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FROM THE EDITOR

Housebuilding, and retrofit, remain at the very centre of the political debate, as seen at the recent party conferences. The Government unveiled its plans for 12 new towns, although the new Housing Secretary Steve Reed, despite sporting a Trump-style 'Build Baby Build' hat, had to restrain the excitement to an announcement of only three actual sites. These are Tempsford, in Bedfordshire, Crews Hill near Enfield, and South Bank in Leeds, Kier Starmer confirming that they would form part of the (otherwise increasingly impossible-seeming) 1.5 million homes by 2030.

But will architects be involved in these projects? I recently attended a UK Construction Week seminar ostensibly around fixing the industry's skills shortages, but which quickly evolved into an interrogation of the Government's wider construction strategies. The always-trenchant Rico Wojtulewicz, head of policy at the National Federation of Builders, took direct aim at the previous Government's 'beauty' focus for housebuilding, saying he was glad to see the back of it in Labour's proposals, because of architects being unlikely to be involved.

Wojtulewicz asserted that NFB members use architects, because they want to achieve rigorously-designed homes with modern performance standards. However, recent RIBA figures showed that 94% of new homes in the UK are designed and built without architects; only 90,000 of the hoped-for 1.5 million.

He expressed his happiness on the Government ditching the Tories' Building Beautiful initiative for housebuilding. This wasn't because of the inherent subjectivity of determining what that 'beauty' looks like, but because it freezes out architects, not requiring them to be part of creating local design codes. Despite his role representing contractors, Wojtulewicz candidly said that leaving 'beauty' to be regulated and managed by housebuilders would not be likely to provide good design.

But what form of requirement could be introduced to help ensure that architects can be reintroduced at the heart of housing schemes? I would suggest that a set of design codes for what constitutes 'quality' in housebuilding could potentially be arrived at, perhaps using the Code for Sustainable Homes as a template. The Code seems to be the one universally-missed (although still secretly still used) part of design regulation, and led to many good quality schemes across the UK with people now enjoying the fruits of lower bills and greater comfort.

These schemes probably cost significantly more than bog-standard volume housing, so a cost calibration within any guidance, setting out the impacts of a more in-depth, rigorous design approach, could help architects manage QS' expectations. They're the ultimate arbiters of 'what good looks like' in housebuilding.

James Parker, Editor

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ON THE COVER...
Bennets Associates' award-winning creative adaptation at the Edinburgh Futures Institute.

Cover image © Hufton+Crow
For the full report on this project, go to page 20

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An evolution in pitched tile roofing

Dry fix has been around for over 50 years, but it was changes to British Standards and manufacturing innovation that kick-started an evolution in pitched roofing in the United Kingdom.

It is no exaggeration to say there has been a significant evolution in pitched roofing over the past few decades, largely due to advances in British roofing Standards, particularly BS 5534: the British Standard Code of practice for slating and tiling for pitched roofs and vertical cladding.

Dry fix systems for roof junctions such as ridge and verge have been around since the 1970's, but it was the 2014 revision to BS 5534 that really drove the changes needed to encourage the use of dry fix systems. The other main driver has been the many innovations in dry fix systems being continually developed by manufacturers such as Manthorpe Building Products.

In 2014, BS 5534 was revised to include new requirements for the mechanical fixing of roof tiles and associated components such as ridge and hip tiles, verge and eaves tiles. No longer can components solely rely on mortar for their security. Mortar can still be used, but a mechanical fix, or connection, to the roof structure is now also required. In practice, this means that dry fix systems, which secure components using mechanical fasteners such as nails, screws, clamps and interlocking units, are a much better option.

Until the introduction in 2018 of a new British Standard, BS 8612: Specification for dry fixed ridge, hip, and verge systems for tiling and slating, dry fix systems were generally unregulated. BS 8612 provides material specifications and durability criteria for dry fix components, as well as performance criteria for rain resistance and mechanical resistance against wind loads. For materials already covered by an existing Standard, BS 8612 simply refers to the relevant Standard.

A dry fix system has several major functions; it must remain durable for its expected lifespan, it must withstand predicted wind loads, calculated in accordance with BS 5534, to prevent the system and associated ridge and hip tiles from being dislodged, and it must resist the ingress of driving rain and snow. An added benefit of a dry ridge system is that it can provide high-level roof space ventilation in accordance with BS 5250 where required.

A great advantage of dry fix systems is they are designed to be maintenance-free. No matter how well a contractor installs a mortar bedded verge, ridge or hip, eventually, the elements and natural building settlement will damage the mortar, making it ineffective. In contrast, dry fix systems can cope with settlement by allowing a degree of movement in the surrounding materials. Dry fix systems provide a neat, consistent finish, often with concealed fixings, which maintains the visual appeal of the roofline over time.

Careful design and testing of dry fix systems means that their mechanical resistance to wind loads is proven. Therefore, systems can be designed to withstand the highest wind loads a roof is ever likely to encounter, based on BS 5534 once in 50-year probability calculations.

Great examples of good quality dry fix systems that fully comply with BS 8612 include the Manthorpe Roll-Out Dry Fix Ridge and Ultra Ridge systems. These mechanically secure the ridges to the roof structure and provide 5,000 mm² per metre of roof space ventilation at high level. A similar, matching system is also available for use at roof hips. The Manthorpe range of dry verge systems are a neat solution at roof verges, eliminating the need for mortar bedding. The verge units are weatherproof

and provide a secure fixing for each verge tile, meaning that they can be regarded as one of the two required tile fixings at the verge. Ridge end caps are available which allows the dry verge systems to seamlessly integrate with the dry ridge. If there is any resistance to the use of dry fix systems, it is generally based on perceived cost. Though the initial cost of dry fix components may be higher than traditional mortar, the reduced installation time and long-term savings in maintenance and repairs more than outweigh the upfront investment. Call backs alone can cost roofers thousands in lost profits and were common practice in housebuilding, where the settlement of a new building quickly damaged the solid, inflexible mortar joints at ridges, hips and verge details. Because no mortar is needed, installation can proceed in damp or cold conditions that would make traditional methods impractical. This increases efficiency and reduces project timelines. Dry fix pitched roofing continues to evolve, with manufacturers innovating to improve aesthetics, ease of installation, and environmental sustainability. Recycled materials and improved ventilation technology are increasingly common features. As climate change brings more extreme weather events, reliable and resilient roofing systems will become ever more essential. In summary, dry fix pitched roofing systems offer a modern, durable, and regulation-compliant solution for roof verges, ridges, hips, valleys, and abutments. Their ease of installation, minimal maintenance, and strong weather resistance make them a smart investment for both new and existing buildings. As regulations and technology advance, the adoption of dry fix methods has become the new standard in pitched roofing across the construction industry.

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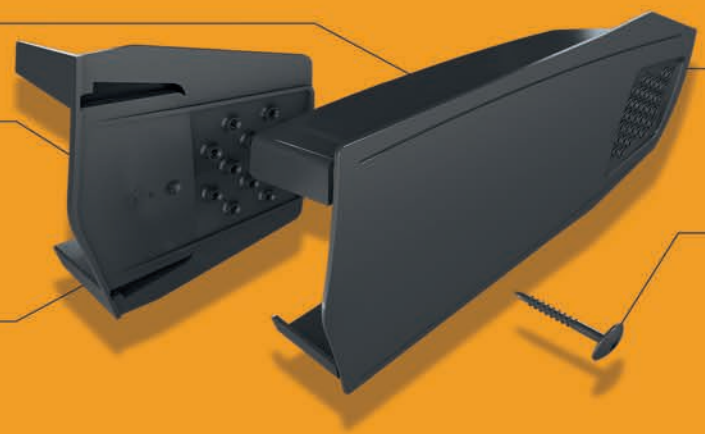

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COLOUR OF THE YEAR

Dulux sings blues' praises with relaxed Colour of the Year 'family'

For the first time, Dulux Trade has selected a 'family' of three colours in the blue spectrum as its Colour of the Year 2026, to give specifiers a variety of options "from meditative to airy and uplifting."

The company believes that the colour family, which they are calling 'Rhythm of Blues' offers specifiers "a broader colour choice and the flexibility to create multiple expressions of energy, mood and pace in interiors and exteriors across every sector." Dulux Trade said it wanted to offer designers colour options for schemes which offered a "quieter" set of colours, in order to counteract current "always-on lifestyles."

The company's forecasters said that people were suffering from being constantly "connected," meaning "there's little time to stop, reflect and refocus." The need to provide 'slow' spaces was therefore the leading theme of three driving the new colours (the others being 'flow' and 'free'). They were all put forward under an overarching tagline of "Your space, your pace," referring to the ability of the new colours to support 'flexible' spaces tailored to each individual, with their own flow and feel. The three key colours comprising the new family present a darker option, a vibrant cobalt, and a much softer wall tone.

Dawn Scott, senior colour designer at Dulux Trade, said designers and paint firms "needed to offer clients designs to help them switch off, and refocus." The second theme ('flow') referred to reconnecting with nature, and rediscovering the "rhythm of life they've been missing, because they're inside." Dulux Trade added that "private and public spaces must work harder than ever to help people feel comfortable and connected."

The third theme ('free') was around the benefits of being connected globally to a wide and diverse range of people, bringing a greater fluidity, meaning "we can be whoever we like, however we like," said Dawn Scott. She added that this sense of "liberation" was feeding into "more creative, but also more carefree and fun designs."

In-person development

Dulux Trade once again underwent its painstaking and international face-to-face Trend Forecasting process in order to identify the drivers that will be influencing the design of living and working spaces over the coming years, to finally produce the Colour of the Year. Completed well in advance, but then reviewed, this was a "collaborative brainstorm with a team of international forecasters," which were turned into three palettes from each of the three colours by AkzoNobel's Global Aesthetic Center.

Dawn Scott said that what marks out this process as unique among firms promoting a 'colour of the year' is that it is "in person, across multiple disciplines, and not desk research." She said that given the firm's driver to support a wide range of international customers, they "give it the same level of credibility every year, to ensure it really comes from a global perspective."

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AWARDS

RIBA Stirling Prize 2025 shortlist announced

The six projects shortlisted for the UK's highest accolade in architecture have been announced. The list is as follows:

Appleby Blue Almshouse by Witherford Watson Mann Architects

Replacing an abandoned care home, Appleby Blue "radically reimagines the traditional almshouse to foster community and reduce isolation among residents," said RIBA. The layout "flips a centuries-old typology, placing communal spaces at its heart to encourage interaction, while bay windows at street level connect residents to the outside world." The timber-clad interior, discreet accessibility features and terracotta paved hallways bursting with benches and planters, "aim to deinstitutionalise the typical model of older people's housing." The result is a "new standard for inclusive social housing in later life."

Elizabeth Tower by Purcell

Elizabeth Tower by Purcell

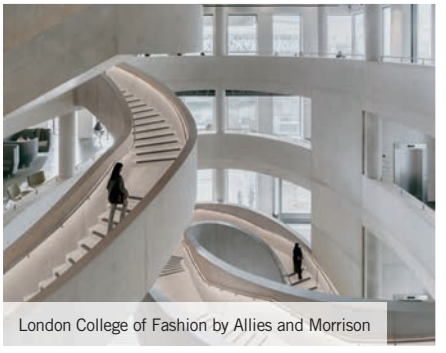
Housing the symbolic 'Big Ben' bell, the most comprehensive restoration of Elizabeth Tower in 160 years is hailed as a "conservation masterpiece" by RIBA. Traditional materials and bespoke craftspeople were sourced from across the UK to "honour the Tower's original design, rectifying previous restoration missteps," as well as repairing newly uncovered damage from the Second World War. RIBA added: "Careful details, such as reinstating the Victorian colour scheme on the clock faces and reintroducing the St George's Cross, return the tower to its former glory." Subtle improvements to accessibility, including a new visitor lift, have also opened up the monument to a broader audience for the first time.

Hastings House by Hugh Strange Architects

Instead of demolishing an ageing hillside home, Hastings House "reuses and celebrates the existing structure and materials to create a house of contrasts," said RIBA. A restrained, updated Victorian front gives way to a modern, timber framed rear, while a rough concrete courtyard "celebrates its industrial character." A series of extensions step up the hillside, blending inside and outside to "cleverly create light filled, open spaces." The result "goes beyond a house extension, transforming the entire home and producing a lesson in restrained, inventive reuse."

London College of Fashion by Allies and Morrison

Located in the cultural heart of Queen Elizabeth Park in Stratford, the new home for the London College of Fashion brings together its 6,000 staff and students for the first time. A constrained site prompted a vertical campus rising to 17 storeys, with dramatic staircases unfurling through a shared "heart space" to encourage collaboration. A restrained palette of materials allows the building to act as a canvas for its occupants, while long sightlines and flexible workspaces promote adaptability. Subtle nods to the area's industrial history create the feeling of a thriving "factory for fashion."



London College of Fashion by Allies and Morrison

The Discovery Centre (DISC) by Herzog and de Meuron / BDP

Niwa House by Takero Shimazaki Architects

Meaning "Garden Home" in Japanese, Niwa House is a "pavilion-like oasis" built on a previously derelict South London plot. "Sprawling across and downwards to navigate planning constraints, this 'horizontal home' is a masterclass in craftsmanship and restraint." Subtle interventions, such as a flowing open plan layout and integrated accessibility features, create a seamless experience for its wheelchair user residents while futureproofing it for later life, demonstrating how inclusive design can be functional yet elegant. A hybrid timber and stone structure, paired with floor to ceiling windows, bathes each room in light, while a courtyard garden rising through both floors underlines the "serene sense of escapism."

The Discovery Centre (DISC) by Herzog and de Meuron / BDP

AstraZeneca's Discovery Centre "radically redefines the research facility, blending cutting edge laboratories with welcoming public spaces." The "surprisingly low-rise, sawtooth roofed building adopts a curved triangular plan, forming an inviting interface for Cambridge's Biomedical Cluster." At its heart, a publicly accessible courtyard echoes the city's iconic college quadrangles, one of the building's many tributes to Cambridge's heritage. Inside, 16 glass lined laboratories are connected by clever interconnecting corridors that balance stringent security with transparency, putting science on display. Flexible lab stations and open plan layouts "foster innovation in a bold new prototype for research facilities," said RIBA.

The winner of the RIBA Stirling Prize 2025 will be announced live at London's Roundhouse on 16 October 2025, sponsored by Autodesk.

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SPORTS & LEISURE

Populous 'reimagines' Everton's home

Everton Football Club's Hill Dickinson Stadium, located on the banks of the River Mersey in north Liverpool, became the Premier League club's new home for the 2025/26 Premier League season.

The 52,769-seater stadium – a "new city centre destination both on matchdays and non-matchdays" will deliver top flight football and host major events and concerts for the benefit of the city region.

Everton's marketing team have worked closely with global sports and entertainment design specialist Populous to develop a distinctive visual narrative throughout, "helping to ensure the brick and steel of the stadium feels like a home for all Evertonians," said the project team.

To achieve this, the club engaged Populous' EMEA Brand Activation team to undertake an intensive heritage study of the Club itself and the local area, as well as player stories and feedback following surveys with Everton fans, to create a "unified visual language and identity." This design strategy reinforces a conceptual narrative of 'The New Authentic,' with bespoke branding prominent throughout exterior, interior and movement spaces across the stadium, including player, GA fan and premium areas.

Reflecting elements of Everton's history, the dock heritage of the city and the stadium's unique riverside location, each stand has been given a "unique personality through applied brand imagery, materiality, and experiential cues. The result sees fan stories, chants and journeys woven in with the club's DNA across the stadium."

A further element is the branding and creation of a visual narrative throughout the player areas, with their journey from arrival to pitch designed as an emotional arc, going from "calm focus to energised empowerment."

The Populous Brand Activation team also helped the Club create an identity and a clear narrative for 'The Arch', a private, invitation only space within Everton's portfolio of 'Bars, Restaurants and Experiences'.

Making the space more relatable for the wide variety of guests that would pass through the lounge across the season allowed the Populous Brand Activation Team and the Club's Marketing team to explore a clear visual identity in a different way that respected the Club's heritage and former home. The result, The Arch, was inspired by the iconic criss-cross steel hallmark that features across Bullens Road, Gwladys Street and the former Main Stands at Goodison Park, all by celebrated stadium engineer and designer, Archibald Leitch.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

RIBA forecasts extent of future AI use in architecture

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has published a new piece of research which predicts the effect that artificial intelligence (AI) will have on architects and their profession in a decade from now.

It comes as a survey for its Future Business of Architecture programme showed that 88% of architects believe that AI use will become "increasingly important for their organisation's business" by 2035, closely followed by business development, sustainability consultancy and client asset management.

Conversely, the quantitative data indicates that architects foresee traditional business tools, such as marketing and project management will be less important than AI to achieving business success during the coming decade.

Architects anticipate that AI will have a significant impact on both design and construction, with 50% of architects surveyed predicting that technology will have a 'transformational effect' on how the profession works at concept design stage and 51% on manufacturing and construction. Only 10% of architects thought that the briefing, concept design and spatial coordination stages of projects would not be affected by AI, digitalisation and automation.

The research paper, 'Artificial Intelligence: The unreliable outlier driving the future of architecture,' maps out "three likely future scenarios for architecture in the wake of advances in AI – good, bad, and largely unchanged." and explores how other innovations are transforming architects' work by causing technological disruption."

It is the third evidence-led white paper to emerge from the Future Business of Architecture.

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MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

SPPARC proposals for Camden Film Quarter 'challenge status quo'

London architecture studio SPPARC, in partnership with real estate investment firm Yoo Capital, has unveiled its emerging proposals for Camden Film Quarter, a major mixed-use district set to feature the inner city's first purpose built film studio campus.

Responding to "booming demand" from the global screen industry for production space in the heart of London, the 23-acre neighbourhood in Kentish Town will house a cluster of world-class studios and sound stages. These will be supported by post-production suites, editing facilities, and an innovative collaboration space for creative companies, "seeking to reduce production times while putting Camden on the map as a global centre for film and the creative industries," said SPPARC.

