alongside biodiverse landscaping and a low-carbon structure. "Public engagement is central, with the ground floor designed as an open and welcoming extension of the public realm, offering

views into laboratories and curated exhibition spaces to bring science to life."

Professor the Lord Darzi, executive chair of the Fleming Initiative said: "Stanton Williams has a bold vision for the Fleming Centre and have brought our ambitions to life with a concept that reflects the Centre's unique purpose and global significance. By providing a flexible space to unite researchers, policymakers, clinicians, behavioral experts, commercial partners and the public in the fight against antimicrobial resistance, we can ensure that the Fleming Centre becomes a global beacon for change in healthcare."



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EDUCATION

AtkinsRéalis opens ‘flagship’ school to address SEND needs sustainably

Around 200 pupils have started the new term at a “state-of-the-art” £18m school in Stockport, which has been designed by AtkinsRéalis to meet the needs of children in the borough with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Built on the site of the former Offerton High School, Lisburne School is “set to transform education for children with SEND,” said AtkinsRéalis, and represents a broader commitment to improving the provision for children across the Stockport Metropolitan Borough.

Pupils aged four to 11-years-old will benefit from “specially adapted” classrooms, sensory rooms, and therapeutic spaces which have been designed to address the specific needs of SEND children, while providing a stimulating educational environment.

Sustainability is “at the heart of the

design,” which has revived a brownfield site to take advantage of the natural surroundings. A key focus of the design is on views out to nature, and “promoting external interaction with the protected green space, allowing pupils to move around freely and safely.”

The design for Lisburne School was delivered by AtkinsRéalis’ team based out of the firm’s newly opened central Manchester office – which “represents a hub of design and engineering activity for the North West region.”

The scheme is divided into three distinct blocks that cater for different age groups, creating a nurturing environment tailored to diverse educational needs.

AtkinsRéalis has demonstrated its multi-disciplinary expertise across the education sector in the UK by delivering more than 380 education projects over the past two



years, with 1,250 active projects across nurseries, schools, FE and HE facilities.

The company has also been working with local and national government clients to develop best practice and innovations in decarbonisation, undertaking 500 Net Zero Roadmaps, identifying more than £38m in savings and 350KT+ of CO₂ reduction.

PASSIVHAUS

Plans submitted for £70m brick clad Passivhaus residential scheme by AEW in central Stockport

A two-tower residential development, designed by London and Manchester-based AEW Architects, has been submitted to Stockport Council as part of the town’s ongoing regeneration plans.

The £70m project includes two connected blocks of eight and 20 stories, designed to meet the Passivhaus standard.

The focus is on creating sustainable homes and to “create a vibrant new community for the people of Stockport,” said AEW, with accessibility to the fore.

Located in a busy area in Stockport town centre, the development will transform a derelict office building and car park into much-needed new homes in one of the North West’s most up-and-coming areas.

The design “puts people first, with features that make everyday living better.” These include “clever positioning” to

make the most of natural sunlight, bright and airy staircases, shared laundry areas, and a rooftop garden with community allotments and solar panels.

At the heart of the development sits a 100 m² flexible space which can be used for various events and workshops for residents and non-residents.

The project will create 245 new homes, including 12 townhouses and 233 apartments, offering a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom properties – a “great mix of options for the area which has grown substantially in popularity of late.”

Phil Hepworth, director at AEW Architects, said: “This is a prominent site surrounded by major infrastructure, so we’ve created a simple, elegant building that rises confidently into the sky.

“The curved brick facade offers a timeless aesthetic that fits with the local



area and we’ve adapted the distinctive oval shape to work with the challenging ground levels, which change by up to six metres in places.”

The scheme recently secured brownfield funding from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), highlighting its importance to the region’s housing plans, as a vibrant place to live and invest.



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SITE LINES

Redefining modular timber

Designer Nick Blunt of WeberHaus highlights how a demonstration project in Germany was created with an aim to “redefine prefabricated timber frame construction,” harnessing contractor-builder collaboration for innovative results.



When tasked with designing Villa Blunt, the ambition was clear: to create a striking prefabricated timber frame house that challenges conventional notions of modular construction. Situated at the WeberHaus World of Living campus in Rheinau, Germany, the project exemplifies how innovative design, sustainability, and practicality can coexist, and offers inspiration for architects and selfbuilders alike.

Reimagining prefabrication

Prefabrication often brings to mind images of uniformity, repetition, and creative restrictions. However, Villa Blunt set out to reimagine the possibilities of modular construction, blending aesthetic ambition with the efficiency of standardised processes. The project was a collaboration between WeberHaus and interior design studio GEPLAN DESIGN. This partnership ensured that the interior and exterior design felt like an integrated whole, avoiding the common pitfall of disjointed elements.

By leveraging modular construction systems, the project demonstrated that creative vision need not be constrained by the available budget or by off-the-shelf materials. The villa is proof that standardised prefabrication can deliver a unique and architecturally ambitious home without excessive complexity.

Grounded design, elevated vision

Villa Blunt's most distinctive feature is its unusual proportions at 25 metres long and just 9 metres deep. This elongated footprint was carefully chosen to maximise light and space, with dual-sided windows flooding the interiors with natural light. The design celebrates openness and clarity, creating a bright and dynamic living environment that resonates with modern lifestyles.

Vertical wooden rods on the upper facade serve both aesthetic and functional purposes. They rhythmically break up the building's length while providing sun protection and privacy. The interplay of vertical and horizontal elements gives the villa its striking, balanced visual identity.

To create the illusion of the first floor 'floating' above the ground floor, the design team incorporated clerestory windows into the ground-floor wall panels. This feature not only enhances the villa's visual lightness, but also helps ground it with natural stone cladding, creating a harmonious balance between weight and lightness.

One of the project's practical challenges was integrating solar shading without compromising the villa's clean lines. The solution involved raising the ground floor slightly and concealing external blinds within a false ceiling in the first-floor overhang. This approach preserved the design's simplicity while delivering effective

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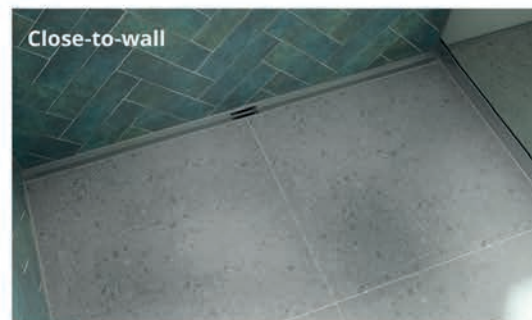
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Key to the project's success was the emphasis placed on early collaboration

solar control – a testament to the thoughtful problem-solving that underpins the project.

Designed for modern living

Inside, the villa offers a carefully planned layout that reflects the needs of contemporary living. The ground floor is divided into distinct yet interconnected zones. A hidden living room can be discreetly concealed with a floor-to-ceiling door, blending seamlessly into the wall when closed. A cutting-edge kitchen with a freestanding island anchors the open-plan living area, complemented by a dining space separated by a central courtyard.

At the heart of the courtyard stands an imposing olive tree, its Mediterranean charm adding warmth and character. This focal point draws the eye and provides a sense of calm, anchoring the space in nature. Threshold-free sliding doors blur the line between interior and exterior, inviting light and greenery deep into the house.

The choice of materials was critical to achieving the villa's harmonious atmosphere. Natural textures, subtle lighting, and minimalist finishes work together to create a seamless flow between spaces. Every detail, from wall coverings to flooring, was selected to enhance the overall aesthetic while ensuring practicality.

Collaboration & precision

Villa Blunt highlights the importance of involving construction partners early in the design process, especially when using a modular and prefabricated approach. Collaboration between the design and manufacturing teams ensured that the villa's ambitious vision was in alignment with WeberHaus' modular system. This approach eliminated the need for reworking design elements and streamlined the construction process, demonstrating how architects and builders can work together to achieve outstanding results.

Sustainability at the core

Sustainability was a cornerstone of Villa Blunt's design. The house incorporates smart home technology, allowing for the efficient



control of lighting, climate, and building services via a centralised system. Residents can manage these features through a smartphone, tablet, or embedded wall panels, making the home as convenient as it is energy-efficient.

The villa's insulation values set a benchmark for energy efficiency, with a wall U-value of 0.11 W/m²K, and a roof U-value of 0.15 W/m²K. These high-performance elements were integrated during the prefabrication process, underscoring the advantages of modular construction for achieving sustainable building standards.

Inspiring the future

Villa Blunt offers valuable insights for architects and selfbuilders, with interest in timber frame construction growing. The project illustrates how prefabrication can unlock creative solutions without compromising on quality or sustainability.

Key to the project's success was the emphasis placed on early collaboration, ensuring the design was optimised for manufacturing and assembly from the start. This approach not only reduced costs but also maintained the integrity of the architectural vision. Architects can draw on these principles to design homes that balance ambition with practicality.

Villa Blunt is more than just a house – it is a statement about the potential of prefabricated timber frame construction to redefine modern living. Its innovative design, sustainable features, and thoughtful execution challenge preconceived notions about modular building, opening the door to new possibilities in residential architecture.

For myself and the WeberHaus team, the villa represents a bold step forward in reimagining homebuilding. By blending creativity with precision, and sustainability with style, the project demonstrates that prefabricated homes can be as inspiring as they are efficient.

As architects continue to explore the potential of timber frame construction, Villa Blunt serves as a shining example of what's possible when vision and expertise come together. This remarkable home sets a new standard for what modular construction can achieve, paving the way for a future where imaginative sustainable design becomes the norm.

Nick Blunt is exclusive design partner for WeberHaus in the UK





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ASK THE ARCHITECT

Matt Spinks from fast-rising Shropshire practice Johnson Design Partnership, answers *ADF's* questions on his architectural journey from assistant to director, leadership challenges, and his vision for growing sustainable design.

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO PURSUE A CAREER IN ARCHITECTURE?

From a young age I was intrigued about what my Grandad did as a draftsman, I've always had an interest in how things are built and structured, and that curiosity grew into a passion for architecture. At school and sixth form I attended work experience at two or three local practices – from that point on I knew that I wanted to pursue architecture.

I was fascinated by the relationship between design and functionality. I got started by studying architecture at university (Portsmouth for my degree and De Montford, Leicester for my Masters), where I was exposed to both the technical and creative aspects of the field.

Between my degree and masters I worked for 12 months as part of my training at a practice in Wolverhampton where I was exposed to a range of projects ranging from industrial projects and sports stadiums to schools.

Then after I finished my Masters, in 2004 I began working at Johnson Design Partnership, and I haven't looked back, gradually taking on more responsibility as I gained experience.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING AT JOHNSON DESIGN PARTNERSHIP?

We have an amazing team; everyone has your back and we support each other. The

vast array of projects we work on is really exciting, from a small domestic extension through to a new hospital ward.

I truly value the collaborative environment at Johnson Design Partnership. It's a place where ideas flow freely, and everyone is encouraged to contribute.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE YOU'VE FACED DURING YOUR JOURNEY TO BECOMING A DIRECTOR?

One of the biggest challenges has been balancing the creative and operational aspects of the role.

As I've advanced in the practice, I've needed to develop strong leadership skills, manage client relationships, and ensure projects are delivered on time and on budget, all while maintaining the design integrity and vision of the firm.

WHICH PROJECTS ARE YOU MOST PROUD TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO?

I'm particularly proud of a few projects where we've been able to design buildings that not only meet the client's needs but also positively impact the surrounding community.

The very first project I was involved with at Johnson Design was a new primary school – Upton Meadows primary in Northampton, which was partly funded by the Prince's Foundation and officially opened by King Charles in 2007.

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Upton Meadows Primary School, Northampton

I'm also proud of my work on various Grade I, II and II* projects where I collaborated with English Heritage to ensure their preservation.

But the small domestic projects are equally rewarding, when a small intervention – be it a kitchen extension or a garden room, where the new space helps improve someone's personal space and home, and ultimately improves their day to day life.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE UPCOMING PROJECTS YOU'RE EXCITED TO WORK ON IN YOUR NEW ROLE?

I'm especially excited about a number of up and coming projects this year, working with various NHS Trusts across the UK, along with several Paragraph 84 projects and Education facilities.

WHAT DO YOU FIND TO BE THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF BEING AN ARCHITECT – AND NOW A DIRECTOR?

One of the biggest challenges is time management. As a director, I'm balancing both strategic and operational responsibilities while also staying involved in the creative and design aspects of the projects.

Finding the right balance between overseeing projects and managing the team is key. But as mentioned, we have a really strong team at Johnson Design along with a supportive external consultant network to allow us to do extensive collaboration work on a wide range of projects and sectors.

WHAT ARE YOUR KEY ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF JOHNSON DESIGN PARTNERSHIP?

With the support of the team around me, I aim to help grow the practice in a sustainable way, not just in terms of business but also by embracing innovation in design and technology.

WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL VISION FOR YOUR CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN ARCHITECTURE OVER THE NEXT DECADE?

Over the next decade, I hope to continue pushing the boundaries of design while focusing on sustainability in architecture. I want to be part of a practice that supports people through potential apprenticeships, and community projects.

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO TACKLE THE CHALLENGES JOHNSON DESIGN PARTNERSHIP MIGHT FACE IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

One key challenge is adapting to rapid technological advancements in design and construction.

We plan to invest in the latest technology and training for our team, ensuring that we can use these technologies to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and stay at the forefront of innovation – BIM, 3D, AI and VR.

HOW HAS YOUR PERSONAL JOURNEY SHAPED YOUR APPROACH TO YOUR WORK & VISION AS AN ARCHITECT?

My journey has taught me how important it is to stay adaptable, as each day is different, from being onsite with a

contractor, liaising with planners, listening to a client's aspirations for the project and putting that onto paper to help show the concept to be developed and build the dream and vision.

I've realised that the best architects are those who remain open to new ideas, always look for ways to grow, and prioritise building strong, meaningful connections with the team and clients.

I give 110% to everything I do; whether it's out of work, personal activities or within work. I approach both my designs and my role as a leader with clear focus and determination, but being caring and considerate at the same time taking on board the clients needs but thinking outside the box to enhance a space.

WHAT IS YOUR BIG PERSONAL GOAL?

I always focus on delivering innovative, sustainable, and visually compelling designs that not only meet client needs but also push the limits of architectural possibilities.

I prioritise building strong relationships with clients, ensuring their vision is clearly understood and brought to life.

And as a director, I mentor and guide emerging architects, encouraging a collaborative team dynamic and fostering a culture of continuous improvement within the firm.

Lastly, I try to stay at the cutting edge of architectural trends and technologies, constantly refining my skills and exploring new methodologies to enhance both the design process, and the final results.

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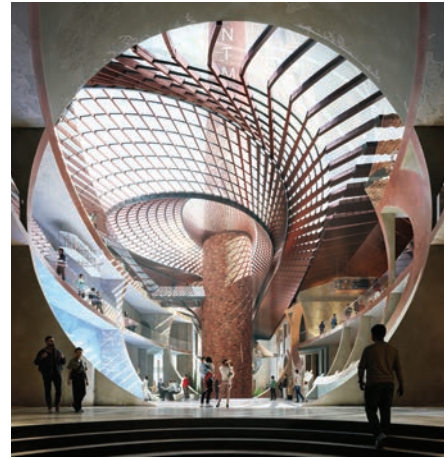
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NIKOLA TESLA MUSEUM, SERBIA ZAHA HADID ARCHITECTS & BUREAU CUBE PARTNERS

Following the anonymously-conducted design competition for the new Nikola Tesla Museum in Belgrade, the jury selected the design submitted by the team of Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA), working with Bureau Cube Partners of Serbia.

ZHA said the new museum will renovate Belgrade's historic Milan Vapa Paper Mill into a "cultural destination celebrating Tesla's legacy" while preserving the city's architectural heritage and creating a variety of new public spaces for local residents and visitors.

