

HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025



SHEDDING THE STIGMA

A project to create a retirement living 'community' in Godalming sees provider Birchgrove taking a bigger stake by going the Build to Rent route, and reusing a former cow shed

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James Parker

ON THE COVER

HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025



SHEDDING THE STIGMA

A project to create a vibrant and inclusive community in Godalming sees residents and professionals work together to bring the Build to Rent model, and creating a local knowledge.

Pepperpot House
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FROM THE EDITOR

Now that Trump is back on the throne in the US, we are reminded of the important maxim which the returning President made his own, of being aware of 'fake news.' With the rise of AI, the risk of fake news becomes more and more prevalent, with the possibility of irrelevant or inaccurate information being peppered into the truth more often.

The question is, are we able to decipher the facts from the 'nearly-facts.' This is also highlighted by a recent story from Barbour Index regarding UK construction contract awards being up 15% in value over 2024. At least they responsibly caveated it in the headline with 'all is not as it seems.' However, AI, and maybe a large proportion of readers, might be most interested in the first few words.

The good news part is of course being "carried" by infrastructure contract awards, as Barbour Index admits, with a string of big contract awards through 2024. But housing spend remains flat at 1% growth with new housing applications continuing to fall. For the second year running housing applications were down by 6%, following a 15% fall in 2023. Infrastructure projects, by contrast, and particularly green energy initiatives, grew by 56%. 2024 was a truly terrible year for housebuilding, measured against the hopes and promises of the new Government. We can only hope that 2025 has better news in store, with Labour hopefully putting some meat behind its promises of freeing up planning to enable the numbers of homes built that it wants to see.

Housing activity remained stagnant, with just 1% growth, despite efforts by the Labour government to boost the sector. Planning approvals were also down 8%, dropping below £100bn for the first time since 2022 despite the new government's efforts to kick start activity since the election in July.

Barbour ABI head of business and client analytics, Ed Griffiths commented: "Despite the headline growth, not all is as it seems. Infrastructure has been carrying the rest of the industry on its back in 2024."

As well as continued cost rises, skills shortages and market uncertainty from a range of factors, resulting insolvencies such as the collapse of SG have had major ripples across the sector, said Griffiths. High interest rates have further reduced demand, as you know. You may also share the 'stubbornly low' confidence across the sector, and not be convinced by Labour's promises. Griffiths didn't offer much hope, saying that Barbour was looking to "emerging sectors" like data centres, to lead growth.

More disturbing than all this, I was disappointed to have a leaflet pushed through my front door from something called the 'National Housing Party.' They are a tin pot, two-man outfit based in Oldham, but are trying to spread their message nationwide it seems, tethering their slightly-to-the-right-of-Farage policies to the housing industry in a way that leaves a bad taste.

As if the challenges facing the sector weren't tough enough, you have divisive political elements like this using housing as yet another tool to target immigrants, saying that we are "giving refugees housing before our own citizens," and we should leave the UN Refugee Convention; to my mind one of the things that makes us a 'civilised' nation along with things like the NHS. Although there are many repercussions of housing genuine refugees, a policy that refuses to do this is unlikely to help the industry build houses any faster, and in fact it's probably a rare source of housebuilding growth currently.

We need to take the politics out of housebuilding and ensure that the targets are based on local need.

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Bellway London development will bring significant investment for Romford



A computer-generated image of Bellway London's new development, The Comptons, at the former Harold Wood Hospital site in Romford © Bellway

A new Bellway London development on the former Harold Wood Hospital site in Romford is due to bring £1.3 million in contributions to the local area.

The development, to be called The Comptons, will create 96 new properties on a 2.8-acre site off Copse Avenue, and as part of the planning agreement Bellway London will invest in local services and infrastructure.

Payments will include £954,335 in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which will be used for wider infrastructure, while the planning agreement includes £250,361 for secondary school places, £60,000 towards bus stop upgrades, and a carbon offsetting contribution of £38,245.

Will Weston-Smith, land director Bellway London, said: "Not only is The Comptons development going to regenerate a brownfield site, but the payments that we have committed to will also support education, transport and the environment. This investment of £1.3 million will make a significant contribution to the area.

"This is a highly sustainable location for new homes, near to day-to-day amenities, shops, restaurants and transport links, while our redevelopment of the site has enabled NHS Property Services to reinvest funds back into the NHS.

"The range of properties we have planned will reach a range of people at different stages in life and meet local demand for high-quality and energy-efficient new homes."

The scheme gained planning permission

in August 2024 and construction work is planned to start in May.

The development will feature 74 homes for private sale – a mix of one, two and three-bedroom apartments and three and four-bedroom houses – alongside 22 one, two, and three-bedroom affordable apartments available for local people through low-cost rent.

The Comptons occupies a site which was once the hospital's Long-Term Condition Centre and Bellway London has agreed to provide 23 parking spaces for the neighbouring NHS Harold Wood Polyclinic as part of the project.

The wider former hospital site is now home to the Kings Park residential neighbourhood, where plans for 810 homes were given outline planning permission in 2010. The Comptons will be one of the final parcels of the hospital land to be redeveloped.

Gleeson to deliver 147 affordable homes



Gleeson Homes has completed the purchase of land for a development of 147 high-quality affordable new homes on Ottringham Road in Keyingham, following the planning consent which was received in December 2024.

The development, named Mill View spans 10.9 acres and will feature a mix of two, three, and four-bedroom homes. Formerly a plant nursery specialising in strawberries, salad, fruit, and vegetables, the disused brownfield site has been redundant for several years. Ideally situated just 10 miles from Hull City Centre, the development offers excellent commuting options and easy access to local amenities. Mill View is nestled between Gleeson's current developments at Kingston Fields in Hull and Sands Reach in Withernsea, both less than 10 miles away.

The Section 106 agreement associated with the development will provide significant support to the community,

including over £198,000 towards recreational facilities and over £47,000 towards the Strategic Access Management and Mitigation Strategy (SAMMS) which will help to fund mitigation measures in respect of the Humber Estuary conservation area. Alongside the community investment listed above, Gleeson will also be adding a pedestrian crossing on Ottringham Road to ease access to the school for both locals and Mill View residents.

Wayne Sutton, regional managing director at Gleeson Homes, commented: "We are delighted to have secured this development. This project represents our commitment to providing quality homes and contributing to the growth and development of the East Riding area. We look forward to giving this unused land a new lease of life and welcoming both local and new residents to the community."

Keepmoat invests more than £50 million to deliver 227 new homes in Wiltshire

UK housebuilder Keepmoat is investing over £50 million in Warminster following exchange of contracts on a 24 acre plot of land situated south of Victoria Road.

Work is due to start at the Cley Hill View development in late 2025 and will deliver 227 high-quality new homes, of which at least 30% will be affordable homes.

As part of the significant £50 million commitment to the Wiltshire area, Keepmoat will also create new green spaces, and play areas alongside pedestrian, road and cycle routes to and from surrounding communities.

Expected to be completed in 2028, the development will offer a variety of much-needed multi-tenure one, two, three, and four-bedroomed homes, catering to first-time buyers, working professionals, and families.

All homes will be delivered in line with the Future Homes Standard, including renewable energy systems such as air source heat pumps, solar panels and EV charging points to help residents save on energy bills.

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Vistry to deliver Windsor Arch development

Vistry Group has secured detailed planning consent to build 320 new homes in Windsor.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead issued planning permission in November 2024 allowing the housebuilder to build the new homes on land off Dedworth Road, following approval from the council's Windsor and Ascot Development Management Committee in October.

The 38-acre development, which will be called Windsor Arch, will feature a mix of one and two-bedroom apartments and two, three, four and five-bedroom houses, alongside a community building and 11 acres of open space. A further 5.4 acres of land will be provided for a special educational needs school, which will be the subject of a separate reserved matters application.

All the homes will benefit from low-carbon space and water heating, with air source heat pumps, solar PV panels and wastewater heat recovery systems. At least 128 will be affordable properties available for local people through low-cost rent or shared ownership, while 10 plots will have customisable layouts. The private homes will be built under Vistry's Bovis Homes brand.

Outline plans for up to 320 homes, a special educational needs school, a community building and open space, with access off Dedworth Road, were approved by the local authority in June 2023.

With planning permission now in place, work was due to begin on the site in January and the first homes are set to be released for sale in late 2025.



Cala Group expands leadership team



UK housebuilder Cala Group has announced the appointment of Ian Sutcliffe as Non-Executive Chairman. The company also announced the appointment of Tom Nicholson as Non-Executive Director.

Ian Sutcliffe brings a wealth of experience to Cala, having served as Non-Executive Chairman of Sigma Capital Group since 2020. His extensive background in the housebuilding industry includes his role as Group Chief Executive of Countryside Properties Plc until 2020. Ian has also held significant leadership positions as Chief Operating Officer for the UK arm of SECRO plc and UK Chief Executive of Taylor Wimpey plc.

Tom Nicholson is a seasoned executive in the housebuilding sector with over 35 years industry experience, having previously served as Chief Operating Officer at Crest Nicholson Plc, Divisional Chairman at Linden Homes, as well as other positions at Galliford Try, Berkeley Homes and Trafalgar House.

Ian and Tom's appointments follow the recent acquisition of Cala by Sixth Street and Patron Capital, completed in October 2024.

Kevin Whitaker, CEO of Cala Group, commented: "I am delighted to welcome Ian and Tom to the Cala board. Their broad-ranging board experience and extensive leadership background in business and the housebuilding sector will be invaluable as we enter this next phase of growth."



New BNG Match-Making Service Launched for Developers



Biodiverse Consulting, an environmental consultancy, has announced the launch of its new 'Biodiverse Brokering' service. The offering connects developers with trusted landowners, helping them meet the biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements mandated by recent legislation.

The introduction of the Biodiversity Regulations has left many developers facing the complex challenge of securing suitable land to compensate for on-site biodiversity loss.

Biodiverse Brokering is designed to ease this burden, ensuring developers can fulfil their obligations by connecting them with reputable landowners who offer off-site units for BNG projects.

Founder and managing director at Biodiverse Consulting, Vicki Mordue, explains: "Navigating the new BNG regulations can be time-consuming and complicated for developers. Our service simplifies this process by matchmaking developers with landowners, ensuring both parties achieve their goals without unnecessary complications. We aim to ensure developers meet their environmental responsibilities while maintaining project timelines and budgets."

Biodiverse Brokering is a discreet process for both developers and landowners, ensuring compliance with BNG requirements while fostering long-term relationships that support nature's recovery.

For more information about Biodiverse Brokering and how it can benefit developers, please visit: www.biodiverseconsulting.co.uk/biodiverse-brokering.



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Frameclad: Meeting housing demands without limitations

On the back of announcing the news that Frameclad has gained BOPAS Accreditation for the seventh consecutive year, the management team has launched a new Residential Solutions brochure.

Joint Managing Director, Nik Teagle said: "Safety, strength, speed and affordability are a powerful combination. Our light steel frame solutions are a cost-effective option for residential projects and as a key offsite construction method, are a fast and efficient way to build.

"Meeting Building Regulations and Building Safety Standards, our light steel systems have the all-important BOPAS accreditation, plus according to the Steel Construction Institute (SCI), have a design life of more than 250 years in a warm frame environment."

Keeping tenants and homeowners safe, since the Building Safety Act came into force, light steel frame is becoming the preferred choice for housing projects. Robust and non-combustible, light steel frame creates highly airtight buildings reducing energy costs for the lifetime of the homes.

ECONOMIC GAINS OF LIGHT STEEL FRAME

With no shrinkage or settlement, light steel systems deliver residential buildings with longer lifespans without the need for remedial works and repairs. The stability of steel also leads to major reductions in long term maintenance cost – a major consideration for cash strapped local authorities and social landlords. Construction finance can be expensive, and the building programme duration is critical to costs. It is the speed of construction delivering steel framed panels or modules that can dramatically decrease the programme schedule. Reducing the borrowing period can dramatically cut the interest paid and total project costs.



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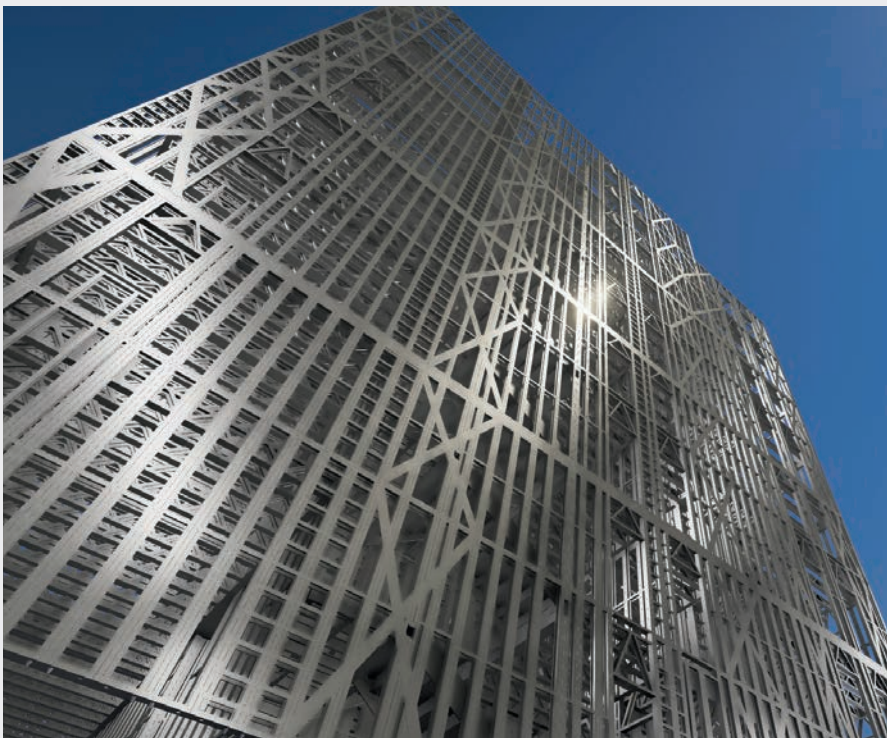
Nik added: "In addition to being strong and economical, light steel frames also provide excellent thermal insulation properties. This means that heat transfer from outside sources is kept to a minimum while internal temperatures remain constant to avoid overheating during the summer months. The frames have exceptional acoustic performance which makes them suitable for use in areas where noise pollution needs to be reduced or even eliminated."

The pressure is on to deliver increasingly large volumes of quality homes. By using light

steel frame systems and offsite manufacture, this pressure can be substantially eased and gives local authorities and housing providers the confidence that homes can be delivered cost effectively and with energy efficiency at their core.