"Challenging the status quo of film studios as industrial sheds in remote locations, Camden Film Quarter is designed as a walkable, mixed-use neighbourhood for major media productions, the creative industries, local communities, and visitors alike." Cutting-edge, combinable sound insulated stages that are designed to stack over each other will allow the film studio campus to sit adjacent to over 1,000 new homes of mixed tenure – including 50% affordable homes on the Yoo Capital-controlled land – as well as amenities such as galleries, shops, restaurants and bars, leisure and community spaces, and a series of connected new public open spaces with new tree planting. It will create a pedestrian high-line route around the proposed buildings, stitching the currently unconnected site into the surrounding neighbourhood.

To open doors into the industry for young people, including local talent, facilities for two film and television schools will sit within an onsite education hub facing a new park.

Camden Film Quarter will open up a previously underutilised, poorly accessible site north of Regis Road, introducing a network of public pedestrian and cycling routes as well as parks and green spaces. The masterplan vision includes a brand new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the railway line that will place Kentish Town within a five minutes' walk of Hampstead Heath for the first time.

SPPARC said: "Throughout the evolution of the masterplan design, buildings have been carefully designed to acknowledge the local area's rich diversity of architecture, referencing its historic industries and former railway goodsyard where the site is located.

"Unusually for film studios, the scheme's design is inspired by civic architecture. It features a distinctive masonry facade with origami-style outdents that react in reverse to the indent sound cushioning on the interiors of six upper-level sound stages, key to the productions that will take place within."

Aiming to "supercharge" its creative economy and create thousands of jobs, the proposals "build on Camden's long history as an international cultural powerhouse," the architects said. "Camden is already one of London's most popular filming destinations, with 900 film related companies in the area. The borough is connected by three major rail termini and seven London Underground lines, putting it within the reach of millions."

"Unlike its contemporaries, Camden Film Quarter seeks to actively welcome the local community and visitors. It does so through a wide range of public facing spaces including the cafes and restaurants that front the high line and a richly-planted roof garden above glazed lanterns that support the functions of the film industry below."

The Camden Film Quarter masterplan vision was adopted by Camden Council as part of the Regis Road Area Guidance in March 2025. A planning application is expected later this year.

SPPARC and Yoo Capital are collaborators on the ongoing £1.3bn regeneration of the Olympia exhibition centre, as well as the revival of the West End's Saville Theatre, which secured planning approval in April 2025.

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VIEW POINT

Rabia Charef of Lancaster University, and sociologist and author Frantz Gault, invite designers to rethink how we build – and shift from a human-centred mindset to one where nature is a partner, not just a resource.

What if architects and engineers didn't design against nature, but for it? Imagine if the common constraints that architects face, like the topography of a site's terrain, trees, nonhuman life and even the wetlands, rocky slopes, or nesting birds, were seen not as obstacles to be removed, but as collaborators in a design.

Although construction is essential to our well being, it is also a major disruptor of ecosystems. Did you know that the construction sector is responsible for around 37% of global CO_2 emissions? It also consumes more than half of all the world's raw materials, including about 75% of the sand extracted. This voracious appetite inevitably leads to habitat loss and pollution, and contributes to the sixth mass extinction our planet is enduring. The question now is how to continue providing homes and cities without ruining the natural systems that support us, especially in the context of a growing population housing demand.

For too long, the construction sector has silenced nature, treating it as an unlimited 'bank of commodities,' or a nuisance to be engineered out. But that worldview is beginning to change, thanks to a growing body of anthropological studies reasserting the value of alternative philosophies of nature.

Anthropologist Tim Ingold, for instance, describes constructing as a conversation with materials and the environment, not a one sided act of domination. He urges designers and makers to follow the natural flows, rhythms, and capacities of the environment they are working in. Ingold invites builders and architects to embrace making not as imposing form on inert matter, but as an act of co-creation, much like weaving strands in a rope, where form arises from active interplay.

More recently, Frantz Gault has suggested going further. Through his concept of natura laborata ("nature at work"), he considers nature as a working partner that should be cared for and listened to, with whom we should negotiate in order to provide good working conditions to ecosystems. In the construction sector context, this would mean considering nature as an active participant in projects, effectively giving ecosystems a seat at the decision-making table, alongside other stakeholders such as architects, engineers, planners, builders, customers and users.

It's not just about eco-friendly aesthetics. It's a systemic shift from human-centred to multi-species design. And it has already begun. Business leaders are experimenting with nature-inclusive governance: the beauty firm Faith in Nature has recently appointed 'Nature' to its board of directors. Similarly, the owners of software firm Norsys gave their shares to an NGO that represents nature, including veto rights on the board of directors. In France, new trade unions are even created to defend nature's rights in the corporate world.

Business leaders are experimenting with nature-inclusive governance

What if the construction sector followed suit? Gault's 'natura laborata' challenges us to understand that nature is already at work and deserves a seat at the decision making table, but he also asks us: which status should we thus give to nature? In the construction sector, should we consider nature as a worker, as a supplier, as a contractor or as a customer? A glimpse into a few visionary projects around the world could help answer this question.

In Lyon, France, an office building L'Orangerie is supported by 14 unreinforced rammed earth arches, using the soil beneath our feet as a construction material. Almost all of the project's materials come from local sources (earth from a nearby excavation site, stone from a local quarry, timber from regional forests), resulting in a very low-carbon structure. Its thick pisé rammed earth walls naturally regulate indoor temperature and humidity, freely contributing to modern comfort

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through ancient means. L'Orangerie (pictured above) demonstrates that an office building can be designed considering local ecosystems as suppliers, whom we care for in return.

On a very different frontier, in New Mexico, Earthship Biotecture has popularised autonomous homes built from society's waste. Earthships are self-sufficient houses made of recycled earth-filled tyres, bottles and cans. They generate their own energy, collect rainwater, reuse wastewater, and maintain comfortable indoor temperatures using sunlight instead of fuel. By working with sun, wind and soil, Earthship communities show that nature can be a partner we are working with. It also reminds us of the value of anthropology, as these communities are deeply influenced by the local Navajo culture, which treats nature as a respected living being.

In Milan, the Bosco Verticale ("Vertical Forest") integrates hundreds of trees and some 20,000 plants into two residential towers. This 'vertical forest' absorbs CO_2 and fine dust, produces oxygen, reduces noise and refreshes the ambient air. With more than 90 plant species on its facades, it has attracted birds and insects back to the city centre. Bosco Verticale shows that even high-density housing can nurture ecosystems. Although this example is not perfect, some argue that the CO_2 absorbed by its trees may be outweighed by the emissions from constructing a structure strong enough to support them. The Bosco Verticale could be considered as an example where nature is seen as a client, where the construction project delivers services to ecosystems.

These examples show that working with nature – not against it – is not a utopia: it is a concrete reality and already underway, as Gault also shows us in his book La nature au travail. Each project reduces the environmental footprint of construction while adding new value: cleaner air, energy savings, carbon storage and urban biodiversity. Furthermore, they represent a tangible step toward rethinking our relationship with nature in construction. Yet they remain rare exceptions.

There are some clear recommendations if the construction sector is to operate a systemic shift from human-centred to multi-species design.

First, adopt nature as a partner, not a mere commodity. Select materials for their ability to 'work with' local climates, humidity, and ecosystems, rather than forcing them into unsuitable conditions through high-energy processing. Favour reversible and adaptive construction methods that allow buildings to evolve alongside the changing needs of their ecosystems, designing for repair, disassembly, and reuse wherever possible.

Nature is already repairing and preserving the planet; it's time for the industry to join that effort and ensure that the homes and cities it builds support life, and don't degrade it

Treat site features such as mature trees, natural watercourses, and microclimates as structural assets, not obstacles; they can guide building placement, orientation, and material choice.

Second, establish project governance models where 'nature' is formally represented by appointing an independent ecological board with decision making power alongside architects, engineers, and developers. Involve ecologists, soil scientists, and local communities at the earliest design stages, ensuring that biodiversity and natural flows shape the project brief as much as engineering and budget constraints. Partner with young designers (like the French Zoepolis collective, who create design processes in order to take nonhuman life interests into account.)

Imagine if every project team included an ecologist to speak on behalf of local soils, waters and wildlife. Imagine if nature were treated as a client to satisfy, as a decisive partner for the success of every project, and not as an obstacle to overcome. This may seem ambitious, but the construction industry must now choose: continue with business as usual, eroding the natural systems we rely on, or lead the shift toward regenerative design. By bringing it to the decision making table for every project, we can design buildings that respect ecosystems and generations to come. As philosopher Jostein Gaarder has argued, the principle of reciprocity should apply not only to space but also to time: we should do to the next generation what we would wish them to do for us. Nature is already at work, repairing and preserving the planet. It is time for the construction industry to join that effort and ensure that the homes and cities we build support life, not degrade it.

Rabia Charef is researcher, architect, and expert in circular economy at Lancaster University, and Frantz Gault is sociologist and author of 'La Nature au travail'

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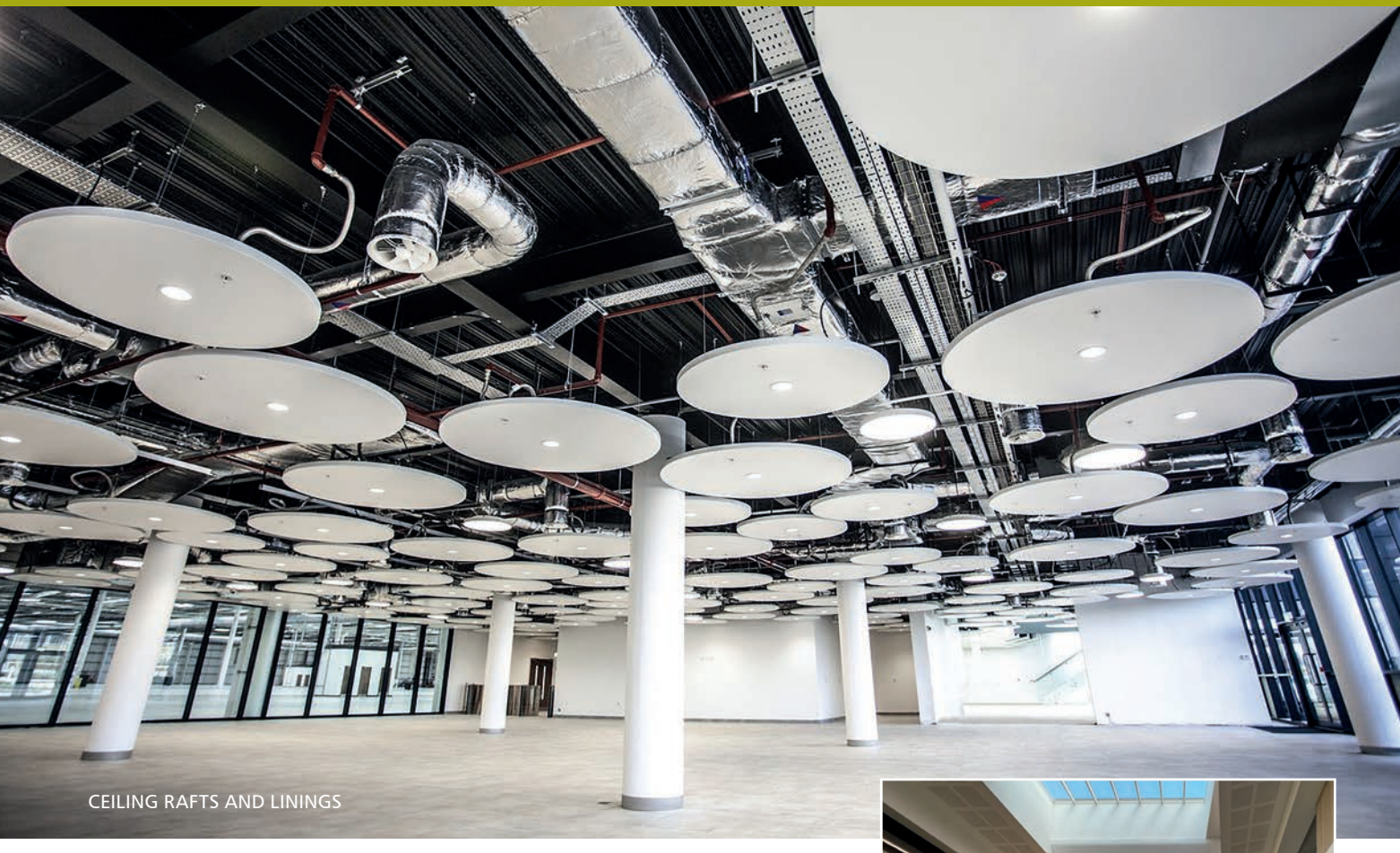

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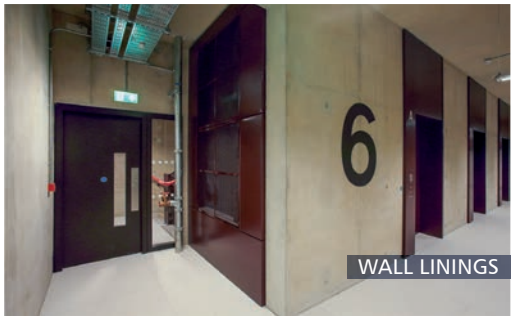

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Rob Bearyman

PRACTICE PROFILE

Bennetts Associates

Kim Neville speaks with Rob Bearyman of Bennetts Associates about how the now employee-owned practice has over its three decades combined resilience, collaboration and pioneering sustainable design.

Bennetts Associates has built its reputation over more than three decades on conviction, resilience and a pioneering approach to sustainable design. Founded in 1987 by Rab and Denise Bennetts, the practice has navigated shifting architectural trends and periods of financial turbulence. Director Rob Bearyman reflects that "conviction and resilience were essential."

Rather than conforming to the postmodernist wave of the late 20th century, the practice championed an early commitment to sustainable, "resource conscious" architecture delivering long-term value through robust, elegant design. "The ability to weather difficult conditions established a culture of resilience and rigour that continues to define the practice today," says Bearyman.

Practice organisation & set up

From the outset, the firm sought to do things differently: designing buildings that were adaptable, functional and rooted in long-term purpose. Collaboration was embedded in its culture, ensuring architecture, structure and services worked seamlessly together.

Edinburgh Futures Institute © Keith Hunter

In 2016, the practice took a significant step by transitioning to employee ownership. This shift was decided upon to deepen collaboration across the studio, and foster motivation and a stronger sense of collective responsibility. As Bearyman explains, "Directors provide direction, but leadership is encouraged at all levels and remains collaborative and open." He goes on to note that the firm's culture is "not static" but continuously evolving to meet the changing needs of the business, an approach that nurtures how teams engage with and deliver projects.

Bearyman characterises the firm's growth as "steady and deliberate." From its beginnings in a single London office, Bennetts Associates has expanded into a 70-strong practice with studios in London, Edinburgh and Manchester. Each location is firmly rooted in its local context, yet closely connected to the collective culture and knowledge of the wider practice. The company has a hybrid working model, which has enabled flexibility to become a permanent part of its operational model.

The practice has developed expertise across a wide range of project types, including offices, cultural venues, life sciences, industrial and logistics facilities, higher education and masterplanning. As Bearyman explains, "Each sector strengthens the others: insights from designing theatres inform the design of workplaces, while innovations developed for universities enhance performance in laboratories and other specialist facilities."

Digital tools connect teams seamlessly across three studios, broadening collaboration and knowledge sharing. Bearyman states that in-person design reviews, workshops and site visits remain essential for creative energy and culture. The balance lies in combining digital efficiency with the dynamism of studio interaction. Practice wide gatherings and study trips ensure cohesion across locations, while hybrid structures support inclusivity and wellbeing.

Practice ethos, leadership & mentoring

The practice sees today's built environment being reshaped by both environmental and socio-economic pressures. Bearyman says the firm's commitment to 'more with less' underpins its approach to

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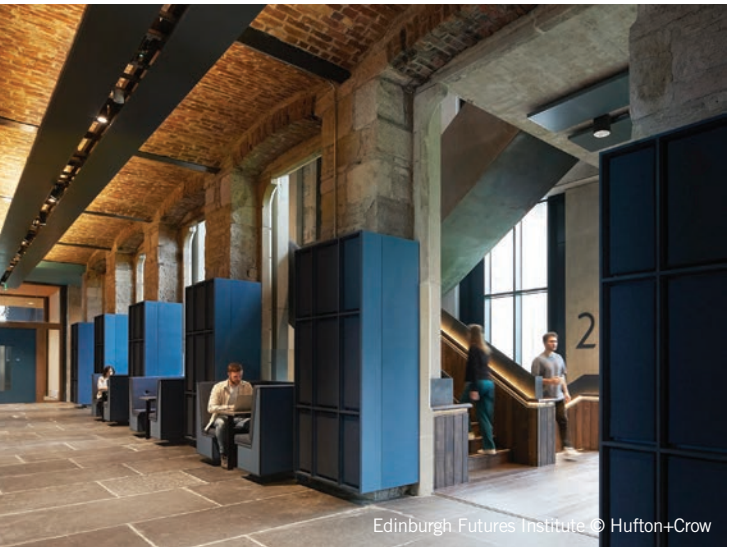


Edinburgh Futures Institute © Hufton+Crow

design and the measure of value it brings. He continues, "What began as a stand against superficiality in the late 1980s has evolved into a practice shaped by the climate emergency and the call for inclusivity."

That ethos extends into emerging technologies. The firm approaches AI with what Bearyman calls "cautious curiosity". The primary value at present is that AI can manage repetitive tasks, freeing up architects' time. Bearyman explains, "The ethos of the practice is built on integrity and evidence, which means AI must always be transparent and under human oversight".

Bearyman describes the practice's leadership style as "rooted in respect, trust and openness." He adds, "Our focus on environmental performance and integration informs how we mentor, encouraging teams to see structure, services and fabric as connected systems rather than separate disciplines." This solidifies the firm's belief that architecture is both collaborative and educational.

Mentoring is treated as two-way learning, embedded in day-to-day operations and reinforced by what the practice calls its Next Generation mentoring programme. Relationships are valued "not just for their outcomes but for the enjoyment of the process," with collaboration viewed as something to be rewarding as well as productive.

The practice has embraced the guiding principle of "doing more with less," which leads to its vision of creating buildings that "reveal their beauty and utility over time." While the firm does not subscribe to a signature aesthetic, it seeks a consistent approach rooted in context. As Bearyman explains, "Each generation of projects strengthens that ethos, ensuring consistency across time while remaining relevant to changing conditions." He adds, "If there is a signature, it is an attitude rather than a style, one that prizes honesty, responsiveness and long-term value."