Built by Belgrade industrialist Milan Vapa and opened in 1924 as the nation's first modern factory, the paper mill was decommissioned and used as the storage facility of a freight company until being abandoned approximately a decade ago. The building has been protected for its cultural importance by the Belgrade Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments. Its renovation as the Nikola Tesla Museum is funded by Belgrade Waterfront.

The adaptive reuse of the 1920s structure will "preserve its industrial heritage whilst upgrading its indoor and outdoor spaces as a leading cultural venue with improved accessibility from the city," said ZHA.

The museum's design draws on Tesla's research into magnetic fields and wireless energy transfer. Informed by concepts of magnetic forces and interconnectivity, the design incorporates dynamic elliptical curves radiating from the old factory chimney, the site's dominant feature.

A new circular opening in the factory's western facade will be the public entrance leading visitors to the triple-height central atrium anchored by the historic chimney at the heart of the 13,400 m² museum.

To enhance circulation and functionality in the building's continued life as a museum, ellipsoidal sectional openings will be carved within the walls that divide the old factory's interior. These openings "define a series of three-dimensional spherical voids that create an extended perspective," viewed from the western entrance, through the atrium and terminating at the Tesla memorial at the eastern end of the museum.

The museum's first floor galleries incorporate historical artefacts, interactive displays and immersive presentations, while temporary galleries will host an ever-changing programme of exhibitions and events, ensuring a new experience for returning visitors. Featuring a 12-million-volt transformer, the immersive Tesla Electronic Transformer Gallery will "capture imaginations and showcase Tesla's pioneering spirit. The museum's visitor amenities also include a cafe, a multipurpose hall and rooftop restaurant offering panoramic views of the Sava River.

Outside the building, Nikola Tesla Square will serve as a new public space for the city. Inspired by Tesla's concepts of electromagnetic fields, the square's flowing pathways, gardens and plazas will enhance accessibility and connect with Belgrade Waterfront as well as the city's transportation network.

Minimising ecological impact through passive design in addition to the use of renewable and geothermal energy, the paper mill's restoration preserves its historic facades, vaulted ceilings and masonry, while updating its structure to serve as one of the city's most important cultural destinations.



HANNAMDONG-4 RESIDENCES, SEOUL UNSTUDIO

UNStudio's design for Hannamdong-4 Residences (in collaboration with Samsung C&T Corporation), will, said the practice, "redefine urban living by integrating design innovation, community-focused spaces, cutting-edge sustainability and the striking surrounding natural landscape."

Located in the Hannamdong-4 Residences of Seoul, it features a group of front-facing O-shaped towers with an innovative, patented spiral design. Complementing these are X-shaped and L-shaped towers have been set along a route leading to Namsan Mountain.

Based on the concept of 'Biophilic Nexus,' UNStudio's design proposal enhances both individual well-being and community connectivity by drawing inspiration from the distinct characteristics of the locality. This holistic approach "prioritises wellbeing and sustainability, creating an environment where the city and nature coexist in harmony."

The design draws from elements that symbolise local heritage. The white pine, which was believed to have disappeared but has now re-emerged in Seoul, and waterlilies emblematic of the Han River, serve as central inspirations for the facade design.

For the series of X-shaped towers, the facade features intricate patterns that mimic the texture and form of white pine trees. Vertical elements, indicative of tree trunks and branches, are integrated into the building's structure. The central 'trunk' branches out at the podium levels to create balconies with views of the Han River and continues to grow all the way to the top framing each tower.

For the O-shaped towers, rotating waterlily modules are arranged around the cylindrical tower that naturally becomes a green spine. These modules are inspired by petals and create a cohesive and expressive articulation around the cylindrical tower. These are strategically placed to create a sense of fluidity and movement across the building.

The L towers become a powerful background for the 'O' towers. Their back side design is inspired by pine trees, while the front side is inspired by waterlilies. This 'Biophilic Nexus' promotes wellbeing and sustainability, said the architects, "fostering a deeper connection with the natural world."

A key innovation in the project is the flexible layout for residential spaces. Designed to accommodate changing family configurations and diverse lifestyles, these layouts allow residents to adjust the interior spaces according to their needs. This design approach "not only increases spatial efficiency but also provides customised environments tailored to users' preferences," said UNStudio.



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INDUSTRY VIEWFINDER

Design Certification for Commercial Client ESG & Zero Carbon Strategies

Introduction

For a wide range of commercial sector clients, ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) aims are central to driving forward sustainability in their building projects, and particularly in workplace new builds and refurbishments.

The need to exercise due diligence on sustainability reporting and data, including on the ESG aims around building sustainability for users and the building's performance, is becoming increasingly acute. More and more firms are required to produce certified workplace designs for new builds and refurbishments, to attract eco-savvy staff and guard against accusations of greenwash. Now forming part of clients' financial reporting, such certifications are firmly on the radar of often internationally-based and sustainability-cognisant investors.

In this new transparency and credibility-focused environment, the veracity of certifications used for buildings in the commercial sector is increasingly in focus. But there are other, more people-based business drivers for ESG too.

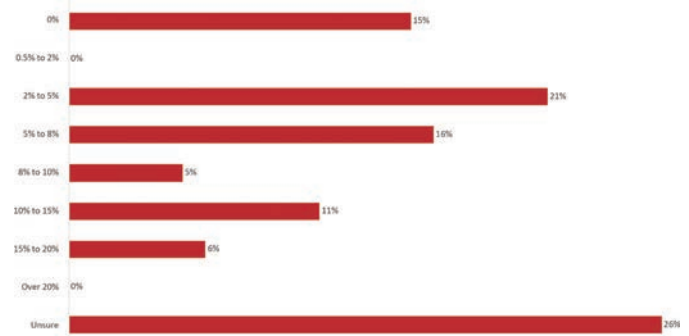
With the changes in working patterns post-pandemic, there is a question mark over the future of urban commercial environments. As a result, designing spaces which promote employee wellness and other ethical approaches such as sustainability within the ESG context is now in the spotlight, to help clients bring staff back to workplaces and other commercial settings.

We surveyed architects to discover their views on the factors and methods which are helping to drive clients' attitudes (and their designs) to promoting wellness and sustainability in the commercial sector, with a focus on workplace design. This white paper

presents the results, and includes discussion of the wider trends, to collectively offer an evidence-based perspective on this important and growing area of the architecture and design industry.

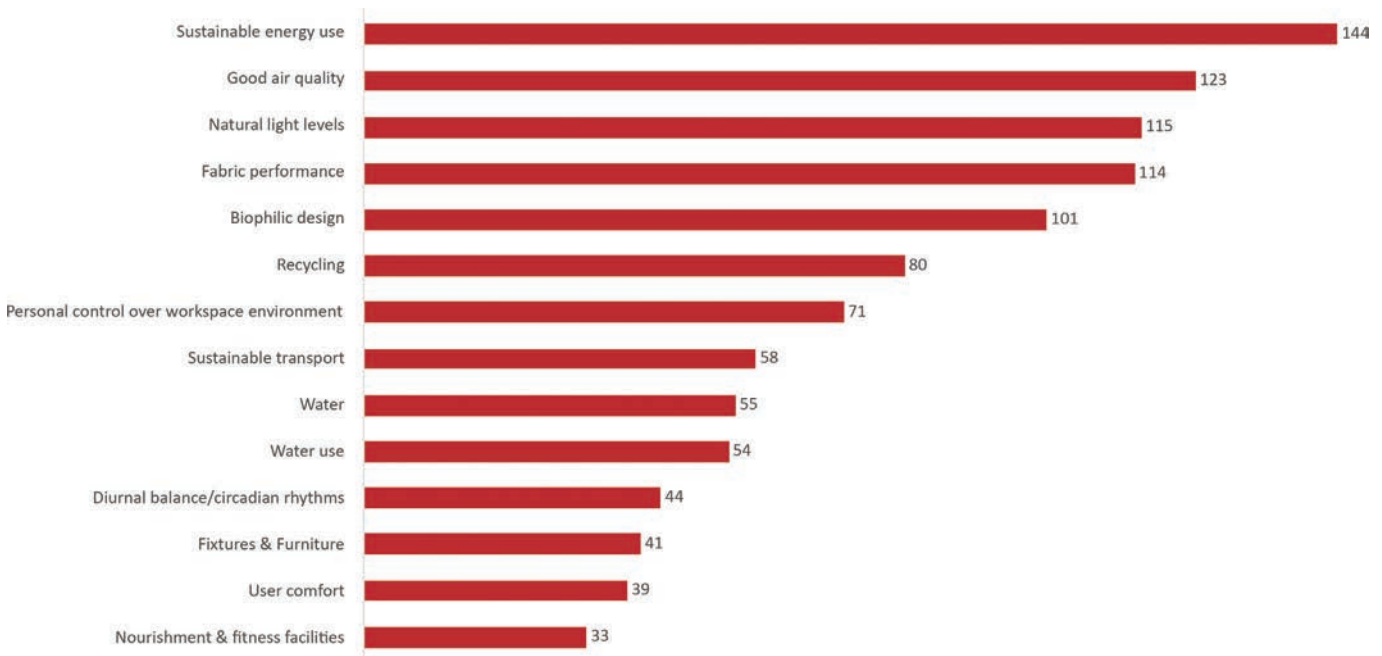
Companies are also required to demonstrate to their owners and shareholders that the sustainability measures they are pursuing in building projects from new builds to refurbishment, are credible, and fully measurable. The umbrella for this new focus on credible sustainability is the rise of ESG, as an internationally accepted corporate framework for driving a series of sustainability initiatives, both within and beyond the built environment itself.

This is where designers and environmental consultants come in, able to offer robust measurement approaches to bolster their design offerings, and some who may be solely responsible for the



How much financial value has it added to the asset for a client?





Which aspects of sustainable design are your commercial clients asking you to focus on?

measurement itself, such as within complex projects. Such rigour in both the certification process and reporting of sustainability measurement is being increasingly sought by major investors in commercial projects.

JLL has produced data to show that BREEAM- accredited schemes on average have a 20% higher capital value than their counterparts. The US Green Building Council has found that LEED certified buildings can produce 34% fewer CO₂ emissions, and save 80 million tonnes of waste that would go to landfill over their life.

Clients' reasons & ROI

Reinforcing the message of the importance of ESG for clients seeking sustainability certification for projects, our results illustrated that the most-selected reason for certification for clients was ESG, with 35% of respondents choosing it. The second two options were the clients' own sustainability policies, and the clients' carbon reduction strategies in new builds (with 25% respectively). Slightly behind these were specific carbon reduction aims for adaptive reuse projects, showing the sustained trend for transforming heritage and other buildings into new uses including workplaces.

Certification methods such as BREEAM have been hailed as important and useful means of coordinating design teams behind an often long and sometimes seemingly conflicting list of criteria. However, for our survey sample, this was low on the list of reasons for their clients, with only 5% saying that the reason for choosing certification was "design coordination of sustainability aims." Lastly, designers' and architectural practices' own aims to achieve such certification was similarly low on the list, at just 5%.

It can add significant cost to a project to undertake full certification of sustainability. According to the USGBC, achieving BREEAM or LEED certification represents "approximately 2% of the total construction cost." However, different certification levels have different levels of detail, so that while LEED Silver or BREEAM Good both come in at only around 0.7%, UKGBC

reckons that LEED Gold or BREEAM Very Good work out around 2.2% of build cost, and LEED Platinum, BREEAM Excellent and BREEAM Outstanding are more likely to cost around 6.8% of the total build budget.

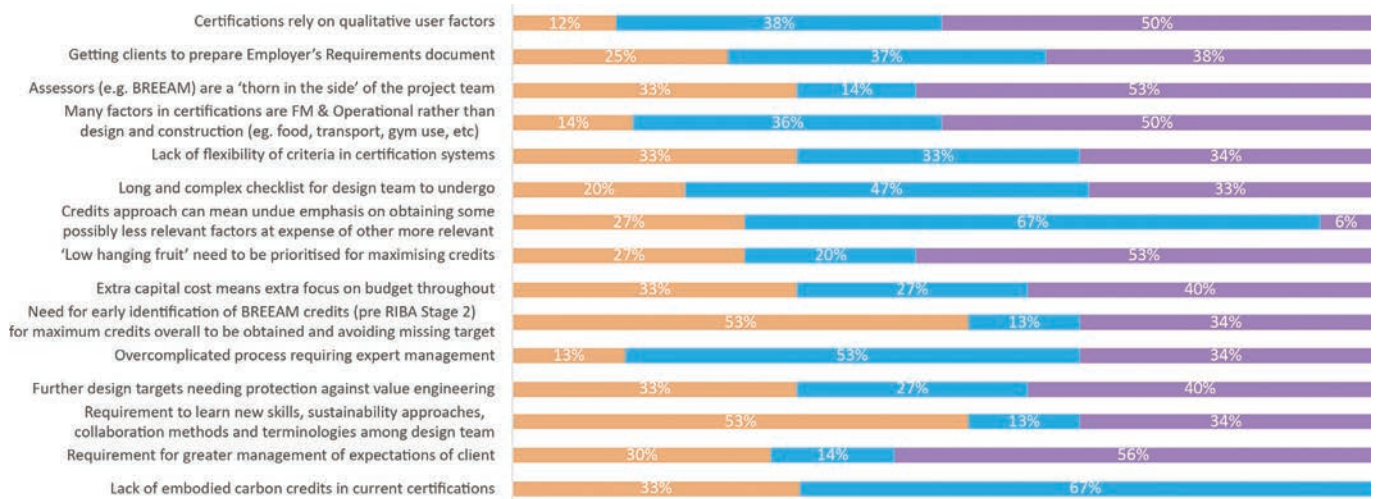
We asked our respondents from their experience what extra investment is likely to be required. While most responses were unsure (32%), a relatively large number (21%) said that certification could add a further 10% to project costs, meaning that it's a considerable investment for their clients which must be recouped. According to a small majority (10%) of our cohort, certification of sustainability could potentially cost below 2% of a project's capital budget.

The findings of our research found that a measurable, although largely modest return on investment for pursuing sustainability certification was likely for commercial clients. The majority said that only a return of between 2% and 5% has been achieved on projects, and considering that most believed that an extra 10% additional project cost could result from the approach. The average was a 3.5% return according to our cohort; clearly there will be a battle to persuade many clients that the return can justify the investment on a financial asset value case alone.

Solutions

There are several established sustainability standards to choose from, depending on the nature of the project, but according to our survey cohort, the overwhelming choice currently is the widely established and comprehensive BREEAM, closely followed by the US-based standard LEED.

While BREEAM the most selected for managed offices, LEED was hot on its heels, equalling its total in serviced offices of 29% for BREEAM. While Passivhaus scored relatively low, its retrofit equivalent EnerPhit saw an encouraging level of take up. The same number as those picking BREEAM and LEED for serviced offices (29%) also said they were using EnerPhit.



What are the Pros and Cons of certification for gaining 'credits' in commercial buildings? Pro Con Both

Interestingly, while we gave our respondents other options for certification of offices, including WELL, FITWEL, NABERS, German standard DGNB, and BREEAM In-Use, only WELL showed any significant take-up across the sectors.

In terms of the non office commercial sectors, the other options (retail, hotels, food and beverage, industrial, sports facilities, leisure, and healthcare) there was dominance from BREEAM, particularly in healthcare and F&B, where 45% of respondents saying they were certifying healthcare projects were using BREEAM in each case.

Priority design measures

We asked respondents to choose and then rank which areas of buildings were the main priorities for their clients in sustainability-certified projects, in commercial sector schemes. Unsurprisingly, 'sustainable energy use' came on top, with a total of 144 ranking points. Then came 'good air quality,' not far behind at 123. However, it was somewhat revealing that for clients, 'natural light levels' were at parity with 'fabric performance' (at 115 and 114 points), with several categories below them, showing the importance of light to users and their clients.