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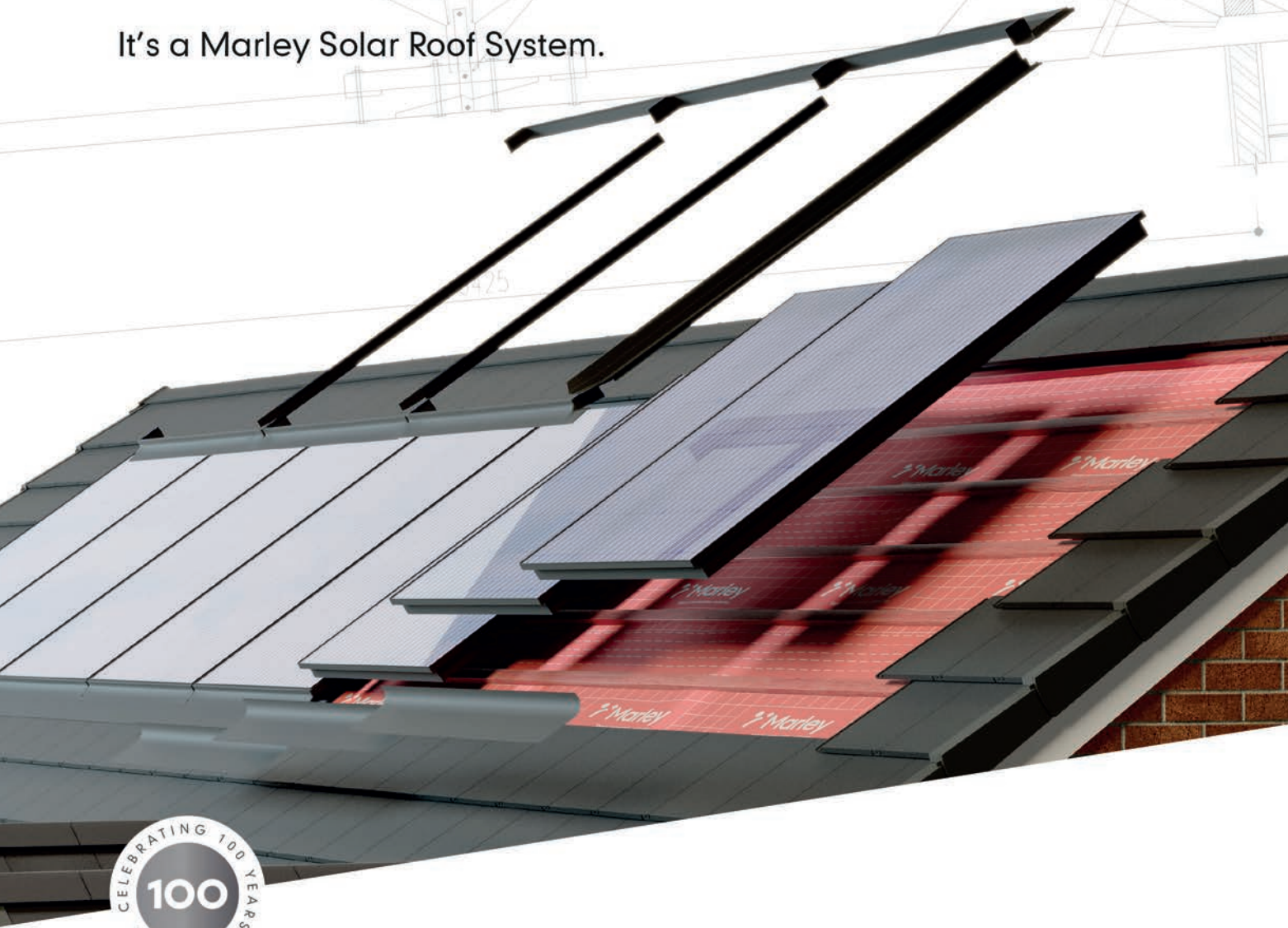
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COMMENT



Patrick Mooney
Housing Consultant

Planning permission shortages stifle housing growth

As the Government and construction sector struggle to meet ambitious housing targets, record low planning approvals and economic uncertainty underscore the challenges. Patrick Mooney highlights the urgent need for reforms to address the crisis.

The New Year brought with it an absolute slew of gloomy news articles highlighting the difficulties facing the Government and the construction sector, as they both struggle to come to terms with the challenge of delivering the very ambitious targets for building new homes.

We had already been warned of extreme shortages of available sites, money, skilled labour, supporting infrastructure and the materials and components for building new homes, when we received what was perhaps the most pessimistic and alarming news from the Home Builders Federation.

2025 was only a few days old when the HBF issued its Housing Pipeline Report, containing data from leading market research and intelligence firm Glenigan, which showed a continued downward trend in planning approval figures for Q3 in 2024, in both the number of sites and homes approved for development.

With just 2,260 sites approved in July to September, this marked a 10% decline from the previous quarter and it was the lowest quarterly total recorded since the HBF began reporting in 2006. The rolling annual total of 10,180 sites approved also represented a new record low, further illustrating the significant challenges the housing sector faces in meeting growing demand.

While the number of homes approved during Q3 increased by 2% to 57,356, this was still 40% below the peak. The rolling annual total of 240,661 homes saw a modest 1% rise from Q2 2024 but this remains 6% lower than the same period in 2023. The decline in planning approvals highlights that, to meet

the Government's target of 370,000 new homes annually, approvals need to increase by over 150%.

HUGE INCREASE IN SUPPLY NEEDED

Neil Jefferson, chief executive of the HBF commented: "The continued decline in planning approvals is deeply concerning and underlines the scale of the challenge we face in addressing the country's housing crisis.

"Efforts by the Government to reform planning policy are very welcome, but the data makes it clear that much more needs to be done to re-ignite housing delivery. Planning approvals will need to increase by more than 150% to meet the Government's target, which is a huge leap from the current figures."

The gloomy statistics were underpinned by other indicators showing a very subdued development sector – whether it is the number of new Energy Performance Certificates issued, or the council taxbase statistics, they all point in a worrying downward direction.

First up we saw that Energy Performance Certificate registrations for new builds have been falling for the last couple of years. The number of EPCs registered in the year ending September 2024 was down 7% on the previous year, and the rolling 12-month total is down 13% compared to 2019, when housing supply was at its peak. This represents a drop of almost 35,000 homes.

Then there are the number of new properties added to local authority council tax lists. Since 2020, the Government has published annual council taxbase statistics each November, covering the period to the preceding September which is a more up to date

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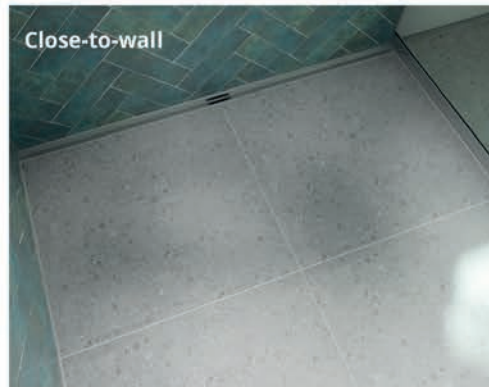
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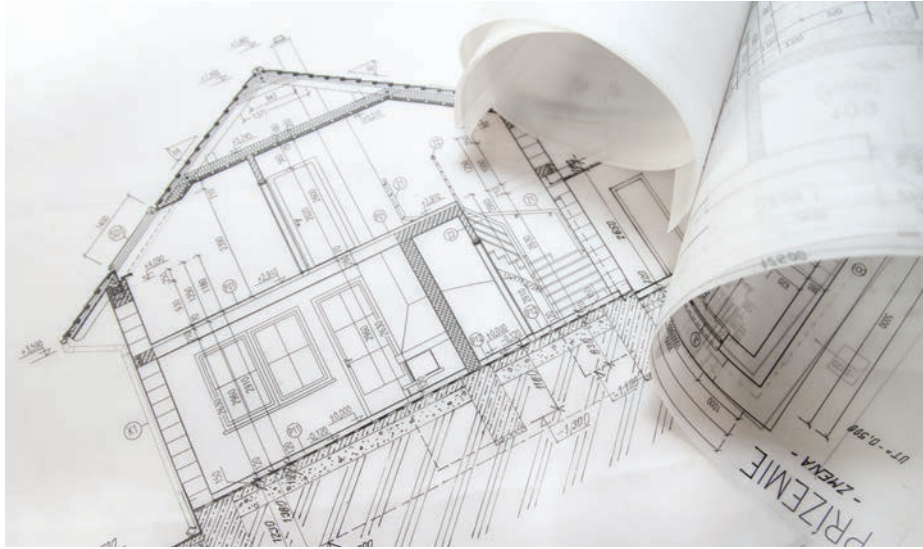


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recording of housing delivery than the net supply statistics.

The most recent data release showed the number of dwellings increased by 213,000 between September 2023 and September 2024. Compared to 2023, when almost 237,000 properties were added, this is a drop of over 23,000, or 10%, on the previous year and significantly below the annual target of 370,000 new homes a year which Ministers have been targeting.

A similar picture emerges when looking at other data sources. Looking back to the late 2010s, when housing supply was at its peak of around 240,000 homes being delivered a year, the number of homes receiving planning approval in a 12-month period was consistently around 100,000 higher (45%) than today.

The number of new homes being approved is worryingly low as these roughly reflect the homes that will be completed in two to three years' time. Typically housing supply figures follow the same trajectory, but are slightly behind planning permission numbers. This number is not only falling but it is well below the figure needed to reach even 300,000 new homes a year.

BOXING DAY BOUNCE

In contrast to a struggling construction sector, the housing market could be heading for a mini-boom. The country's leading property portal Rightmove announced that they had enjoyed their busiest post-Christmas period showing there is plenty of appetite for new homes from would-be buyers.

Boxing Day has long been known for its traditional 'bounce' in housing market activity, as people's thoughts quickly turn to what a New Year living in a new home

could look like. Rightmove's data showed a 26% increase in the number of new properties listed for sale compared to Boxing Day 2023, which previously held the record.

Nearly half (46%) of homes coming onto the market were 'second stepper', three and four-bedroom homes. Smaller homes, popular with first-time buyers, made up 35% of listings, while 18% were larger, top-of-the-ladder properties.

But it wasn't just sellers contributing to this 'bounce', as home-hunters were also on the lookout for their potential next home. Enquiries sent to estate agents about homes for sale were 20% higher than Boxing Day 2023, as would-be buyers took advantage of the increased choice. And the agency saw the highest number of Boxing Day visits to its website in history, surpassing the previous record set in 2021.

Rightmove's chief data officer, Steve Pimblett, said: "We've seen a record-breaking Boxing Day, not only for people turning to the Rightmove platform once the Christmas Day festivities are over, but also for home-movers taking action and getting ahead with their 2025 moves. While it's very early days, these first indicators are positive signs for a busy start to the year for agents."

A further short-term stimulant to the property market in the first quarter of 2025 is likely to be provided by a planned rise in Stamp Duty changes. This will mean increased buying costs for some home-movers from 1 April onwards, with some buyers rushing to complete their purchases before the deadline.

The number of first-time buyers that are active in the market and sending enquiries to agents is 13% ahead of the same period last year. The availability

of stamp duty-free homes for first-time buyers varies enormously by region. Only an estimated 8% of London homes will qualify, while over 70% of properties in the North East fall within the new £300,000 threshold.

MARKET JITTERS

The Government also needs to address the lack of available affordable mortgage lending that is suppressing the huge real demand for new homes and is particularly hampering first-time buyers and young people's ability to get on to the housing ladder.

This uncertainty in the market, allied to the lack of Registered Providers in a position to take on the affordable homes being provided as part of planning permissions through S106 agreements, is discouraging house builders from investing in new sites and planning permissions and pressing the accelerator on housing supply, despite the positive planning interventions the Government has made.

Neil Jefferson of the HBF, added: "The lack of affordable housing is impacting communities across the country, and without a stable demand for new homes, the industry lacks the confidence to invest in building the homes that are desperately needed."

"Increasing housing will require going beyond planning reform and addressing broader issues such as financing for homebuyers and a lack of providers in the market to take on the affordable housing developers build. Continued intervention from the Government will be crucial to ensuring we have a robust housing market that can deliver for the nation and tackle the housing crisis head-on."

We often talk about a perfect storm hitting the housing market, but on this occasion it is hard to avoid the description. Nearly everyone wants more houses to be built, but the current difficulties demonstrate how it needs more than just political intent and speeches to change how construction and the housing market works.

There are very sophisticated push and pull factors in place, with the impact of policy changes often only being felt in several years' time. Most politicians struggle to see beyond the date of their next election and they demand early results. On this occasion the Government needs to hold its nerve and work with developers, construction companies, financial markets and local communities if it wants to get anywhere close to achieving one of its highest priorities.

WITH JUST 2,260 SITES APPROVED IN JULY TO SEPTEMBER, THIS MARKED A 10% DECLINE FROM THE PREVIOUS QUARTER



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THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE

The routes to a greener world

Building on decades of experience in housebuilding design, Neil Walker of Russell Homes reflects on how evolving regulations and innovations have transformed housebuilding for a greener future, ensuring sustainable, future-proofed homes for generations to come.



Over the last few decades, housebuilding design has drastically changed from every possible angle; from energy, technology and construction to industry standards and regulations. At the same time, the push towards carbon reduction and net zero, energy efficiency and biodiversity has gathered momentum by the year.

Keeping up with all of these changes has been, and continues to be, an ongoing challenge for housebuilders. But it's a challenge that does come with its rewards – adapting to the latest rules and regulations and embracing the latest technological advances can add real value to how homes are designed. Collectively, they also have the power to influence customers' decisions, with some changes, particularly technological, evolving more rapidly than construction has.

But of all the changes, which updates have had the biggest impact on green housebuilding design so far?

Several key updates have significantly impacted green housebuilding design, with regulatory and technological advancements driving change across the industry. One of the most important regulatory developments was the introduction of the Standard Assessment

Procedure (SAP) in 1993, which made the energy performance of homes more transparent. For the first time, homeowners could see a dwelling's predicted energy use through an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). This rating system has been updated every few years, with the most recent revision in 2022, further refining energy efficiency expectations for new builds.

Another major shift came with the development of the Future Homes Standard, a government-led initiative aimed at ensuring all new homes are 'zero carbon-ready' by 2025. This means properties built from that date must produce 75 to 80% less carbon emissions than current levels, while homes constructed in the interim are required to achieve a 31% reduction. These evolving standards highlight the growing emphasis on sustainable building practices and energy-efficient technologies.

Building Regulations have also undergone substantial changes over the years, particularly in relation to insulation and energy conservation. In the 1980s, U-values for walls were set at 0.6 W/m²K, but they have steadily decreased over the decades, now standing at 0.26 W/m²K. Improved

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insulation has played a crucial role in achieving these reductions. In 2021 and 2022, the UK Government introduced further regulatory changes, including updates to Part L (conservation of fuel and power), Part O (overheating), Part S (electric vehicle charging infrastructure), and Part F (ventilation), all of which align with the broader goal of net-zero housing.

Beyond energy efficiency, biodiversity has become a fundamental aspect of green housebuilding. The Environment Act 2021 made Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) a mandatory requirement from February this year, requiring housebuilders to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value compared to the pre-development state of a site. This regulation, regarded as one of the most significant planning changes in decades, ensures that developments actively enhance rather than diminish the natural environment. Planning authorities must approve BNG plans before any construction work can begin.

Technological advancements have also played a crucial role in shaping modern housebuilding. The use of solar panels has surged in recent years, thanks to improvements in efficiency and reductions in installation costs. While a small solar array in the 1990s could cost upwards of £7,000, a comparable system today is available for around £2,000.

The technology has become so advanced that, in some cases, solar power can sustain entire buildings, making it a key component in achieving energy-efficient homes.