Bearyman describes the practice's approach to sustainability as "embedded in rigorous, measurable ways rather than aspiration." The firm was the first to adopt approved science-based targets and is transparent with its own emissions and those of their projects.

As Bearyman explains, "We were founder members of the UK Green Building Council, are involved in the RIBA Sustainable Futures Group, and most recently have been heavily engaged in developing embodied carbon guidance for designers in partnership with LETI and the NZCBS." The practice continues to go beyond established standards, setting itself the ambitious goal of reducing emissions by 75% by 2030.

In 2025, Bennetts Associates achieved the highest B-Corp score of any architecture practice worldwide, an accomplishment Bearyman calls a "proud achievement." The company's 'more with less' research explores how to reduce cost, carbon and risk simultaneously by simplifying buildings and avoiding over-design. Performance is validated through carbon benchmarks, NABERS ratings, and post-occupancy studies, ensuring sustainability is both evidenced and verifiable.

Projects

An award-winning creative adaptation at the Edinburgh Futures Institute maximised space and usability, a sequence of large, multi-purpose rooms that eliminate redundancy while providing the adaptability demanded by modern teaching. Six Nightingale ward wings were restored and reconnected through widened circulation routes and staircases, now serving as natural breakout spaces and informal meeting areas. The wards have been carefully stripped of intrusive additions to recapture their former grandeur. The public realm has also been reimagined, with a new 'communal scale' plaza creating a refined setting for the main entrance.

Another demonstration of reuse combined with a new design is Landsec's Timber Square, London. A 10-storey Grade A commercial office was reworked from an extended 1950s printworks, and a 15-storey addition is a new hybrid steel and CLT Grade A commercial office building, comprising offices, retail and leisure uses, with terraces and/or roof gardens. It is currently by volume the largest commercial development in the UK using CLT and has the tallest hybrid frame. Bennetts' design approach prioritised minimal finishes and exposed joints, with performance validated through carbon assessments, NABERS and post-occupancy studies.

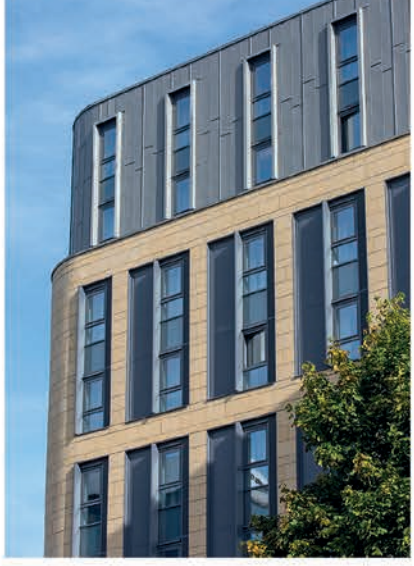
The practice has been shortlisted three times for the RIBA Stirling Prize (for Hampstead Theatre, Jubilee Library in Brighton and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon). It has also received multiple RIBA National Awards and Civic Trust Awards. Bearyman says that while awards validate the ethos, attract talent, and set benchmarks for the wider industry," the greatest achievement is "the body of work."

Future

The industry is facing pressures to deliver greater environmental and social value while adhering to tighter budgets. To address these, Bennetts Associates is focusing on brand and identity, diversity and inclusion, efficiency and competence, business development, and financial governance. Bearyman explains, "The challenges are significant, but they reinforce our clarity of purpose."

The firm has pivoted towards whole-life carbon accountability, retrofit and circular economy principles. Bearyman adds that inclusivity and wellbeing are increasingly on the agenda "as essential components of environmental design."

The practice continues to deliver projects across its broad portfolio while progressing international work in India. Bearyman says the aim is to "set benchmarks for resource conscious design in demanding climates." He explains, "It's not about diversification for its own sake, but about applying established principles of resilience, adaptability and design clarity to sectors and regions where they can make the most difference." ■



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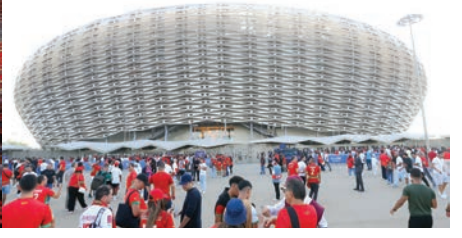

PRINCE MOULAY ABDELLAH STADIUM, RABAT
POPULUS

The Kingdom of Morocco has opened its new national stadium, the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat. Designed by Populous, the 68,700-capacity stadium features a unique parametrically designed LED facade. The design of the bowl places a premium on acoustics and atmosphere, with stands placed as close to the pitch as possible.

Under the direction of the National Agency for Public Facilities of Morocco, the stadium was designed in accordance with FIFA specifications to host matches up to the semi-finals of the 2030 FIFA World Cup. It incorporates state of the art media and broadcast facilities, a 360° wind shielding roof, and expanded VVIP, VIP and hospitality areas.

It was been delivered in just 24 months of combined design and construction, with design teams across multiple Populous offices ensuring continuous coordination with all stakeholders and adaptability working with Moroccan construction processes led by contractor SGTM.

Covering 100,000 m², the facade, created through parametric design, is composed of 19,200 champagne coloured aluminium triangles, each with their own unique dimensions. At sunset, the stadium creates a spectacular light show as the facade glows with the help of 70 km of LED strips spiralling around the structure.

A vast open concourse to the south leads into a steep, two-tiered 23,000 capacity 'Kop' stand, one of the largest fan sections in Africa and Europe. The two superposed tiers, where the upper tier cantilevers eight metres above the lower tier, create an impression of floating over the field.

Skyboxes on Level 2 form a U-shaped ring around the pitch, offering optimised views both of the pitch and of the vibrant south stand. The overall design ensures an electric stadium atmosphere, enhancing the fan experience at every level.

The speed of construction made possible thanks to the "adaptability and responsiveness of Populous as part of its integration into the Moroccan construction process."

GRAND BAYVIEW QIANHAI, SHENZEN
FOSTERS + PARTNERS

Grand Bayview Qianhai is claimed to be a new building typology aimed specifically at professionals who have an "intensive work centred lifestyle." Designed by Foster + Partners, the two connected towers are arranged in a fan shape to optimise views and daylight, maximise privacy on the outer radius, and provide focused communal areas at the centre of the scheme.

Rising to 180 metres, the two apartment buildings are linked by a large semi-public garden that connects with adjacent greenbelts, extending the experience of the development at ground level. A deck on level two seamlessly connects with an elevated walkway, providing a transitional space between neighbouring sites and creating a green urban oasis. As residents travel up through the buildings, green terraces provide shared spaces across all levels; each sky garden is a triple height space.

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INDUSTRY VIEWFINDER

Design approaches for Future Homes Standard and Future Buildings Standard compliance

Executive Summary

In January 2024 we surveyed architects on the changes to residential and non-residential building design required by the 2021 updates to Parts L, F and O of the Building Regulations. This year we wanted to discover if their views had changed, and also some of their practical approaches to achieving compliance with the Future Homes Standard (FHS) and the Future Homes Standard (FBS).

In the event, with both standards still awaiting full introduction, the survey probably garnered more of the former than the latter. However, the findings enabled us to see if the previous obstacles remained to the same degree, as well as discover insights on new aspects of compliance that have emerged. New questions for 2025 included preferences on the Notional Building 'options' in the Future Homes Standard consultation, preferences on U-value targets, and the potential of the standards to achieve their goals.

We also discovered their views on the likely plusses and minuses of the Home Energy Model, the cost uplift of compliance, and the effect of changes they were required to make to existing designs.

The results of this study, which was sponsored by Kingspan Insulation and Fakro, help contribute to the evidence base to demonstrate its readiness for the new standards, and highlight remaining issues for the Government to address.

SAP has always had its share of critics as a robust method for calculating (and thereby driving) the performance specification of new buildings. Flaws have been identified such as around its assumptions in terms of buildings' energy use, and the simplistic way that it assesses overheating. But whether the more sophisticated Home Energy Model (HEM) will be able to provide a dramatic improvement in the short term is still up for debate.

This was reflected in our survey results, where half of our respondents said that they were unsure as to whether HEM was fit for purpose as a replacement for SAP. And while some commentators have said that the assumptions which have been made in SAP around domestic water use (and potentially are being carried over into HEM), are misleadingly low, our findings did not conclusively find this unanimous view. However, 36% still said the assumptions were 'underestimating' consumption.

We looked at the design changes architects have already had to implement, both in the Future Homes Standard and Future Buildings Standard, and enabled several key comparisons between 2024 and 2025 findings. These included whether views had changed on if they believed the carbon reductions required were achievable short term, how important they thought third party testing of products were, and their preferences around the notional building options proposed in the consultation.

We also looked again at potential issues getting the right data on performance and energy efficiency of products, and some of the solutions being prioritised by designers to achieve compliance. The results, even where there are small differences, show some interesting fluctuations among our survey samples, and some good news, for example on the relative acceptance levels of design changes required from planners and clients, although there remains a challenge around contractors' acceptance levels.

Introduction

Key changes for FHS & FBS

The Government consultation process with the industry on the Future Homes Standard and Future Buildings Standard, and its fundamental building assessment component, the Home Energy Model (HEM) began in 2023, and closed in March 2025. However, the Government's official response, announcing which of two options were chosen to take forward the Standard has not yet

transpired, despite being supposedly due in summer 2025.

The two options the industry was asked to look at were based on a 'Notional Building', i.e. a building designed in HEM software (still not launched, but which will replace SAP) to have certain performance which a building of the same shape is then assessed against in order to pass the FHS/FBS. As a stop gap, the Government recently launched SAP 10.3, while the industry awaits confirmation of which of the following two options will be taken forward for the FHS.

Option 1 is the more expensive, but offers better carbon savings, and is recommended by Government. It requires tighter fabric but also solar PV, to the tune of 40% of the building's foundation area for 'side-lit' spaces and 75% for top-lit spaces. It also includes decentralised mechanical ventilation (dMEV) – ie continuous air extract, and waste water heat recovery. Option 2 is the 'minimal approach,' not requiring PV, but meaning similar tighter fabric

There are two key acronyms within the Future Homes Standard and Future Buildings Standard, namely DFEE and DER. The Dwelling Fabric Energy Efficiency is how well the building fabric performs thermally, and the Dwelling Emission Rate is the essential measure of the building's CO_2 emissions.

Survey findings

There are a vast amount of potential impacts from the new standards, and in particular the Home Energy Model. However, both due to the still somewhat speculative nature of assessing the changes, and the fact that there needs to be a selection of key known impacts, we asked a few, but revealing questions.

We repeated a number of key questions from our 2024 survey in order to track progress or otherwise, or how views have changed as the FHS and FBS have evolved or the ramifications have become clearer. These included the construction industry's readiness to deliver the changes needed, the fitness for purpose of the Home Energy Model, the need for third party testing of products and resulting data, and the design changes to existing schemes that architects had already been forced to make.

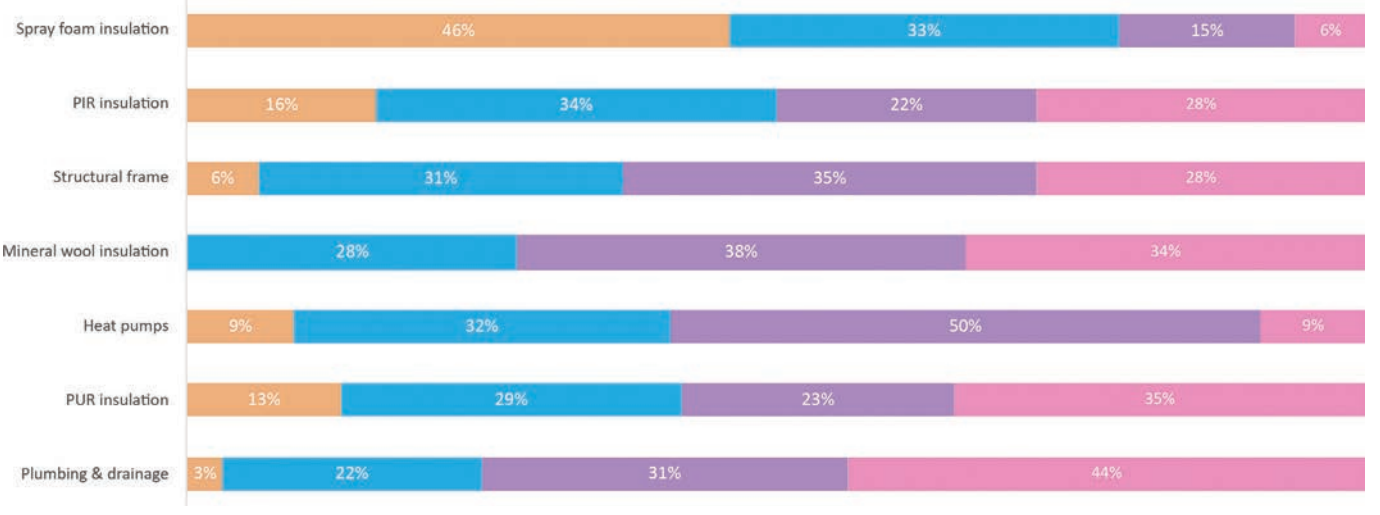
Unfortunately, the aspirations among our respondents for the likelihood of the sector being able to deliver the predicated 75-80% emissions reductions in new homes in 2025 were less aspirational in this year's survey. This may reflect wider awareness of the full impact of the standard on designs, but also wider issues such as cost of materials, skills, and affordability generally. This year, architects saying that the sector wasn't ready to deliver these savings jumped from 2024's figure of 37% to a fairly conclusive 56%, yet this also speaks to general views currently that the standard itself, and the Home Energy Model won't in fact be fully introduced until 2026.

The Home Energy Model & materials

SAP has never been hugely popular – but did our survey cohort think the Home Energy Model replacing it would be fit for purpose (at least as far as its content is understood so far). A similar number of respondents (53% and 52% in 2024 and 2025 respectively), were 'unsure' on whether it was fit for purpose, but those saying they thought it was had increased from 14% to 22%.

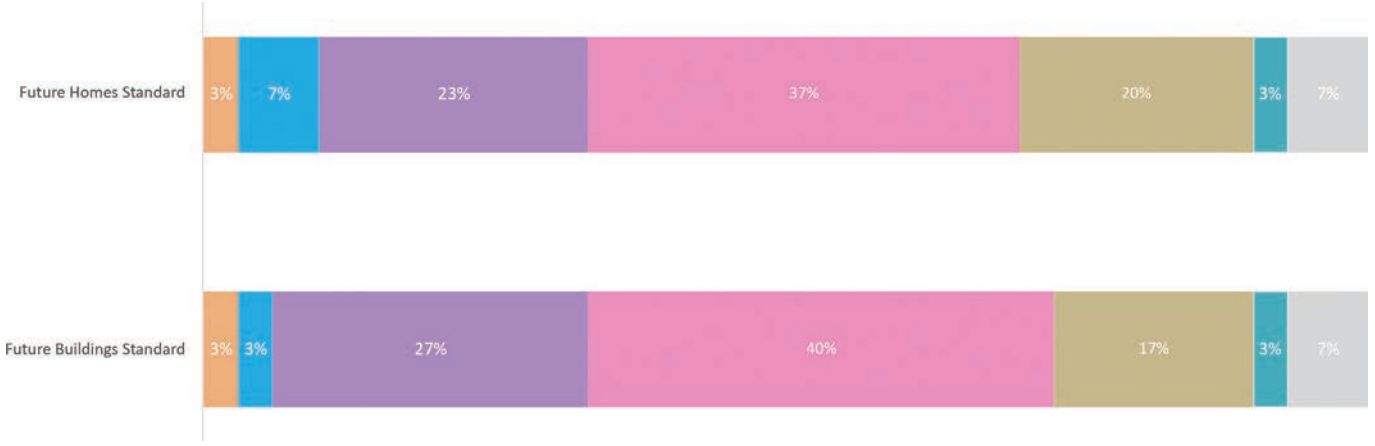
With product data becoming more important with designers required to demonstrate performance in a more granular way for the new standards, our respondents consistently saw it as a key factor across the two studies. The numbers were slightly stronger in 2025, with 88% saying that it was very or moderately important, up from 77% in 2024.

Many of our respondents said they had been asked to redesign existing projects in order to meet both the FHS and the FBS requirements, and among those who had (a not insignificant minority of 24% in 2025) this was overwhelmingly due to the need



What product types have raised issues for you in terms of obtaining adequate performance in meeting the Future Homes Standard?

Many issues *Some Issues* *Minimal Issues* *No Issues*



What is your estimated cost uplift per home or building from the Future Homes Standard & Future Buildings Standard?

No increase *Under £1k* *£1k to £5k* *£5k to £10* *£10k to £20* *£20k to £30k* *Over £30k*

to mitigate overheating, presumably caused by tighter performance and air standards from Part L's 2021 upgrade, and meaning facade redesigns or re-orientation of dwellings. The need to redesign had dropped slightly from a 29% figure in 2024.

Were respondents still finding problems obtaining performance and energy efficiency data on materials and structures to achieve compliance? Although in 2024 we framed this around Part L, F and O, this year it had improved only slightly; 72% still saying this was 'moderately or very' challenging.

On the specific material types which were providing difficult in terms of obtaining data, there was a similar pattern overall at the top across the two studies, with external envelope and cladding materials the most selected category (51% in 2024 rising to 63% however in 2025), followed by glazing (45% rising to 56%). Insulation dropped two spaces at 37% to be replaced by air source heat pumps now in third place in 2025 (44% picking it). This suggests that as air source heat pumps have become the default method of heating for many housebuilders approaching the new standards, obtaining performance data has become increasingly difficult, and something manufacturers need to grapple with.

We recorded good news this year in terms of improved levels of acceptance of the design changes required from planners and clients, but less good news, perhaps unsurprisingly, from contractors. 30% of planners were 'fully accepting' of the changes needed (though this was down on the 52% from 2024). Clients were 'fully accepting' of the changes according to 21%, although this was also a drop from 30%. Lastly, contractors were only fully accepting for 9% of our survey – a big drop on 22% in 2024.