'Biophilic design' was also placed highly, at 101 points, although we did not break this down into the various potential characteristics that fall within this umbrella. The other categories, in descending order, were recycling, followed by 'personal control over workplace environment' (where staff are able to control light and temperature in their own area), 'sustainable transport,' 'water,' 'diurnal balance/circadian rhythms,' 'fixtures and furniture,' 'user comfort,' and lastly, 'nourishment and fitness facilities' (with food provision and fitness included as a factor in WELL and other standards).

Most of our designers working in office projects were using some form of code to guide sustainability in their projects. Half said they were using British Standards, but 43% were using British Council of Offices guidelines, and UKGBC guidance was being used by 36% – the same number as those choosing CIBSE guides on services. Slightly lower down was the number using RICS Guides – 35%.

Challenges of sustainability accreditation

We asked our respondents what they believed were the pros and cons of certification for gaining 'credits' in commercial buildings.

Positives chosen by respondents included the need to identify BREEAM credits early on in certified projects

The joint largest 'con' picked by architects was the assertion that the credits approach 'can mean undue emphasis on obtaining some possibly less relevant factors at expense of other more relevant.' However, in a later question there was less clarity on whether the perceived trade offs which can occur between different design measures to achieve credits would 'alter or constrain design aims' – only 14% said this occurred in their experience, while 21% said it didn't, and 65% said they were unsure.

The other largest con was the 'lack of embodied carbon credits' currently offered in certifications, which was unambiguously seen as a negative for our respondents with 67% choosing it; compared to 33% saying it was a positive, presumably because it made accreditations more achievable. The general complexity of many accreditation processes was a negative for 53% of our cohort, and the length and complexity of the 'checklist for design teams' was picked by 47% as a disincentive.

Positives chosen included the need to identify BREEAM credits early on in projects (before RIBA Stage 2) for maximum credits to be obtained – picked by 53% of our respondents, making it the top 'pro' chosen. Other positives included 'extra capital cost meaning an extra focus on the budget throughout the project, but interestingly this was also seen as a 'con' by 40%. Other 'pros' (that were picked by a third of our cohort) were the fact that the design targets within the sustainability accreditation process meant another thing which needed protection from value engineering in projects, but also the lack of flexibility in criteria, as well as the aforementioned lack of requirements for an embodied carbon rating.

Practicalities of accreditation

We asked designers whether they believed it was essential to have an assessor to work as a sustainability champion throughout the project, including onsite to "ensure contractors and subcontractors are delivering installations in accordance with the design." This

was endorsed by a majority of 56%, however 31% said they were ‘unsure.’ There was a lack of clarity on whether it was possible to combine design certifications on one project, but most respondents believed it was difficult to some degree – half thought it was ‘somewhat difficult’ while a further 21% said it was ‘very difficult.’ And a sizeable 14% believed that it was ‘impossible.’

The comprehensive, in-depth, real time certification of a building post-construction is a challenge to achieve in practice, meaning further investment of time, money, and potentially staff onboarding, but it can prove beyond all doubt the veracity of a project’s design claims. The difficulties are suggested by our finding that 43% of our respondents said they were not using it on their commercial projects. However, a positive finding of 21% saying they were shows that it is possible, and that many clients are going to the next level to ensure their certifications are credible on an ongoing basis.

Manufacturer information

Sourcing information from manufacturers on products is one of the key means of ensuring that projects can meet their sustainability certifications in a reliable way. We asked respondents how they were doing this, and most (57%) said that CPDs were their main source of information, followed by more sustainability-specific EPDs (Environmental Product Declarations), individual Design Details, and specific conformity information relating to the accreditation (36% and 29%). However, many (28%) were using more general performance information on the products, and 21% were using performance guarantees.

Our respondents gave some revealing answers to the question of whether they have experienced challenges in getting objective advice on products’ ability to contribute to certification. This is understandable, given the vast range of products concerned in any building project, but also somewhat indicative of a wider industry problem of credibility of advice when it comes to product information. Three-quarters of our cohort said they have encountered challenges on this front, meaning that more focus

The results also showed that architects believed that ESG was the key reason for corporate clients to pursue the route of investing in robust certification

needs to be put into initiatives such as the new Construction Products Regulator which is set up to increase the robustness of the product certification system, but broadening this beyond its safety remit to a wider performance framework.

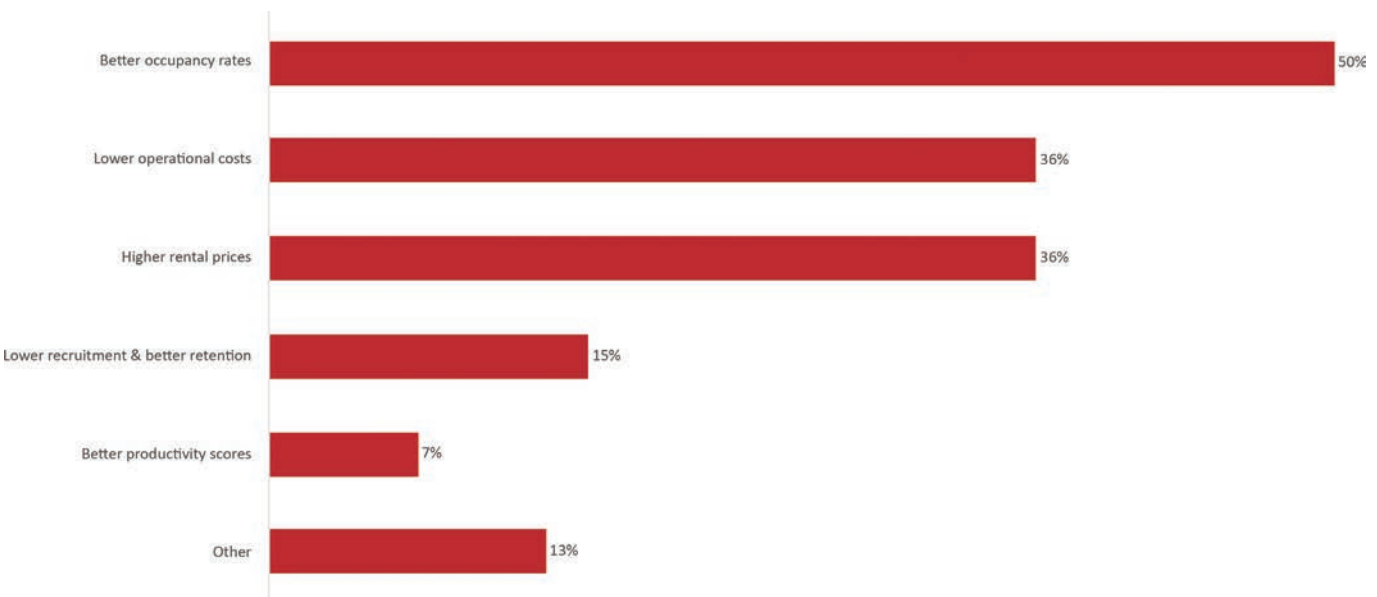
Conclusion

Our research supported the belief that sustainability accreditation is a powerful tool in the commercial sector facilities for designers and clients alike, as well as highlighting the challenges. Architects revealed how they are tackling these, from the investment needed to the difficulties of certifying buildings.

The results also showed that architects believed that ESG was the key reason for these often major corporate clients to pursue the route of investing in robust certification to prove the sustainability credentials of their projects as a market differentiator. Our survey shows how the return on investment can be substantial, up to 20% in some cases, which is a compelling case for clients.

With many commercial sectors becoming more and more competitive, attracting and retaining the right staff is a fundamental business imperative. Providing them with measurably good, healthy environments in which they can work and function more healthily as well as more productively is seen as a major plank of business, and architects and others in the design community are benefitting from these drivers.

For the full version of the Industry Viewfinder white paper report, visit insights.netmagmedia.co.uk



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Futurebuild: Making an impact with sustainable innovation

Futurebuild 2025 promises to be a pivotal event for architects eager to embrace sustainable design and innovation. Taking place at London Excel from 4-6 March, the 20th edition of Futurebuild will spotlight transformative solutions that address pressing environmental challenges and redefine architectural practices.

Take a sneak peek

The Futurebuild Arena, sponsored by Mitsubishi Electric, will be hosting a series of informative and thought-provoking sessions. Day one will emphasise circularity and reuse, topics essential for architects committed to reducing environmental impact. The session “Design for Reuse for Resource Resilience and a Circular Economy,” chaired by Dan Cooke of CIWM, will explore regenerative design strategies to minimise construction waste. Architects Kat Scott from Hackney Council and Rachel Sayers of FCB Studios will share practical approaches to adaptive reuse and material efficiency.

Architect Duncan Baker-Brown will lead “The Futurebuild Conversation,” offering insights into circular design with real-world applications. His discussion on integrating reclaimed materials and designing for disassembly will provide architects with actionable strategies for sustainable project delivery.

Sustainability, social justice & the built environment

Day two will delve into the intersection of sustainability and social justice. The panel “Tackling the Polycrisis: Can We Fix Housing, Climate, Nature, and Health?” chaired by Richard Simmons, will examine how housing solutions can simultaneously address environmental and societal challenges.



The session “10 Years On: Progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals” will reflect on the construction industry’s alignment with global sustainability objectives. Speakers Will Arnold from the Institution of Structural Engineers and Cressida Curtis from Wates Group will share insights on how architects can champion equitable and sustainable design practices.

Net zero & innovative building standards

Day three will feature critical discussions on achieving net-zero goals. The session “Implementing the UK Net Zero Carbon

Futurebuild 2025 offers architects an unmissable opportunity to engage with cutting-edge sustainability practices and design innovations



Buildings Standard (UKNZCBS),” chaired by David Partridge of NZCBS, will outline compliance strategies and highlight pilot projects demonstrating the standard’s practical application.

Additionally, “Lessons in Carbon: The UKNZCBS” will present case studies on effective carbon reduction in building design. Julie Godefroy from CIBSE will offer guidance on how architects can seamlessly integrate these standards into their workflows.

Materials & modular

The Materials Impact Stage will present sessions crucial for material-conscious architects. “Building a Modular Circular Economy,” led by Richard Hipkiss of MPBA, will showcase how modular construction can support circular economy principles by reducing waste and enhancing flexibility. The session “Fire-safe Mass Timber for the UK” will explore innovative and safe applications of timber in sustainable architecture, with insights from Built by Nature and BE-ST representatives.

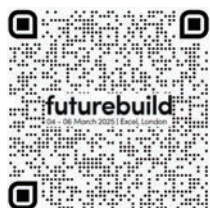
Biophilic & nature-inclusive

Architects interested in enhancing urban environments will find inspiration in the “Biophilic Urban Design” session. Chaired by Dr. Vanessa Champion, this panel – featuring Andrew Waugh of Waugh Thistleton Architects – will explore how integrating natural systems into urban projects can boost well-being and biodiversity.

Architects: working as agents of change

Futurebuild 2025 offers architects an unmissable opportunity to engage with cutting-edge sustainability practices and design innovations. From circular economy principles to net-zero standards, the event provides a roadmap for embedding environmental responsibility into architectural practice. As the built environment faces growing climate challenges, the sessions and insights at Futurebuild 2025 will empower architects to lead with purpose and design for impactful change.

Scan the QR code to register for your free ticket.



Article supplied by Futurebuild

NEWS FEATURE



Enjoying the benefits of anhydrite screeds

Nick Bratt, national technical sales manager for tile adhesive manufacturer Palace Chemicals, says that the single issue which he comes across most frequently in queries from architects is the topic of tiling on to anhydrite screeds.

Anhydrite (or calcium sulphate) screeds have been available for almost 40 years, and are popular with specifiers because of the speed with which they can be poured and their sustainability credentials. However they do involve much extended curing times compared to sand:cement screeds. These will have a knock-on effect on project times and budgets. Clearly these are considerations which architects need to be aware of at the building design stage.

To achieve the required maximum relative humidity of 75% prior to tiling, the relevant British Standard (BS8204-7:2003) states that the minimum required drying time for anhydrite screeds is one day for each millimetre up to 40 mm thickness, with an additional two days per mm thickness above 40 mm.

In ideal drying conditions therefore, a 40 mm thick screed should be allowed to dry for a minimum of 40 days. At 50 mm thick, the minimum drying time would be 60 days and at 60 mm thick, a minimum of 80 days drying time would be required before the screed was sufficiently dry to receive a tiled finish. Failure to follow these recommendations and tiling before the screed is sufficiently dry will generally result in adhesion failure at the screed/adhesive interface. This compares with a minimum of 21 days for sand:cement screeds, according to BS5385-3:2003.

So why use them? The main advantage is that they can be laid more quickly and easily and are more cost-effective especially for larger areas. They will self-level and offer minimal shrinkage, making them especially suitable for use with underfloor heating systems, where they will fully encapsulate all pipework. Up to 2,000 m² of anhydrite screed can be laid in a single day – compared to 100-150 m² for conventional sand:cement screeds, making them particularly suitable for use on large commercial contracts.

Furthermore the latest fast-track systems such as Palace’s own Pro Gyp-Base, are a game changer, since they make it possible to tile with a cement-based adhesive on to anhydrite screeds, which have a relative humidity as high as 95%. This can normally be achieved in just seven days, at which point tiling can commence. This reduces the time required for the overall completion of the floor surface by up to ten weeks, which clearly has a very significant impact on timescales and costs on-site. The adoption of one of these new systems will allow contractors to derive all the benefits of rapid and easy pouring of an anhydrite screed, without involving delays on the job caused by having to wait for an extended drying period.

Supplied by Nick Bratt, national technical sales manager for Palace Chemicals

A new era of sustainable construction

With climate change accelerating at an alarming rate and 2024 officially recorded as the warmest year in human history (approximately 1.6°C warmer than pre-industrial level) the urgency for sustainable solutions in the construction sector has never been greater. Architects and construction professionals are now under increasing pressure to design with sustainability in mind, ensuring their projects contribute to a greener future rather than exacerbating environmental issues.

At Milbank Concrete Products, we understand the significant role our industry plays in shaping a more sustainable built environment. That's why we are not just making promises – we are taking action. From our commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2030 to our ongoing innovations in low-carbon concrete, we are leading the way in reducing the environmental impact of precast concrete. And now, with the launch of our groundbreaking Carbon Calculator (which we are showcasing at Futurebuild 2025), we are providing architects and developers with the tools they need to make truly informed, responsible choices.

Introducing the Milbank Carbon Calculator

One of our most exciting innovations for 2025 is the launch of the Milbank Carbon Calculator – an industry-leading calculation designed to provide customers with accurate carbon savings data which will be provided as standard for precast and prestressed concrete quotations. This unique addition to our quoting process is set to transform how architects and construction professionals plan sustainable projects and is calculated based on all of the improvements and innovations we've made since our baseline carbon calculation back in 2018. This includes factors such as cement replacement,



biomass and solar curing and HVO and electric vehicles.

With the pressure to meet net-zero targets mounting, architects and developers must consider the environmental impact of their materials from the very beginning of a project. Our Carbon Calculator enables them to make informed choices by delivering clear, data-driven insights into the carbon footprint of our products at the quote stage. This transparency helps professionals align their designs with sustainability goals, meet regulatory requirements, compare to other suppliers and contribute to a more environmentally responsible built environment.

Our commitment to Net Zero

We continue to drive forward with our ambitious sustainability goals, reinforcing our position as the most sustainable supplier of precast concrete products. The urgency of tackling climate change has never been greater, and we are proud to be leading the charge.

Since 2018, we have made incredible progress in reducing our carbon footprint, cutting our CO₂e emissions by 69%. However, this is just the beginning. Our goal is to achieve net-zero emissions for Scope 1 and 2 by 2030 – 20 years ahead of government targets. Additionally, we are actively developing our Scope 3 emissions reduction strategy to extend sustainability efforts across

our entire supply chain. A major milestone in our journey is the continued development and adoption of low-carbon concrete. By incorporating cutting-edge cement replacement technology, we have successfully reduced cement usage by over 30% while maintaining high performance and durability. This equates to removing over 2,500 tonnes of CO₂e annually from our concrete products. Our latest advancements mean that the CO₂e in products manufactured in our Prestressed Factory (Beams and Hollowcore Planks) has reduced by over 21%, while those from our Precast Factory (Stairs, Landings, Columns, and Ground Beams) has seen a reduction of over 15%.