Similarly, air source heat pumps are becoming an increasingly popular alternative to traditional heating systems. These pumps, which use electricity rather than fossil fuels, help reduce both carbon footprints and homeowners' energy bills. While there is still some scepticism surrounding their widespread adoption, growing demand is expected to drive further innovation, leading to more manufacturers producing heat pumps and eventually making them a standard feature in new homes.

Another major technological shift has been the rollout of electric vehicle (EV) charging points. Since the first modern electric car was introduced in 2008, EV technology has rapidly progressed, with improvements in battery life, performance, and affordability. To support this transition, Part S of the Building Regulations now requires all new-build homes with associated parking to include an EV charging point. Looking ahead, the Government's planned ban on new petrol, diesel, and hybrid vehicle sales from 2035 will further cement the importance of EV

infrastructure in housebuilding.

Together, these regulatory and technological advancements have reshaped the way homes are designed and built, ensuring they are more sustainable, energy-efficient, and environmentally conscious than ever before.

THE IMPACT OF KEY CHANGES

The ripple effect of the changes has significantly shaped housebuilding design, as sectors, construction included, strive to become net zero. As a result, future housebuilding stipulations and company visions are fundamentally aimed at building properties that encompass:

- An increased green focus: There's a greater push on providing more housing, but at a much lower impact to the environment (from both an immediate and ongoing perspective).
- All-encompassing energy-efficient thinking: Several years ago, energy efficient features, such as insulation, water-saving solutions, PV panels, etc. weren't as much of a priority as they are now. We make sure all of our homes are designed to factor in as many relevant energy efficient solutions as possible. In turn, this means we are now continuing to develop and design house types to work through different technical components.
- Futureproofed homes: With new technologies developing faster than ever before, housebuilders have to make sure their new properties are compliant and long-life for customers and their future requirements, e.g. EV charging points.
- Prioritising green spaces: The increased focus on biodiversity has fundamentally revolutionised the design of future developments. We are now prioritising green spaces first and foremost to make sure our sites comply and go above and beyond with the relevant regulations before turning our attention to the bricks and mortar element of our developments.

While the fundamentals of connecting spaces where people live remain the same, there's no denying the fact green housebuilding design will continue to evolve for the benefit of both people and the planet. And what we do know, based on our experience and design insight, is that we need to create homes and communities that work on an environmental and customer-centric level now – and for the future.

Neil Walker is design manager at Russell Homes

Senior takes the lead on sustainability with new appointment

Senior Architectural Systems, one of the UK's largest privately-owned manufacturers 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, as well as ensuring that its network of fabricators and installers can also benefit from the company's investment in sustainability.

Commenting, Senior's new UK sustainability lead, Luke Osborne, said: "My role here at Senior



Architectural Systems will be focused on driving sustainability across the whole business and building on what is already a strong foundation. Senior has made significant advances in recent years, particularly in developing its product range and using lower-carbon aluminium. I am looking forward to working with both colleagues and customers to ensure that the work we are doing really makes a difference in terms of reducing our own carbon footprint,

supporting supply-chain targets, and improving the standards for sustainability across the fenestration sector."

Mark Wadsworth, Senior's managing director, added: "Sustainability has always been an important part of our ethos here at Senior, and I am delighted to have Luke on board to help us continue our journey and take us to the next level. We are proud to be UK-owned and UK-based, which gives us means that our sustainability policies and procedures directly align with the specific needs of our UK customers. Luke will take the lead on this next chapter of our sustainability strategy, supporting our customers to achieve compliance with the relevant regulations, targets, and the proposed UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard".

For more information, please visit the website or search for Senior Architectural Systems on LinkedIn and Facebook.



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The Impact of BNG on Open Space Management



The introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has reshaped open space management, requiring housebuilders to adopt long-term strategies. Early collaboration between ecologists, land managers, and developers is key. Meadfleet Open Space Management has enhanced biodiversity within its developments,

creating ecosystems like wildflower meadows, hedgerows, and woodlands. Practical BNG considerations, such as accessibility and maintenance costs, must be planned. Challenges include equipment limitations, contract flexibility, specialist contractor availability, and training needs. Meadfleet addresses these through expert assessments, education, and contractor support, ensuring sustainable greenspace management that benefits nature and communities.

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Timberplay and Urban&Civic's Study Day on Sustainable Development

Working alongside Urban&Civic, Timberplay are delighted to announce a collaborative Study Day on the 20th March 2025, held at Priors Hall Park Community Centre, right in the heart of the Priors Hall Park development in Corby, Northamptonshire. This study day brings together esteemed speakers who share a passion for developing outdoor spaces of excellence to enhance residential areas. Targeting residential developers, housebuilders and landscape architects, the day will include a site tour and provide attendees plenty of inspiration on harnessing the environment to create thriving communities.

Priors Hall Park is a stunning 907-acre housing development by master developer Urban&Civic. Speakers include Scott Chalmers and Mark Redding from Urban&Civic, ecological consultant James Patmore (BMD), Elizabeth Connelly from Fields in Trust, Peter Livings from Gillespies and Alison McCann and Helen Griffiths from Fields in Trust.

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RETIREMENT LIVING PROJECT REPORT

From cowshed to retirement community

A project in the affluent Surrey town of Godalming has transformed a listed cow shed as part of a group of vibrant apartments. Mark Smulian explores how Birchgrove is redefining retirement living with a strong sense of community in a flexible build-to-rent model.

It may be a surprising move to invite retired people to live in a former cow shed, but this historic listed structure forms part of the new build-to-rent (BTR) apartments on offer at Birchgrove's fifth assisted living development, in Godalming, Surrey.

The cows have long since vacated the building, but it is Grade II listed and so had to be preserved when Birchgrove bought the 1.02 acres site for redevelopment as Pepperpot House, its latest assisted living facility.

Unlike most retirement accommodation, here apartments are rented rather than sold, an approach which Birchgrove says offers retired people a more flexible and economic way of accessing accommodation where they can call on help when needed. Although Pepperpot House is not a care home, it comes

complete with a 24-hour concierge service.

Birchgrove judged the site a sound choice as it is near Godalming high street – and its location also offered the prospect of an accessible flat roof to take advantage of commanding views over the Surrey countryside. The site was also – apart from the cow shed – a brownfield vacant since 2017 that required only the demolition of a former warehouse used by the locally well-known Mole Country Stores agricultural business. Birchgrove acquired the site in 2020.

Development manager Tom Webb explains the provenance further: “The old cow shed building dates back to the 17th century, and has been converted to two one-bed apartments, retaining some listed features though the exterior is unchanged.” The main building is of concrete frame, with bricks selected to



match closely the listed brick facade of the cow shed.

Webb says: “We’ve got the existing listed building, which we wanted to match the new builds with as much as possible.” Pepperpot House is mostly arranged over four storeys, rising in part to five. It has a flat roof with a terrace accessible by the residents, where a bar allows people to have a relaxing drink while admiring the views.

Only about half of the roof space is accessible however, as it also houses air source heat pumps and photovoltaic cells on its far side. Heating is via a mixture of these heat pumps and gas fired boilers though within the apartments everything is electric. Energy is purchased solely from renewable tariffs. Also, at the request of planning authority Waverley Borough Council, 20% of the parking area is reserved for electric vehicles and charging facilities.

Construction started in October 2022, lasting until November 2024. “It’s a really good looking building,” Webb enthuses. “The roof terrace is quite unique for the area of Godalming, there are fantastic views of the town and surrounding Surrey Hills as it’s in an elevated position.”

TAILORED DESIGN

The architect used was TDC Architects, chosen by main contractor Natta Building for being well versed in the creation of healthcare-oriented buildings. Natta also appointed mechanical and electrical subcontractor Touch Building Services. Other notable contributors to the project appointed by Birchgrove included Aecom as employers agent and quantity surveyor; Couch Perry & Wilkes (M&E technical monitoring), and Devon Interiors.

Birchgrove does not work to a standard design for its developments – since it must respond to each site. Webb adds, however: “We’ve learned from previous projects around kitchen access, making domestic equipment easier for residents to use with more accessible drawer positions.”

All apartments include waist-height kitchen appliances, ensuite walk-in showers and simple switches, taps and plugs. Doors and corridors are wheelchair accessible for better freedom of movement. Kitchens and bathrooms are not pre-fabricated, as development director Russ Beresford explains: “There’s no use of modular in it. That only really works when you’ve got all the same

PEOPLE STILL WANT TO ACCESS LOCAL SERVICES SO BUILDING ON A REMOTE GREENFIELD SITE WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS



apartment types, but there are some variations here. That meant modular really wasn't the best solution." He also says that at only 52 apartments, the development didn't provide the scale required to make modular viable for Birchgrove: "When you've got a larger scale then modular makes more sense," but adds, notwithstanding this, "you can still get some quite good buying power from suppliers at our scale."

SUBCONTRACTORS

Birchgrove does not directly employ a building workforce, but chooses contractors as needed, and is not in any long term formal partnerships. Beresford says the company uses a design guide for the interiors, which covers the quality of kitchens, bathrooms, and size of amenity space contractors need to follow. This includes a restaurant, a lounge, libraries, and a small gym, "but this is not an identikit design that you can pick up and build anywhere," says Beresford. He adds that "we really believe in outdoor spaces."

He continues: "Planning obviously dictates the kind of massing that you can have on a site. The visual appearance of the facade needs to respond to the local

vernacular as well and work with the town and the setting that you're in."

While the developer uses size guides to dictate the amenities' look and feel to a degree, he adds they "like to have some local context so we respond to where we build, and adapt it slightly." He adds that while "you'll see some similarities" in the firm's developments, "there are definitely some differences in terms of visual appearance, both internally and externally."

Contractors are appointed partly on having the right attitude towards Birchgrove's approach rather than simply on price, says the development director. Beresford comments: "You can make some very bad decisions if you just go on price. We want to work with like-minded and forward thinking dynamic contractors that want to work with us on the projects and not just deliver and say 'see you later'." He adds: "We want to build relationships with a small pool of main contractors and consultants."

LONG-TERM APPROACH

Building accommodation for rent means that – unlike a conventional developer – Birchgrove cannot simply finish a job and walk away. It has to offer long-term



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management and maintenance and will engage contractors as needed for the latter. Beresford says the firm puts a lot of stock into investing into an area as a long-term partner in the community, but this means “you have to have various expertise in your company to continually manage as a developer and operator,” he says.

Beresford details the approach further: “We have a long-term outlook – providing a high-quality building, appropriately designed, and working with the local communities, and we like to integrate our buildings into the towns we operate in.” He reinforces the message: “We’re not a ‘build it and leave developer,’ community outreach is important to us.”

The demographics of the catchment area was the key factor for choosing Godalming; it was deemed to hold sufficient demand among older people to support a development of this size. Residents normally tend to come from the surrounding area of a Birchgrove development rather than moving to the location from long distances.

Beresford said the firm does a lot of analysis before choosing a site: “We can’t think ‘we’re going to build 300 units and it’s going to be fine, we’ll be able to lease

them all.’ We need to be very analytical about the number of units we build to ensure that we can lease them.”

The research includes looking at the available market size and demographics in the area concerned, and Godalming, he says, “ticks all those boxes.” Beresford continues: “We had enough people of the age group that we’re interested in that will be needing the type of products that we provide.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS

People who move into the developments tend to be owners of houses that may have become too large for them, or which have lots of stairs, or perhaps where people now only actively occupy a small part of their home. Beresford says: “Our tenants can now live in an age-appropriate, higher quality, modern apartment with peace of mind and just pay one bill, and their families can be sure their relations can be looked after, and be safe,” he explains.

There are 22 layouts to choose from in Pepperpot House’s apartments of which a typical one-bedroom option has a floor area ranging from 57.1 to 64.3 m², while the two-bedroom option covers 73.3 to 91.2 m². The rental basis of



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Birchgrove's business is relatively rare in a sector more commonly geared to selling apartments, but the company believes it is onto a winning formula which works for customers and that will drive a steady construction programme as it seeks out more sites.

Beresford comments further on the benefits of the BTR model: "We believe rental is a bit cheaper and more flexible for people. They can just write one cheque per month for the rent which covers the service charge and monthly activities, plus the gym and other communal facilities." When the company was founded, he says, offering rental was a key differentiator which is appropriate for later life: "There was only the purchase option available to older people, and rental gave people more choice."

"Our average age of tenant is 82," he explains; "most people are not really looking to buy another product at that age." He adds: "In our developments they can age in place [meaning residents can stay in their retirement community even if their care needs change significantly] and not have the hassle of maintaining an existing home with all the stresses associated with a house, garden, having to navigate stairs, and operate in a

kitchen that's most probably not suitable for an older person."

Older people are not of course necessarily inactive, and this has seen Birchgrove to seek out sites which are in and around towns, which consequently tend to be brownfield. People still want to access local services so building on a remote greenfield site would be unlikely to attract custom.

The company's chief executive Honor Barratt has big ambitions, and wants "a Birchgrove in every town" in the long term. For now, the developer is seeking sites in the south east near the M25, where all its existing development can be found.

Pepperpot House is the company's fifth completed scheme and it also recently opened Ayrton House in Mill Hill, its first in Greater London. It has four projects under construction in Hampton, Leatherhead, Banstead and Chiswick.

Beresford says: "We're actively searching for more sites, we're trying to build a pipeline to progress through this year and into the next few years," and the south east remains the focus for this initial growth phase.

He asserts that the company's work is not "just about getting land and churning

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out as many apartments as we can from land,” adding that socialisation is a big focus: “A fundamental part of what we offer is communal living for older people who are looking to move out of one environment into ours, and socialisation is fundamental to their health and wellbeing and integral to everything that we do.”

While he acknowledges that loneliness is “a big problem, especially for some of the older demographics that haven’t got family around them or their friends have passed away,” it is being addressed in the firm’s schemes such as Pepperpot House. “People here have that ability to make new connections, and it helps them to live longer.”

Safety is always a top priority in accommodation for older people, and Pepperpot House has AI-assisted technology in the form of Nobi Smart Lamps in every room which include sensors and alert staff if – for example – someone has suffered a fall. Residents are also given smart watches which allow emergency calls to be made anywhere.

CONCLUSION

Demand proved to be strong at Pepperpot House, with 40% of apartments pre-let

off plan. Honor Barratt of Birchgrove says: “We’re delighted that so many of the apartments at Pepperpot House have been snapped up in advance of opening. It helps that we were able to secure such a central location and we’re really pleased to have been able to bring a disused site back to life.”

She concludes that much of the reason for the success of the scheme so far commercially “is that we were able to show prospective residents our other thriving local communities to give them an idea of what it’s like to live in one of our developments.” Barratt continues: “We believe we’re firmly on a roll now and are confident we can achieve even higher pre-let rates as we roll our successful rental retirement living model out further across the country.”

The accommodation market for older people has long been centred around selling apartments, and some have proven problematic when occupiers or their heirs wish to sell, given the somewhat limited demand. By contrast, Birchgrove’s rental model is designed to overcome this, and if it becomes as attractive as the company expects, it will open up a new stream of work for housebuilders. ■

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SOLUTIONS FOR BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN & NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY IN NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2024, adding 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory for new developments, bar a few exemptions. This followed the introduction of the requirement in February 2024, at which point it applied to 'larger' developments only – developments of nine houses or more in housebuilding terms – before the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) rolled it out further.