Design solutions

Our survey cohort, somewhat surprisingly, did not give a definitive verdict on the question of whether they preferred the more comprehensive and energy-efficient Option 1 in the Notional Building/HEM model currently proposed (including PV, and more expensive), or the more basic Option 2. For the Future Homes Standard, it was split evenly between Option 1 and 'don't know' – with 38% and 35% respectively, but a decent 27% picked Option 2 as their preferred option. For the Future Buildings Standard (non-domestic), Option 1 and 'don't know' were identical, with 39% each, and Option 2 at 21%.

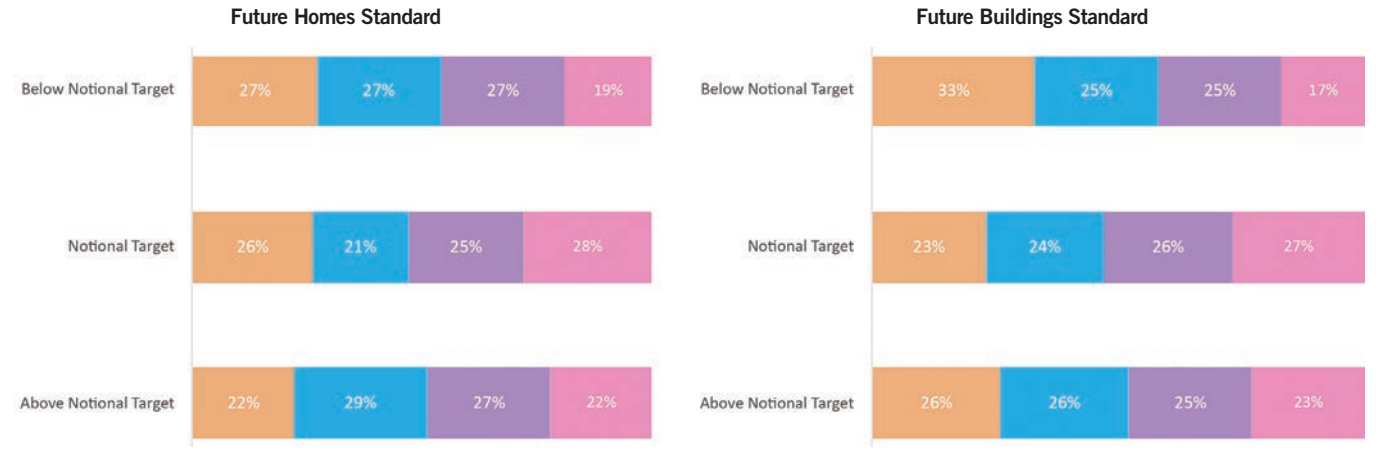
A challenging finding which speaks to the veracity of whether data on architects' choices was as informative as those of contractors, was that most of our respondents said that architects did not have enough say in specifying housebuilding projects.

Our verbatim comments received to the question around whether or not architects needed a bigger say in order to make a 'meaningful difference to specifications in order to reduce carbon emissions in volume housebuilding projects' were revealing. One asserted that the "vast majority of schemes were designed by non-architects," and another mentioned that all specification decisions "were commercially driven."

Others cited Design and Build contracts leading to a lack of control and that "new or good ideas are not easily accepted" as being a general rule in the sector. One respondent however said that, while financial motives are paramount, "if there are incentives as well as statutory requirements that mean developers and clients can promote a sustainably superior product and get return for 'capex' and 'opex,' then architects will be able to have more say in how to achieve the targets alongside great architecture and design solutions."

In terms of the U-values being sought, and whether our respondents were looking to undershoot, meet or exceed the current Notional Building target U-values (which can be traded against each other as long as the overall Target Emission Rate is achieved.) According to our cohort, for homes and non-domestic properties there was a largely even four-way split between window, wall, roof and floor U-values for their picks on either below-target, on-target or above target.

A slightly counterintuitive, and contrasting finding was around whether architect respondents had seen window sizes reduced



"What U-values (in relation to the Notional Building target) are you seeking for Future Homes Standard & Future Buildings Standard compliance?"

Windows *Walls* *Roofs* *Floors*

on their ongoing schemes in order to meet the FHS/FBS, with the majority saying they hadn't in both cases (55%). However, in an earlier set of answers, the minority who had needed to redesign schemes said they had needed to due to overheating, therefore we could perhaps deduce that rather than redesign windows, the numbers of windows on facades could be reduced.

Product solutions

In both studies we asked which technologies and approaches respondent architects would prioritise in order to meet the new requirements within both residential and non-residential projects, although in the 2024 study this was focused on Part L compliance. The distribution of technology types was somewhat similar in Future Homes Standard compliance, with breathable membranes on top as a 'definite,' although this had dropped from 74% to 55% in 2025 for housebuilding. Thermal breaks came in second both times, and airtightness tapes was in third both times.

However, our results saw trickle vents and background ventilation had dropped from fourth in 2024 (chosen by 49%) to a fairly mediocre 31%, with heat pumps having risen from former sixth place to fourth at 38%.

Battery storage, arguably the ideal scenario for many housing projects despite the challenges, was picked as 'unlikely to use' by 10% and as a definite 'no' for 8% surprisingly, but possibly indicating financial and space constraints. No-one said a definite 'no' in 2024 but there was a significant 17% saying it was unlikely.

In non-resi projects, the distribution was more even, with thermal breaks in top, just in front of breathable membranes, these roles switching in 2025. Battery storage fared slightly better, with only 6% saying they definitely wouldn't use it, but also only 22% saying they definitely would.

Cost uplift

While still speculative, many architects and contractors are currently trying to establish what their likely cost parameters are for the extra performance spec required for homes and non-resi schemes, and the wide-ranging views of our respondents provide considerable food for thought.

The most popular choice in our 2025 survey was that the cost uplift per unit for the FHS would be between £1,000 and £5,000. This was chosen by 37% of our survey cohort, but the substantially greater parameter of between £10,000 and £20,000 was picked by a significant 20% chunk of respondents as the likely increase. And slightly worryingly, 7% believed that it would be over £30,000 uplift. Only 3% thought there would be no increase in cost.

And for the Future Buildings Standard, there was a similar distribution, with 40% believing that a £5,000 to £10,000 uplift was most likely. Again, 7% believed it would be over £30,000, and 3% saw no increase as likely.

Conclusion

Our survey gave a broad indication of the issues and key priorities in 2025 for architects as the industry awaits these potentially transformative standards. The answers raise further questions and issues which remain to be addressed.

There is growing consensus that the Home Energy Model, as well as the Future Homes and Future Buildings Standards themselves, will now emerge in 2026. The delay itself speaks to how complex and difficult it is to satisfy the industry's aspirations alongside those of the Government and wider stakeholders, including end customers. Most of our survey cohort thought the Future Homes Standard would even not be in force until after 2028, putting the Government's ambitions of 1.5 million new homes under even greater doubt.

We would once again like to thank our sponsors Kingspan Insulation and Fakro for supporting this Industry Viewfinder research project.

For the full white paper report please visit www.insights.netmagmedia.co.uk

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Medspace recently designed premium workstations for Eastbourne Hospital's Elective Care Hub. The highlight: a visually-striking, two-toned reception desk, Medspace used **James Latham** supplied HIMACS Arctic Granite and Suede, which were selected for their brilliantly subtle aesthetic contrast, as well as incredible hygiene properties and seamless joining capability. Breathtaking, this striking, curve-detailed, two-tone reception desk perfectly showcases HIMACS suitability for healthcare environments, offering incredible impact resistance and ultra-low maintenance.

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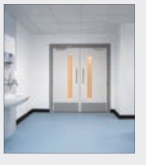

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The opinions of the architectural community

As part of netMAGmedia's research offering, *ADF* has been increasingly harnessing the knowledge and views of its focused readership to produce 'Industry Viewfinder' white papers based on reader surveys. These are documents which contain unique insights and data on a wide range topics that are currently fuelling debate in the industry, from Passivhaus to Part L. This audience research, providing real-world experience, provides us with the opportunity to better understand the needs of our readers and tailor our content accordingly.

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Hermetic door systems: Key benefits and where they matter most

What are hermetic door systems?

Hermetic door systems, also known as airtight or sealed doors, are precision-engineered to provide an airtight seal when closed. Unlike traditional doors, which may allow the passage of air, dust, and contaminants, hermetic doors are designed to block all external elements from entering or exiting a controlled space. These systems are commonly used in industries and environments where hygiene, safety, or environmental control are critical.

Key benefits of Hermetic door systems

Superior Contamination Control

Hermetic doors are essential in maintaining sterile environments. Their airtight seal helps prevent the ingress of dust, pathogens, and airborne particles. This is particularly vital in cleanrooms, hospitals, and pharmaceutical labs where contamination could compromise safety or product integrity.

Energy Efficiency

These doors improve energy efficiency by minimising air exchange between rooms with differing temperatures or humidity levels. In climate-controlled environments such as cold storage units or laboratories, hermetic doors help maintain stable conditions, reducing the load on HVAC systems.

Improved Sound Insulation

Hermetic sealing significantly reduces sound transmission, making them ideal for areas where noise isolation is important. This feature is especially useful in medical imaging rooms (like MRI suites), broadcasting studios, and testing labs.

Enhanced Fire & Smoke Containment

Many hermetic door systems are designed to be fire-rated, providing an additional layer of protection in the event of a fire. Their ability to contain smoke and flames can help buy time for evacuation and limit damage.

Automatic Operation & Hygiene

Most hermetic door systems are automatic and touch-free, reducing the risk of germ transmission – an increasingly important feature in healthcare and food processing sectors. The smooth, seamless surfaces also make cleaning easy and effective.

Where Hermetic doors are most needed

Hermetic door systems are not just a technical upgrade - they are a necessity in the following sectors:

Healthcare Facilities

Isolation rooms, ICUs, operating theatres, and imaging departments benefit from infection control and pressure management.

Pharmaceutical and Biotechnology Labs

Cleanrooms, production lines, and containment zones require strict control over airborne particles and contamination.

Food and Beverage Industry

Areas such as packaging, refrigerated storage, and processing units benefit from hygienic, climate-controlled separation.

Electronics & Semiconductor Manufacturing

In dust-sensitive environments, hermetic doors help maintain ultra-clean standards and prevent electrostatic interference.

Cold Storage and Logistics

Warehouses and cold rooms rely on efficient sealing to preserve temperature-sensitive goods and reduce energy loss.

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The GEZE MCRdrive is a modular sliding door system for areas of buildings where hermetic air tightness is required.

What makes it special?

GEZE MCRdrive offers a standard-compliant and certified overall system and fulfils the requirements of building projects with modern and appealing design concepts. In addition, thanks to its modular design and uniform profile and sealing system, the GEZE MCRdrive provides configuration options for maximum customisation to customer needs.

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BUILDING PROJECTS

A healthy new life

LIDINGÖDOKTORN HEALTH CENTRE, SWEDEN

White Arkitekter reimagined the historic AGA factory in Stockholm as a healthcare centre that echoes the quality heritage of its predecessor with a sustainability-focused and person-centred building. Alexandra Pratt reports.

AWARD-WINNING
The new home of the health centre – in the birthplace of the AGA cooker – was Highly Commended in the Design for Adaptation and Transformation category at the 2025 European Healthcare Awards

The relocation of the Lidingödoktorn Health Centre to a former factory in the Dalénum district of Lidingö, which forms part of the Stockholm archipelago, is turning heads for its innovative and sustainable design. Highly commended in the 'Design for Adaptation and Transformation' category at this year's European Healthcare Awards, the project by White Arkitekter echoes the thoughtful vision and commitment to quality pioneered in Dalénum's industrial past by the inventor of the AGA, Gustaf Dalén. It reimagines a post-industrial space as a benchmark for sustainability in modern healthcare.

In 1904, Dalen, a Nobel Prize winning physicist, invented a cooker that was clean, safe and easy to use. His factory played a significant role in the industrial development of Sweden and of the Dalénum district in particular. Although closed in 2002, the building had been used as offices until recently, and this conversion is part of a wider regeneration of the area.

Once filled with machinery and factory workers, the building's generous scale and robust structure provided a solid foundation for reuse. Rather than erasing this industrial heritage character, the design team chose to celebrate it, allowing the manufacturing past to remain visible in the structure, while giving the interior a new, community-focused role. This sense of continuity between history and present adds depth and meaning to the patient experience.

Several former factories in Dalénum now provide housing, workplaces and community facilities. The preservation and renovation of these industrial buildings has created a new zone, making this area once again a dynamic part of Lidingö. A recent survey by Novus suggested that the service most lacking in Swedish neighbourhoods today is healthcare. In this context, the relocation of the Lidingödoktorn health centre to a newly rejuvenated part of the city is playing an important role in making attractive, convenient and safe places, where residents want to live and work.

A new focus

The site of the health centre has become a focal point locally, as it shares a striking atrium and entrance with a design school, a nursing home and a centre for maternity

care. The new health centre is therefore more than just a clinic; it has become a vital civic anchor within the regeneration of Dalénum. By sharing space with other facilities, the new health centre strengthens links between generations and improves overall access to services. This clustering of activity is making a positive contribution to a mixed-use neighbourhood, helping to establish the area as a vibrant, connected neighbourhood once again.

Accessibility and inclusivity are central themes in this project, and superb public transport access – including via ferry and tram – means both social and environmental sustainability were already integral to the site's development, even before work began on site.

It was within this context of sustainability that interior architects and lighting designers were brought onto the project by the healthcare provider, Praktikertjanst Lidingödoktorn, to collaborate with project architects VIZ Arkitektkontor.

"We shared a common vision with the client," explains Isabel Villar, White's lighting designer. "They were very interested in our expertise in environmental design and re-use."

White Arkitekter is already a well-known name in healthcare design, following the firm's innovative work on the Velindre Cancer Centre in Wales, UK. This is a new NHS building that was constructed using mass timber, making it the UK's most sustainable hospital. In this much smaller healthcare centre in Sweden, White Arkitekter provided colour, lighting and furniture schemes within the wider project. The design included even the smallest details, showcasing how well-crafted environments can be shaped through a holistic approach, where even signage is considered as part of the whole.

User experience

The guiding principle was the experiences of all users, including patients, staff and visitors. The goal was to create a supportive and welcoming centre that does not feel like a conventional health setting, yet which is safe, accessible and environmentally sustainable.

In practical terms, accessibility from the atrium to the front entrance can be as easily

The building's generous proportions and robust structure provided a solid foundation for reuse as a health centre with excellent spatial character

managed in a wheelchair as on foot, and the welcoming reception desk has different heights. Those with hearing difficulties benefit from the latest technological assistance, and contrasts of colour and texture assist those with a range of visual and neurological challenges.

Consultation was key to achieving this, and "Clinical stakeholders were very engaged," says lead architect Malin Lindell, "We had reference groups of staff who gave feedback. We listened and modified our concepts." Working with Lidingödoktorn, White Arkitekter developed a welcoming and supportive interior that draws upon the character of the building and adds richness through careful material choices. Lighting and surface finishes create a cohesive, considered and cost-effective whole, without compromising on high standards of accessibility and sustainability.

The interior design naturally starts with the qualities of the building itself and turns them into assets for the new, contemporary design. This 100-year-old factory has been transformed into a flexible space that can adapt as demands change. White Arkitekter worked with VIZ Arkitektkontor on the layout, as the structure of the building was transformed. Internally, the large industrial windows remained, and Lindell and her team gave feedback to VIZ on partitions and door heights.

"We wanted to make a warm, welcoming environment," says Lindell, who worked to reconcile environmental concerns, such as reuse, hygiene and cost-effectiveness factors throughout the project.

Light relief

The building offered high ceilings in addition to the large windows, and these have been carefully incorporated into the final design, flooding examination and staff rooms, as well as corridors with natural light. This layout maximises the benefits of existing architectural and vernacular features, while a passive design approach helps to reduce the use of artificial lighting, cutting energy usage and enhancing patient wellbeing.

Glass partitions above the doors to each of the twenty examination rooms make the most of the building's tall ceilings, creating a bright and open feel and bringing borrowed light into the core of the building. The staff room was also prioritised as a space that would benefit from daylight.

"Putting the staff room close to the windows makes the layout work well," says Villar. "We were thinking about what was best for the staff, as they work there for eight hours a day."

Studies consistently show that access to daylight supports patient recovery times and also improves staff wellbeing, reducing fatigue and stress. By ensuring that both examination rooms and staff areas are bathed in natural light, the design actively supports the health of users.

Villar approached the lighting plan in the reception and central waiting room differently. In these darker areas, carefully positioned artificial lighting maintains a calm, non-clinical atmosphere. Located in the centre of the plan, the central waiting room has scarce amounts of daylight, so Villar chose large, eye-catching pendants that give a soft and warm light to the room. Different forms of seating also accommodate those with diverse needs. Similar pendants hang in the 'kids' corner' of the waiting room, where dedicated seating, books and games are available for younger visitors and their families.

"The waiting area is the most important for a calm, safe feeling," says Villar. "So, we worked with a warmer colour temperature than in the other rooms, pendants, and cove lighting in the kid's corner."

This playful element is complemented by a light installation on a wall, consisting of back-lit panels.

"It's a 'fake window' that has the same proportions as the real windows," explains Villar. "The clinic is not over-lit, and the lighting can be adjusted according to need."

Colour selection was also part of the interior plan, with contrasting colours and textures between the reception desk and the floor, as well as between the floor, walls and doors.

"We wanted to have a warm, yet pale colour and the walls and floor, due to reduced daylight," explains Lindell. Green, and one darker shade in particular, is used throughout the centre, including in the examination rooms, where it is used on the tiles around the basins.

"The soft green colour is found in nature. It is comforting and calm," says Lindell. "In the examination rooms, it creates a big contrast with the walls and floors, and the darker colour is used to 'ground' the rooms. We enhanced this with plants, as we didn't want to add more colours."

Materiality is also critical to this holistic approach. Each of the partitions is clad

in timber for a "less institutional feeling," explains Lindell and this is echoed in the architrave and skirting around the building. Lindell explains the ethos behind the subtle interiors: "We don't want users to recognise it, but we have thought about it."