A sustainable future for construction

At Milbank Concrete Products, we recognise the immense responsibility we hold in shaping a sustainable future for the construction industry. By pioneering innovations such as the Carbon Calculator and continuing to push the boundaries of low-carbon concrete, we are not just meeting industry standards, we are setting them.

Get in touch today to find out more about our Carbon Calculator and other sustainability initiatives, or visit us at stand D24 at the Futurebuild Expo.

01787 223931
estimating@milbank.co.uk

FUTUREBUILD STAND D24

Marmox Thermoblocks and Fireboard on show at Futurebuild

With both an energy and a housing crisis looming large across the UK, it is appropriate that Marmox has opted to dedicate its stand F42 at this year's Futurebuild – taking place at the Excel from March 04-06 to showcase their Multiboard range together with the A1 non-combustible certified Fireboard.

The A1 non-combustible certified Fireboard can serve as a weatherproof render-backer or be used internally across walls and ceilings to take a plaster finish, while providing sound absorption properties, along with thermal insulation. The 600 x 1,200 mm Fireboards are available in thicknesses of 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 kPa (9 tonnes/m²), while its high insulation performance will help combat thermal-bridging and the formation of surface

condensation, as well as having the potential to cut energy bills.

Marmox Multiboard, a lightweight tile backer board option, used for waterproofing, dry-lining and to provide thermal insulation has a unique patented surface, which allows heavier tiles to be safely and securely fixed to walls.

Being completely impermeable to water, it is doubly useful in areas prone to moisture, making it a good option for anyone looking for a kitchen or bathroom tile board. Multiboard can be used to insulate and waterproof walls, floors and ceilings. Even the thinnest boards will be useful when used with underfloor heating wire to reduce heating costs.

The marketing manager for Marmox, Grant Terry says: "The most important thing is that unlike everyone else, we're specified to be used externally.

"For an alternative insulated, waterproof render board, this is a great product to use".



Grant Terry also commented: "As a regular exhibitor at Futurebuild and other major trade shows, we endeavour to ensure the products we showcase are as relevant as possible to both specifiers and installation specialists and this year will include a preview of the New Fireproof Thermoblocks."

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

FUTUREBUILD STAND F42

A winning hand with Ravago Building Solutions UK



Ravago Building Solutions, manufacturer of extruded polystyrene (XPS) insulation, is inviting Futurebuild attendees to visit stand E70 on the GRO Pavilion to discover why its Ravatherm XPS X range gives customers a 'winning hand' in insulation. With comprehensive Declarations of Performance (DoPs), full transparency on compressive creep across its entire product range, and the lowest thermal conductivity of any UK manufactured XPS board accompanied with a BBA certificate for its Ravatherm XPS X ULTRA, Ravago customers are left holding all the aces. Architects and building specifiers can meet Ravago's trusted team at the stand to discuss complex design specifications. With over 100 years of combined expertise in thermal insulation, the team is ready to advise on the extensive variety of Ravatherm XPS X boards for roof and floor applications, available in a wide range of thicknesses and compressive strengths. Visit Ravago at Futurebuild to find out more and discover how its innovation and expertise stack the deck in your favour!

03301 096136 ravagobuildingsolutions.com/uk/en

FUTUREBUILD STAND E70

The opinions of the architectural community

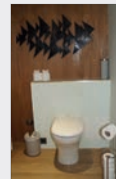


As part of netMAGmedia's research offering, ADF has been increasingly harnessing the knowledge and views of its focused readership to produce 'Industry Viewfinder' white papers based on reader surveys. These are documents which contain unique insights and data on a wide range of topics that are currently fuelling debate in the industry,

from Passivhaus to Part L. This audience research, providing real-world experience, provides us with the opportunity to better understand the needs of our readers and tailor our content accordingly.

insights.netmagmedia.co.uk/whitepapers

Saniflo enables effective conversion

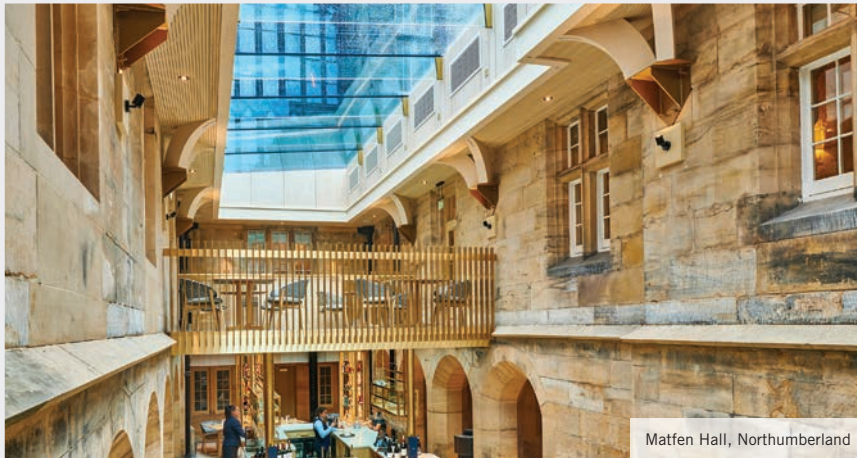


Saniflo has played a crucial role in converting the historic Sula Lightship into a unique, high-standard accommodation facility. This project demonstrates Saniflo's effectiveness in supporting non-traditional properties where reliable waste management solutions are essential. Saniflo supplied a range of macerators and pumps to manage on-board black and grey water waste, including a Sanimarin WC and a long-standing

Sanishower unit to discharge grey water waste into former freshwater tanks repurposed as storage. These systems provided the necessary capacity and durability for high-usage scenarios on the vessel.

020 8842 0033 www.saniflo.co.uk

Passivent – a fresh take on ventilation solutions



Matfen Hall, Northumberland



Passivent has been providing natural and hybrid ventilation solutions for over 40 years. Its product range can help deliver many benefits, including improved energy efficiency and air quality, natural daylight and moisture removal in order to create healthier, more comfortable environments. This is in line with modern specification requirements which favour natural ventilation over more energy-intensive mechanical systems to meet stricter sustainability targets.

Natural ventilation strategy for refurbishment project

Matfen Hall, a stunning Grade II listed hotel, golf and wedding venue in Northumberland, has undergone an extensive refurbishment programme designed by Doonan Architects, with a striking new covered external courtyard area providing a focal point. This space can now be used all year-round, thanks in part to the natural ventilation strategy delivered by Passivent and the installation of ten Passivent Aircool® wall ventilators beneath the new glass rooflight, to maintain a fresh air supply to the enclosed area. Aircools are fully controllable and perfect for night-

time cooling strategies where daytime heat build-up is purged from the structure during the night. A two-zone iC8000 intelligent controller was also installed to monitor the internal and external temperature and carbon dioxide level.

Solutions for educational and leisure environments

For Sunningdale SEND School in Sunderland, which specialises in teaching children aged between 2 and 11 years with severe and multiple learning difficulties, Passivent provided an energy efficient natural ventilation strategy which minimises noise pollution during operation. Its unique thermal acoustic Aircool window ventilators, Litevent Airstract® rooflight/ventilators and Airscoop® roof ventilation terminals were used in classrooms, corridors and halls.

Passivent's Airscoop roof terminals were also specified to naturally ventilate a 70m indoor shooting range at the new performance archery facility at Lilleshall National Sports Centre in Shropshire, home to Archery GB. Ideally suited to large buildings and deep plan spaces, the energy-saving design of the

Airscoop terminals requires no power to move the air, instead harnessing the natural power of displacement ventilation.

To read more about these projects as well as other Passivent case studies, please visit www.passivent.com/case-studies, email projects@passivent.com or follow Passivent on LinkedIn.

01732 850 770
www.passivent.com

A partnership with IES

Passivent has partnered with Integrated Environmental Solutions (IES) to make a selection of its products available to model within the Virtual Environment (VE) platform IESVE, starting with the Airscoop roof ventilation terminal. Passivent's in-house technical team can also provide a full range of technical support and advice on natural ventilation strategies as part of the specification process.



Sunningdale SEND School, Sunderland



Performance Archery Centre, Lilleshall, © Speller Metcalfe



BUILDING
PROJECTSCRUSADER WORKS
MANCHESTER

A brighter future

As a celebration of Manchester's cotton mill past, this major residential scheme by shedkm combines respect for historic fabric with striking minimalist additions to help catalyse regeneration. Stephen Cousins reports.

Back in the 19th century, Manchester and the surrounding towns in south and east Lancashire were the largest and most productive cotton spinning centre in the world.

Nicknamed Cottonopolis, this industrial powerhouse was able to flourish thanks to the infrastructure and particular geographical layout of the region, with sloping hills and streams that provided the city's mills and factories with water to drive their processes. Abundant coalfields meant that collieries could supply the coal to run steam engines and the digging of canals allowed easy transportation of cotton to UK ports and then across the globe.

Fast forward to the Manchester of today, and many cotton mills and associated warehouses still survive, albeit converted and renovated for new uses including commercial or residential premises, to meet the needs of a bustling, modern city.

Crusader Works, by architects shedkm who have a local studio, sets a new standard for such adaptations with its strikingly contemporary, yet sensitive regeneration of a collection of cotton mill buildings from the 1840s into new housing.

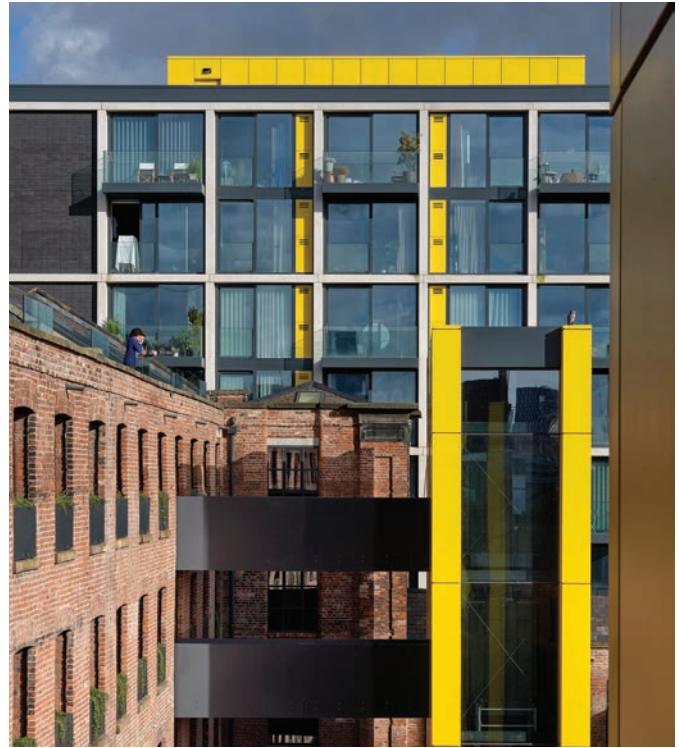
Developer Capital&Centric (C&C) conceived of the 123-home scheme, located in Manchester's emerging Piccadilly East district, as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of a rundown urban area.

The overarching ambition was to celebrate the listed buildings' character and avoid invasive penetrations through the historic fabric, which is characterised by original brick and cast iron structures, timber beams and staircases.

A key design move was shedkm's decision to run access corridors along the outer facades of the warehouses, facing onto a new communal courtyard, in contrast to a traditional internal route. These 'cloisters' are linked via new steel footbridges to bright yellow cores, which stand as separate architectural elements in the centre of the courtyard.

This design device helps liven up residents' journey from the street to their flats, explains Mark Sidebotham, practice director at shedkm: "I'm really passionate about the journey the resident takes from the pavement to their front door, it's more important than the experience inside the flats themselves. Walking along the cloister, you're always connected to the courtyard as the main central space, and the upper bridge links afford great views back to the city." He adds: "It's a really lovely route to take, not just a generic corridor that could be inside any building."

The project proved complicated and costly, due to unexpected issues with existing timbers, the contractor going into administration, and the onset of the



SENSITIVE APPROACH

A sensitive approach to the historic fabric helped win over the planners, who nevertheless pushed shedkm to ensure the correct detailing and materiality

The developer conceived of the 123-home scheme in Manchester's Piccadilly East, as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of a rundown urban area

pandemic, but shedkm's design vision ultimately paid off, and the project took home two RIBA awards in 2024.

Experienced hand

Adapting historic buildings has been a key focus of much of shedkm's regeneration and placemaking work, and this project focused on the refurbishment of one of the earliest and largest purpose-built textile machinery works in Manchester.

The mill was built in the 1840s by Parr, Curtis and Madeley, but a fire destroyed it in 1861, requiring a rebuild. John Hetherington & Sons, another leading textile machinery manufacturer, continued to use the mill until the early 1920s when the industry fell into decline. The buildings were listed in 1994 as a rare example of a large, mid-19th century works.

The works were earmarked to be incorporated into the HS2 regeneration framework, with the adjacent land to form part of the new route into Manchester Piccadilly Station. However, cancellation of the rail project's connection into Manchester forced the local authority to look at alternative opportunities for development.

C&C saw great potential in the rundown area, which was characterised by derelict industrial sites and dilapidated buildings,

identifying Crusader Works as the catalyst for a wider regeneration to include more homes and apartments, schools and a hotel.

The scheme is one of five Manchester mills being reinvigorated by C&C and the latest phase in its relationship with shedkm, the pair having previously collaborated on Talbot Mill; the £250m Kampus development with joint venture partner Henry Boot Developments; and C&C's 'Bunker' offices in Liverpool.

A series of one-, two- and three-bed apartments (singles and duplexes), are distributed across the site. The next door plot is occupied by the Phoenix building, a new 10-storey apartment block also designed by shedkm for C&C, providing another 75 apartments.

Initial space planning studies looked to use all the mill buildings, however, to help balance the project appraisal it was decided to replace one three-storey unlisted mill structure with the new Phoenix building. This helped support the relatively high investment that was going into the dilapidated listed buildings and made the overall scheme viable.

The special architectural interest of Crusader Works lies in its scale, industrial character and the aesthetic effect of the repeating bays and windows. Sidebotham describes the building as "a classic mill



CRUSADER



building, with chunky, thick walls, cast iron columns, timber beams and floors, and some amazing roof trusses.”

An early decision was to make the scheme car-free, encouraging residents to use bikes and local transport infrastructure including the tram and Piccadilly Station just a few minutes walk away. This revealed an opportunity to transform the existing central space between the mill buildings, then being used as a car park, into a landscaped communal courtyard for residents. The multi-use space is intended as a contemplative garden with communal activities including barbecues, fire-pits, cycle facilities and wi-fi access.

Two bright cores

Visitors to Crusader Works are immediately struck by two bright yellow cores that rise up from the centre of the courtyard plan. These form part of a simple circulation strategy connecting steel footbridges and

cloister walkways running behind the existing masonry facades.

Locating the yellow cores within the central space, rather than within the existing building, avoided the need to carve out large portions of the existing historic fabric of the mills, says Sidebotham, explaining that “trying to put a perfectly square steel frame core through a cast iron and timber floored building is always complicated.” The move also increased the net area of the scheme and made it possible to separate the living accommodation from lifts and refuse stores.

Where standard layout solutions for apartment blocks rely on a central corridor with single-aspect apartments, the cloister and courtyard configuration gives most apartments a dual aspect, also improving natural light and cross ventilation. It also made it possible to retain more of the exposed brickwork than if the walls were penetrated by apartment windows.



A new thermal wall forms the back wall of the cloister at the rear of the apartments, boosting the scheme's overall thermal performance. "When you analyse the apartments from a SAP point of view, 50% of the building is thermally insulated," says Sidebotham. "If all of the apartments had existing exposed brick walls, we'd have ended up having to do a lot more insulated dry lining etc, thereby losing the exposed brick aesthetic."