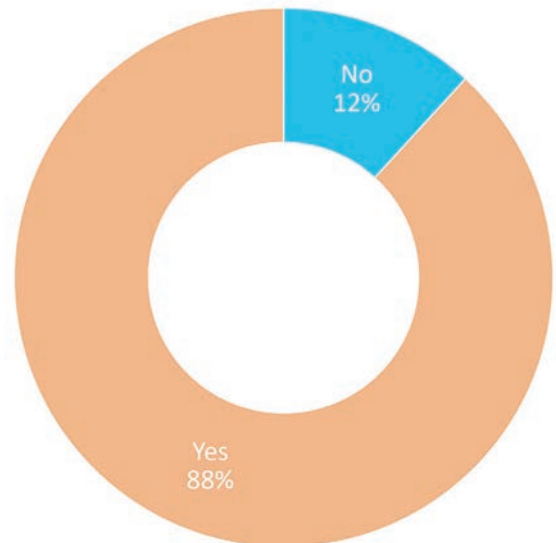
Protecting biodiversity is increasingly important, with the UK having lost over half of its biodiversity due to human activity since monitoring began in 1970. With efforts being made to restore habitats seen across multiple industries, housebuilding is no exception and has the potential to achieve progress at scale.

Adding 10% BNG means developers are not just obligated to replace any species habitats destroyed by a new development, but also add a further 10% of habitat. Ensuring new development is not just neutral in the impact it has on biodiversity but actually makes a change for the better is clearly a positive step for the environment, but it undoubtedly comes with challenges. We sought to survey housebuilders on their views on both biodiversity itself and its impact on their developments, to learn more about the challenges they're facing – and possible solutions that could be adopted elsewhere.

Any additional measures to be undertaken by developers comes at an additional cost which has to be managed and either absorbed or passed on. There is also an administrative element to contend with, comprising a 'hierarchy' of options to navigate, from achieving BNG onsite, to doing it offsite, to finally purchasing BNG 'credits.'

In order to establish the BNG requirements for a development, Natural England requires a Biodiversity Net Gain Plan for planning permission to be granted, following a developer's Environmental Impact Assessment. This then calculates the 'units' of BNG that are to be lost as a result of the development, with 10% then added to give the replacement required. Where it's necessary for housebuilders to buy credits, they can purchase them from local landowners (thereby providing biodiverse

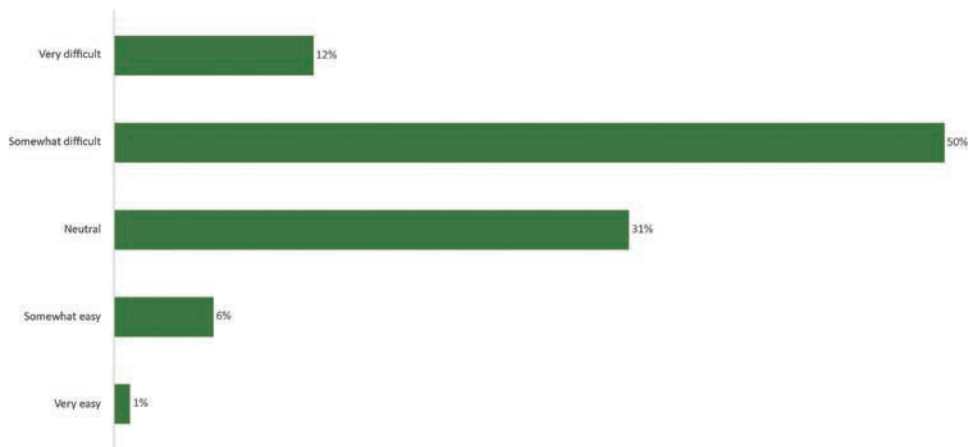
Are you aware of the full ramifications of what adding 10% Biodiversity Net Gain means for your schemes, and what the exemptions are?



habitat near to their scheme), other third party sources, or buy statutory credits from Natural England who run a scheme on behalf of Defra.

Natural England has also in recent years highlighted the issue of nutrient pollution caused by new developments, and subsequently advised dozens of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) that they can only approve developments if they are certain it will not cause additional pollution – from untreated/partially treated sewage and wastewater, and surface water run-off. Currently, developments which are in areas at risk of nutrient pollution are therefore required to achieve nutrient neutrality, meaning additional nutrient loads created through wastewater must be mitigated.

How difficult are you currently finding it to achieve 10% BNG?



INTRODUCTION

In order to quantify the biodiversity impact of developments, the Government introduced tools to determine a proxy biodiversity value which has been developed by Natural England. There are separate tools depending on the size of the development – the statutory biodiversity metric, or the simplified Small Sites Metric (SSM), which applies to developments of nine homes or less.

Using these calculators – which consider factors such as the habitat quality and area – developers can calculate the biodiversity value of a site and thus the biodiversity units required, without the need to engage with external environmental consultants.

Following this, developers must then produce a biodiversity gain plan, which outlines how they intend to deliver their required biodiversity net gain, allowing the local planning authority to assess whether measures meet the BNG objective. The scheme has been described as “world-leading” and was referenced at the November 2024 United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP16).

THE BNG HIERARCHY

Defra and Natural England have specified that housebuilders and developers should consider onsite biodiversity measures as the priority, among a ‘hierarchy’ of measures. This can encompass a range of measures, including setting emission reduction targets, creating new/enhancing existing habitats, minimising the discharge of pollutants, nature conservation, and compensating for the loss of one type of biodiversity by providing another.

Under the BNG ‘hierarchy’ that developers must obey, the other options are specialist offsite BNG solutions, and finally – should neither of the first two options be viable – purchasing so-called ‘biodiversity credits’ to enable a scheme to comply.

Despite the fact that the purchasing of credits is designed to be used only as a last resort, only 21% of respondents to our research are currently not purchasing credits at all, and delivering their BNG requirements exclusively through either onsite or offsite solutions.

Where developers are unable to meet their 10% BNG requirement onsite, offsite solutions can either be applying the same measures as above but on land outside of the development site, or by purchasing offsite biodiversity units on the private market. These solutions can also include measures such as sourcing materials such as timber from sustainable companies. Offsite measures are arguably more suitable for sites in urban areas where green space is lacking and onsite solutions are

therefore not so viable.

Failing both of these, the third and final measure is to buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government, the revenue from which will be used by the government to invest in habitat creation. The price of these credits is based on the cost of creating, maintaining and monitoring different habitat types, with a mark-up to “prevent statutory credit prices undercutting the off-site market,” as Defra explains it. While credits may seem perhaps the ‘easiest’ option in terms of time and administration, they are intentionally priced at a higher rate than the market price for the equivalent biodiversity ‘unit.’

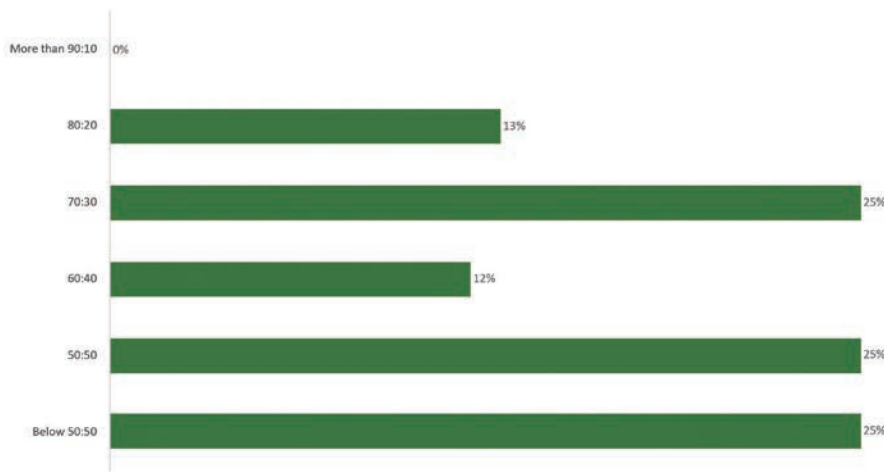
Developers are permitted to combine the three measures to meet their 10% required BNG, but must apply them in order according to the hierarchy. To help meet their target, advised housebuilders plan early for including BNG, and collaborate with stakeholders who can help achieve it, such as ecologists, wildlife groups, landowners, environmentalists and local governments. Collaboration is key to bridging knowledge gaps and helping housebuilders not only in the short term, but also in making longer term plans for ongoing BNG on sites.

NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY

It applies to areas where nearby surface water has been impacted by high levels of contaminants – mostly phosphate and nitrate, which are present in treated wastewater and harmful when above a certain threshold. In the affected areas, developers must demonstrate how the anticipated amount of nutrients will be either removed or offset in order to achieve nutrient neutrality. This can be achieved by creating buffer zones along watercourses, or by creating new wetlands where the nutrients are stripped from the water.

Similarly to 10% BNG, the introduction of nutrient neutrality has not been without its critics, with some – including the Home Builders Federation (HBF) claiming the scheme has blocked more than 100,000 homes from being built in areas covered by it. The Conservative government attempted to scrap the scheme altogether, but this was blocked by a Labour-led rebellion. Labour has since proposed planning changes that will take a broader look at the area in which a development is proposed and take a more “pragmatic” approach. It will also allow projects to begin without a concrete plan in place regarding nutrient neutrality, instead allowing for it to be agreed upon during development, and has promised £47m to seven of the worst nutrient polluted areas of England to help alleviate the problem.

What is the ratio you have achieved so far between 'actual' biodiversity additions, and purchasing BNG credits?



A HIGH PERCENTAGE SAID THEY ARE CURRENTLY FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE 10% BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

CHALLENGES

Crucially, we asked respondents how difficult they're currently finding it to achieve 10% BNG. Worryingly, a total of 72% answered either 'very' or 'somewhat difficult'. A further 31% selected 'neutral', leaving only 7% answering 'somewhat' or 'very easy'. It's concerning that such a high percentage of housebuilders go so far as to say it's not just not easy but is difficult, and demonstrates that concerns over the lack of support and preparedness from Defra, and consequently local authorities, are not unfounded. It could also be, as is often the case with legislative changes, a cost issue, which can particularly impact smaller housebuilders who don't have the same capacity to absorb additional costs as larger developers might. Finally, there is also the administrative and logistical element that comes with such changes, with housebuilders either having to employ third-party consultants to assist them or spend time and money on in-house training. All of these combined undoubtedly make 10% BNG a challenge, especially for SMEs.

With Defra outlining in their biodiversity gain hierarchy the order in which housebuilders should set about achieving 10% BNG, we asked what ratio respondents have achieved so far between 'actual' biodiversity additions – onsite or offsite – and purchasing BNG credits, the least favourable option. The responses were somewhat divided – 25% said the ratio is 70:30, a further 25% said it's 50:50, 13% said 80:20, and 12% said 60:40. Worryingly the final 25% said it's below 50:50. Given purchasing BNG credits should be a last resort, it's concerning that no respondents said their ratio is more than 90:10, and that overall 50% said it's either 50:50 or less. This clearly indicates there are some significant barriers to overcome in order to encourage developers to prioritise either onsite or offsite solutions, before resorting to purchasing BNG credits.

ADMINISTRATIVE & LOGISTICAL ISSUES

One of the biggest challenges for any industry when faced with legislative changes is the logistics and administration of ensuring individuals are up to speed in order to remain compliant. There's also often a certain amount of jargon to learn and understand, all of which can cause a headache for housebuilders. On that basis, we asked if the jargon and logistics are creating a substantial learning curve for their firms, to which 50% said 'yes', and a further 12% said 'somewhat'. While it could be argued this is to be expected given the complexity of 10% BNG, and the lack of real support on offer, it's nonetheless concerning

such a high percentage of developers feel they're faced with such a steep learning curve; the knock-on effect in terms of time and money spent on training and learning could equal less time and money spent on projects.

We asked respondents how they have acquired credits, giving them the option of either 'local landowners', which 15% selected, or 'other sources' which the remaining 85% chose.

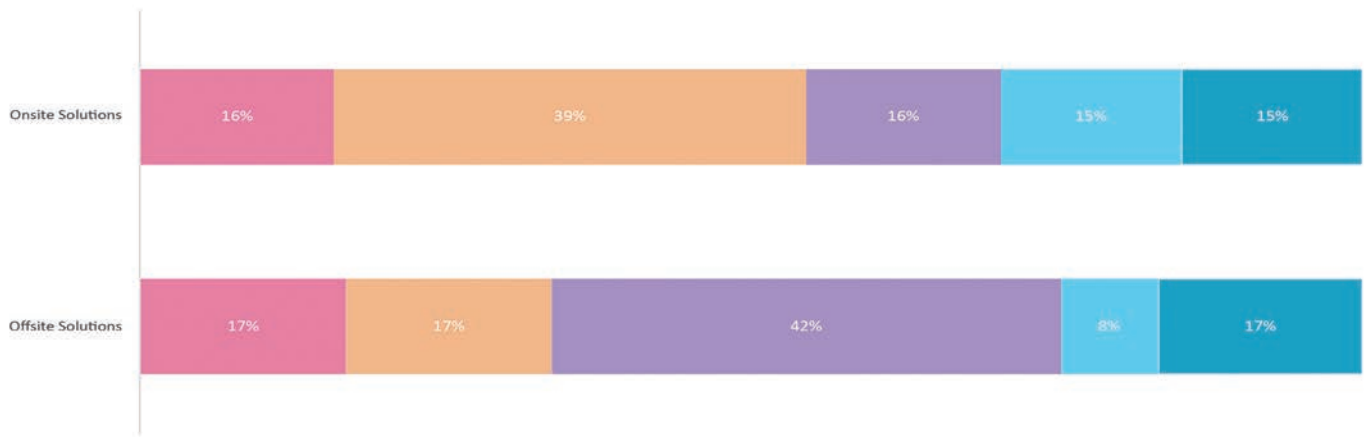
SOLUTIONS

In order to gauge from the outset what our respondents understood of their responsibilities, we first asked if they are aware of the full ramifications of what adding 10% BNG means for their schemes. 88% responded said they were aware, which is promising and shows that while there may be many obstacles to overcome, housebuilders at least feel their understanding is good – arguably the first hurdle with any legislative change.

We then asked respondents how they are delivering their 10% BNG requirements, asking them to select a percentage range each for onsite solutions, offsite solutions, and BNG credits. Onsite solutions had the biggest range of answers – 13% said they deliver '90 to 100%' of their requirements through onsite solutions, which is hugely encouraging. A further 13% said it's '80 to 90%', and another 6% said it's '60 to 70%', meaning that overall, 32% of respondents are delivering 60% or more of their 10% BNG requirements through onsite solutions, by far the most preferable.

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

To learn more about what exactly housebuilders are pursuing, we asked specifically what onsite solutions respondents are currently utilising, given they are more likely to cost less than offsite measures, asking them to select all that apply from the options of 'avoidance', 'minimisation', or 'rehabilitation & restoration'. This is based on the mitigation hierarchy, which outlines the steps in order of preference. Avoidance "attempts to avoid negative impacts to biodiversity", minimisation "aims to reduce the severity, duration or extent or negative impacts", and restoration "aims to restore habitats that have lost biodiversity value".