A new mechanical ventilation system also works unseen and unheard, ensuring the air inside the centre is always fresh, while minimising heat loss. This is just one small part of the effort to reduce resources across the project. Elsewhere, resource management meant making as few changes to the original building as possible.

Innovation in reuse

Sustainability has been a guiding principle throughout this project, with a focus on reducing resources and the reuse of existing materials. This project has pushed the boundaries of what is standard in healthcare settings, with an unusual strategy for sourcing furnishings.

A three-step principle was put in place, in which, where possible, existing furniture from the client's previous premises was reused. This was mainly the examination beds. Secondly, second-hand pieces were resourced, and thirdly, new furniture was

purchased, provided it was long-lasting and easily repairable, making it suitable for reuse in future life cycles.

This approach not only cut costs but also reduced the project's carbon footprint significantly, with over 80% of furniture diverted from landfill. For example, older examination beds were refinished, while reception seating was 'refreshed' with new, hard-wearing fabrics. Each piece was given a second life, contributing to a design that is both resource-efficient and attractive.

This approach has become common in commercial environments over recent years, but has yet to be taken up in any significant way in the healthcare sector. Part of the reason for this could be hygiene considerations.

"The reused furniture was re-upholstered for hygiene," says Lindell. "And imitation leather was used, also due to hygiene reasons."

A flexible furniture concept emerged, enabling reuse and allowing different suppliers to contribute pieces that matched the design vision.

"The reused furniture market is fairly new in Sweden," says Lindell. "And

The health centre shares a striking atrium and entrance with a design school, a nursing home and a centre for maternity care

COMFORTING GREEN
The subtle interior design makes copious use of a darker green shade which offers a comforting feeling to patients
Images © Emil Fagander

certainly, reusing furniture is not common on these projects. We had to be iterative with the design, in consultation with the client. The refurbishment market is difficult, and we worked with a refurbishment company to modify the ideas. That provided its own challenges in terms of design time."

Communication & collaboration

The timescales on this project were one of the key challenges, with the entire project running to just eight months, completing in June 2024. The solution to this was open communication.

"We had a very open dialogue with the client, with clear timescales for reviewing and meetings pre-booked," says Lindell. "Plus, the client had a good structure for handling decisions, and that was key," adds Isabel Villar.

The feedback from staff and users alike has been very positive, and the White Arkitekter team are pleased. The project came in on time, on budget and has a positive response for all users. Warm materials, plants and playful lighting create an environment that feels safe, dignified and supportive for all ages.

"I'm very proud of the result," says Lindell, again emphasising the subtlety. "Especially the reused furniture. You don't 'see' it, but it's part of the warm, playful whole that came in at an efficient cost."

With the project's commendation in the recent design awards a fitting reward, the team at White Arkitekter attribute the successful outcome to several factors.

"It's easy to make a lavish project successful," says Lindell, "But a cost-effective one forces us to be more creative." It's certainly true that the project began with worthy and challenging priorities, and the successful impact of the design has had a real impact on the result. The quality of the space is felt as much as seen.

Villar agrees: "It is a small project, but it has attracted so much attention. We have been doing things other people don't do. It's been a great collaborative push to move it all forward."

"This kind of environment is often forgotten," continues Lindell. "Healthcare projects are often completed on autopilot. This was a small project, but it reached quite far. More love and attention were given to it. They cost little but give so much, helping people, especially the most vulnerable."

The relocation of Lidingödoktorn's Health Centre shows how even modest healthcare projects can deliver an outsized impact when design, sustainability and collaboration align. By honouring the industrial heritage of Dalénum while rethinking what a modern clinic can be, White Arkitekter and their partners have created a space that is flexible, cost-effective and deeply person-centred.

The project demonstrates that careful reuse, inclusive design and attention to detail need not be reserved for flagship hospitals, but can transform everyday healthcare settings. In doing so, it continues the legacy of innovation started here at the beginning of the 20th century by Gustaf Dalén, while setting a new benchmark for the future. ■

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Healthcare facilities are among the most demanding buildings to maintain. High levels of foot traffic, the constant movement of beds, trolleys and medical equipment, combined with rigorous cleaning routines, place huge pressure on interior walls and doors. Without adequate protection, surfaces quickly become damaged, creating unnecessary repair costs and disruption.

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Family Hub chooses Style again for folding partitioning wall

Christchurch Family Hub provides essential, early support for local families. In 2003, **Style** installed a folding wall with pass-door to enable the Hub to divide its main activity and family room into two separate areas, as and when needed. 22 years on and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council again contacted Style, this time to replace the old wall with a modern system with enhanced operation and improved acoustics. Finished in a beech laminate, the new Dorma Huppe Variflex moveable wall is smooth and lightweight to manoeuvre, allowing the space to be easily opened up, or divided into two rooms, many times a day. If preferred, the dividing wall can be left in place for extended periods thanks to an integrated pass-door and, with a 49 dB acoustic rating, activities can comfortably take place either side of the wall undisturbed. The Variflex system installed the Christchurch Family Hub brings improved acoustics and the latest operational features. One such benefit that is particularly relevant for this busy activity centre, is that the Variflex panels are manufactured separately to frame.

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A high-quality finish at St George's Health and Wellbeing Hub from Gerflor and Gradus!

The brand-new St George's Health and Wellbeing Hub in Hornchurch, Essex, brings together a wide range of health and care services under one roof. Over 5,000 m² of world class flooring products from international interiors specialists **Gerflor** was specified, alongside Gradus entrance matting and stair nosing's as a complete solution for the healthcare community building. Gerflor's notable contribution to the project included their highly specialised Mipolam EL7 permanent dissipative flooring, Taralay Impression Compact heterogeneous floor coverings, and Tarasafe Ultra Safety Vinyl. These innovative products were installed throughout the building, covering areas such as clinical spaces, consulting rooms, dialysis and renal units, as well as toilets, bathrooms, showers, corridors, and stairs. Entrance flooring and stair safety were also a key consideration for the project. To compliment the specification and provide a complete solution to the end user, Gradus supplied their Mat-in-A-Box entrance matting system and a range of XT stair nosing's. Gerflor and Gradus bring the design vision to life and perfectly executed the project on time and to budget.

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Keeping Brachytherapy Equipment secure with Obexion

As cancer treatment advances, more hospitals are creating specialized brachytherapy departments, requiring both space for equipment and strong security. Large Linear Accelerators stay fixed and can be powered down, but mobile brachytherapy devices, which use live radioactive isotopes, demand constant protection. As they deliver higher radiation doses, layered security is vital. One Midlands hospital installed both security-rated personnel doors and an Obexion roller shutter from **Charter Global** to safeguard its brachytherapy unit. The Obexion shutter is independently certified by the Loss Prevention Certification Board to LPS 1175 D10 (SR4) standard. This means that even if the outer personnel doors were breached, the shutter gives an additional 10 minutes of resistance to attack by hand tools and power drills. The control keypad allows staff to have individual PIN codes, giving complete traceability of who operated the shutter last and to limit access to only approved team members. The Obexion shutter range has a number of specialist features, including fast deployment in the case of emergency and a unique Lockdown mechanism ensuring that the shutter self-locks at all points of closing, so it cannot be forced open, even when partly closed.

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Gilberts' top-level approach to helping reduce hospital waiting lists

Hospital operations in Bradford are set to increase with input from **Gilberts Blackpool** contributing towards a new NHS surgical day case unit. The roof-top plant necessary to operate the unit at St Lukes Hospital for Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is being screened by over 500 m² of Gilberts weather louvres (WGK75). The core 102 m long x 3.5 m high screen, powder coated in matt signal black, runs the entire perimeter to provide an attractive ground-level aesthetic to visitors to the facility and a degree of protection from the elements for the plant behind. An additional L-shaped 44 m louvre within includes insulation, doors and a cat ladder to minimise sound from and allow maintenance access to the equipment needed to power the two-storey unit and its two operating theatres. Gilberts designed and fabricated the louvre components in its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility before installing on-site for principal contractor Darwin Group. The screen is an integral part of the unit's design which aims to improve the patient experience, including an interior laid out to provide a circular patient pathway and a generous landscape buffer.

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Architects' Datafile website

architectsdatafile.co.uk is designed for architects – Content is added daily to the site, enabling visitors to keep up to date with the latest news, legislation development, CPD programs, case studies and much much more. It's no wonder that there's an increasing number of architectural professionals engaging with the site each and every day. With thousands of unique visitors each month the website provides the perfect companion to other elements of the *ADF* brand. Display advertising opportunities are available on the home page and across the site. These opportunities can bolster brand awareness and ensure a valuable competitive edge.

www.architectsdatafile.co.uk

Oscrete announces part of strategic growth

Oscrete has announced its successful integration of customers from Glassfibre Reinforced Concrete (GRC) specialists Cemcotec. Glass Reinforced Concrete is a key tool in building design due to its low weight and high strength qualities. Flexible, light weight and easy to mould, GRC is ideal for architectural facades, panels and decorative construction. The amalgamation of Cemcotec customers into Oscrete's expanding operations, marks a significant milestone in Oscrete's ongoing growth strategy.

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19-20 November
London Build Expo

London Build's 10th birthday

London Build is taking over Olympia's Grand and National Halls on 19 and 20 November, celebrating 10 years of connecting the construction industry. To mark the milestone, this year's event will offer more content, networking, and community building opportunities than ever before. London Build attracts over 38,000 attendees, 750+ speakers across 12 CPD accredited stages, and more than 450 exhibitors, making it a key destination for professionals across the built environment.

What to expect

This year's show features 12 stages covering the full spectrum of the construction industry. Attendees can explore the AI & Digital Construction Stage, Architecture Stage, Building Safety & Security Stage, Construction Marketing Stage, Diversity in Construction Stage, Fire Safety Stage, Modern Methods of Construction Stage, Networking Hub, Skyscraper & Tall Buildings Stage, Sustainability Stage and UK Housing & Real Estate Stage.

The programme tackles the industry's biggest challenges, from design trends and sustainable practices to innovative workplaces, homes, and public spaces, as well as high-rise projects and urban engineering solutions. Digital construction takes centre stage, with sessions on robotics, automation, and AI, while sustainability and climate resilience run across all stages. Diversity, inclusion, and gender balance are also key themes.

Attendees can also engage directly with decision makers at the Government Hub and explore procurement opportunities through Meet the Buyer sessions, offering unique access to projects, industry contacts, and real world insights.

Leading voices

These stages will feature influential global leaders in construction, including:

- Manuela Gatto, director, Zaha Hadid Architects
- Oliver Hall, partner, Make Architects
- Angela Brockbank, affordable homes sector director at Galliford Try
- Kamran Moazami, executive managing director, property & buildings at WSP
- Dan Hawthorn, executive director of housing and social investment at Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
- Grant Kanik, partner & deputy head of workplace consultancy, Foster and Partners
- Paul Drayton, head of digital - Europe at Laing O'Rourke
- Rob Mcgill, sustainable design leader of HOK
- Jamie Young, head of design management at Morgan Sindall
- Trudi Sully, industrialised construction director at Mott MacDonald
- Alison Crompton, head of existing buildings decarbonisation UK at AECOM
- Liz Blackwell, group head of sustainability strategy, planning and change, L&Q Group
- Neil Dobbs, head of facades, Multiplex
- Andrea Singh, executive director of people at BAM UK & Ireland
- Gemma Rees, project director at McLaren Construction Group

To register for your ticket, please scan the QR Code.

Article supplied by London Build Expo

A must-attend event for anyone shaping the future of the UK's built environment

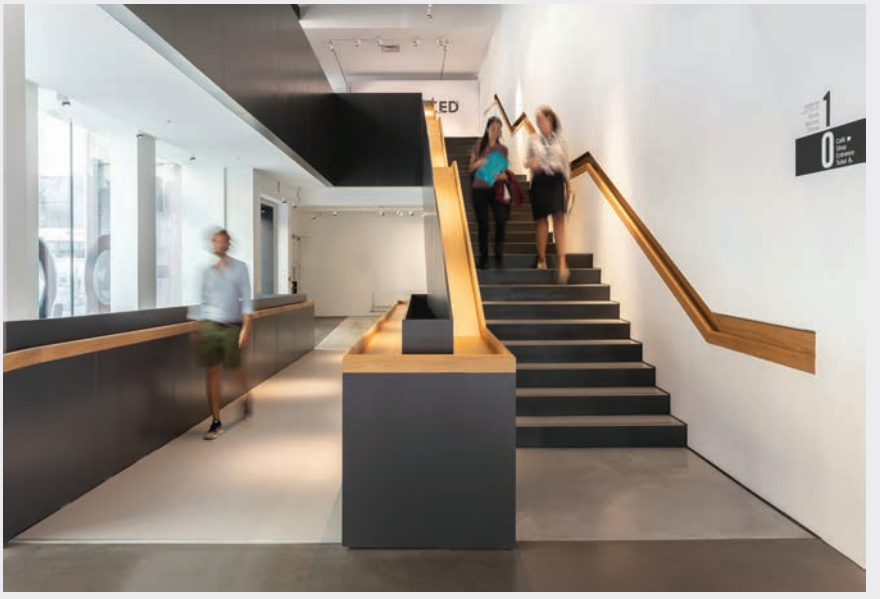
fermacell® Fibre Gypsum Boards: Streamlining installation without compromising performance

In the pursuit of smarter, faster, and more sustainable construction, architects are increasingly turning to materials that offer more than just compliance, they demand innovation. fermacell® fibre gypsum boards are a prime example of this shift, offering a streamlined alternative to traditional plasterboard systems without sacrificing fire, acoustic, or impact performance.

One of the most compelling advantages of fermacell® is its ability to reduce installation layers. Traditional plasterboard systems often require multiple layers, including pattresses, to meet structural and performance standards. This not only increases material usage but also adds time, labour, and complexity to the build. fermacell® single-layer solution eliminates the need for these additional components, simplifying the process while delivering superior results.

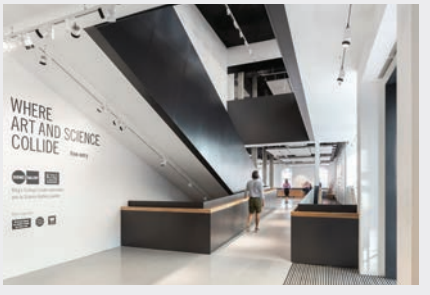
Thanks to its dense composition, a blend of recycled paper fibres, gypsum, and water, fermacell® boards are inherently robust. This density translates into exceptional load carrying capacity, allowing fixtures to be mounted directly onto the board without the need for pattresses or reinforcements. For architects, this means greater design flexibility and cleaner detailing, especially in commercial interiors where wall-mounted elements are more frequent.

Performance-wise, fermacell® excels across the board. With an extensive suite of EN test data underpinning the boards fire credentials, its fire resistance meets and often exceeds regulatory requirements, making it suitable for high-risk environments such as schools, hospitals, and multi-residential buildings. Its acoustic insulation properties are equally impressive, with single-layer systems achieving sound reduction levels that typically require double-layer plasterboard setups. This is a game-changer for projects where space efficiency and acoustic comfort are paramount.



Impact resistance is another area where fermacell® outperforms. In high-traffic areas, walls are subject to frequent knocks and abrasions. fermacell®'s solid core construction ensures durability and longevity whilst conforming to crowd load requirements, reducing maintenance costs and enhancing the building's lifecycle performance.

From a sustainability perspective, fermacell® continues to lead. Its EPD verification confirms its low environmental impact, and its production process – free from adhesives and reliant on recycled materials – supports circular economy principles. By reducing the number of layers required, fermacell® also cuts down on transport emissions, packaging waste, and on-site debris.



For architects working on timber frame or commercial projects, the benefits are even more pronounced. fermacell®'s dimensional stability and moisture resistance make it ideal for off-site construction and modular builds, where precision and reliability are key. Its ability to perform multiple roles – structural, acoustic, fire-resistant – within a single board ßsimplifies specification and accelerates project timelines.

In an industry where time, cost, and sustainability are under constant scrutiny, fermacell® offers a rare formula: efficiency, performance, and environmental integrity. By reducing installation layers and eliminating the need for pattresses, it empowers architects to design smarter, build faster, and deliver better outcomes for clients and communities alike.

fermacell® isn't just a board, it's a building solution. And for architects ready to embrace the future of construction, it's a material that truly delivers.

www.fermacell.co.uk/sustainability-meets-simplicity

JamesHardie fermacell®

Wates Wildscape: Reimagining the balance between housing and habitats

Turning BNG from Burden to Opportunity

As England accelerates plans to deliver 1.5 million new homes by 2029, developers face a difficult challenge: balancing the demand for housing with the urgent need to restore our natural environment. Wates Land and Development (WL&D) is leading the way in solving that challenge with the launch of Wates Wildscape – a bold new venture dedicated to delivering nature-based solutions for developers across England.

A clear route through BNG complexity

Wates Wildscape was created in response to the ongoing challenges faced by developers struggling to navigate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Combining Wates' expertise in planning and development with its passion for sustainability, it offers end-to-end support for developers navigating the purchase of offsite BNG units, ensuring planning conditions are discharged quickly and efficiently. Created by developers, for developers, Wates Wildscape is a trusted and reliable route to meeting nature-related planning obligations that delivers for housebuilders, planning authorities and nature.

Building habitats that lift local ecosystems

At the heart of Wates Wildscape is the creation of high-quality, ecologically valuable habitat sites. The division's first habitat site, sitting in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and the High Weald National Character Area, brings Wates' ambition to life. A former 17-hectare maize field is being transformed into a rich mosaic of grassland, scrub, hedgerows, wet woodland and ponds. Bordering the River Medway, the site includes high-quality riparian planting and the removal of invasive species – ensuring the scheme both generates much-needed watercourse units for the BNG market and improves water quality. This is not mitigation by numbers; it is nature recovery and long-term stewardship, creating thriving habitats that strengthen biodiversity and environmental resilience.

Expertise with purpose

"We are acutely aware that nature is struggling, and we want to play a more direct part in helping it recover," says Olivia Dear, sustainability and wates wildscape director at WL&D. "Wates Wildscape is our way of reimagining the balance between housing and habitats. By creating off-site, nature-based BNG solutions, we are providing high-quality, assured and sustainable options for the industry to meet its obligations and ultimately, ensure nature thrives." For David Brocklebank, executive managing director of WL&D, the initiative is integral to the business' long-term strategy: "Wates Wildscape is more than a business initiative; it is an integral part of our sustainability strategy. We are combining our strategic land expertise, our commitment to the environment and our expert knowledge of planning and development to help our sector meet environmental targets whilst also supporting local nature recovery. We are fully invested in ensuring the BNG market functions properly, to improve the world around us for future generations."