A typical two-bed flat in the former mill has bedrooms positioned against the thermal wall, with the living space positioned along the outer perimeter wall.

But what of the bold colour scheme for the cores, which is also picked out on elements of the Phoenix building? Yellow is one of shedkm's signature colours, explains Sidebotham: "We're modernists; using primary colours in a succinct way is something we've always done."

The courtyard runs north-south, limiting

the amount of sunlight, but according to the architect, even on a dull day daylight reflects from the yellow onto the warehouse bricks, brightening up the space. Alongside the cores, the steel frame bridge links are another contemporary motif, helping differentiate the new additions from the heritage buildings.

Unpredictable structure

Understanding the structural make up of historic buildings is notoriously difficult due to a frequent lack of surviving construction documentation and the fact that many structures are hidden from view, requiring intrusive investigation work.

Things were further complicated on Crusader Works because intrusive surveys and materials testing were not carried out until a relatively late stage and the results revealed major issues with the structural timber, which was relatively low grade.

"This was difficult to understand,

These 'cloisters' are linked via new steel footbridges to bright yellow cores, which stand as separate architectural elements



because the timbers had been carrying all this massive machinery from the mill industry,” says Mark Sidebotham; “Normally, there would just be some rotting at the beam ends, not something so structural.” As a result, new steel frame propping was inserted to support the original structure along the cloister line.

Other ‘higgledy-piggledy’ building features also demanded the attention of the designers. Raised floors were installed over existing undulating timber floors throughout the scheme making it possible to set a new datum for installation of a new staircase. This also provided a zone for concealed services, and helped improve acoustic performance.

A survey of the existing windows revealed a range of different shapes and sizes, and the scans were used to develop a common square window that would fit any of the openings.

A sensitive approach to the historic fabric helped win over the planners and heritage experts, who nevertheless pushed the architect to ensure correct detailing and materiality.

“Introducing a thermal wall internally meant we didn’t have to do any dry lining on the courtyard facade, which meant all the bullnose reveals could be all kept in place, in tune with what the heritage people wanted,” says Sidebotham. The original staircase treads on the lower level, which have become dish-shaped with wear, are also retained, adding in new handrails and lighting to ensure safety.

As part of the drive to adapt to, rather than fight against, the existing building, the mill’s structural layout largely dictated the different scales of flats, in turn informing a range of price points for the properties.

“We worked with the structural grid and the rhythm of the windows,” adds Sidebotham, “When you enter an apartment [from the cloister] you align with the centre line of a window on the outside facade. This is slightly different for different apartments because the grid changes slightly as you go along.”

To ensure a level of repeatability in the design, each flat has a standard-sized kitchen and bathroom, and the spaces around them increase or reduce in size according to the physical constraints of the mill’s structure.

Duplexes in the upper two levels of each of the buildings were treated slightly differently. To raise the height of the roof



space, terraces are formed from recessive cut-outs, using a steel ‘goalpost’ spanning between the existing timber trusses to support the existing roof.

The duplex living and kitchen spaces are located on the upper level, while the terraces provide private amenity spaces and views back towards the city centre.

Industrial aesthetic

The material palette for the refurbishment sticks to and celebrates the ‘mill template,’ with cleaned up brickwork and new windows and slate roofs in the same language as the original. The 10-storey Phoenix building on the adjacent plot takes a more contemporary approach, but inspired by the industrial aesthetic.

The focus is on the precast concrete structural facade divided into rectangular sections of blue engineered brick cladding.

CLOISTERS

A key design move by shedkm was to include ‘cloister’-like circulation corridors on the external facades facing the courtyard, rather than internal circulation, plus ‘thermal walls’ to the apartments

PROJECT TEAM

Client: Capital&Centric

Architect: shedkm

Contractor: Capital&Centric

Structural engineer: Arup

Services engineer: Progressive Services Design



The concrete is tied back to an internal steel frame and carries the weight of the masonry cladding and the glazing, plus bolt-on balconies on two sides.

“You see a lot of buildings in Manchester with external renders and cladding, but we felt the rhythm of the stack-bonded blue engineering brick would mirror the strong rhythm of the warehouses,” says shedkm’s Sidebotham.

The fact the steel frame is only carrying the floor plates, not the facade, allowed for more slender steel sections on the interior, which are expressed as part of a general drive to express the structure and services, including precast concrete soffits, sprinklers, ventilation ductwork, and pipework.

“It took real work to coordinate the services to make it look clean, including the exposed conduits with lighting and smoke detection, sprinklers are even aligned with holes in the steel work,” says Sidebotham.

The internal layout on each level of the Phoenix comprises six two-bed apartments arranged around the perimeter with two studio flats around the central core. Living spaces have full height glazing wherever possible to improve the quality of light within units. The single staircase configuration has since been superseded by Building Safety Act regulations on fire requiring two staircases.

C&C has admitted that Crusader Works is probably one of the most challenging projects it delivered, taking a lot longer to build than planned. The developer won planning consent in 2016 and the conversion began in earnest in early 2018. But delays ensued in 2019, after much of the timber was found to be unusable, and a year later the pandemic hit.

Despite these setbacks, the finished scheme proved a knockout with the RIBA, which awarded it the RIBA North West Award 2024 and the RIBA North West Conservation Award.

The RIBA judges said the project is “exemplary, not only in the way the architects have conceived its layout and details, but also in terms of a developer’s vision to use the project as a catalyst for changing a wider, previously rundown urban area.” The Piccadilly East area of Manchester may no longer be hitting the enviable highs of the 19th Century ‘Cottonopolis,’ but Crusader Works is helping reinstate it as a much more vibrant and desirable part of town. ■

Harnessing the power of the sun to transform spaces



LALUNA

Towns and cities worldwide are facing a new design challenge: creating spaces that are not only aesthetically inspiring but also energy-efficient, sustainable, and aligned with net-zero goals. As architects and lighting designers seek innovative ways to illuminate urban environments while reducing carbon footprints, solar-powered lighting has become a compelling solution.

The potential is limitless. According to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Earth receives 173,000 terawatts of solar energy continuously – more than 10,000 times the world's total energy consumption. Harnessing even a fraction of this power can transform how we design and light public spaces.

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At Urbis Schröder, sustainability isn't just an add-on – it's at the heart of every solution we create. Our solar lighting technology enables projects to seamlessly integrate renewable energy, reducing reliance on grid electricity while significantly cutting carbon emissions.

By designing with solar, you're not only enhancing efficiency but also contributing to a more sustainable, future-proof environment. With Urbis Schröder, innovation and sustainability go hand in hand, delivering

lighting solutions that are both beautifully designed and environmentally responsible.

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For over a century, Schröder has blended form, function, and efficiency in urban lighting. Now, we're advancing solar technology, integrating it seamlessly into architectural landscapes without sacrificing performance, safety, or design integrity.

Partnering with Photinus, we offer next-generation solar luminaires – off-grid, high-performance solutions that align with modern aesthetics. These innovations provide long-term efficiency, durability, and cost savings, empowering designers to create striking, sustainable spaces.

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VERTICALIS

By cutting reliance on fossil fuels, these systems lower costs while contributing to decarbonised, intelligent spaces.

The SMART approach to smarter lighting

We believe all smart systems should be Simple, Modular, Automation-driven, Resilient, and Trustworthy (SMART) – the foundation of Schröder's EXEDRA. This intelligent platform optimises energy use, reduces costs, and adapts lighting in real time for safer, more efficient spaces.

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We invite you to deepen your expertise in solar lighting and discover how it can transform your projects while actively contributing to decarbonisation goals.

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In a fast-paced, competitive industry, it's crucial to stay accountable and be proactive in reducing risk. Delta Membrane Systems Limited introduces the HLA Plus, an innovative solution for the future of construction.

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Delta Pumps App

The Delta Pumps App is a command center for all Delta HLA Plus devices.

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When you open the Delta Pumps App, the Dashboard is the first thing you'll see. It has Six main sections that help you navigate the App with ease. With the tiles at the top of the screen showing important information clearly and directly. Green means all is well, while amber and red signal attention is required.

Delta's MD, Kevin Dodds shares the real story of turning an idea into a product available for everyone: "Understanding your market and audience is crucial for successful product development. Stay informed and ahead of the competition by knowing what your customers need and want."

Embrace new technologies that can transform the way we live and work. These innovations are not just trends, but real solutions improving our lives daily.

"In product development, wrong decisions are part of the journey and can lead you to the right choices. Mistakes are expected and valuable for progress".

He continues: "There were sleepless nights and endless searches for the 25th hour in day. At Delta, we believe in our mission to make the waterproofing industry safer. Our team is genuinely motivated and inspired by this goal. Both Chris (Christopher Burbridge, Delta's founder and director) and I feel a real sense of achievement with the Delta HLA Plus.

"Customer feedback has truly amazed me. It's both a pat on the back and a seal of approval. We must sincerely thank the Delta Team for their help in getting our product into production. Their support was invaluable".

Kevin stays focused despite having countless tasks every week by prioritising what's important and staying dedicated.

"We're passionate about solving problems to help our customers. It's impossible not to admire big brand inventors who think ahead, aiming to solve customer problems before they even arise. It's not just an invention; it's building a trusted global brand. While others may try to imitate products, they can't replicate an inventors' unique vision and innovation."

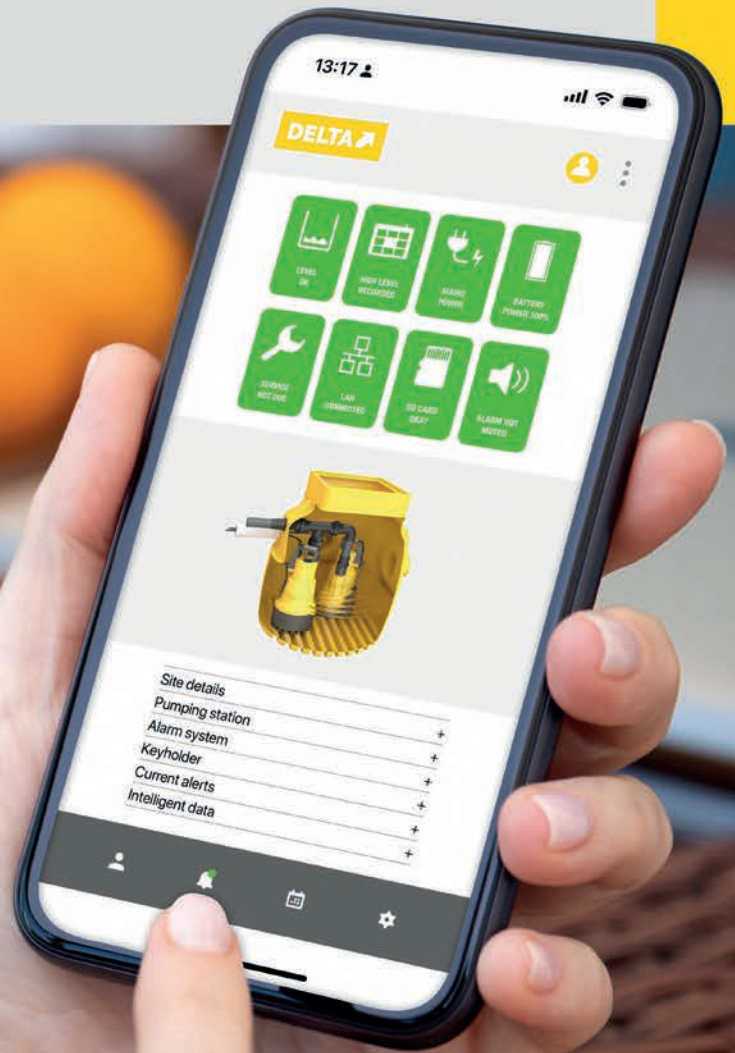
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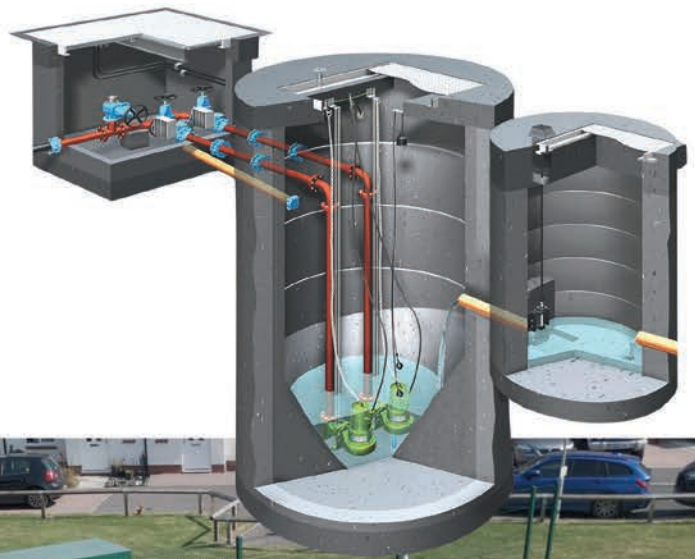
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- ✓ Full NICEIC certification
- ✓ Comprehensive operation and maintenance manuals



Placemaking for flood resilience

To avoid surface water flooding, holistic urban design include the ‘sponge city’ concept should include sustainable drainage from the very start, explains Chris Hodson, consultant to trade body MPA Precast Paving.

In projects across the world, the ‘sponge city’ concept is gaining traction amongst policymakers, masterplanners, architects, landscape architects and others. It recognises the growing risk of flooding with climate change and the need for nature-based rainfall management solutions, in place of the previous sealing-up of urban areas. The UK Rivers Trust offers a useful summary of this concept: ‘A Sponge City is designed to mimic natural processes, allowing urban areas to absorb, store, and purify rainwater, much like a sponge soaks up water. Sponge Cities can effectively reduce the risk of flooding while simultaneously enhancing the quality of urban life.’

A Sponge City future

The term ‘sponge city’ was coined by landscape architect Kongjian Yu, a professor at Peking University, for his concept of using a range of nature-based techniques inspired by traditional landscape management. He says: ‘The sponge city concept adapts these ancient principles into urban planning, by incorporating permeable surfaces, green spaces, and constructed wetlands.’ Sponge cities were accepted in China as a nationwide urban construction policy in 2014 applying to new build, expanded and rebuilt buildings and communities, roads and squares, parks, green spaces and urban water systems. Some 30 cities in China are already implementing this policy.

While the concept takes a city-wide, ‘catchment-based’ approach, sponge city techniques can be applied at any scale. These techniques are used in various countries and known as: ‘green/blue infrastructure’, ‘water-sensitive urban design’, ‘best management practice’ (BMP) or ‘low-impact development.’ In the UK, ‘sustainable drainage systems’ (SuDS) have been in use with similar aims since the mid-1990s, albeit with slow uptake and ongoing

delayed government implementation.

The principles and techniques involved are all fundamentally the same, with some differences in scale of application and responses to local weather or ground conditions. In essence, they make extensive use of green infrastructure – but permeable paving plays an essential role as well. As the Rivers Trust says: ‘One of the key components of a Sponge City is permeable pavements... these surfaces allow rainwater to infiltrate the ground, reducing surface runoff and replenishing groundwater. These pavements not only reduce the risk of flooding but also mitigate the heat island effect, making urban areas more comfortable during hot weather. Other benefits include eliminating ‘ponding,’ reducing the risk of ice forming on the surface and no rain splashing from standing water.’

Masterplanning with water

In the UK – as the name suggests – sustainable drainage systems began by focusing on drainage techniques to reduce flooding and pollution (‘quantity’ and ‘quality’), with a growing appreciation of their other multifunctional benefits (‘amenity’ and ‘biodiversity’, completing the four pillars of SuDS). Today, SuDS are often designed by drainage engineers and effectively grafted onto previously designed layouts. At this late design stage, the multiple potential benefits of SuDS techniques like permeable paving are easily missed. However, with the sponge city approach water is a fundamental consideration as part of holistic masterplanning – from the very start.

Now is the time for architects to take a lead with sponge cities and fully integrate SuDS techniques, such as permeable paving, within the design process to optimise their multifunctional benefits.