How much has your investment been in pursuing these solutions?

■ Less than £5k
 ■ £5k to £10k
 ■ £10k to £25k
 ■ £25k to £50k
 ■ £50k to £100k
 ■ Over £100k

While avoidance is the preferential option, only 20% of respondents selected this – highlighting that while the more favoured option, it is also unfortunately the most difficult. This is however perhaps not surprising given that avoidance can often mean avoiding a particular site altogether if its biodiversity value is high, which will not always be a realistic option if a project has already had significant time and money invested in it.

Minimisation was selected by double that number of respondents (40%). Minimisation can again be somewhat disruptive to projects depending on how far along in the planning process they are, with solutions including the adaptation of site layouts, changing construction materials, or using different machinery for development. It's therefore positive that almost half our respondents are actively pursuing minimisation, and demonstrates the need for schemes such as 10% BNG is not only taken seriously, but also achievable.

Rehabilitation & restoration was the most selected option at 57%. This generally sees new habitat areas created to replace those that have been lost, or the enhancement of existing ones. Given that development is almost guaranteed to cause a certain amount of disruption, it's unsurprising that many housebuilders are actively pursuing this, likely having little choice but to replace at least some habitat lost to their project. It is nonetheless encouraging that this is, according to our findings, likely being pursued in conjunction with more favourable options such as minimisation.

PRACTICAL MEASURES

Moving on to more specific solutions, our research demonstrates that housebuilders don't necessarily need to think too 'outside the box' or explore entirely new solutions. Natural sustainable drainage solutions (SuDS) are known to be a useful means to supporting BNG, helping manage surface water, improving water quality, reducing the risk of flooding, and creating diverse habitats for wildlife. With SuDS having previously had a somewhat disappointing uptake, due in part to a lack of legislation and planning policies, it's encouraging that 67% of our respondents said they are combining BNG solutions with SuDS.

There are also product solutions that can also help housebuilders with BNG onsite, many of which – like SuDS – are not necessarily new or innovative, but rather require consideration that they perhaps hadn't before. We asked respondents which product solutions they are using to support and benefit BNG onsite, selecting all that apply. The top three choices were 'wildflower meadows' (79%), 'artificial nesting

boxes' (64%), and 'hedgerows or native tree planting' (50%). These are all solutions that not only promote biodiversity, but also offer benefits to – and therefore make a development more attractive to – future homeowners, providing inviting outdoor spaces and planting, and encouraging an abundance of insects and birds to the site. Wildflower meadows and hedgerow/tree planting are also effective means of replacing any potentially lost habitat.

Next on the list were 'green roofs or living walls' and 'ponds or wetland creation', both selected by 36% of respondents, before 'wildlife corridors' and 'habitat structures', which were selected by 29%. Other less popular choices were 'rain gardens or permeable paving' (21%), 'biodiverse grasslands' (21%), and 'soil improvement techniques' (7%). While some evidently currently have a low uptake, each solution is being utilised by at least some housebuilders, suggesting that all options are possible, even if only on certain developments.

CONCLUSION

There's no denying that the aims of the 10% BNG scheme are honourable, and that there is absolutely a need for schemes that encourage – and enforce – developers to better consider biodiversity and the impact of their projects on local habitats. That said, our research shows that there are also a number of challenges facing housebuilders in meeting these new requirements.

While the majority of our respondents understand the requirements of 10% BNG, a high percentage also said they are currently finding it difficult to achieve it. It's clear that the usual barriers relating to additional costs, and administrative and logistical complications, such as the training of staff, are impacting housebuilders and adding complications.

There are a variety of solutions for achieving BNG success onsite, and our research showed that all of these are being utilised by at least some developers, including a good percentage pursuing SuDS approaches. While uptake of 'actual' biodiversity additions is perhaps not as high as Defra and Natural England would like, the ratio achieved between onsite/offsite and purchasing BNG credits is still reasonable, especially given the number of developers who are struggling with BNG.

James Hardie appoints new Sales Manager



James Hardie is pleased to announce the appointment of Gabriela Carp as their new Channel Sales Manager for the Midlands. This strategic move reinforces James Hardie's commitment to optimising channel performance, and strengthening their presence in the region. Gabriela brings over 8 years of experience to James Hardie with a proven track record in sales management and a clear understanding of the construction industry. In her

new role, she will identify new business opportunities, nurture existing client relationships, and implement strategic initiatives to grow the business within the region's channel sales network.

0121 311 3480 www.jameshardie.co.uk

Designer Contracts – new year, new faces



Designer Contracts starts the New Year with four new appointments and a promotion. Bradley Harris and Mark Caldwell join as sales managers, while Luke Monteith strengthens the sales team with a promotion. Clare Critten and Craig Pearcey have been brought on board to boost its senior contracts

staff. Bradley Harris takes on the role of sales manager for the South East region. Critten is joining Designer Contracts as a senior contracts manager for the Wales and West region. Also joining the senior contracts management team – for the Thames Medway area – is Craig Pearcey. Monteith, promoted after three years as sales administrator, manages Thames Medway. Managing director Peter Kelsey welcomes the expanded team.

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Reducing carbon in steel construction

With increasing pressure from central government and local authorities to minimise the carbon emissions and environmental impact of construction projects, **voestalpine Metsec** has introduced a reduced carbon steel option for its renowned light gauge steel construction solutions, including the pre-panellised loadbearing solution, Metframe, SFS, Purlins and its range of internal non-loadbearing stud, track and MF ceilings. Branded Metsec Decarb, the steel is produced in new, state of the art electric arc furnaces and is a true move towards a reduced carbon future for the construction industry, containing less than half the amount of carbon dioxide per tonne for the same quality of steel. Andy Hackett, General Manager of voestalpine Metsec's Dry Lining Division, states: "Together with our commitment to Net Zero Carbon operations by 2035, Metsec Decarb underlines our commitment to providing specifiers, developers and clients with a very real opportunity to reduce a project's carbon footprint and enhance its sustainability credentials. "Metsec Decarb is a bona fide lower embodied carbon steel. It does not rely on greenwashing, carbon offsetting, allocation of green energy or mass balance approach to achieve this, providing real peace of mind for the designer."

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SHOW PREVIEW

04-06 March
Excel, London

FUTUREBUILD 2025: DRIVING SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION FOR HOUSEBUILDERS & DEVELOPERS

Futurebuild 2025, taking place from March 04-06 at London Excel, is a must-attend event for housebuilders and developers dedicated to delivering sustainable, high-quality, and future-proofed housing. Celebrating its 20th anniversary, this year's event will focus on practical strategies and innovative solutions to meet climate goals, improve housing standards, and drive profitability through sustainable development.

As the housing industry faces mounting pressure to deliver net-zero homes and sustainable communities, Futurebuild 2025 also offers a platform to connect with policymakers, sustainability leaders, and innovative suppliers, to shape the future of construction.

BUILDINGS IMPACT STAGE: SUSTAINABLE & SCALABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Opening the event, the session 'From Net Zero to Healthy Homes and Buildings,' in partnership with the Healthy Homes and Buildings Coalition, will provide developers with strategies to meet growing market demand for energy-efficient, health-conscious homes. This session will highlight how prioritising occupant well-being can increase market value and meet evolving regulatory standards.

Following this, 'Futureproofing Construction: How Advancements in Modular Buildings Can Lead the Way for Future Development,' led by Richard Hipkiss of MPBA, will explore how modular construction methods can streamline project delivery, reduce costs, and meet sustainability goals – making it an ideal solution for large-scale housing developments.

The second day will focus on creating resilient, economically viable communities.



The session 'Accelerating Quality in the Built Environment,' hosted by BRE, will offer insights into performance evaluations that safeguard the longevity and value of new homes and retrofits – critical information for developers aiming to deliver high-quality, durable housing stock.

Over on the Placemaking Impact Stage, 'Building Nature-Rich Places: How a Landscape-Led Approach Delivers Climate, Nature, and Community Benefits,' in partnership with the Landscape Institute, will present cost-effective strategies for integrating green infrastructure and biodiversity into housing developments – enhancing property value and meeting planning requirements.

SCALING RETROFIT & SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS

With retrofitting existing properties becoming increasingly important for meeting net-zero



FUTUREBUILD 2025 OFFERS HOUSEBUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS AN INVALUABLE PLATFORM TO EXPLORE PRACTICAL, INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT DRIVE SUSTAINABILITY AND PROFITABILITY

targets, the session 'Data-Driven Retrofit – Leveraging Insights for Effective Change' on the National Retrofit Conference stage, will equip developers with scalable retrofit strategies to improve energy performance, reduce operational costs, and increase property value.

The session 'Bio-Based Materials for New Build and Retrofit,' hosted by the Alliance for Sustainable Building Products (ASBP) on the Materials Impact Stage, will showcase innovative, cost-efficient materials that align with sustainability goals and appeal to environmentally conscious buyers.

In addition, the National Retrofit Conference – co-located with Futurebuild – will offer housebuilders insights into scaling retrofit solutions across housing portfolios. With rising energy costs and regulatory pressures, these sessions will focus on how to make retrofits financially viable while delivering long-term energy savings for residents.

INNOVATIVE MATERIALS & CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

Cutting-edge materials and building methods are key for developers looking to stay competitive. The session 'Fire-Safe Mass Timber for the UK' on the Materials Impact Stage will explore how sustainable

timber solutions can be safely integrated into residential projects, balancing cost efficiency with environmental performance. Meanwhile, 'Biophilic Urban Design,' on the Buildings Impact Stage, chaired by Dr. Vanessa Champion, will offer strategies for integrating natural elements into housing developments to enhance community appeal and meet local planning regulations.

Futurebuild 2025 offers housebuilders and developers an invaluable platform to explore practical, innovative solutions that drive sustainability and profitability. From modular construction and scalable retrofit strategies to innovative materials and nature-rich community designs, this event delivers the tools and insights necessary for future-proofing developments.

Article supplied by Futurebuild

Scan the QR code to register for your free ticket.



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 1200 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



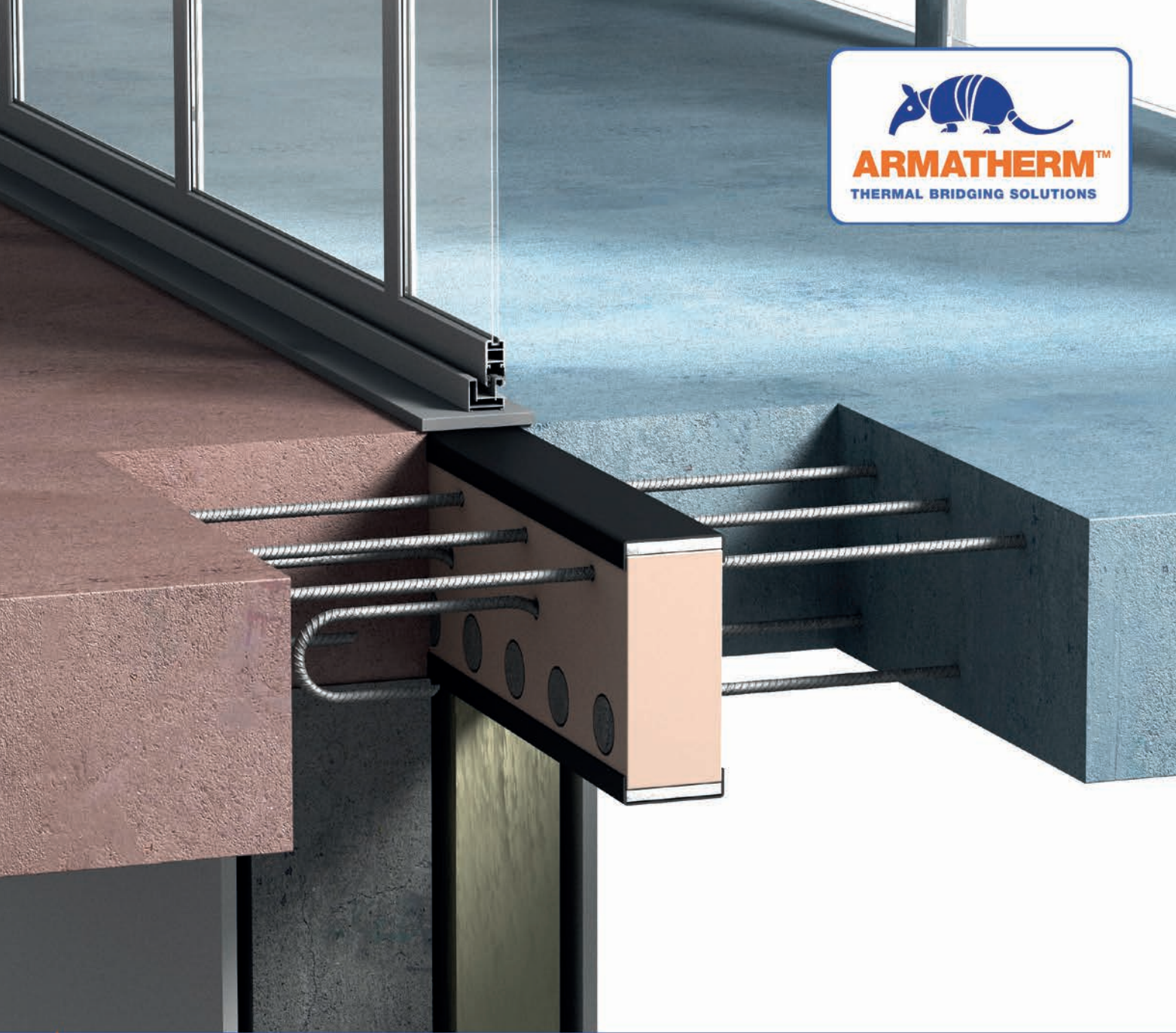
be used to insulate and waterproof walls, floors and ceilings. Even the thinnest boards will be useful when used with underfloor heating wire to reduce heating costs.

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



Booth Number D44

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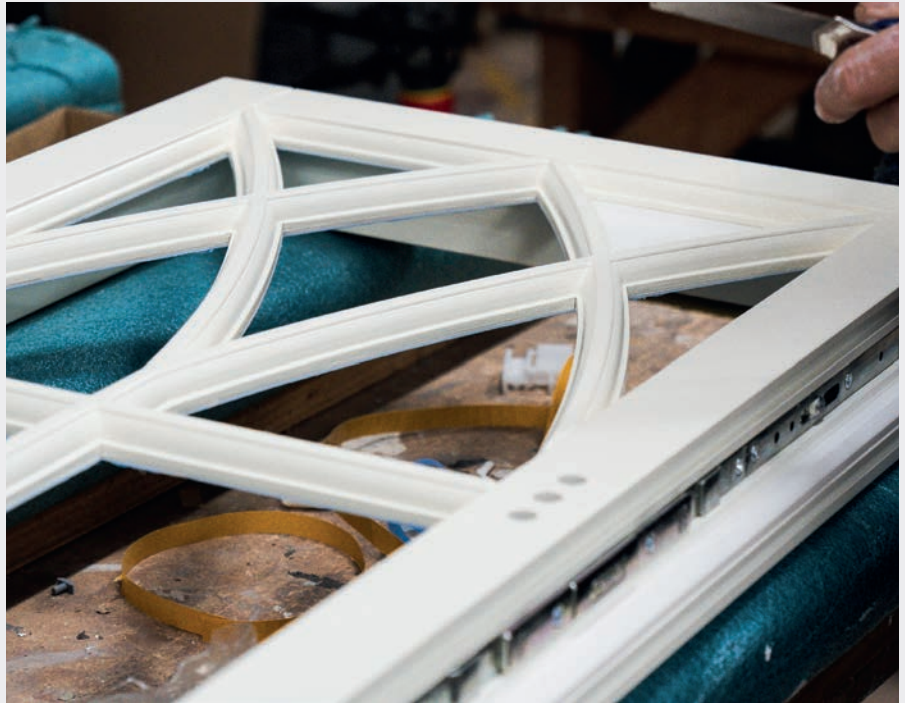
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Modernising Timber Manufacturing



Mark Osborne, Managing Director of Country Hardwood, reveals how technological innovation is enabling timber manufacturers to challenge the efficiency of uPVC and aluminium fabrication while maintaining their reputation for quality.