A partner developers can trust

Wates Wildscape is structured to give developers confidence: credible sites, robust design, and a straightforward route to compliant off-site BNG units. By aligning planning expertise with ecological ambition, the division helps to de-risk programmes, discharge planning conditions efficiently and deliver tangible benefits for nature. As additional habitat sites come to market, each will be shaped to enhance its natural context and support the broader vision of places, planet and people thriving together.

Make nature part of your development story

To discuss how Wates Wildscape can support your next scheme, please send an email, or for more on Wates Land and Development and the Wates Wildscape offer, visit the website.

wateswildscape@wates.co.uk
www.wates.co.uk/wates-wildscape

19-20 November
Excel London

elementalLONDON debuts!

This new exhibition for London is focused on the twin aims of advancing building efficiency and decarbonisation

ElementalLONDON is a new event coming to London's Excel on 19-20 November 2025. This new exhibition for London is focused on the twin aims of advancing building efficiency and decarbonisation.

The 4,000 attendees expected at elementalLONDON encompass a variety of roles and disciplines across commercial and residential buildings. The common thread across a community of decision makers who are responsible for the reduction of energy use and carbon emissions in the built environment. Here are the key reasons why you should attend.

Engaging speaker programme

The two-day programme of thought-provoking and informative content includes five theatres and over 200 expert speakers from government, industry and academia.

The elemental Arena will feature keynote speakers and lively debates on decarbonising the built environment and the National Home Improvement Council (NHIC) Knowledge Hub will cover everything you need to know about housing, from the Future Homes Standard to the Warm Homes Plan and anything in between. The Climate Solutions Theatre will showcase heating and cooling issues and solutions in commercial and public buildings, a key area of decarbonisation.

Peer-to-peer learning will also play a key role in the programme, with visitors given the chance to collaborate with others, share knowledge and exchange ideas from their own projects and challenges, which will help ensure better outcomes for all.

Renowned architect Michael Pawlyn has signed up to speak on 20 November. He set up architecture practice Exploration in 2007 to focus on high-performance buildings and the circular economy after previously working with the late Nicholas Grimshaw on the Eden Project.

Pawlyn joins a growing list of speakers from across the building supply chain. Some confirmed speakers so far include:

- Phil Steele, future technologies evangelist, Octopus Energy
- Ben Cross, managing partner, More
- Marcella Ucci, professor in healthy & sustainable buildings, UCL
- Jess Hrivnak, sustainability lead, RIBA
- Janet Smith, head of sustainability, The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust
- Shabna Hayes, regional director, AECOM
- Freya Scott, public health engineer, Arup
- Anna Thompson, head of engagement, LABC
- Craig Robertson, associate director & head of sustainability, AHMM

The event programme is fully CPD certified by The CPD Group, so visitors can collect CPD points by attending sessions hosted by our engaging and insightful speakers. Keep your eyes peeled for the full event timetable which will be revealed soon.

Big name exhibitors

elementalLONDON will feature over 200 exhibitors across a wide variety of key industry sectors.

Exhibitors at the event include leading brands operating in the built environment industry, with a wide selection of heating, cooling, ventilation, renewable energy and building management systems and controls suppliers, and more. Key exhibitors already signed up include:

- Samsung Climate Solutions
- Mitsubishi Electric
- Baxi
- Mixergy
- Danfoss
- Panasonic
- Geberit
- Resideo

A full list of exhibitors is available, but make sure to follow elementalLONDON on LinkedIn for all the latest announcements of who's attending.

To register for your free ticket to elementalLONDON, please scan the QR Code or visit elementallondon.show for more information.

Article supplied by elementalLONDON

Vent-Axia expands production facilities

British ventilation manufacturer **Vent-Axia** has expanded its Dudley Manufacturing centre, located on the Blackbrook Valley Industrial Estate. The expansion increases capacity to support the anticipated uptick in demand for low-carbon ventilation. This significant investment provides Vent-Axia with a dedicated factory for its commercial and industrial ventilation range, alongside new equipment, additional warehouse space, and new members of staff, adding to its production team. These improvements will enhance production times and allow customers to benefit from shorter lead times.

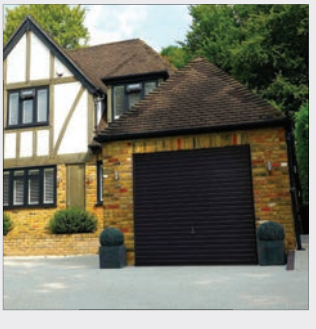
0344 856 0590 www.vent-axia.com

Modular Highline 275 Range shortlisted

British heating and cooling equipment specialist **Diffusion** is celebrating its Modular Highline 275 fan coil range sweeping the board by reaching the final in seven different prestigious awards. Officially launched in May 2025, the Modular Highline 275 has achieved a shortlisting in every award it has been entered in. The Modular Highline 275 expands Diffusion's award-winning modular range of fan coil units to offer a new, higher-capacity option, providing airflows up to 514 l/s. This ensures that even large-scale spaces, such as hotels, receptions, and offices, can benefit from the range's modular design.

020 8783 0033 www.diffusion-group.com

Complete GaraPro automation kit including a Carlton or Horizon Up-and-Over Door for just £949

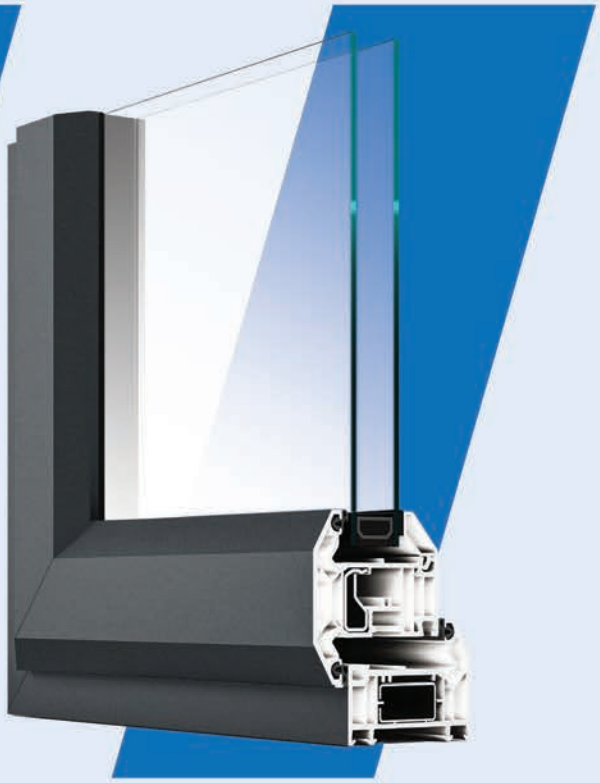


Garador has launched an all-in-one GaraPro automation solution, combining the renowned reliability and style of a Carlton or Horizon up-and-over door with a new GaraPro electric operator with handset and framed retractable gear – all for just £949 + VAT, fully fitted.

Garador's Carlton and Horizon are two of the most popular garage door designs, each engineered for strength, weather resistance, and low maintenance. Available in four sizes: 2,134 x 1,981 mm, 2,134 x 2,136 mm, 2,284 x 1,981 mm, and 2,284 x 2,136 mm. Includes in a GaraPro Operator, a compact, high-torque motor unit engineered which delivers smooth, whisper-quiet operation with minimal headroom. One handset is also included. An optional Retractable Plus enhancement is available at an additional cost. This exclusive offer is available through Garador's nationwide network of approved installers. To learn more or book your installation, please contact Garador.

0330 4415 222 promo@garador.co.uk

OMNIA



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Light, air & efficiency

Richard Williams of Velux explains why windows are fundamental to the balancing act architects need to perform in order to design the right building fabric.

Windows and doors are not simply part of a building's envelope; they shape how spaces perform, contribute to fabric efficiency, and help deliver low-carbon, healthy environments for occupants. Designing openings within the building fabric has always required architects to balance aesthetics, structure, and performance. Today, that balance has become increasingly complex as regulation, sustainability targets, and occupant expectations converge. Doors and windows play a critical role in defining thermal performance, daylighting, ventilation, and wellbeing, making them integral rather than peripheral to design intent.

The conversation around doors and windows is no longer limited to material selection or frame detail. These components are now part of a broader system in which energy efficiency and carbon reduction are paramount. With Building Regulations tightening, the performance of glazing and frames contributes directly to whole building targets for heat loss, overheating mitigation, and operational energy use. In practice, this means architects must treat the design of openings not in isolation, but as interdependent with insulation strategies, airtightness measures, and services integration.

Access to natural light remains one of the most powerful benefits that well considered glazing can deliver. Research consistently highlights the role of daylight in improving occupant health, productivity, and mood. For designers, window and rooflight positioning determines how light is distributed within a space, whether the aim is to minimise artificial lighting demand or to create a specific spatial character. The proportions and placement of openings can transform small areas into generous, uplifting environments while maintaining energy performance.

Studies show that roof windows can deliver up to two times more daylight than facade windows of a comparable size, because of the direct angle of overhead light. This is especially relevant for deep plan or single-storey spaces where wall glazing alone may not achieve sufficient penetration. Flat roof windows extend this opportunity further, and can offer up to three times more daylight as they introduce it into areas where conventional windows cannot be used at all. The proportions and placement of these openings can transform small areas into generous, uplifting environments while still supporting energy performance goals.

One example of this approach is the use of roof windows, which are frequently specified to introduce daylight deep into plan forms or retrofit projects. By opening up previously underlit spaces, such solutions can significantly improve spatial quality while supporting low-energy lighting strategies.

Architects need to weigh options carefully to ensure they suit the intended use and context of each space

Ventilation & indoor comfort

In parallel, windows and doors are vital in supporting natural ventilation strategies. Cross ventilation, stack effect, and purge ventilation depend on the thoughtful arrangement of openings within a floor plan. Mechanical systems continue to play a role, but low-energy buildings increasingly look to natural or hybrid strategies to reduce reliance on active cooling. Operable windows, rooflights, and glazed doors provide adaptable solutions for seasonal shifts, enabling designers to respond to both occupant comfort and carbon targets.

Roof windows

Although roof windows may sometimes be perceived as 'standard' items, in practice, specification decisions can have significant implications for both performance and long-term maintenance. Architects need to weigh options carefully to ensure they suit the intended use and context of each space.

Operation type also has an impact on usability. Centre-pivot windows, for example, are practical where accessibility is straightforward, but top hung or dual function models may be preferable where clear outward views or higher installation heights are priorities. Where manual reach is limited, electric or solar-powered roof windows support options for remote control or integration into home automation.

The number and arrangement of roof windows are another design variable. A single unit can provide valuable daylight and ventilation, but multiple windows in combination can transform interior spaces.

Responding to the unintended consequences of Part O

Part O's simplified calculation method has led to unintended consequences by limiting maximum glazing areas and reducing daylight opportunities. For architects, this creates a tension between compliance and design quality. The key is to prevent overheating without compromising daylight or spatial character.

To resolve this, approaches such as external shading systems stack-effect ventilation, and passive design that balances glazing ratios, shading, and ventilation are emerging as practical ways to comply while keeping interiors bright and welcoming.

Richard Williams is senior architectural development manager at Velux

Introducing ME007 FR Window & Door Sealing Membrane +

Illbruck is proud to launch the ME007 FR Window & Door Sealing Membrane +, the first product in a new range of + Class B membranes designed to meet the evolving needs of modern construction. Thanks to advanced coating developments and fleece technology, this cutting-edge solution delivers exceptional performance in extreme weather conditions while ensuring durability, airtightness, and fire safety.

With climate change driving increasingly hotter, wetter, and colder conditions throughout the year, building materials must now offer higher resilience than ever before. Illbruck's new + membranes have been engineered to outperform industry standards, ensuring structures remain protected against the elements, even in the most exposed locations.

Exceeding W1 industry standards, ME007 provides superior protection against wind-driven rain and harsh environmental conditions, ensuring building integrity in even the most challenging climates. When tested around a window in a key BBA test, ME007 membrane resisted the passage of water at 2,400 pa. This is equivalent to rain battering the membrane at 130 mph!

Designed with low energy and Passivhaus standards in mind, ME007 achieves excellent airtightness down to <0.01 m^2/m^2.h.50Pa, helping reduce energy loss and improve thermal performance. The membrane conforms to our principles of 'inside tighter than outside' allowing moisture within the building to escape, preventing mould and mildew formation while maintaining an optimal indoor environment and protecting the investment of the Window or door it is sealing. ME007 offers long-lasting UV resistance and can be left exposed on the building site for 12 months.

Tested both in isolation and as a complete system (including overlaps, adhesive, and primer), ME007 is fully complaint with EN 13501-1, ensuring total fire safety assurance for high-rise and "relevant" buildings.

Available in 50 m rolls with pre-cut slit widths from 60 mm to 100 mm, ME007 is versatile and easy to install. When used in conjunction with illbruck FR Membrane adhesive (SP025), it forms a robust, continuous weather and airtight barrier across the building envelope, ensuring long-lasting protection around windows, door, junctions and penetrations.

hello@cpg-europe.com www.illbruck.com

Warehouses get the One Can treatment

Warehouses on a Dorset industrial estate have received an impressive makeover using Bradite One Can. Half a dozen buildings on the Townsend Business Park at Bere Regis have been thoroughly spruced up by RJ Murphy Decorators Ltd. The all-in-one quality of the coating which is both primer and finisher, plus the quick drying time meant the job could be handled by four to five painters in one week.

"We just had to clear vehicles out the way of one building and could complete that before moving on to the next," says Ray Murphy. The two-tone colour scheme – Moorland Green BS12B21 and with trims painted in Mushroom BS10B19 gives a fresh new look to the estate.

Supplied by Brewers Decorator Centre in nearby Christchurch the choice of One Can was a foregone conclusion for the contractor. "It does what it says on the tin," says Ray, adding; "and its sticky" referring to the formulation's adhesive strength on any substrate.

The water-based, virtually odourless, coating has tough anti-corrosive properties particularly suited to exposed or coastal locations.

One Can – Matt is a primer, stain blocker and matt finish, all in one can. Water-based, this product is virtually odourless and is touch dry in as little as 30 minutes, with recoats possible after just one hour.

Applied by spray, roller or brush, One Can – Matt provides excellent adhesion to many substrates, including interior and exterior joinery, metals, building plastics and cementitious surfaces, whilst also providing powerful stain blocking.

No matter the substrate it is applied to, One Can – Matt delivers a professional finish along with tough anti-corrosive properties.

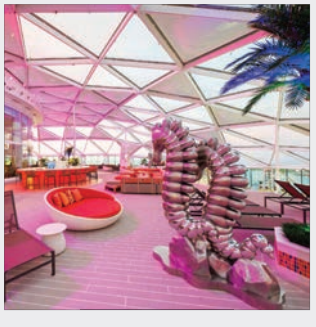
01248 600315 bradite.com

Invisible door automation brings seamless access to London cafe

Discreetly integrated into the entrance of Acai Berry cafe in London's busy SW1 district, a **TORMAX** iMotion 1401 underfloor door operator ensures effortless, hands-free access for all visitors. Offering invisible automation, this innovative swing door solution provides a neat, contemporary appearance that complements the cafe's modern design, while delivering the reliable performance demanded in such a high-footfall location. With the mechanism concealed entirely beneath the floor, the entrance maintains an uncluttered aesthetic, free from bulky overhead drive units, and is engineered for durability with minimal ongoing maintenance requirements. The Acai Berry cafe offers a welcoming space for customers to enjoy bowls, smoothies, and fresh juices, all focused on natural ingredients and wellness. With a reputation for creating spaces that are both stylish and accessible, the TORMAX automated entrance ensures inclusivity for all visitors. TORMAX's iMotion operators are built using cutting-edge AC motor technology, delivering quiet, smooth, and energy-efficient performance over an exceptionally long service life.

sales@tormax.co.uk

Novum Structures and Pyroguard deliver innovative facade glazing system for cruise liners



Novum Structures and **Pyroguard** have worked in partnership to design a fire-rated, clear-view facade glazing system that is fully tested and accredited to meet A30 and A60 fire resistance criteria for use on cruise liners. The innovative solution was developed for the Royal Caribbean Group and first used as part of its latest 'Wonder of the Seas' liner. Novum's design aimed to achieve the maximum glazed area, with minimised steel frame, offering an unimpaired vision for the passengers. Pyroguard's glazing system had to deliver exceptional fire resistance while maintaining a clear-view facade glazing system without obstructing frame elements. Specifically, it had to meet A30 and A60 fire-resistance criteria. The Pyroguard and Novum glazing solution achieved IMO MED (International Maritime Organisation Marine Equipment Directive) certifications, which ensure the system meets strict fire and safety performance for marine applications. Steve Goodburn, business development director at Pyroguard said: "We are delighted to have worked closely with Novum to develop fully tested and certified fire-rated, clear-view facade glazing systems for cruise liners."

01942 710 720 www.pyroguard.eu

Renovation of office building with captivating rhythmic facade

A company working out technically sophisticated solutions wants to communicate this to the outside world with an appropriate visual business card. The same was true for RE-AVES in Helmond (NL). Managing Director Reinier Vogels bought a building a few years back to completely gut it and make it ready for the next 20 years (or more). Spaces were opened up, everything was finished down to the smallest detail, and the Linarte facade with random profiling was the crowning touch.

RE-AVES contacted fellow native LXarchitects. LXarchitects explored the possibilities. They compared materials and colours, also considered wooden variants. “The choice eventually fell on aluminium combined with stucco. This provides a nice contrast, isn’t as commonplace, and will stand the test of time. The neutral black and white colour palette also repeats itself in the interior, where we added warmth through natural materials.”

The architect deliberately sought a changing rhythm for the new facade. A private home in the city with a Linarte facade visually convinced its client.