Of course, safe and attractive hard surfaces are needed in any development and



Concrete block permeable paving overlay on an existing road base conveys water to tree-planted basins
© Robert Bray Associates



Retrofit SuDS include permeable paving to collect runoff from existing streets, then providing a gradual source of clean water to rain gardens and existing trees
© Chris Hodson



A new pocket park includes 'sponge city' principles with retrofitted permeable paving linked to green infrastructure © Robert Bray Associates

concrete block permeable paving (CBPP) has proven to be a robust, resilient and adaptable technology for all types of paving over more than 25 years of use in the UK.

Concrete block paving is generally slip-resistant, durable, strong and sustainable. It delivers fast, low-cost installation and replacement, using weather-independent, 'dry' construction. There are no curing, hot-work or noxious fume issues and only small construction equipment is needed, while noise and disturbance are minimised. With an extremely long lifespan, modular blocks can be taken up and re-used without processing for repairs, altered layouts, or new schemes – saving carbon and meeting 'circular economy' criteria.

Permeable paving potential

CBPP shares and enhances this technology but uses angular aggregate (not sand used for conventional block paving) to fill enlarged joints and as a permeable laying course. Pavement layers of voided material below can then accommodate water, whilst still providing structural performance. As a SuDS technique, CBPP combines proven engineering design solutions with nature-based water management near the surface

Now is the time for architects to take a lead with 'sponge cities' and fully integrate SuDS

– and without additional land-take. It can also accept additional runoff from adjacent impermeable paving and roofs.

The unique capabilities of CBPP enable rainwater to be intercepted at source, attenuated, treated and conveyed within the permeable laying course, allowing filtration of silt and retention/treatment of pollutants without clogging. A gradual flow of clean water can then be released for safe, open SuDS features, biodiversity and amenity. CBPP works in synergy with green infrastructure. It can meet the latest planning requirements for street trees with long-term maintenance, providing diffuse rainwater infiltration and retention for irrigation, plus the free air/CO₂ exchange that is essential for roots, without surface disruption.

Chris Hodson is a consultant for MPA Precast Paving

Michelmersh introduces two new clay bricks for bold vibrant design

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perfect combination of charm and durability. Equally striking, the Hampshire Stock Orange adds bold vibrancy to any project. Its rich orange tones and smooth texture make it an adaptable choice for both contemporary spaces and historic settings. Together, these products offer architects a versatile palette to create designs that stand out while blending harmoniously with their surroundings.

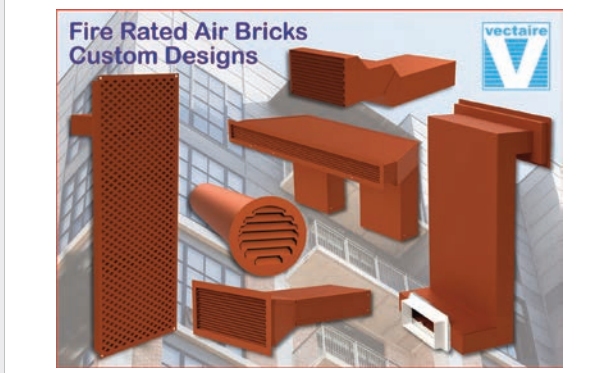
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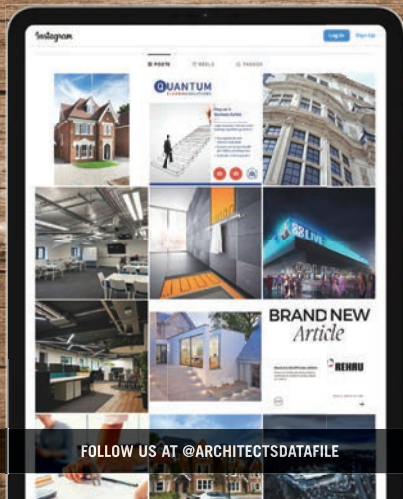
Vectaire’s Fire Rated Air Bricks are high performance, non-combustible terminals designed for low resistance use with powered mechanical ventilation. They are available in three sizes, 500 mm or 100 mm length, bezzled or non-bezzled and in five RAL colours with a range of accessories. They are manufactured from galvanised sheet steel and powder coated achieving an overall fire rating of A2-s1,d0 as required by Approved Document B. The 500 mm length versions are IPX3 rated for water ingress and they all have very low airflow resistances. They are manufactured in the UK and all designs are registered. AND Vectaire can custom design and make fire rated air bricks to suit all installation requirements. They complement Vectaire’s MVHRs, MEVs and DMEVs.

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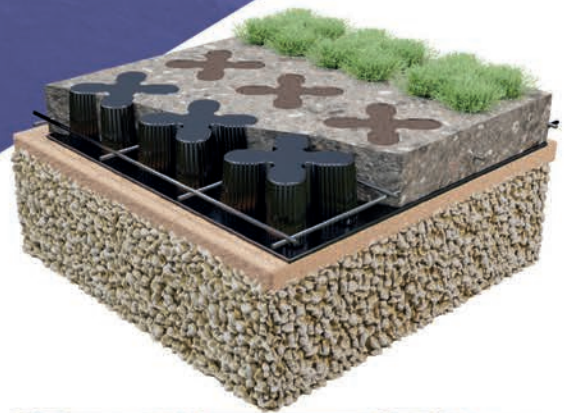
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Senior takes the lead on sustainability with new appointment



Senior Architectural Systems, the UK's largest privately-owned manufacturer of aluminium windows, doors, and curtain walling, has appointed Luke Osborne to the newly created role of UK sustainability lead. Luke brings with him a wealth of industry experience, having worked with a number of major building products manufacturers to help establish and develop environmental initiatives, sustainability policies, and reliable carbon data sources. In his new role, Luke will advance the existing work Senior has been doing to reduce the environmental impact of its business operations, and provide its customers with accurate calculations relating to embodied and operational carbon. Key to this will be the development of environmental product declaration (EPD) documents across Senior's extensive range of aluminium windows, doors, and curtain wall systems, as well as a robust roadmap to support Senior's net zero, biodiversity, and waste reduction targets. Luke will work closely with Senior's architectural advisory team to support the company's main contractors and specification partners.

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TORMAX delivers access solutions to prestigious commercial facility



As part of a major expansion, TORMAX was invited to return to the headquarters of De Soutter Medical Ltd – a decade after installing an automatic curved-sliding door to the main entrance – to enhance the facility with four additional automatic door systems. A newly created main entrance features an impressive semi-circular, curved sliding door, like the initial installation. Two bi-parting sliding doors systems provide side-access to the building. In the warehouse, a double set of curved sliding doors work in tandem to create a D-shaped lobby, where small deliveries can be quickly and easily processed. All entrances are powered by TORMAX iMotion 2202. A door drives. Uniquely engineered with a motor that features none of the working parts that generally wear out, such as gears or brushes, the iMotion 2202. TORMAX worked with sub-contractor, Apic, and the architect, to deliver functional yet aesthetically impressive automatic entrances throughout the facility. As well as adding a prominent architectural detail to the front of a building, curved-sliding door systems are intensely practical, providing up to 40% more pass-through space than linear sliding doors.

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Breaking the spec breakers

Product substitution, otherwise known as ‘breaking spec,’ threatens building performance and raises lifecycle costs. David Grace of K Rend highlights how manufacturers can help protect specifications to ensure design integrity.

When a specified product is substituted and changed for one that is believed to offer similar performance, it can result in the application of value engineered products which don’t have the same benefits. For example, thinner specifications can lead to poor longevity, thereby undermining a building’s performance, and in the longer term affecting its lifecycle costs. Substitution may also invalidate contract conditions and, in the worst case, expose people to significant liabilities in the event of product failure. Ultimately, it disrupts the specifier’s vision and design intent, leading to a mismatch between the intended design and the final built outcome.

Render choice

The choice of render is one area that can be particularly susceptible to the perils of product switching. A fundamental component of building envelopes, render plays a pivotal role in the overall performance and aesthetics of a structure. However, improper specification or application of render can lead to a cascade of issues that haunt projects for years to come. From poor finishes to premature deterioration, these problems not only compromise a building’s integrity but also result in substantial remedial costs down the line.

While a value engineered solution may seem like an attractive option upfront, the long-term implications can be devastating, impacting the durability, longevity and quality of finish. Failure to adhere to the manufacturer’s technical specification and application guidelines can also result in certification being invalid, leaving the project vulnerable and the housebuilder liable. Moreover, remedial work to address issues like cracking, delamination, or an uneven finish can far outweigh any initial savings. For example, failure to use mesh



around window and door openings can result in cracking or delamination.

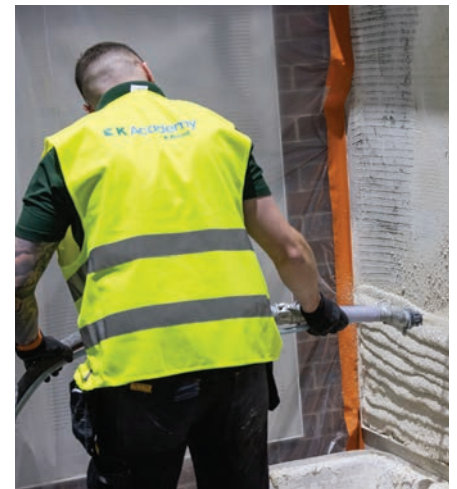
The manufacturer’s role

Many manufacturers understand the vital need to protect specifications. By offering comprehensive support and resources throughout a project, they aim to ensure the correct product is used and applied as per the application instructions, safeguarding the integrity of the design. This multifaceted approach includes providing detailed technical specifications, clear application guidelines, and on-site assistance from a team of application specialists and R&D experts. This vision is clear – to enable the most appropriate choices and practices to deliver a first-class experience for everyone in the project chain.

Bridging the skills gap

To address the skills gap in the industry, some manufacturers have also launched training programmes to equip applicators

Render plays a pivotal role in the overall performance and aesthetics of a structure





with the knowledge and skills to execute render systems flawlessly for both hand and machine methods.

Comprehensive training programmes can empower applicators to master the application of a wide range of high-performance render products. These

training courses ensure adherence to best practices, enabling the delivery of exceptional, long-lasting results that protect specification. It's a simple purpose to deliver a very achievable goal.

Manufacturers are also recognising the value of material selection, with some offering innovative solutions like silicone-based renders. These products not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the facade but also contribute to the building's overall durability and breathability, providing superior water repellency and a longer-lasting, fresher appearance.

With ever-increasing pressure to deliver cost-effective, high-performing buildings, the importance of render specification cannot be overstated. By partnering with manufacturers who prioritise product quality, technical support, and applicator training, architects and contractors can ensure that their designs are realised to the highest standards, protecting both the building's performance and their own reputation. Correct render specification is the foundation upon which enduring, sustainable buildings are built.

David Grace is sales director at K Rend

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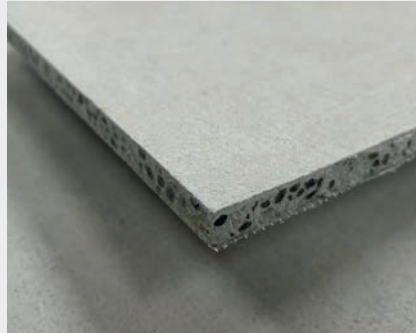
A. Proctor Group launches A1-rated, Wraptite®-compatible sheathing board

The A. Proctor Group is introducing a score and snap sheathing board to its range of facade solutions.

Used in conjunction with the highly regarded and well-established Wraptite® external air barrier, the Proctor A1 Cement Board can help specifiers and contractors move more towards a system solution.

While suitable for all buildings, the through-wall fire testing carried out featuring Proctor A1 Cement Board means it can be used with Wraptite to support compliance with fire safety requirements for relevant buildings.

“As a cementitious product, Proctor A1 Cement Board is automatically classified as non-combustible,” said Will Jones, head of business development at the A. Proctor Group. “Through-wall testing has confirmed the sheathing board’s compatibility with our Wraptite membrane, delivering a result of 120 minutes without integrity failure. Customers can therefore feel assured when



choosing a fully-adhered external air barrier and vapour permeable membrane.”

There are further benefits from the compatibility with Wraptite. As the membrane offers a W1 classification for water hold out, there is no need to use tapes and sealants on the Proctor A1 Cement Board to provide airtightness and temporary weather protection.

Key to the development of Proctor A1 Cement Board was the desire to offer the best possible all-round solution. As a result, it combines the benefits of traditional fibre cement boards with desirable qualities of newer gypsum sheathing boards that have gained acceptance in the marketplace.

“Fibre cement boards tend to be heavy and difficult to cut on site,” explained Lewis Stanley, business development manager (High Rise & Facades). “Proctor A1 Cement Board is a lightweight board for easier handling, and it is score and snap to make cutting and installation easier.”

As with all products offered by the A. Proctor Group, Proctor A1 Cement Board is backed up by comprehensive technical support, plus on-site support including all complementary fixings and accessories.

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AIM's improved OSCB and WCB ranges meet rainscreen fire safety challenges

Significant investment in product development and testing for its Open State Cavity Barrier (OSCB) and new Wall Cavity Barrier (Red Edition) ranges has enhanced their suitability for rainscreen cladding systems, says AIM – Acoustic & Insulation Manufacturing.

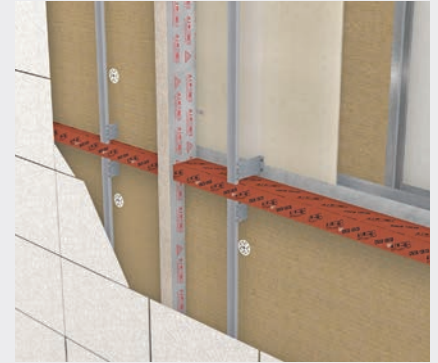
Open state cavity barriers and full fill cavity barriers are crucial to fire safety within rainscreen cladding on medium and high-rise buildings. Together they can achieve compartmentation within the void created by the rainscreen cladding. This then provides an effective barrier to the passage of hot smoke and fire behind the cladding system. The OSCB is installed horizontally to permit free flowing ventilation through the cavity in a vertical plane and the wall cavity barrier is fitted vertically to complete compartment lines.

AIM's six OSCBs allow the ventilation necessary within the wall construction to prevent problems of condensation allowing

free airflow and drainage with either a 25 mm or 44 mm air gap. They can fill voids up to 425 mm (or greater in particular circumstances). In the event of a fire, heat activates the OSCBs intumescent strip which expands quickly to close the cavity fully. They offer either a 60, 90 or 120-minute performance for both integrity and insulation confirmed by testing in accordance with ASFP Technical Guidance Document 19 and to the general principles of BS EN 1363-1:2020.

For use in cavity voids up to 600 mm AIM's new Wall Cavity Barrier (Red Edition) range is available cut to size or in slab form. Available in three thicknesses, 75 mm, 100 mm and 125 mm, they prevent the passage of heat, flame and smoke within the cavity for 30, 60 or 120-minute fire rating periods tested to BS EN 1366-4:2021. This rating makes these wall cavity barriers suitable for medium to high rise buildings.

Both the AIM OSCB and Wall Cavity Barrier (Red Edition) products have



third party certification issued by IFC Certification Ltd. AIM's OSCBs and Wall Cavity Barrier (Red Edition) ranges are suitable for both new build rainscreen projects and remediation work.

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Saniflo UP facilitates garden retreat



Thanks to a Saniflo UP from Saniflo, a new garden retreat in the capital has been elevated to a new level of comfort and convenience. The garden building, which was supplied and built by Shack Cabin, sits slightly below the level of the main house, presenting a unique challenge for traditional waste drainage. The quiet Saniflo UP macerator system provided the ideal solution, efficiently pumping waste to the main soil stack. Installed discreetly behind a demountable panel, the unit is hidden yet accessible for maintenance. This seamless integration means visitors to the space would never know it was there.