The timber fenestration sector stands at a crucial crossroads. While the demand for premium timber products remains, manufacturers must evolve to compete with the efficiency of mass-produced alternatives. As Managing Director of Country Hardwood, I believe the answer lies not in choosing between traditional craftsmanship and modern technology, but in harnessing both.

When we established Country Hardwood in 2007, we began with a simple mission: to craft superior timber products that would stand the test of time. Today, that mission remains unchanged, but our methods have transformed. Our recent £700,000 investment in advanced CNC machinery demonstrates our commitment to embracing new technologies and innovation, while remaining true to time-honoured traditional joinery.

CNC MACHINERY: CONSISTENCY & QUALITY CONTROL

For trade professionals, consistency is paramount. Every variable in installation adds time, costs, and potential complications. Our approach to manufacturing addresses these challenges head-on.

Through precision CNC engineering, we ensure exact specifications are met on every product, every time. Our automated processes guarantee consistent quality within large volume orders, while advanced machinery enables complex designs without compromising efficiency. Quality control systems monitor every stage of production, ensuring excellence from start to finish.

The result? Products that arrive on-site ready for trouble-free installation, reducing time on site and minimising callbacks.

However, our investment over the past few years in new machinery wasn't about replacing craftsmen with computers. Instead, it was about reinforcing the capabilities of our skilled team - many of whom have been with us since day one. We've always kept the tradition of woodworking at the centre of our work; our team continues to oversee the entire operation, bringing decades of skill, expertise and knowledge to the table and ensuring the perfect finished product.

The result is a manufacturing process that delivers consistent quality while meeting the demanding schedules of modern construction projects.

Our commitment to forward-thinking extends beyond machinery. Take our unique wrap-around locking system - a perfect example of how technical innovation can improve traditional products. This system locks at five separate points around the edges of larger window frames, ensuring optimal security without compromising aesthetics.

We've also developed practical solutions for common market challenges. Our oak-effect hardwood, for instance, offers the prestigious appearance of oak at a more cost-effective price - ideal for larger developments where budgets are tight but quality standards remain high.

Bringing technology into timber window and door manufacturing requires a balance - it's crucial to maintain consistency and quality without losing the tradition of hand-built elements that makes timber so sought-after, even today.

The reason people continue to prize timber windows and doors is the same reason people continue to prize hand-made pottery over mass-produced products - expertise, built up over years of experience, simply

can't be replaced by machinery. Instead, if timber manufacturing is to compete with uPVC fabrication, it must work alongside advancements in technology.

It's also crucial for timber manufacturers to recognise the importance of supporting trade partners where needed. Our comprehensive design support includes full CAD capability for bespoke projects, backed by detailed technical specifications and documentation. Our nationwide delivery service also ensures timely arrival at sites nationwide, while our emphasis on sourcing materials and making our products here in the UK means we can offer competitive pricing to our customers.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE

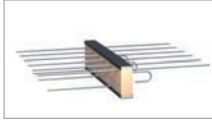
The market for premium timber products continues to grow, driven by increasing appreciation for sustainable, high-quality materials. However, success in this market requires manufacturers to deliver these products efficiently and consistently.

Our investment in technology has enabled us to maintain consistent 12-week lead times across our product range. We can handle complex bespoke projects with confidence, delivering exceptional quality every time while our efficient processes allow us to offer competitive pricing.

I firmly believe that the future of timber manufacturing lies in this balanced approach - combining the irreplaceable skills of experienced craftsmen with the precision and efficiency of modern technology. At Country Hardwood, we're committed to continuing this evolution, investing in both our people and our capabilities to ensure we remain at the forefront of the industry.

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www.countryhardwood.com

Armatherm Cast-In-Situ Thermal Break Solution



Armatherm™’s new Cast-In Situ (CIS) thermal break prevents thermal bridging in reinforced concrete structures like balconies and parapets. Its 75 mm thick Armatherm™ 500-280 insulation achieves a high R-value of 5.7, enhancing the building envelope’s thermal efficiency. With

stainless steel rebars for superior strength and corrosion resistance, the CIS ensures durability and easy handling during transport and installation. Its rigid insulation allows for nailing to formwork and cutting, making it practical on-site. By reducing heat loss, condensation and mould, it improves indoor comfort while exceeding UK building regulations. Visit Armatherm at Futurebuild, stand D44 to see it in action!

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FUTUREBUILD STAND NO D44

Generon generates its first rave review



A unique solar roof tile system launched by Breedon has ticked all the boxes for the first housebuilder to use it. Breedon Generon has been used by developer John Brooke Builders on two sites in Yorkshire. The innovative system,

a premium whole roof concept comprising a 3.2 mm monocrystalline tempered glass PV cell discreetly integrated with a Breedon Elite 330 mm x 420 mm base concrete roof tile which is laid in sequence with matching standard roof tiles, was specified for 10 large detached houses in Brighouse and two semi-detached houses in Robertstown. John Brooke said: “I looked at several other options, and at far cheaper products, and while I gave them consideration, it was a no brainer as soon as I saw the Generon product.”

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Surroundings full of atmosphere

With its lighting system “mx light”, markilux offers a range of options for providing attractive lighting for the awning and garden in the evening. Over the years, gardens, terraces and balconies have become living spaces where more and more people spend their leisure time: especially if they have an atmosphere with a feel-good factor. An attractive lighting concept plays an essential part in this. This is exactly why the awning manufacturer markilux has designed the system “mx light” - initially for two of its models. It is based on a number of different LED light sources which immerse outdoor spaces in a neutral, warm white to coloured light. The garden has become the focus of life for many people over the summer. This is where they spend most of their time with family and friends. And not just during the day, but also in the evening. This is why awning specialist markilux has developed the lighting system “mx light”, controlled by means of an app, for its latest models, the “MX-4” and the “pergola style”.

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
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CHESTERFELT
by **SOPREMA**

DAYLIGHT: THE OVERLOOKED ROLE

As sustainable construction advances, home design must go beyond energy efficiency, considering daylight, ventilation, comfort, and embodied carbon. Neil Freshwater of VELUX explores how daylight and Indoor Environment Quality can contribute.



Visualization made in cooperation with the VELUX Group 

In the pursuit of more sustainable and energy-efficient homes, a holistic approach to building design is crucial. While the Future Homes Standard (FHS) and existing Approved Documents provide a regulatory framework for energy efficiency, they fail to consider several critical factors that contribute to overall building performance.

Among these, daylight provision is a significant omission. Natural light in homes directly influences occupant health, well-being, and energy consumption.

In December 2024, VELUX launched the #DaylightChampion campaign in the UK Parliament, bringing together daylighting experts and politicians to highlight its importance. Additionally, the Parliament's

All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Healthy Homes & Buildings, whose advisory board we are a member of, has long championed the need for a holistic approach to building policy and design.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DAYLIGHT IN BUILDINGS

Despite its benefits, daylighting remains overlooked in UK building regulations. The current Approved Documents and the proposed Future Homes Standard focus on energy efficiency and ventilation but do not include minimum daylight requirements. This is a missed opportunity to enhance occupant well-being while reducing reliance on artificial lighting.

Roof windows effectively maximise

daylight penetration due to their lack of exterior obstruction. Research shows that exposure to natural light improves mental well-being, productivity, and sleep cycles. Homes with adequate daylighting require less artificial lighting, reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions.

THE BIGGER PICTURE – HEALTHY & HOLISTIC BUILDING DESIGN

The VELUX Group has long championed Active House design principles, balancing energy, environment, and indoor comfort. These principles consider environmental impacts like embodied carbon and water efficiency, as well as indoor comfort parameters including thermal comfort, air quality, daylight, and acoustics. These can

be objectively measured and incorporated into design specifications. Across the Irish Sea, the Housing Performance Index (HPI), championed by the Irish Green Building Council (IGBC), exemplifies this holistic approach.

ADDRESSING OVERHEATING CONCERNS

Overheating has become a pressing issue as buildings become more airtight. Part O of the Approved Documents seeks to address this but has had unintended consequences – reducing daylight access due to the simplified calculation method, which limits maximum window areas. Many house builders report difficulties complying.

The government is currently reviewing Part O, offering an opportunity to incorporate strategies such as exterior shading – common in mainland Europe – and stack-effect ventilation, which leverages upward airflow to cool buildings. Additionally, incorporating daylighting requirements would ensure that overheating mitigation measures do not compromise natural lighting.



PART Z? THE CALL FOR LEGISLATING EMBODIED CARBON

Construction accounts for around 40% of global carbon emissions, with about 25% stemming from the manufacture, construction, and disposal of buildings rather than operational energy use. Improving energy efficiency has an environmental cost due to material choices. While necessary, we must also acknowledge the true environmental

impact and encourage manufacturers to reduce embodied carbon. The proposed Part Z campaign, which aims to legislate embodied carbon considerations, warrants serious attention from policymakers.

STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

Buildings are systems, not just collections of components. Holistic design is essential. While building regulations' Approved Documents have improved, some remain disconnected due to siloed regulatory writing. For example, the Future Homes Standard considers only a fraction of the 19 existing Approved Documents.

As the Future Homes Standard progresses, we must advocate for a balanced approach. Daylighting, ventilation, shading, and embodied carbon must be integrated alongside energy efficiency measures to ensure that new homes are sustainable, comfortable, and environmentally responsible.

Neil Freshwater is public affairs manager at VELUX Great Britain & Ireland

DESPITE ITS BENEFITS, DAYLIGHTING REMAINS OVERLOOKED IN UK BUILDING REGULATIONS.

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Sapphire Balconies Delivers Fire-Safe, Elegant Solutions for Phase 3

Sapphire Balconies played a key role in transforming the Green Man Lane Estate in West Ealing. The estate has been undergoing major redevelopment since 2011 as part of Ealing's initiative to improve the borough's housing stock. Phase 3 of the Green Man Lane project continued the estate's development but introduced new challenges that required innovative solutions to meet evolving safety regulations.

This phase required significant adjustments due to the updated 'Part B' fire regulations implemented after the Grenfell tragedy. These regulations placed stricter requirements on materials used in balcony construction, particularly excluding laminate glass from the exemption list for facades. This posed a significant challenge in maintaining the aesthetic continuity with previous phases, where glass balustrades were prominently featured.

Having contributed to the earlier phases, Sapphire Balconies was once again engaged to develop a compliant solution that adhered to the new fire safety standards while preserving the development's design integrity. The primary challenge was achieving the A2-s1, d0 fire rating mandated by the updated regulations without compromising the project's visual and functional continuity.

Leveraging their expertise and innovative

design approach, Sapphire adapted the balcony specification from the initially planned glass balustrades to a railing system meeting stringent fire rating requirements. This critical adjustment ensured full compliance with the new safety standards. Despite the material shift, Sapphire maintained their signature Cassette balcony design, incorporating the same drainage trays and decking used in previous phases. This consistency preserved the visual harmony across the entire development.

Sapphire Balconies' solution not only met the technical requirements but also seamlessly aligned with the architectural vision. Their close collaboration with the project's architects and contractors exemplified their commitment to innovation, safety, and design excellence. The successful integration of the A2-s1, d0 fire-rated railing system in Phase 3 stands as a testament to Sapphire's ability to overcome regulatory challenges while enhancing safety and design continuity.



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Astraseal unveils the Rehau Artevo System



Astraseal have recently launched a brand-new fenestration system, designed specifically for large scale building projects, The Rehau Artevo System. Unlike any other window system, the Artevo system incorporates glass fibres within the profiles to offer unrivalled strength, whilst maintaining slim

profile sightlines. The Glass fibre reinforcing within the profiles reduces noise transmission, offers hugely improved thermal performance, and enables the use of much larger, heavier glass panes. To further enhance the Artevo system Astraseal are approved for the manufacture and installation of the new Skyforce Juliet balcony solution. Skyforce is a Juliet balcony that fits perfectly and discreetly into the clean lines of the build.

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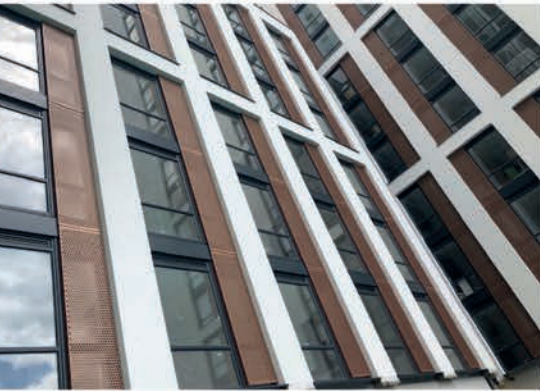
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Panasonic provides sustainable solutions



Panasonic celebrates its partnership with Inverness at the opening event for its brand-new Renewable Energy Training Hub. The new hub provides hands-on air source heat pumps for installers to experience the latest sustainable heating technology, and included in the fleet

is the Panasonic L Series heat pump range. Seeking to upskill the next generation of heating and plumbing installers in renewable-based technologies, Panasonic worked in partnership to provide a range of its Aquarea L Series air source heat pumps to UHI Inverness new training hub. The event offered information about the advanced heat pump technology and how the new hub can upskill practitioners and benefit businesses.

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Research highlights radiators ‘best option’



Research providing information on the performance of different heating systems at the Energy House 2.0 facility at the University of Salford, has provided clear evidence that new homes heated by radiators have lower running costs than those heated by a combination of underfloor heating and

radiators in the same building. This where a modern renewable heating system is the source of heat for heating and hot water in the home. Visit salford-repository.worktribe.com/output/3397480/energy-house-20-study-on-future-homes-standard-heating-systems to view the original report. Visit the **Stelrad** website for more information.