LXarchitects chose random profiling and determined a nice mix. Craftsmen neatly adopted this design and finished between the frames with flashing. Installers followed the drawing and alternated narrow, wide, and

border profiles according to the design. All the profiles, accounting for 78 m², were placed within five days. Smooth installation is one of Linarte’s advantages. You have to think of it as a kind of accordion with 2 mm margin (narrower and wider) per profile. So if there are already frames, you can still slide various profiles in and out to create the desired look. That gives more freedom in execution. Ease of installation is also a strong argument in new buildings, in addition to the vertical character that makes the facade easy to clean and the possibility of integrating techniques. Here, for example, cables from the embedded security cameras run neatly behind the profiles, for a sleek result.

www.renson.net

Are pitched roof underlays ‘easy to install’?

The marketing of pitched roof underlays should avoid the phrase ‘easy to install,’ which is subjective and depends on user experience. Pitched roofing is a skilled trade, and suggesting that an underlay is ‘easy’ to install implies it can be done well even with limited experience.

For that reason, the phrase features in the document Words and Phrases to Avoid Using, published by the Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI). Nevertheless, pitched roof underlays can include features and characteristics that make them as user-friendly as possible for experienced installers.

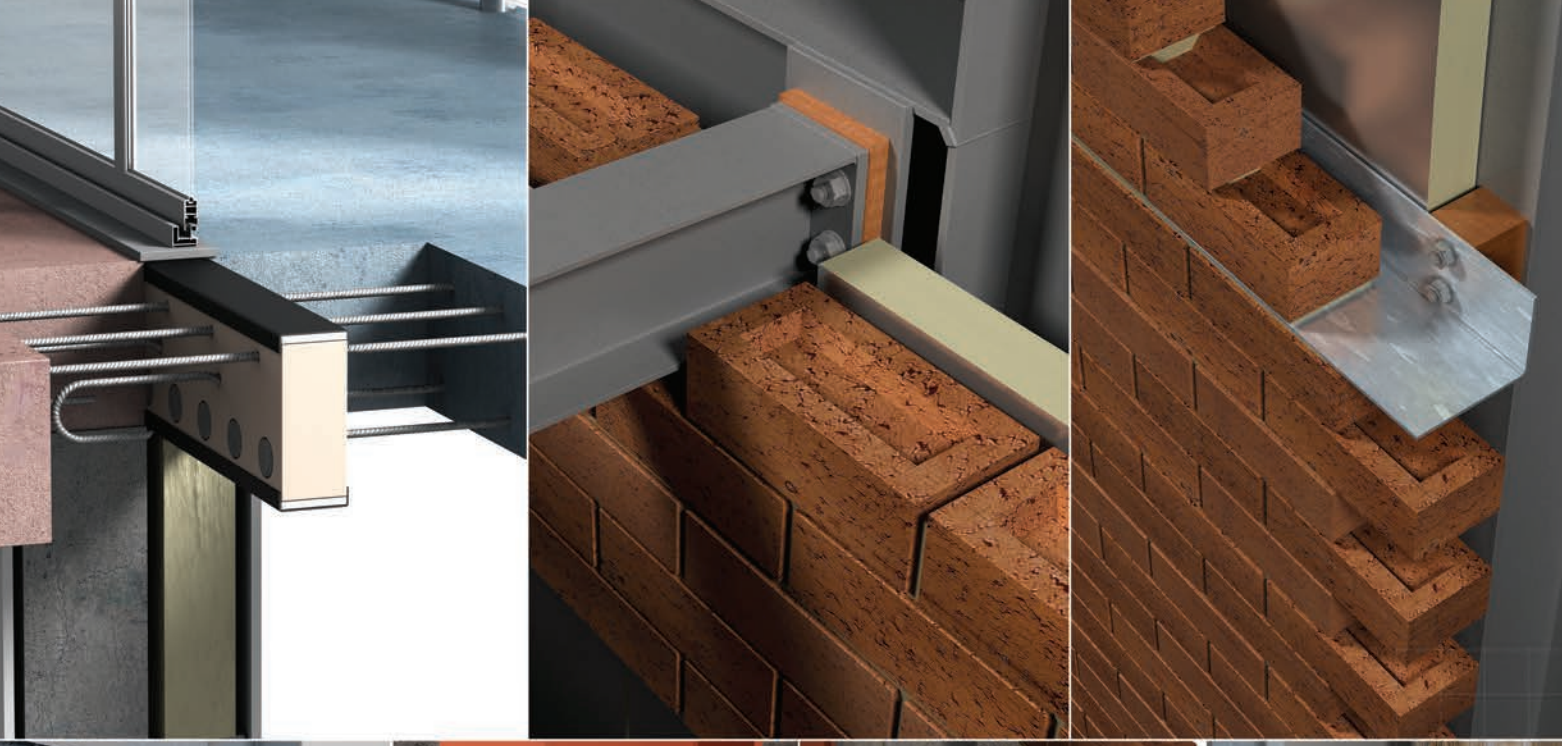
Essential repairs and renovation are being carried out on a parish church in Oxfordshire, as part of which St Mary’s Barton is receiving a new pitched roof covering and underlay. The roofing work has been carried out by contractors Speakman Roofing. The church’s pitched roof specification was the responsibility of the roofing contractor, and Speakman Roofing put forward Proctor Air® as their preferred underlay. “We use Proctor Air on nearly every project. The feedback from our installers is that it’s good to use. It

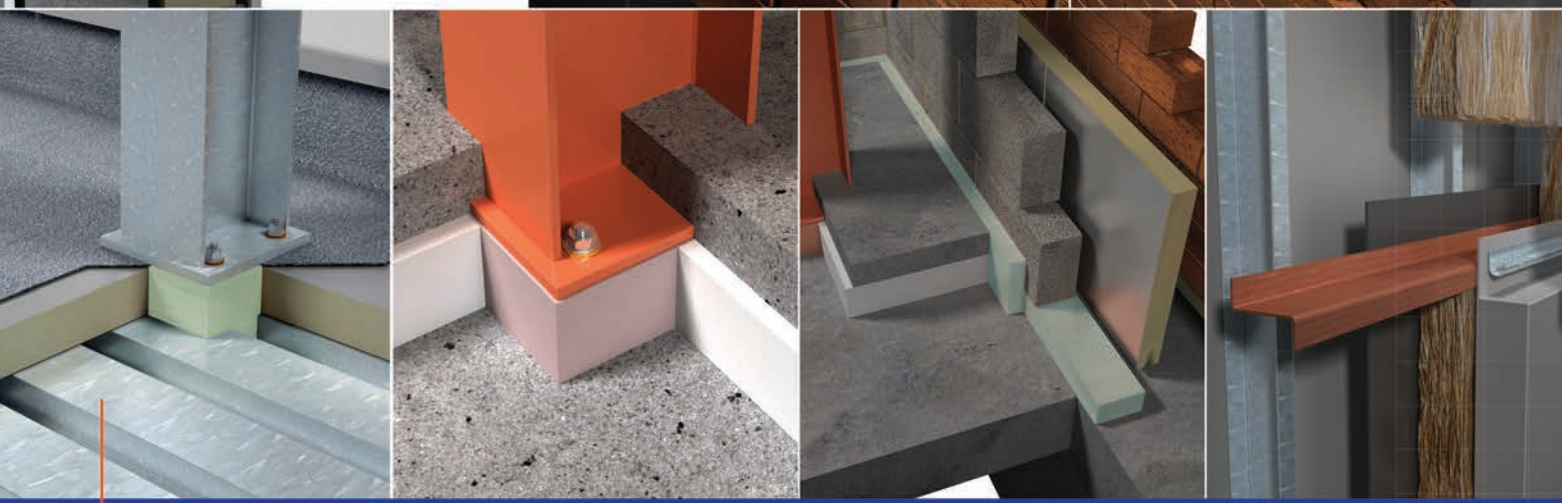
gets all the little things right that matter to the people using it” said Andrew Speakman, director of Speakman Roofing.

Feedback on the positive and negative aspects of a construction product, like a pitched roof underlay, can significantly alter how that product (and its manufacturer) is perceived in the marketplace. Feedback from end users is crucial. If a product is difficult to install, even for an experienced contractor, then the manufacturer needs to understand that. Otherwise, contractors will complain to their merchants and suppliers, and simply move on to an alternative they prefer. Or the feedback might reach the architect and the product simply doesn’t get specified again. Speaking on this topic on the Proctor Podcast, Will Jones, head of business development at Proctor Group said: “At Proctor Group, we pride ourselves on making products that are fit for purpose. Contractors sometimes speak to us about cheaper alternative products they’ve had a bad experience with, and we carry that feedback into our product development processes.” At St Mary’s Barton, Andrew Speakman, explained: “The one product can cover all eventualities so it’s cost effective – we don’t have to stock different rolls of different membranes.”

“The air permeability of Proctor Air makes it very versatile for us,” said Andrew Speakman. “St Mary’s Church featured a traditional pantile on a mortar-bedded creasing tile eave. Proctor Air gave us a breathable roof without sacrificing the traditional elements, and while maintaining the original appearance of the building.”

01250 872 261
proctorgroup.com/products/proctor-air





armatherm.co.uk

ARMATHERM™
THERMAL BRIDGING SOLUTIONS

THERMAL BRIDGING SOLUTIONS

Armatherm™ is one of the leading suppliers of thermal break materials for the construction industry. Our goal is to provide architects, engineers, and contractors with the knowledge and materials to effectively address thermal bridging issues. Armatherm™ thermal break materials have low thermal conductivity, high strength, and have been designed and tested in a number of load baring applications where they effectively reduce or prevent thermal bridging.

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Senior Architectural Systems publishes EPD for its SF52 aluminium curtain wall system

Senior Architectural Systems, a leading UK supplier of aluminium fenestration solutions, has published a new independently verified and product specific Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) which delivers a new level of transparency for its SF52 aluminium curtain wall system.

Developed in accordance with EN 15804+A2 and independently verified to ISO 14025:2011, the new EPD provides transparent, third-party assessed data on the environmental performance of the SF52 curtain wall system. This includes key metrics such as global warming potential (GWP), energy consumption, and water usage across the product's full life cycle.

Unlike many comparable EPDs in the market, which typically report carbon figures for 1 kg of aluminium billet and often exclude the environmental impacts of profile extrusion and non-aluminium components, Senior's latest publication sets a new standard. The SF52 EPD offers fully project-relevant data by detailing the environmental impact of all system components, including thermal breaks, gaskets, and fixings, as well as fabrication and delivery to site via Senior's fabricator network. The energy-intensive extrusion process is also accounted for, providing a truly comprehensive overview.

Senior's new EPD has also been developed in line with the latest BS EN 18001:2024+A2 Product Category Rules for curtain walling, using the recommended reference sizes for the system. Importantly, the glazing has been excluded, as it is not normally supplied by system houses. If glazing is included, it can distort results when divided down to 1 m² declared unit. The heavy weight of glass, combined with its relatively low carbon per kg, makes the overall figures for the aluminium system look lower than they really are after conversion. That's why for complete accuracy, glazing should always be reported separately through its own EPD.

By taking this approach, we believe our SF52 EPD gives a true and transparent figure per m² of aluminium system. This more holistic approach not only aligns with rising industry expectations around transparency and project-specific carbon reporting, but also underlines Senior's proactive strategy to support informed specification. The SF52 EPD is also unique in that it includes non-linear scaling, with three system sizes verified and consolidated into a single publication. This enables specifiers to accurately calculate and scale the environmental impact of any SF52 mullion-drained system configuration. Senior and its verifier, EPD Hub, believe this level of detail is currently unmatched within the sector.

By making this data available, Senior is supporting the whole construction supply chain, from architects and main contractors to specialist fabricators and installers, in making more informed decisions when specifying aluminium curtain wall systems. The published EPD, which is available on request or via Senior's NBS Source profile, also supports compliance with increasingly stringent building regulations and sustainability frameworks such as BREEAM and Passivhaus projects.

Senior's SF52 curtain wall system, which is manufactured in the UK using responsibly sourced aluminium, offers excellent thermal performance and high levels of recyclability. The publication of its EPD reinforces the product's suitability for a wide range of low-carbon construction projects, including new builds and refurbishments across the commercial, education, residential, and public sectors.

Senior is also in the process of developing further EPDs for its aluminium system portfolio, including the patented PURe® range, underlining the company's ongoing commitment to sustainable specification and transparent reporting.

Luke Osborne, Senior Architectural Systems' UK sustainability lead, said: "We know how important reliable environmental data has become for everyone involved in the construction process, from design and procurement, right through to delivery and installation. The Environmental Product Declaration document for our SF52 curtain wall system gives our customers across the supply chain the information they need to meet their own sustainability targets and regulatory requirements. It's also part of our wider commitment to raising standards and driving continuous improvement in environmental performance."

Download the SF52 EPD via Senior's NBS Source profile or request a copy from UK sustainability lead Luke Osborne at lukeo@sasmail.co.uk

For more information, please email enquiries@sasmail.co.uk

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Evolution for the perfect pitch

Gareth Wright of Manthorpe explores how updates to British Standards supporting the use of dry fix solutions are driving innovation in pitched roofing across the UK.

It is no exaggeration to say there has been a significant evolution in pitched roofing over the past few decades, largely due to advances in British Standards covering roofing. This is particularly the case for BS 5534: the British Standard Code of Practice for slating and tiling for pitched roofs and vertical cladding.

Dry fix systems for roof junctions, such as ridge and verge, have been around since the 1970s, but it was the 2014 revision to BS 5534 that really drove the changes needed to encourage the use of dry fix systems. The other main driver has been innovations in dry fix systems being continually developed by manufacturers.

In 2014, BS 5534 was revised to include new requirements for the mechanical fixing of roof tiles and associated components such as ridge and hip tiles, verge and eaves tiles. No longer can components solely rely on mortar for their security. Mortar can still be used, but a mechanical fix or connection to the roof structure is now also required. In practice, this means that dry fix systems, which secure components using mechanical fasteners such as nails, screws, clamps and interlocking units, are a better option.

Until the introduction in 2018 of a new British Standard, BS 8612: Specification for dry fixed ridge, hip, and verge systems for tiling and slating, dry fix systems were generally unregulated. BS 8612 provides material specifications and durability criteria for dry fix components, as well as performance criteria for rain resistance and mechanical resistance against wind loads. For materials already covered by an existing standard, BS 8612 simply refers to the relevant standard.

A dry fix system has several major functions; it must remain durable for its expected lifespan, it must withstand predicted wind loads, calculated in accordance with BS 5534, to prevent the system and associated ridge and hip tiles from being dislodged, and it must resist the ingress of driving rain and snow. An added benefit of a dry ridge system is that it can

As regulations and technology advance, the adoption of dry fix methods has become the new standard in pitched roofing

provide high-level roof space ventilation in accordance with BS 5250 where required.

A great advantage of dry fix systems is that they are designed to be maintenance free. No matter how well a contractor installs a mortar bedded verge, ridge or hip, eventually the elements and natural building settlement will damage the mortar, making it ineffective. In contrast, dry fix systems can cope with settlement by allowing a degree of movement in the surrounding materials. Dry fix systems provide a neat, consistent finish, often with concealed fixings, which maintains the visual appeal of the roofline over time.

Careful design and testing of dry fix systems means that their mechanical resistance to wind loads is proven. Therefore, systems can be designed to withstand the highest wind loads a roof is ever likely to encounter, based on BS 5534, once in 50-year probability calculations.

Dry verge systems are a neat solution for roof verges, eliminating the need for mortar bedding. The verge units are weatherproof and provide a secure fixing for each verge tile, meaning that they can be regarded as one of the two required tile fixings at the verge. Ridge end caps are available, which allow the dry verge system to seamlessly integrate with the dry ridge.

If there is any resistance to the use of dry fix systems, it is generally based on perceived cost. Though the initial cost of dry fix components may be higher than traditional mortar, the reduced installation time and long-term savings in maintenance and repairs more than outweigh the upfront investment. Call backs alone can cost roofers thousands in lost profits and were common practice in housebuilding, where the settlement of a new building quickly damaged the solid, inflexible mortar joints at ridges, hips and verge details. Because no mortar is needed, installation can proceed in damp or cold conditions that would make traditional methods impractical. This increases efficiency and reduces project timelines.

Dry fix pitched roofing continues to evolve, with manufacturers innovating to improve aesthetics, ease of installation, and environmental sustainability. Recycled materials and improved ventilation technology are increasingly common features. As climate change brings more extreme weather events, reliable and resilient roofing systems will become ever more essential.

In summary, dry fix pitched roofing systems offer a modern, durable, and regulation-compliant solution for roof verges, ridges, hips, valleys, and abutments. Their ease of installation, minimal maintenance, and strong weather resistance make them a smart investment for both new and existing buildings. As regulations and technology advance, the adoption of dry fix methods has become the new standard in pitched roofing across the construction industry.

Gareth Wright is sales director at Manthorpe

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The case for bespoke flat roofs

With ensuring effective drainage and insulation being essential for all flat roof projects, Matthew Evans of Kingspan Insulation explores how tapered systems can be used to meet both requirements, and adhere to designs.

As we head towards the winter months, flat roofs across the country are set to be put to the test from wind, rain, sleet and freezing temperatures. When working on any project involving a flat roof, whether it be a new build or refurbishment, ensuring the surface will drain properly is essential for the lasting health of the roof. At the same time, these constructions also need to be effectively insulated to limit the heating demand for the building. Tapered insulation systems combine both insulation and a fall for drainage in a simple, lightweight solution which is designed especially to meet the demands of your project.

Despite their name, flat roofs are laid to a slight angle (fall), which allows any moisture to drain down to internal or external guttering and be channelled off the roof. The finished fall should be at least 1:80 in all areas of the roof, including at the hip and valley joints. Where the fall is either insufficient or fails to channel water to the correct points, it can lead to water ponding on roofs. This standing water can contribute to mould and algae growth, increase the thermal stress on the waterproofing layer during freeze thaw cycles, and add additional weight to the deck – potentially causing it to deflect over time, shortening the lifespan of the roof.

Roofs also play a key role in limiting heat loss from a building. For new build roofs, the Notional Dwelling/Building specification (contained in the relevant Approved Documents or Technical Handbook) provides a good starting point when deciding what U-value should be achieved. On retrofits, the worst case U-value the roof should achieve will depend on whether it is just the existing waterproofing system being replaced (roof refurbishment) or the deck itself is being replaced (full re-roof). The regulations in England, Scotland and Wales all provide some flexibility in these U-values for refurbishment projects to allow for potential refurbishment challenges that the projects can pose.