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Cistermiser welcomes DEFRA's targets



Cistermiser has welcomed the ambitious water saving targets for commercial buildings recently set by DEFRA. These include a national goal to reduce water leakage by 37% by 2038 and 50% by 2050. "Water efficiency is no longer optional; it's essential," says Richard Braid, managing director of Cistermiser. "We are proud to support DEFRA's bold goals by providing practical, scalable solutions that make a real difference. Our technologies empower businesses to intelligently take control of their water usage, reduce waste and contribute to a more sustainable future."

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Rugged good looks

Commercial washrooms endure heavy footfall, but as Amanda Mills of Kinedo highlights, bathroom wall panels can provide the necessary durability, maintenance and waterproofing characteristics, along with some glamorous aesthetics.

Heavy usage in any hotel, camp site, gym or other sports facility is likely to take its toll on not only the water delivery systems but also the decorative walls surrounding them. To maintain a stunning, clean, and hygienic appearance at all times, it is imperative business owners, and the architects tasked with designing the washrooms, explore the best options on the market.

Offering an easy to clean, and long-lasting alternative to the more traditional tiling that has been utilised in UK washrooms for decades, bathroom wall panels are increasingly becoming a viable option for architects and property owners wanting style, durability, and impermeability in just one product.

This is especially important given the thousands of people using these showers, baths, and washrooms on a daily basis. For instance, around 10 million people in the UK are members of a gym, and with 76% of users visiting the gym at least twice a week, those washrooms are likely to see high levels of foot traffic – increasing the pressure on the wall panels to remain clean, hygienic, and aesthetically pleasing.

Developing products with the materials to ensure longevity

When designing a washroom in a new commercial facility or when undertaking a comprehensive renovation of an existing washroom, the specification of the most hard-wearing and durable yet stylish materials is paramount.

Made from the finest polyethylene and aluminium, bathroom wall panels are a stunning addition to any washroom without compromising on impermeability, durability, or longevity.

In fact, with polyethylene being 100% waterproof, bathroom wall panels are typically longer-lasting and more durable than the tiling alternatives, making them a cost effective and reliable option for

architects and property owners specifying a product that's truly built to last.

Additionally, their impermeability means a reduced risk of water damage or mould growth, meaning cleaning is quick, simple, and cheap.

Reducing repair & replacements – saving time & money

With the UK currently in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, property owners, especially those in hospitality, are looking to reduce expenditure where possible. Often, unexpected costs relating to maintenance, repairs, or replacements can be some of the most expensive, increasing the importance of utilising trusted products and materials.

Offering impressive impermeability – thereby greatly reducing the risk of leaks – and designed to withstand whatever life in a busy commercial bathroom or washroom can throw at them, bathroom wall panels are designed to very rarely require extensive maintenance programmes. As a result, property owners can avoid having to spend potentially vast sums of money on costly repairs or replacements.

As many hotel, gym, sports facility, or other commercial building owners know, having washrooms or bathrooms out of action while they are being renovated or repaired can not only irritate guests, it can also cost them vital income. This, therefore, exacerbates the need for long-lasting and trusted products that are resistant to scratches and knocks and don't need replacing or repairing regularly.

Versatility

Able to be cut onsite and then quickly and easily installed, bathroom wall panels have versatility and flexibility in abundance.

Adaptable enough to be applied on any wall, including awkward areas on corners or around vanity units, bathroom wall panels can be fitted on top of existing panels, wall tiles, or painted walls, making





them a stylish yet simple alternative to the more commonly-used bathroom tiling.

Stunning designs to suit any washroom environment

With a myriad of stylish colours, finishes, and designs available, bathroom wall panels are the ideal addition to any commercial washroom. No matter whether the washroom is traditional or modern in style, the wall panels can be tailored to suit.

This gives architects and property owners the flexibility and opportunity to design their washrooms with years of use in mind, knowing that the wall panels won't go out of style and will retain their aesthetically pleasing appearance for many years.

The appearance of the wall panels, and indeed the washroom as a whole, also plays a vital role in the guest or visitor's opinion on the facility. With that in mind, utilising a stylish and highly durable design can ensure a more enjoyable showering or bathing experience and an increased likelihood of that individual returning again in the future.

While typically costing less to maintain and clean, wall panels are also often cheaper to purchase than tiles. In fact, as they are able to be cut down to size on



No matter whether the washroom is traditional or modern in style, the wall panels can be tailored to suit

site to suit any specific dimensions, wall panels are quicker and cheaper to install – typically ending up around three times cheaper than tiling.

This cost efficiency offers a crucial solution to money-conscious commercial property owners, especially with the UK remaining in the grip of financial constraints.

With the appearance of a commercial bathroom or washroom just as important as efficiency of the water systems, utilising wall panels as an alternative to traditional tiling is an opportunity architects, property developers, and one that owners should not pass up – especially when panels offer the flexibility, durability, and impermeability that other options cannot.

Amanda Mills is marketing manager at Kinedo

Accessible showering – enhanced compliance

Horne's leading design for accessible showering now complies with BS 8300, HBN 00-02, DOC M and Wheelchair Housing Design Guide.

This accessible dual-mode shower panel package features lever controls, a fixed overhead showerhead, and a separate, height-adjustable handset on a sliding riser rail. Users can effortlessly switch between these options using a manually operated flow diverter, providing independent and assisted showering options within a single system. This design is ideal for dementia and elderly care, shared accommodations, supported living, and multi-user facilities, where individuals have varying needs but an adaptable space.

The wall-mounted rail now allows 1,000 mm range of shower head height adjustability – better accommodating users of different heights and abilities for a more personalised shower experience. The rail's robust yet lightweight construction – powder-coated extruded and anodised aluminium – supports a maximum load of 150 kg, thus also doubles as a sturdy grab rail for extra support.



The sliding handset carriage features a novel pull-tab release extender, which allows in-wheelchair and shorter users to lower the shower head to a comfortable level with minimal effort. The handset holder also employs finely controlled friction grip technology, enabling precise positioning and

rotation of the handset even when hand mobility is diminished.

The rail is available in deep orange/grey (RAL 2011) or white/grey (RAL 9010). Orange is selected specifically for it being a lasting (in terms of visual perception) colour with strong tonal contrast against pale backgrounds. This is particularly beneficial for individuals with colour perception and contrast sensitivity difficulties – often observed with neurodegenerative conditions such as Parkinsons and Alzheimer's.

A built-in thermal disinfection functionality also addresses water system hygiene and allows internal pipework to be periodically sanitised through an elevated-temperature flushing process. While particularly advantageous in healthcare settings and supported care facilities, specifiers should understand that in private dwellings, thermal disinfection if it is required, should only be performed by a competent and fully ambulant individual, and with strict adherence to manufacturer guidelines to minimise scald risk.

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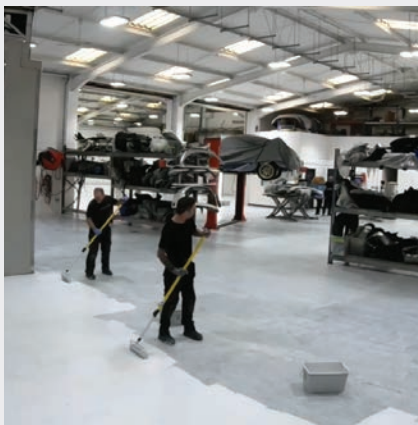
From these humble beginnings comes a world of expert protection, knowledge and solutions for tile, stone and many other floor coverings. schluter.co.uk/schiene



Bradite's busy bodyshop boost

A busy East of England vehicle repair specialist has a tough, bright new bodyshop floor, thanks to discovering one of Bradite's top coatings.

The Bodycentre is a major automotive repair shop in Norwich, handling an average of 60 vehicles weekly for bodywork and structural repairs, paintwork refinishing and a wide range of other treatments.



"After some trouble with other floor products in the past we decided to speak to a local paint supplier, called PaintWell," says Jake Masters, The Bodycentre's digital marketing executive. "After much discussion about our previous attempts at doing the floor with no great success, they advised that we use Bradite Floor-it."

The job was undertaken by a team made up of The Bodycentre's own staff, including technicians, the general manager and one of the directors. "The application was very straightforward," says Jake, adding, "recoat time was exceptional. It took us about a day to prep the floor ready for the product to be applied, but once this was done and all necessary objects were masked up, it took us just under ten hours to apply three coats."

And the verdict? "It makes the workshop look so much brighter and cleaner. We are over the moon with the final finish."

Bradite Floor-it is a single-pack, high performance coating ideal for general shopfloor usage. The water-based acrylic floor paint has no odour and is suitable for use on suitably prepared concrete, as well



as wood, metal or asphalt surfaces. The semi-gloss finish is extremely durable with excellent adhesion.

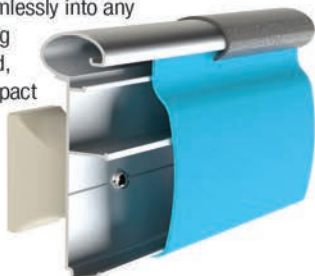
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School offers a lesson in modern building practices

The new Junior School for the Girls Day School Trust Notting Hill & Ealing High School designed by Architects Hawkins\Brown is a true lesson in sustainability. Rated BREEAM Excellent, the school serves as a model of combining best modern building practices with academic excellence.

The school worked closely with Hawkins\Brown and were keen the building represented an opportunity to empower the students with knowledge and skills to contribute positively towards the green transition and instil optimism through actionable change. Targeting net zero in operation, the site includes 14 new junior school classrooms, additional sixth form classrooms, library and specialist teaching spaces for music, art, science and computing. The addition of a science garden and forest school area add to the inside-outside learning experience.

Anderson Acoustics were appointed to provide acoustic advice for the redevelopment

of the site which included large, pitched roofs and large expanses of windows and hard surfaces. Part of their solution was to specify Troldekt's wood wool panelling across many areas to control the acoustics in the building and provide a quiet environment for learning. The result is so effective that the spaces are now used during exams.

This is a perfect example of how Troldekt's wood wool acoustic panels can help transform educational spaces. The panels are available in a variety of different structures and colours, combining optimal sound absorption with an award-winning design. The Troldekt range has a minimum expected life cycle of 50 years coupled with excellent resistance to humidity and tested to meet ball impact standards. The range is available in various sizes and structures, from extreme fine to fine. They can be supplied as natural wood, unpainted FUTURECEM™ offering a reduced carbon footprint and finished in almost any RAL or NCS colour.



© Jack Hobhouse

Depending on the panel specified, reaction to fire is classed in accordance with EN 13501 as B-s1,d0 or A2-s1,d0 respectively. Cradle to Cradle Certified® at Gold level, Troldekt wood wool acoustic panels are manufactured using wood from certified forests (PEFC/09-31-030 and FSC®C115450) and can contribute positively to a building's BREEAM, WELL or LEED points.

Samples, case studies and technical guidance are available from the Troldekt website or see our product listings on NBS (bit.ly/3vx0Tfq) or the Material Bank website.

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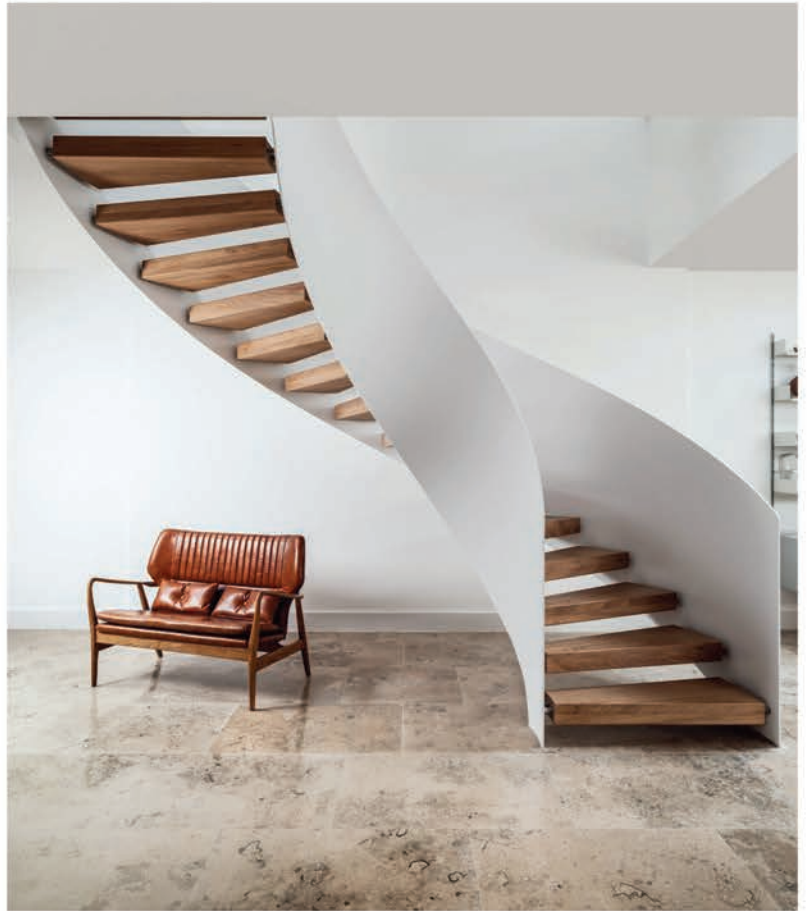
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2025 Vicaima Interactive Interior Door Selector

Flicking through outdated static printed or digital brochures is for yesterday. In 2025 expectations are higher, the desire to seek out product possibilities in the quickest and most inspiring way, is not just desirable but essential. Now all this is possible in the world of Vicaima interior doors. Experience a journey of discovery, with the new Vicaima Interactive Interior Door Selector (IDS 25). Navigate easily from design, through performance, then pricing to availability and back again. Constantly enhanced, dynamic and relevant. Ever changing for our fast-moving construction market.

As a company celebrating 65 years of innovation in 2025, the new Interactive IDS marks another significant step forward in progressing the interface between visionary ideas and realization. Blending a communication tool that speaks on multiple levels, from intricate design concepts to practical and everyday ordering information. With at-a-glance door finishes, models, technical data, price list and even general availability guides, all readily accessible.

Suitable for a myriad of applications, the new interactive IDS 25 truly offers something for everyone and from all walks of the construction sector, whether the focus is on new build residential housing, social and affordable homes, student accommodation, Senior Living, hotels, education or even medical buildings, Vicaima has the expertise and the product solutions to suit.

For those familiar with the traditional Vicaima IDS, this new incarnation sees a change in direction, not only due to its

modern and more dynamic format. Although of course your journey could begin wherever you wish to start, for interior designers, aesthetics often plays an integral part in the specification process for interior doors and door sets. Here the vast array of Vicaima products have now been arranged by type of finish material, taking you from real wood veneers; natural or stained, finished foils, hard wearing laminates, through whites and solid colours to embossed skins and paintable finishes. And for those in need of inspiration a series of mood boards helps to view intended décor from a different perspective.

Where users want to look a little deeper, the new interactive IDS 25 explains everything from regulatory performance to environmental credentials, with in-range guides, technical data sheets and specific certification details. These encompass doors and door kits with third party accredited fire assemblies, Secured by Design (SBD) and acoustic solutions. And not just for complex issues either. Simply by clicking the link provided, you can even jump straight to handy help such as Painting Recommendations for clear instructions on everyday doors.

The all-new interactive IDS 25 also includes a number of new, extended or reimagined door designs for this year. For those projects where budgets remain tight, Vicaima have introduced two new paintable models to the catalogue. MDF Lite, a cost-effective unlined primed flush door and the Classic S Range, with its paneled styling in both hollow and solid core options. However, if the desire is to embellish the chosen door design or avoid wasting time on site; through ironmongery



factory pre-machining, the opportunity to select from the Vicaima Modify your Door options presents an ideal solution, and again, due to this interactive tool, can be accessed from all relevant door ranges inside the IDS. As part of this Modify your Door service, 2025 sees the introduction of a new groove model PG2PT, with its unique dual groove design emulating a traditional paneled door to realistic effect.