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Domus Ventilation ducting to be manufactured with recycled plastic

Domus Ventilation is proud to announce that its ventilation ducting will now be manufactured primarily from recycled plastic. The company already uses 100% recyclate on its rectangular ducting and over 95% of its fittings use 100% High Impact Polystyrene (HIPS) which comes from post-consumer recycled plastic. As part of the Genuit group, which has committed to have 62% of its ducting source material come from recycled plastics by 2025 where at all feasible, Domus Ventilation has now progressed to manufacturing its entire ducting range primarily from 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. Domus Ventilation ducting is available as flat channel, round pipe, and Radial semi-rigid duct system and comes with a range of problem-solving accessories. It has been designed to work in harmony as part of a ventilation system and has been third party tested for end-to-end system performance. As part of the Genuit group of companies, Domus Ventilation adheres to Genuit's detailed Sustainability Framework. Its aim is to lead the industry in recycling and waste by increasing recyclability to its maximum threshold and to become a zero-to-waste operation.

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BEYOND BOILERS

As energy efficiency standards tighten, Barry Fentem of Altecnic explores the alternatives to gas boilers which are available to help housing upgrades meet regulations while futureproofing homes with sustainable heating solutions.

AS ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS BECOME MORE STRINGENT, THE HOUSING INDUSTRY MUST ADAPT



As energy efficiency standards become more stringent, the housing industry must adapt by moving away from traditional gas boilers, which can no longer be considered the default for domestic heating. Housebuilders are now encouraged to explore alternative solutions that not only align with evolving regulations, but which also meet buyer expectations, and futureproof homes.

HEAT PUMPS

Heat pumps are pivotal in sustainable housing, offering renewable, energy-efficient alternatives to boilers. By extracting heat from the air, ground, or water, they provide an environmentally friendly heating solution. With efficiencies often exceeding 300%, they support carbon reduction targets and improve SAP ratings, making them attractive for regulatory approval. Both air source and ground source heat pumps suit diverse property types and climates.

HEAT PUMP COMPONENTS

To ensure that heat pumps perform optimally, key components are essential. Components like anti-freeze valves, which work to protect the heat pump systems from freezing by opening at temperatures below 3°C to allow system content to

be dripped and discharged safely. This ensures continuous operation, even in extreme winter conditions, and prevents costly damage to the system.

Dynamic balancing valves are another component that help to increase efficiency of a heat pump through distributing heat evenly throughout the heating system by regulating flow rates in each circuit. Finally, dirt and air filters help to remove air, debris, and magnetic particles from the heating system, thus maintaining optimal performance. By preventing blockages and wear, filters reduce maintenance costs and improve the system's overall reliability.

SOLAR THERMAL/HYBRID SYSTEMS

Solar thermal/hybrid systems offer an effective way to generate domestic hot water using renewable solar energy. By combining renewable energy sources like solar thermal systems with efficient backup technologies, these systems ensure year-round performance, even during less sunny periods. They are an effective way to reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources, lower carbon emissions, and futureproof homes against rising energy costs.

Solar thermal/hybrid heating systems offer a versatile and sustainable solution

for modern homes by combining renewable solar energy with efficient backup technologies. These systems significantly reduce reliance on grid energy and fossil fuels, promoting energy independence and lowering utility costs for homeowners. During sunnier months, solar collectors are designed to efficiently generate hot water, while backup technologies like heat pumps or boilers can ensure consistent performance in colder or overcast conditions.

By automatically switching between energy sources based on demand, hybrid systems optimise efficiency and minimise carbon emissions. Their adaptability and scalability make them suitable for a variety of property types and climates, providing a reliable, as well as futureproof heating solution.

SOLAR THERMAL/HYBRID SYSTEM COMPONENTS

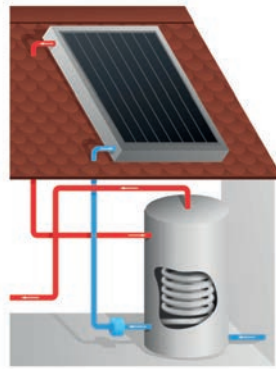
Solar thermal/hybrid heating systems rely on a combination of advanced components to ensure efficiency, reliability, and seamless integration. For example, thermal stores, also known as buffer tanks, play a crucial role in solar and hybrid heating systems by efficiently managing and distributing heat energy. These cylinders or tanks are designed

to store hot water or heat transfer fluid from multiple energy sources, such as solar collectors, heat pumps, or boilers to ensure a steady supply of hot water and heating even when the primary energy source is unavailable. Expansion vessels are another component that are designed to manage pressure fluctuations caused by the expansion and contraction of liquids within the system. These fluctuations occur naturally as water or heat transfer fluid heats up and cools down during system operation. Without an expansion vessel, the pressure changes could lead to stress on pipes, joints, and other components, potentially causing leaks or damage.

UNDERFLOOR HEATING

Underfloor heating (UFH) is increasingly popular in homes, offering even heat distribution and enhanced comfort. When paired with low-temperature heat sources like heat pumps, UFH systems maximise energy efficiency and complement the open-plan layouts commonly found in contemporary housing designs.

UFH eliminates the need for radiators, creating more space for interior design flexibility. It operates at lower temperatures than traditional radiators, reducing energy consumption while improving air quality by minimising dust



circulation within a property.

However, in retrofit projects, UFH can also be integrated with existing radiator systems, allowing homeowners to enjoy the benefits of both technologies. This combination is particularly effective for targeting specific zones with UFH while maintaining radiators in other areas, making it a practical and versatile solution for upgrading heating systems.

UNDERFLOOR HEATING COMPONENTS

Manifolds with flow meters are critical for distributing hot water to different zones within an UFH system. The inclusion of flow meters allows for precise control over water flow, ensuring each area of the home receives consistent and adequate heat. Proper flow regulation not only

enhances comfort but also minimises energy waste by preventing overheating or underheating in specific zones. Thermostatic radiator valves are also used in UFH systems. Here, TRVs are typically installed in mixed heating setups where underfloor heating is combined with radiators or where different zones require separate temperature control. They regulate the flow of hot water into the manifold or specific circuits based on the ambient temperature in each zone. This allows for precise control of heat distribution.

CONCLUSION

The shift away from traditional boilers represents more than a regulatory change – it's an opportunity for housebuilders to differentiate their developments with sustainable, future-proof heating solutions. Heat pumps, solar thermal/hybrid systems, and underfloor heating each offer distinct advantages for modern housing projects. By prioritising the use of quality components and adopting strategic implementation practices, housebuilders can lead the way in constructing homes that meet current demands and prepare for future challenges.

Barry Fentem is specification divisional manager at Altecnic

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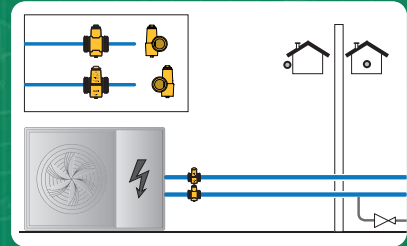
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FANS OF EFFICIENCY

Mechanical extract fans are essential for home ventilation, yet often overlooked. Paul Williams of Domus Ventilation explores how choosing the right fan for a property – and ensuring proper installation – will aid efficiency, performance, and regulatory compliance.

The humble mechanical extract fan is the unsung hero of the ventilation market. They're never the star of a product portfolio and, once they're installed, they are mostly forgotten or ignored. Yet these compact mechanical devices keep millions of our homes and facilities well ventilated year after year, removing stale air that's frequently heavy with condensation.

Humble though they may be when compared to whole house ventilation systems, choosing the right extract fan is essential if the fan is to perform to the desired standard and to meet Building Regulations Part F.

TYPES OF EXTRACT FANS

There are two types of intermittent extract fans to choose from – axial and centrifugal – both of which are suitable for use in wet rooms, including bathrooms, toilets, kitchens, utility rooms and ensuites.

The simplest to install, axial fans are designed to work with short duct runs, typically no more than 1.5 metres, which connect directly to an external outlet or grille. Most kitchens and bathrooms with an external wall are suitable for axial fans. They incorporate impellers that force air to move parallel to the shaft around which the impellers rotate. Axial fans are the lower cost option.

Where longer duct runs are necessary, often because the room to be ventilated is in the centre of the house, centrifugal fans are the preferred option. These fans force air to move at right angles to the intake of the fan using centrifugal force. They produce more pressure to overcome resistance encountered in longer duct runs – normally up to a maximum run of 6 metres. Typically, they are quieter than axial fans, which in some instances may make them a better option – especially when it comes to ensuites – despite being more expensive.

In addition to standard centrifugal and axial fans, there are also duct-mounted inline fans which come in both formats, as well as mixed flow models which move air in both axial and radial direction relative



to the shaft and will develop higher air pressure but move less air than axial fans. Mixed flow fans are most frequently used in longer duct runs up to 6 metres. Inline fans are not installed within the room itself – frequently in the ceiling void or attic – but are connected to the room via ducting mounted with a decorative grille at the end. This makes them ideal for installation in splash zones. As installation of inline fans requires longer ducting, they are mostly used in new builds and major refurbishment projects.

SELECTING THE RIGHT FAN

Extract fans may be the most basic type of domestic mechanical ventilation, but they still need full consideration when choosing which is right for a particular application.

Domestic extract fans come in two sizes: 100 mm and 150 mm. As you would expect, the larger fans are for larger bathrooms (typically greater than 9 m²), but would also be beneficial in heavy usage bathrooms and those where there is no natural ventilation.

As well as size, the fan's performance needs to be taken into account. Measured

in litres per second (l/s) or metres cubed per hour (m³/hr), the air extraction rate is vital. To meet Building Regulations, the minimum extraction rate for a bathroom extractor fan is 15 l/s. Ultimately, when choosing your fan, refer to the manufacturer's performance curve, which shows the relationship between the static pressure capabilities of a fan compared to its extraction rate, plus pressure loss in ducting, to determine the final extraction rate.

GET IN CONTROL

Extract fans are available with different control options, so this is an area to also think about. We have done research into which are the most popular control options and they are at the opposite end of the market, financially. The basic timer and pull cord model remains popular as a cost-effective option, whilst the more advanced fans with humidistat or combined humidistat & timer that react to a significant change in humidity, are prevalent in higher end properties.

PIR based controls that activate the fan on the detection of movement are also available, but are less popular.



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Both flexible ducting and incorrectly sized ducting will also lead to a much noisier fan than is necessary, and your customer won't thank you for that!

Also when it comes to ducting, it's best practice to keep ducting as short and straight as possible as ducting creates air resistance, which reduces airflow.

Lastly, it might seem obvious, but you'd be surprised how often this mistake is made: if you are drilling through an external wall, make sure that the core drill is the right size based on the fan spigot. You don't want it too small as otherwise the fan won't fit through the hole, but clearly if it's too big you'll have to do some remedial work to the wall.

Paul Williams is product manager at Domus Ventilation

AVOID COMMON MISTAKES

The biggest error we see when it comes to extract fans is not the fan directly, but the ducting. Contractors rarely credit ducting with the attention it deserves, but it can make or break any ventilation system, even something as seemingly simple as an extra fan fitted as a through-the-wall installation.

The biggest 'crime' here for installers is to make the mistake of using flexible instead of rigid ducting. Flexible duct work causes a lot more air resistance and

can be damaged or even crushed easily.

The next mistake to avoid is to use the wrong size ducting for the fan. If the fan has a 150 mm diameter spigot, use 150 mm ducting! We repeatedly see installations where the ducting used is smaller than that of the spigot, and reducers have been used to make it work. But it doesn't work – at least, not well – as this causes significant air resistance and problems with the performance of the fan. In a similar vein, ensure you have the appropriately sized tile vent.



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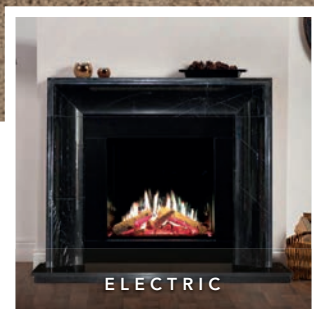
Vinyl Floors with Certified Pre-Consumer Recycled Content

Unilin Flooring announces certified pre-consumer recycled content for its dryback and engineered vinyl flooring for housing and commercial projects made under the Quick-Step and Moduleo brands. Unilin Flooring, a division of Unilin, specialises in the production of laminate, wood and vinyl floors for housing and commercial interiors. As part of the Unilin One Home sustainability strategy which aligns with SBTi (Science Based Targets initiative) near-term targets, it has undergone an analysis of pre-consumer recycled content within its vinyl floors made at its Avelgem, Belgium production facility. Conducted by third-party certification body SCS Global Services, the analysis has calculated the total content of pre-consumer recycled content used in dryback, loose lay and engineered vinyl floors made under the Quick-Step and Moduleo brands. Under the analysis, pre-consumer recycled content is defined as: recycled materials from other industrial processes, including internal cutting waste, reprocessed into raw materials. For dryback and loose lay vinyl floors, such as those in the Moduleo Roots 55, Moduleo Moods and Moduleo Intoo loose lay collections, a minimum 21% pre-consumer recycled content is used (SCS-RC-20324). At least 22% pre-consumer recycled content can be found in engineered vinyl floors from Quick-Step Alpha Vinyl and Moduleo LayRed.

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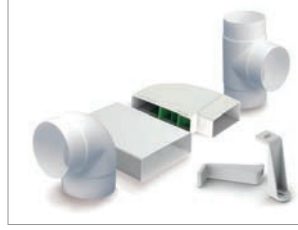
Saniplus UP facilitates garden retreat



Thanks to a Saniplus UP from **Saniflo**, a new garden retreat in the capital has been elevated to a new level of comfort and convenience. The solution, expertly chosen by former DJ and TV presenter Sam Pinkham, owner of Shack Cabins, for one of his customers, facilitated the luxury of a fully functional WC in a stylish garden office and leisure space. The garden building sits slightly below the level of the main house, presenting a unique challenge for traditional waste drainage. The quiet Saniplus 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.

www.shackcabins.com www.saniflo.co.uk

Manufactured with recycled plastic



Domus Ventilation has announced that its industry leading ventilation ducting will now be manufactured primarily from recycled plastic. The company already uses 100% recycleate on its rectangular ducting and over 95% of its fittings use 100% High Impact Polystyrene (HIPS) which comes from post-consumer recycled plastic. This latest development 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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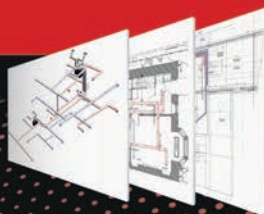
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Quality, reliability and affordability make Beko the ideal choice for landmark Manchester development



Beko | Your appliance solution partner



With a proven track record of delivering high quality products within project and budget requirements, Beko Appliance Partners were chosen by Sourced Development Group as the appliance provider for their luxurious 525-apartment Regent Plaza development in Manchester.

A COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

Sourced Development Group, a forward-thinking property developer, owns and manages residential projects from concept to completion, including the landmark Regent Plaza in Manchester's emerging creative quarter. Comprising 525 apartments across five blocks, nearly 200 units have already been completed in Blocks B and C of the development, with each property featuring a standard Beko package including a single oven, ceramic hob, cooker hood and fridge freezer. Washer/dryers and dishwashers from Beko's latest range were available as optional extras.

BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP OF TRUST

Joanne Waller, director at Sourced Development Group, credits the company's trusted kitchen installation contractor for establishing the relationship with Beko Appliance Partners. As the contract supply division of the UK's best-selling large home appliance brand, Beko Appliance Partners is a specialist appliance provider to housebuilders and developers, offering tailored solutions. Joanne explains: "Beko is our contractor's preferred supplier due to the exceptional quality, reliability and affordability of their appliances. When our team was introduced to Beko's range, we were immediately impressed and excited to incorporate their products into Regent Plaza."