Trends are something Vicaima pays close attention to and the popularity of the Vicaima Embossed Range with its classic and linear skin designs is one that has seen a substantial increase over recent times. So much so that from 2025, the MD55 model, with its 5 panel vertical effect, will now take its place as a stocked line, among the tens of thousands of doors held in Vicaima's Swindon facility. The interactive IDS 25 has a built in Price List so this and many other door models can be checked for price and availability to aid the decision-making process.

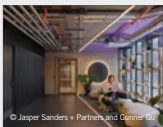
Embrace the future now, by taking a journey of discovery with the new Interactive Interior Door Selector for 2025. A constantly evolving resource making product information relevant for today and tomorrow. Helping the market stay in touch, with the very best interior doors and door sets from Vicaima.

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www.vicaima.com/files/files/catalog/vicaima-interior-door-selector-2025.pdf



Forbo's solutions used in refurbishment



Jasper Sanders + Partners specified a broad range of Forbo's commercial flooring brands throughout 16-18 Potterrow Student Living, a Purpose-Built Student Accommodation building for post-graduates. Rebecca Finney, creative director, who led on the vision and strategy for the building, explains: "Forbo's ranges aligned seamlessly with these values, making it a natural choice to continue our partnership. The texture and colours of Tessera Cloudscape, specified in Stormy Weather, Mistral Gale, and Sirocco Blue, perfectly suited the scheme with their rich texture, depth of pattern, and colour."

forbo.com/flooring/en-uk/segments/student-accommodation/p3uwfy

Beautiful Bold Elegance from Keller

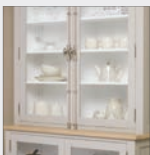


This new, elegant, industrial style kitchen from Keller merges traditional and bold features and hues. The Bronzite fronts and bronze-framed glass doors with bronze tinted glass combine with the striking, angled Calacatta black worktop to create a calming clean space. Which is perfect for dining, working and socialising in

style. Featured on the back wall are cabinets in Keller's new Fossil Grey Evia Ultra Matt finish nodding to the eternal popularity of grey. Also featured is the new bronze full cabinet width 627 handle.

www.kellerkitchens.com

Croft introduces Cremone Bolt collection



Croft presents their new Cremone Bolt offering – an elegant collection of traditional, meticulously crafted bolts. Comprising three individual styles, each design promises to add grandeur to French doors, windows, cabinets and internal doors. Combining elongated, solid brass bars in a choice of three distinctive designs – Haute, Contour, and

Luxe, this collection seamlessly combines traditional elegance with intricate beauty and detail. The Luxe design is crafted to transform large casement windows and doors, with the Haute and Contour Slimline bolts being most suited to cabinets and internal doors.

sales@croft.co.uk www.croft.co.uk

Havwoods introduces FixFinity



Havwoods is delighted to begin its milestone 50th year in 2025 with a ground-breaking new launch – FixFinity. Setting new standards for sustainability in flooring, the launch aligns with the principles of a circular economy, aiming to minimise waste and maximise resource efficiency, without compromising on exceptional performance and functionality. Adhesive-free, sustainable and reusable, FixFinity Floor is a ground-breaking new system revolutionising floorcovering installation. FixFinity supports a cleaner, greener approach that keeps materials in use for longer and reduces the dependence on new raw materials.

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Showcasing British Engineering Excellence

Aston Martin's new dealership- Grange Aston Martin Birmingham- has chosen the best in British HVAC engineering- Gilberts Blackpool- to help showcase its iconic British automotive craftsmanship.

The leading sports car retailer in the UK, Grange already has an established network across England selling not only Aston Martin but other luxury marques including Bentley, McLaren, Lamborghini and Rolls-Royce. The new Birmingham showroom spotlights eight Aston Martin models and supports aftersales service with a bespoke seven bay state of the art service & maintenance facility. The entire two-storey building, including offices and



storage for 40+ cars within the roof space, will maintain the appropriate ventilation to create a positive guest experience, courtesy of Gilberts.

Complimenting the design ethos of the building and the vehicles, Brava Building Services has installed Gilberts high performance adjustable swirls (GSJA), high induction linear slot diffusers (HSLs), multi slot diffusers (GSLs) and adjustable double deflection circular ducting grilles (CVH) throughout the premises. To further optimise ventilation within the valeting bay, Gilberts' louvres incorporated into the facade ensure effective air circulation and removal of fumes.

Explained Jason Button, property managing director for Grange Motors' parent Cambria Automobiles: "The new Grange Aston Martin Birmingham dealership has been designed to embody Aston Martin's philosophy of showcasing the best in British craftsmanship and engineering against a backdrop of an immersive customer environment with class-leading facilities."

Added Andy Owens, Brava building services managing director: "The design and



engineering quality of Gilberts' diffusers and grilles made them the obvious choice for such a high-end project, where the smallest detail matters."

All Gilberts' products, standard lines and bespoke solutions, are designed and developed in accordance with BS EN ISO 9001:2015 quality standard in the company's state of the art 140,000 ft² facility in Blackpool. The company has a heritage spanning 60+ years, and a reputation of delivering quality throughout- from technical advice and expertise through design and manufacture to site support.

01253 766911 info@gilbertsblackpool.com

Tile of Spain exhibit inspiring latest collections at Surface Design Show 2025



Bari Lattice Cotto Tiles by Realonda

Tile of Spain was delighted to exhibit at the Surface Design Show in February 2025. Showcasing the newest collections from a selection of its manufacturers, the show offered visitors an opportunity to see the very latest in Spanish tile innovation, design and technology. Thanks to developments in manufacturing processes, Tile of Spain presented some of the most interesting and exciting tile designs yet. From bold and vibrant colour palettes to 3D reliefs and exquisite stone and marble-effect tiles, the Tile of Spain stand did not disappoint those searching for inspiration in surface design. A true celebration of the versatile, durable and authentic nature of Spanish tiles, the collections on display demonstrated the unique characteristics and unlimited aesthetic possibilities of Spanish ceramic tiles. Designers and specifiers were invited to explore the products through live moodboards and eye-catching displays, discovering the design opportunities for residential and commercial projects alike. Representing 125 ceramic tile manufacturers across Spain, Tile of Spain promotes the incredible quality and values worldwide of the Spanish tile industry.

www.tileofspain.com/en

Vent-Axia's Embodied Carbon Calculations



To help with the design of low and zero-carbon buildings, leading ventilation manufacturer Vent-Axia has completed its embodied carbon calculations on its product portfolio. This includes its CIBSE award-winning Sentinel Apex1,

the next generation of commercial heat recovery, which is set to help specifiers create low-carbon buildings as we head towards the UK's 2050 net-zero target. Sentinel Apex was developed from the outset with equal consideration to operational performance and whole-life-costing, and this is visible in the data available for the product.

0844 856 0590 www.vent-axia.com

Manufactured with recycled plastic



UK ventilation manufacturer Domus Ventilation is proud to announce that its industry leading ventilation ducting will now be manufactured primarily from recycled plastic. The company already uses 100% recycalate on its rectangular ducting and over 95% of its fittings use 100% High Impact

Polystyrene (HIPS) which comes from post-consumer recycled plastic. This will make Domus Ventilation ducting one of the lowest carbon choices on the market, without any detrimental impact on the quality of the product that Domus ducting is renowned for.

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Stackdoor Corner shutter protects Flagship Chanel Store

Having seen a video online of the Stackdoor Corner security shutter, luxury retailer, Chanel, were impressed by the quality and styling of the product and keen to see if it could be installed into their flagship store in Seattle, USA.

The store is in a large shopping mall with different opening hours, so it was crucial to secure the concession while keeping promotional displays visible to passers-by.

Chanel was directed to Charter Global in the UK, who supply a Stackdoor Corner

as part of their revolutionary Stackdoor system range.

One main factor in the decision-making process is that the store frontage is a large, 'L' shaped opening, with each side being over 6 m, making many physical security options difficult to install without having a central corner post in position either permanently, or without needing an inconvenient floor fixing.

Chanel also needed the shutter to disappear into the ceiling void completely, so when open, there is no sign of the Stackdoor and the opening has a seamless finish.

Stackdoor is a lightweight system designed for maximum visibility without compromising security. The stack-and-pin technology allows up to 80% free visibility and airflow, with no unsightly head box as the stacking mechanism requires minimal space at the top and bottom of the curtain.

Unlike other standard security shutters on the market, Stackdoor is capable of spanning large widths without intermediate



guide rails and is able to follow profiles in plan. This makes the design ideal for retail environments, securing revolving door systems using the Stackdoor Curved version, and car parks where airflow is required.

Chanel was delighted with the outcome as the quality and aesthetics of the product is in keeping with their high-level brand, as well as giving them secure protection.

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Stelrad for extra care in Workington



Stelrad radiators have been selected for a new extra care scheme at Harbour Place in Workington – 79 one and two bedroomed apartments and 28 bungalows for people over 55. The apartments feature Stelrad's sector leading LST – low surface temperature – radiators and the bungalows have the best-selling Compact radiators. Add 79 of Stelrad's Fantasia

Fluid chrome electric towel rails to complete the comfort heating on the development. Head to the website for more information.

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Enhancing accessibility in luxury conversion



Ocean House, once a high-rise office building, has been converted into a luxury residential complex, redefining urban living within a repurposed commercial space. This transformation included a full interior refurbishment, the addition of two extra

floors and the installation of two new Stannah lifts, one of which is a firefighter lift. The new lifts comply with EN81-73 standards, which ensure safe shutdown in the event of a fire and include firefighting controls for enhanced occupant safety. With the end user in mind, Stannah prioritised accessibility and durability in the lift's design.

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Security plus accessibility

Darren Hyde of the Automatic Door Suppliers Association discusses how powered pedestrian doors can integrate with modern security systems while ensuring accessibility and regulatory compliance.

Devising access control requirements for commercial buildings can be a difficult task. A client may desire a grand edifice with an impressive facade, their estates team may want smart building integration and improved security, while users will demand safety and accessibility.

In reality, any proposed development or major retrofit must encompass all these elements. This may involve installing physical installations and software to verify identity, authorise access and restrict entry, while maintaining security, safety, and compliance with organisational or regulatory requirements.

It is a multi-layered necessity that doesn't start and end at the front door but incorporates perimeter and foyer or atrium requirements to better manage planned use.

Powered pedestrian doors (PPD) are a key component. Combining doors with integrated access control technologies, such as card readers, biometric scanners, or QR code systems, ensure smooth and efficient traffic flow. Designers must consider how these technologies interface with other security measures, such as CCTV, alarm systems and physical barriers, to create a cohesive and robust defence against potential threats.

Safety standards such as EN 16005, BS 7036-0 and EN 17352 provide essential guidelines for the safe design, installation, and maintenance of automated pedestrian doors. Furthermore, integrating fire safety standards such as BS 9999 and BS 9991 with security standards like PAS 24 or LPS 1175 ensures that entrance systems meet the highest levels of performance under various conditions.

Legislation legacy

Marty'n's Law, proposed legislation in the wake of the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing, underscores the need for enhanced security measures in public venues. It mandates operators of publicly



accessible spaces must assess risks, develop counter-terrorism plans, and implement measures to protect occupants and visitors. Entrances, as critical points of vulnerability, will require particular attention.

Architects and designers must account for the practical implications; for example, PPD can be designed to include anti-tailgating measures, emergency lockdown capabilities and blast-resistant materials where necessary. Additionally, integrating PPD with wider building management allows for real-time monitoring and rapid response in the event of a security incident.

It is equally important to ensure that entrances remain accessible and inclusive for all users. Powered entrance systems play a crucial role, offering smooth and automated entry for people with mobility issues, parents with pushchairs and those carrying heavy loads.

Balancing security with accessibility requires careful planning and design. For instance, revolving doors or security

Modern entrance systems can do more than regulate access; they can also serve as part of a building's wider management and security strategy



The Priory View, Dunstable (Record UK)

turnstiles can pose challenges for wheelchair users or those with limited mobility. To address this, designers might pair such systems with adjacent 'pass' sliding or swing doors.

Modern entrance systems can do more than regulate access; they can also serve as part of a building's wider management and security strategy. Powered pedestrian doors can be integrated with occupancy tracking systems to monitor footfall, ensuring compliance with fire safety regulations and aiding crowd management. These systems can also support energy efficiency by reducing heat loss and maintaining internal climate control.

When paired with other smart building technologies, such as lighting, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and security systems, PPD can optimise building performance. For example, doors equipped with sensors can detect unauthorised entry attempts and trigger alerts to a security team. Similarly, integrating door systems with emergency response protocols can streamline evacuation processes.

Entrance systems must be tailored to the specific requirements of each site and

its users. High-traffic retail environments may prioritise ease of access and traffic flow, whereas a secure research facility may require stringent access controls and compartmentalisation of internal spaces.

Early collaboration between architects, security consultants and automatic door suppliers is essential to achieve the right balance of functionality, security, and aesthetics. Artificial intelligence and machine learning are beginning to play a role in access control, enabling predictive analytics and automated responses to potential security threats. Biometrics, such as facial recognition and fingerprint scanners, are becoming more sophisticated and can provide a higher level of security without impeding user convenience.

To future-proof entrances, architects and designers should consider systems that are modular and adaptable. This allows for easy upgrades as new technologies emerge, ensuring that the building remains compliant with changing regulations and continues to meet the needs of its users.

Darren Hyde is technical training manager, Automatic Door Suppliers Association (ADSA)



City of Glasgow College (GEZE UK)

New fire safety for Scottish Borders Hotel



When the George and Abbotsford Hotel in Melrose urgently required an upgrade to its existing fire alarm system, Safe Services installed a new Advanced MxPro 5 analogue addressable fire panel to provide industry-leading protection. Fire and security service providers, Safe Services, were contacted to upgrade the fire system and installed an Advanced MxPro 5 four-loop analogue addressable fire panel, with all four loops used to meet the requirements of this large hotel. The Advanced panel was also seamlessly integrated with EMS Firecell wireless devices.

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Hörmann OktaBlock strengthens defence at Cardiff City

Hörmann UK have announced that they have recently deployed their OktaBlock mobile vehicle blockers at Cardiff City Stadium home of Cardiff City FC. Providing the highest levels of security and safety, while maintaining excellent pedestrian permeability, Oktablock has been installed primarily to separate and protect the stadium entrances in the car park areas.

Developed in response to vehicle related terrorist attack, OktaBlock has been designed to provide hostile vehicle mitigation and to protect pedestrians. Offering a flexible way to protect major venues and large public spaces, OktaBlock is particularly relevant with the imminent introduction of Martyr's Law. The legislation is being established to ensure that the public have additional protection from terrorist attacks while at events and public venues, and it is expected to pass into law early 2025.

With its' patented design, OktaBlock has been developed to replace temporary concrete

barriers. It is easy to deploy and without the costs normally associated with fixed security bollards or blockers. Certified according to international crash standards PAS68 / IWA 14-1, a single OktaBlock can stop a 7.5 tonne truck travelling at speeds of fifty kilometres per hour. It also holds a CPNI Vehicle Attack Delay Standard (VADs) rating when used in specific configurations.

Certified as a single module, OktaBlock's has been designed to be unobtrusive and its exterior can be customised to feature bespoke information. Offering a truly flexible solution to meet specific venue requirements, OktaBlock can be arranged individually, in rows or offset, and is ideal for areas where fastening into the subsurface is not possible. Due to its' axisymmetric geometry, OktaBlock has no predefined impact side which means the angle of the collision is inconsequential making it suitable for a variety of situations from narrow streets and cycle paths to large, open pedestrian areas.



OktaBlock can be easily moved using a forklift truck or with the OktaMover manual handling device, making it simple to position whilst providing access for emergency vehicles if required. Its' tamper-proof and non-flammable construction means there is no need for physical guarding before, during and after the event which was a key consideration for Cardiff City FC.

OktaBlock is available in the UK from Hörmann either to purchase or hire by agreement.

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