Beko Appliance Partners' reputation for delivering high-quality products within budget played a key role in the decision. Joanne adds: "Their ability to consistently meet project requirements while maintaining exceptional standards was critical. Beko appliances provide both quality and long-term value, making them the ideal choice for this project."

LONG-TERM BUYER SATISFACTION

Sourced Development Group's partnership with Beko Appliance Partners was further driven by Beko's wide range of durable products available across various price points.

This flexibility allowed for additional extras where required, enhancing buyer appeal. Joanne comments: "Beko are a well-established and trusted brand with a strong global reputation. Our customers have given positive feedback on the performance, reliability and design of Beko appliances."

SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION

With environmental considerations becoming increasingly important to homeowners, Beko's commitment to innovation and sustainability aligns with the values of Sourced Development Group's customers. Joanne highlights Beko's innovative RecycledNet® ovens, which incorporate parts made from recycled fishing nets and industrial thread waste, taking steps towards reducing the product's embedded carbon footprint by minimising the use of virgin plastics.

EXCEPTIONAL END-TO-END SERVICE

Beko Appliance Partners' tailored support played a key role in strengthening the partnership. Joanne notes: "Our experience has been outstanding, particularly thanks to our dedicated Specification Manager, who has been readily available to assist with any issues or queries. The team has been highly efficient and exceptionally helpful, ensuring smooth project delivery."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The project's success and positive buyer feedback have positioned Beko as a preferred choice for Sourced Development Group's upcoming ventures.

"Beko's products have added significant value to the Regent Plaza project," Joanne concludes. "We have been extremely pleased with the quality and performance of the appliances and our overall experience with Beko Appliance Partners."

appliancepartners@beko.co.uk
appliance-partners.bekopl.com



PROJECT DETAILS:

Developer:

Sourced Development Group

Project: Regent Plaza, Manchester

Units: 525 apartments over 5 blocks

beko

Full contract range
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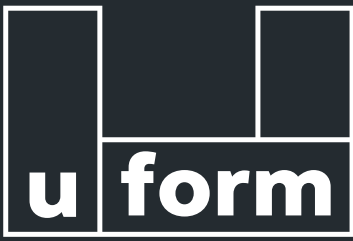
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DESIGN FOR THE FUTURE

Complying with legislation to create future-proof, carbon-neutral buildings is key. Andrew Watkins of wedi Systems explores sustainable, long-lasting solutions for bathroom and wet room design amid evolving regulations. Andrew Watkins, Technical Manager at wedi Systems (UK) Ltd, discusses how to best comply with new and emerging legislations when it comes to bathroom and wet room design.



Ensuring compliance with current and future legislation, making buildings future-proof and carbon-neutral is a key concern for architects and clients today. Innovative solutions that last the lifetime of the building and reduce the pressure on the planet are now taking centre stage. However, these are not always new technologies or products – while some solutions directly tackle specific challenges, others are more systemic, helping to create the conditions under which all other solutions can be adopted at a greater scale and pace.

Protecting the fabric of the building with reliable waterproofing has always been vital, but now, NHBC's Technical Guidance 9.2/06 'Substrates for tiling bath and shower enclosures, wet rooms and bathroom pods' reinforces this. In essence, any new home whose foundations begin on or

after 1 January 2025 in the UK, must comply with this guidance if an NHBC warranty is to be provided.

In short, magnesium oxide boards must not be used, and in wet rooms or bathrooms with power showers, there are strict requirements; only building boards that hold technical approvals acceptable by NHBC can be used. Critically, whatever the subsurface, all tanking solutions must have appropriate third party certificates such as a European Technical Assessment (ETA) and the tile, adhesive and grout should be compatible with the selected waterproofing system.

There is an obvious advantage of using directly tileable waterproof building boards as opposed to non-waterproof or only water-resistant boards that need tanking. But of course, providing that they hold the appropriate third party certificates, other waterproofing solutions,

such as liquid or membrane applied, are also acceptable. However, time is usually of the essence and so it is important to note that not only is research required to ensure compatibility with the chosen substrate and with everything else applied on top of the waterproofing layer, but due to several curing times (priming then sealing with a potential requirement for multiple coats), installation is considerably longer when compared to using waterproof building boards that are directly tileable.

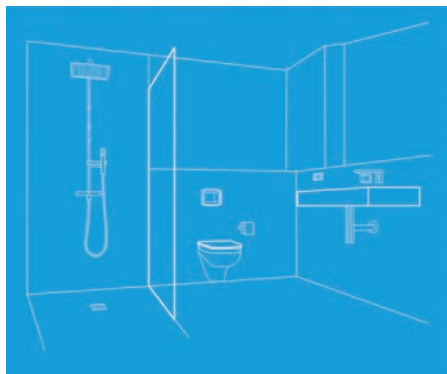
It is also important to consider that liquid and membrane type waterproofing can also restrict the surface design because, regardless of the substrate, the tanking solution determines whether large-format, heavier tiles, slabs or natural stone can be used for example. Naturally, with waterproof building boards, the weight-load capability is a given. In

some cases this could be over 100 kg/m² that gives a freedom of design without drawbacks – e.g. no need to choose between a large, floating washstand and the natural stone finish of the wall.

In 2025, compliance with the Future Homes Standard will also become mandatory; all new homes built from this year are to be future-proofed with world-leading levels of energy efficiency. Low carbon heating encouraged to reduce emissions to 70-80% less than previously accepted.

While directly tileable waterproof building boards may not directly tackle such challenges, thanks to the low U-value, they also contribute to the thermal insulation of the room from the inside, and therefore to the energy efficiency of the home – this makes them perfect to use beneath under-tile-heating (UTH) systems of all kinds. It is also worth mentioning, that some manufacturers offer these boards with factory-cut, precise grooves that not only greatly reduce the risk of the pipe runs being accidentally damaged but also ensure the even placement as close to the surface as possible – ideal to use with heat pump operated water-heating systems under the floor or behind the wall.

Directly tileable XPS boards and shower formers hold all required certificates to



comply with NHBC's new guidance; from Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) and an A+ VOC label, through BBA certificates and a European Technical Approval (ETA) marked to EAD 030437-00-0503, to CE, UKCA and UKNI marks.

It is also worth noting, that using waterproof building boards together with clever accessories and interlocking components – such as floor-level shower elements, benches, niches and ready-to-use partition walls – provides a floor-to-ceiling, systemised waterproofing solution that, when installed correctly, lasts the lifetime of the building.

Finding a manufacturer who, besides directly tileable waterproof elements, can also provide compatible grouts and adhesives that fulfil the above discussed

requirements, is not at all impossible. Imagine; everything beneath the tiles from a single source – one manufacturer means one responsibility and of course, one point of contact for planning, construction and for any issues.

So, ultimately, there are two distinctive routes to comply with NHBC's new technical guidance. One takes you on a journey of complex research during planning, then requires careful time and personnel management during the construction phase if the project is to be completed on time. While the other offers a quick and straightforward installation with significantly less personnel and installation steps being required, and can minimise the risk of failure; simply put, it creates the conditions under which other solutions can be adopted easier and faster.

The focus is on energy efficient future-proof bathrooms, the importance of which our industry is only just beginning to realise. Now more than ever, it is crucial that we implement complementary innovations together; it can provide far more significant outcomes than implementing them in isolation. Streamline the construction process and stay focused on the design.

Andrew Watkins is technical manager at wedi Systems (UK) Ltd

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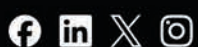
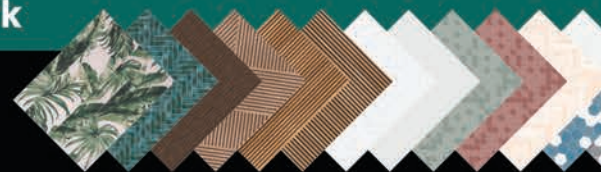
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Whether you are adding a shower or renovating a whole bathroom, Kinewall is a quick and versatile solution. With a lightweight and easy to cut and drill composition, on-site installation is a breeze.

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kinedo.co.uk/kinewall

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by Kinedo

2025 Vicaima Interactive Interior Door Selector

The Future Begins Today

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 decor 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 unclipped 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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Michelmersh Group unveils new additions to its Carlton Capital Collection

With over 130 years' experience, Carlton has fine-tuned the production of a broad spectrum of high-quality, durable bricks from its manufacturing base in Yorkshire. Carlton boasts the ability to manufacture monotone colour blends in rustic, dragwire, smooth and sand faced textures, which are widely used for contemporary brickwork detailing in commercial, retail and residential developments.

The Michelmersh Group is delighted to unveil three stunning additions to its Carlton Capital Collection: Ripley Thatch, Golden Thatch, and Golden Sandfaced. These new bricks offer an exciting palette of warm, earthy tones, perfect for architects and housebuilders looking to create striking facades with plenty of depth and memorable character. Each brick within this collection has been crafted to provide both

aesthetic charm and outstanding technical performance, ensuring they meet the highest industry standards while maintaining the timeless appeal associated with Carlton bricks.

RIPLEY THATCH

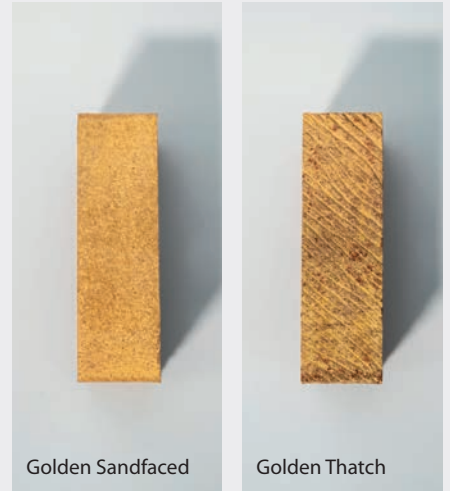
Measuring 215mm x 102.5mm x 65mm, Ripley Thatch is a red multi-brick with dark buff, brown, and purple hues. Its rustic textured thatch finish enhances its traditional aesthetic, making it ideal for projects seeking a blend of heritage and contemporary style. This extruded wirecut brick boasts T2, R1, F2, S2 classifications and a compressive strength of 40N/mm².

GOLDEN THATCH

Also 215mm x 102.5mm x 65mm, Golden Thatch is a buff-brown extruded wirecut brick with a rustic thatch texture, balancing heritage and innovation. It seamlessly integrates into restoration projects and contemporary builds, offering exceptional durability and technical specifications identical to Ripley Thatch.

GOLDEN SANDFACED

For a smoother aesthetic, Golden Sandfaced features a sandfaced texture while retaining the rich buff-brown tones of its counterpart. With the same dimensions, durability, and strength as the others, it is a versatile choice for restoration and new-build projects.



Golden Sandfaced

Golden Thatch

With these additions, Carlton continues its legacy of crafting high-quality bricks that blend durability, character, and versatility. Whether used individually or blended together, Ripley Thatch, Golden Thatch, and Golden Sandfaced offer a multitude of creative possibilities for architects and developers seeking to make a lasting impression.

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Nationwide trade service introduced



Paul Rowles Kitchens is pleased to announce that they will now be rolling out the same tailored service normally reserved for retail customers to Trade customers nationwide.

This comes following several years of successful kitchen and white goods supply to housebuilders and developers such as FW Properties, Pentaco Construction and Abode Construction across the Midlands and East Anglia.

The natural route of progression for the company was to branch out further to the Trade sector with its uncompromising attitude to design and quality.

01327 300 506 www.paulrowles.co.uk

Cavity wall weakness detail can be eliminated



The recent storms have highlighted and reported a weakness in a commonplace cavity wall construction detail. Subsequently, one of the longest-established cavity tray companies – Cavity Trays Ltd – has reported a surge in demand for one of its products, that eliminates the problematic construction detail. The Type CD Cavity Dropcloak when used to protect cavity insulation and/or spandrel integration in gable

walls, can eliminate the structural separation that weakens the gable masonry triangle. The moulded Type CD protects as required, but does so whilst maintaining structural continuity. Watch the video to see why its so important:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uny6Doq1-UI www.cavitytrays.co.uk

Reverse water consumption increases a high impact, low-cost solution

With an increasing population and changes in lifestyle the UK water deficit is anticipated to be 4017 mega litres per day. To reduce this predicted shortage, OFWAT have tasked water companies to reduce consumption by an average of 8 litres per person per day.

THE "OTHER" SMART SOLUTION TO MANAGING WATER RESOURCES:

Whilst 'smart' water meters provide valuable insights into water demand and help to manage consumer expectations (and bills) there is another smart solution out there with a proven track record of reducing water consumption by up to 12%.

Installed alongside any smart (or traditional) water meter, Groundbreaker's LoFlo® provides whole site flow restriction. A simple, yet very effective solution to managing water supplies to new or existing dwellings without any reduction of water pressures or effect on central heating systems.

OVERSUPPLY OF WATER IS WASTED WATER!

Water companies are regulated to provide a minimum level of water supply, but in many areas, due to network structure and gravity fed systems, supply is much greater. In high pressure areas households could receive up

to three times this minimum levels. To date, flow restriction devices have been used at each outlet. However, industry reports show that many of these devices are not retained by occupiers in the long term.

The alternative is whole site flow reduction. Groundbreaker's LoFlo® regulates the level of flow entering customer premises – regardless of network pressure, meaning a reduction in the level of water used by customers when 'variable use' appliances are used.

As the flow of water into the premises is limited, then the amount used by the customer is also limited – without a degradation of service. More importantly, not requiring any behavioural change on the part of the customer, so leading to 'natural' reduction in per capita consumption.

As these products are fitted to the main water supply, not each individual outlet, they remove any risk of consumer interference. Ensuring that minimum standards of water supply are maintained as specified within the Water Industry Act and Water Fittings Regulations.

PROVEN TECHNOLOGY – PROTECTING THE NETWORK

LoFlo® is a derivative of Groundbreaker's proven and trusted NRv2 product, designed to manage and regulate the flow of water to a property by



means of a "smart" non-return valve, therefore offering whole site protection against back-flow and contamination of water mains from internal sources.

Fully approved by accredited test house KIWA for use with potable water, and certified to withstand static water pressures of over 25 bar.

ZERO COST INSTALLATION - THE LOW-COST SOLUTION

When installed with a new meter, whether a new supply or a meter exchange, LoFlo® effectively has a zero installation cost. The unit is simply installed between the manifold and the meter, adding less than a couple of minutes to a meter installation times.

Making this unique product by far the most efficient and cost-effective method of reducing per capita consumption and finding "water neutrality".

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IMPACT NOW



BRINGING OPEN SPACES TO LIFE

In partnership with housebuilders across England and Wales, Meadfleet Open Space Management are protecting the planet and creating a legacy of sustainable developments across the country.

Our award-winning Bee Friendly campaign in partnership with Buglife demonstrates our commitment to improving open spaces for biodiversity.

With the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain, our expertise in habitat management, ecological improvements, and adaptive management style ensure that together we create a brighter, more biodiverse future.



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All photos taken on Meadfleet managed open spaces.


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