In the case of flat roof retrofits, careful inspections will also be needed to confirm the condition of the existing deck, waterproofing system, and any insulation that is present. If any of these are retained, they must be sound and capable of supporting the dead load of the insulation, and the potential condensation risk should be considered by an expert. In all cases, site teams will need to ensure the deck is in good condition before the insulation is fitted, with care taken to ensure the finished system falls to drainage points.

Tapered solutions

The traditional approaches to establishing a fall on a flat roof are either to lay screed to a fall or to install angled timber firrings beneath a plywood deck. The insulation layer is then fitted above this, in a separate operation. This can be labour and time intensive, require careful planning from the roofing contractor to ensure the correct fall, and can lead to substantive constructions with the thickness of insulation needed to achieve the required U-values.

Alternatively, tapered insulation systems can help to streamline processes, ensure correct drainage and reduce the overall depth of the construction. These systems typically comprise three types of rigid insulation boards: tapered, hip and valley, and flat 'packer boards' (which sit below the other types of board). In some cases, systems can be mechanically fixed, meaning no time is lost waiting for the system to dry – and a much lighter alternative to screed.

In addition, as the insulation boards themselves are used to create the fall, the overall system thickness can be slimmer than with the alternative approaches. Most tapered systems are manufactured from PIR insulation; however, some manufacturers provide them with vacuum insulation panel (VIP) packer boards, achieve much lower thermal conductivities than standard PIR packer boards and can make it possible to achieve the necessary U-value with a reduced depth of insulation.

To ensure tapered systems provide both the required U-value and fall, manufacturers typically offer dedicated tapered design services. For new build roofs, these designs can be developed based on the roof plans. For refurbishments, the manufacturer may offer to survey the existing deck. The surveyor will review key aspects, for example, the position of features such as rooflights and the location of the rainwater outlets which the system will need to be designed to fall to.

From this, the designers can then develop a tailored system layout which will provide effective drainage and meet your target area weighted U-value with the slimmest possible construction. The design will also typically include a condensation risk analysis.

A clear way forward

Ensuring what is designed is built is a major hurdle on any project. The tailored design approach for tapered roofing systems means architects and specifiers can have greater confidence that the finished system will match the design, and deliver on the key performance targets.

Matthew Evans is director of technical and regulatory affairs at Kingspan Insulation

Ensuring what is designed is actually built is a major hurdle on any project

AIM wall cavity barrier under zero compression

AIM – Acoustic & Insulation Manufacturing has demonstrated that its Wall Cavity Barrier (Red Edition) provides effective fire performance without compression in masonry construction. The new zero compression solution means AIM's Wall Cavity Barrier (Red Edition) can be installed easily with green brickwork, or other forms of masonry cladding, and avoids the problem of "brick push off" which can be associated with barriers installed under compression.

Acting as a fire and smoke barrier for masonry cavity walls, AIM's Wall Cavity Barrier (Red Edition) is used to provide a fully closed cavity fire barrier along compartmentation lines in the external cavity wall in a wide variety of construction types, including masonry and SFS. The different barrier thicknesses of 75 mm, 100 mm and 125 mm provide 30, 60 and 120-minute fire ratings to BS EN 1366-4.

Applicable to masonry construction only, zero compression installation has been tested horizontally and vertically for use within voids up to 400 mm. The barrier

is installed and then the bricks built up against its edge. Once the mortar has set, AIM Acrylic Intumescent Mastic should be applied between the barrier and both substrates. A DPC separating layer can be included if required.

"Tests have demonstrated that the AIM Wall Cavity Barrier is effective without compression in masonry voids, a significant product enhancement that offers far greater flexibility during construction," explains Ian Exall, AIM's commercial director.

The high-density foil faced stone wool barrier also reduces airborne transmission of sound by a minimum of 21dB RW.

AIM will sell slab versions of the Wall Cavity Barrier (Red Edition) for zero compression applications – not cut barrier. This is so that the installer has total flexibility in sizing of the barrier to exactly suit the cavity void size as required.

Installation details, with a step by step guide, can be found in AIM's Wall Cavity Barrier (Red edition) Technical Guide, which can be downloaded at aimlimited.co.uk/solutions/wall-cavity-barrier.

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EJOT CROSSFIX® helps shape the future of sustainable housing

The construction of two apartment buildings within the ground-breaking Climate Innovation District urban regeneration project in Leeds demonstrates how the EJOT CROSSFIX® substructure system can be used to incorporate rainscreen facades into highly sustainable buildings, without the need to vastly increase insulation depth.

Developed by Citu in partnership with one of Scandinavia's leading architectural practices, White Arkitekter, and civil and structural engineers Civic, the development is an entirely new sustainable neighbourhood featuring over 500 low energy homes with integrated amenities, built to a PHPP (Passive House Planning Package) assessed design.

The development's two apartment buildings, Aire Lofts and District Lofts, feature rear ventilated facades (RVFs) finished with two types of Swisspearl products externally.

EJOT CROSSFIX® was chosen for the critically important RVF substructure because it enabled the construction of a highly insulated envelope without compromising aesthetics, with the added benefit of streamlining installation.

Multiple performance goals

The façade of District Lofts was constructed by Hansen Facades using CROSSFIX, in conjunction with main contractor Artium Construction after its successful deployment on Aire Lofts. Here, the system's versatility and effectiveness were first recognised for attaching secret-fix Ivory panels that demarcate duplex apartments at the ground and first floor levels.

CROSSFIX enabled the use of two different types of cladding to be used, including secret-fix panels for the ground and first floors.

District Lofts is one of two apartment buildings at Citu's Climate Innovation District development in central Leeds.

The facade's EWS1 (External Wall System 1) fire safety rating had to be balanced with thermal and ventilation goals. Given the high thermal requirements, designed to a weighted U Value (based on a typical subframe arrangement) of 0.13 W/m²k, the cavity depth had to accommodate insulation with a 250mm thickness and maintain the required ventilation for a system of this type.

A sustainable façade enabler

The CROSSFIX substructure specified consisted of a 220mm Konsole K1 in A2 stainless steel, complete with the Powerkey for enhanced structural stability in the same metal grade, which supported L, Z and T profiles. The EJOT package was completed with five types of stainless steel fasteners to provide secure assembly with consistent performance.

The CROSSFIX Konsole's stainless steel composition and thermal stop contributed to achieving the facade's 0.13 W/m²K U-value.

CROSSFIX's stainless steel composition helped to achieve the façade's target thermal performance due to its very low thermal conductivity, which minimises the potential for thermal bridging. Coupled with a thermal stop on the CROSSFIX Konsole, this meant that the facade's U-value is actually lower than it would have been if other substructures had been used with the same thickness of insulation.

Whole life cycle advantages were also provided by CROSSFIX because of its recyclable stainless steel composition, which requires less energy to manufacture compared with metals used in other RVF substructure systems – confirmed by an Environmental Product Declaration (EPD).

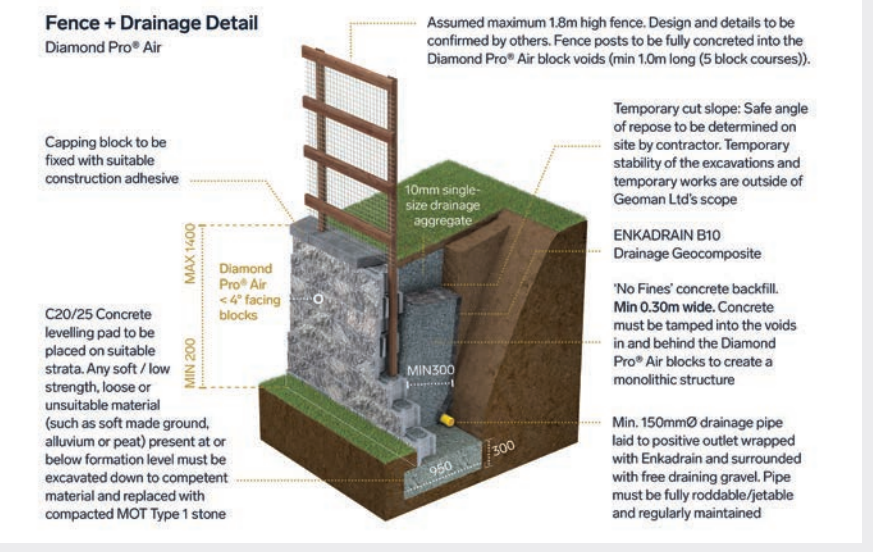
A smart solution for modern construction methods

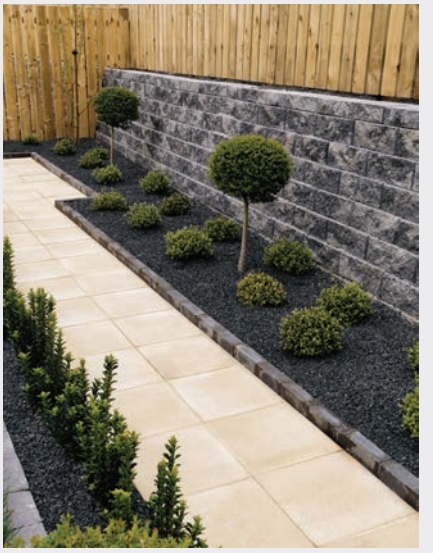
The multiple sustainability benefits provided by CROSSFIX, enhanced further through the system's 'non-flammable' fire resistance rating and a unique design flexibility that enables it to be used in both horizontal and vertical assembly, means it is well-aligned with the higher efficiency, safety and quality targets demanded in modern construction.

In addition, CROSSFIX does not require special or handed brackets in areas of the façade where space is limited, such as locations between windows and other openings. Versatility of the substructure also means that one subframe can be used for both secret-fix and face-fixed cladding.

01977 687040 www.ejot.co.uk

AG introduces lightweight retaining wall solution for streamlined design and build





AG, a third-generation, UK manufacturer of low-carbon paving and building products, has launched Diamond Pro® Air, a lightweight retaining wall solution engineered to streamline construction and maximise site efficiency.

Designed with the practical pressures of housebuilders and contractors in mind, Diamond Pro® Air helps optimise labour, build schedules, and land use, while offering versatile solutions for plot divisions, split-level sites, landscaped areas, and boundary walls.

Each block weighs just 24.5 kg, making it AG's lightest 200 mm high segmental retaining wall block. Despite its reduced weight, it supports gravity walls up to 1 metre and engineered walls up to 3.6 metres. The range's mortarless construction allows walls to be built in all weathers, avoiding delays common with traditional mortar-based systems.

Diamond Pro® Air features a split-face design and natural texture in three warm earth-tone shades – Basalt, Cashel, and Canelletto, perfectly complementing AG's wider walling portfolio for cohesive styling across sites. For walls over 3.6 metres or requiring BBA/HAPAS approval, AG's Vertica range is available.

The blocks feature a near-vertical batter of less than 4 degrees, enabling developers to make the most of every plot. Unlike steeper competitor products, this profile preserves garden and building space, maximising flexibility across even the tightest or most complex sites.

Installation is straightforward and efficient. Diamond Pro® Air's built-in handholds and locator lugs enable precise positioning, while its lightweight design allows for one-person lifting. Delivered right side up on pallets, the blocks can be moved directly to the wall, reducing double handling and simplifying on-site assembly.

Large internal voids in the blocks reduce material use, provide drainage, and align during construction to strengthen the wall. Lightweight design allows up to 20 bales per curtain-sided lorry, cutting transport needs and easing site congestion.

From concept to completion, AG provides an end-to-end support system. Clients can use AG's licensed software for self-service planning and estimation, or take advantage of the family-run company's complimentary in-house Retaining Wall Design Service to produce preliminary layouts tailored to each development.

Diamond Pro® Air is produced at AG's Fivemiletown facility using 100% renewable energy and harvested rainwater. The product mix incorporates aggregates from AG's own quarry and secondary sources and, combined with reduced material use, helps reduce embodied carbon while upholding the company's rigorous sustainability benchmarks.

Complementing AG's wider walling, paving, and brick portfolio, Diamond Pro® Air allows multiple high-quality materials to be sourced from a single supplier. With AG's 'good, better, best' range, consistent aesthetics and quality can be maintained across projects, while simplifying procurement and logistics.

Commenting on the company's latest innovation, Stephen Acheson, CEO of AG, said: "Diamond Pro® Air was developed to address the day-to-day pressures faced on construction sites, from limited land and tight schedules to labour constraints. Its near-vertical profile maximises usable space, while the lightweight, mortarless design makes walls quicker and easier to build, even on split-level sites. Large internal voids, pallet-ready right-side-up delivery, and low-carbon production save time, reduce handling, and support both our ambitious sustainability goals and those of the wider industry. Combined with our design service, distinctive finishes, and broader product portfolio, Diamond Pro® Air provides a complete, practical solution that keeps projects on track and maximises value per plot."

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The Critical Role of Professional Indemnity Insurance in Below-Ground Waterproofing

With the Building Safety Act fundamentally transforming professional accountability, Professional Indemnity insurance in waterproofing has become even more essential, given the emphasis on the responsibilities of the dutyholders involved.

For specifiers navigating increasingly complex regulatory requirements, understanding the critical intersection between PI cover, professional competence, and waterproofing design has never been more vital.

The New Professional Liability Landscape

The Building Safety Act represents the most significant regulatory shift in construction since the 1980s, potentially positioning specifiers as the 'principal designer' dutyholders responsible for material compliance throughout a building's lifecycle.

This expanded accountability framework means waterproofing failures can expose specifiers to substantial financial risk.

The Act's competence requirements demand that specifiers either demonstrate specialist expertise or appoint suitably qualified organisations. Where waterproofing falls outside proven competence or PI cover scope, professional responsibility mandates the engagement of a specialist.

The emphasis on the 'Golden Thread of Information' – comprehensive digital records maintained throughout a building's lifecycle – further underscores the importance of documented competence and appropriate insurance coverage.

Understanding Financial Exposure

Waterproofing failures represent one of the highest-risk scenarios in construction. Unlike many building defects that present primarily aesthetic issues, water ingress can compromise structural integrity, create health hazards, and necessitate extensive and expensive remedial work, often requiring temporary relocation of occupants.

The financial implications extend far beyond immediate repair costs. Business interruption claims, consequential losses, and potential litigation can accumulate rapidly, with some waterproofing failures generating claims running into hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The Building Safety Act's lifecycle approach means even defects that emerge years after initial construction can potentially trigger claims, long after project completion.

Compliance with British Standards

Compliance with British Standards represents another critical dimension of professional liability in waterproofing. The Building Safety Act reinforces the importance of adherence to established standards, creating clear accountability for specifiers who deviate from recognised best practice without adequate justification.

Current British Standards for waterproofing, including BS 8102:2022 for protection of below-ground structures against water ingress, provide detailed guidance on design principles, material selection, and installation requirements. Specifiers who fail to adhere to these standards, or who specify non-compliant products, face increased liability exposure.

The Strategic Value of Specialist Partnership

Given these challenges, partnering with specialist waterproofing companies that carry comprehensive PI insurance represents a strategic approach to risk management. Newton Waterproofing, with over two decades of continuous PI cover specifically for waterproofing design, enables specifiers to transfer design responsibility to an organisation with proven competence and appropriate insurance coverage.

Newton's comprehensive approach includes expert support throughout the specification process, from as early as Stage 0 of the RIBA Plan of Work. All relevant products also undergo independent third-party verification to ensure compliance with relevant British Standards and Building Safety Act requirements, providing documented evidence of regulatory adherence.

With over 175 years' of history, and decades of experience between their industry-qualified experts, Newton offers bespoke waterproofing design services backed by comprehensive PI policies.

Ensuring Professional Protection

For specifiers serious about managing professional risk while delivering superior outcomes, the combination of appropriate PI insurance and specialist partnership represents the gold standard in contemporary waterproofing specification. This approach ensures compliance with Building Safety Act requirements and provides robust protection for both the specifier and the client.

01732 496 510 newtonwaterproofing.co.uk

Permission to criticise

Permitted Development Rights have fast-tracked housing delivery, but often at the expense of thermal comfort and occupant wellbeing, says Andrew Nash from Nuaire, who warns that reforms and ventilation innovation are urgently needed.

Permitted Development Rights (PDR) emerged as a fast-track response to the UK's housing crisis. From 2013, PDRs have allowed for change of use for buildings in commercial, business and service use to a dwelling, without the need for planning permission from the local planning authority (LPA). Nor are they subject to full Building Regulations.

By allowing commercial buildings to be repurposed as residential units in this way, they offer a speedy solution to increasing the housing stock. Between 2015/16 and 2022/23, 102,830 new homes were created in England through change of use PDRs, which is approximately 6% of the net additional homes delivered since 2015/16.

Has PDR created more problems?

A 2020 study commissioned by the Government found that homes created through PDRs resulted in 'worse quality residential environments' than those that required LPA planning permission. By sidestepping the usual regulatory frameworks, PDR conversions often escape the rigorous checks designed to ensure homes are safe and comfortable. Critically, they are exempt from Part O of Building Regulations, which addresses overheating in residential dwellings and aims to protect the health and wellbeing of occupants by reducing the occurrence of high indoor temperatures. This exemption leaves thousands of homes at risk, specifically

Beyond the health risks, overheating also affects mental wellbeing and economic productivity

The result is a proliferation of homes that are technically compliant, yet thermally dysfunctional

those transformed from office buildings with sealed facades and extensive glazing, architectural legacies that can work against thermal comfort.

A 2023 survey on PDR housing and health published by UCL showed that only 63% of respondents were able to keep comfortably cool during hot summer weather conditions.

The risk is growing

This year has been the driest January to June for England since 1976. Spring 2025 is the UK's warmest and sunniest on record, with June the second warmest for the UK since records began in 1884. The situation is worsening; the state of the UK Climate Report 2024 shows the UK is warming at a rate of approximately 0.25°C per decade.

These temperature extremes have serious implications. There were 2,985 heat-related deaths in 2022, the year that saw the highest recorded temperature in England, according to the UK Health Security Agency. This figure is the highest since recording began. Beyond the health risks, overheating affects mental wellbeing and economic productivity.

According to the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE), a predominantly mechanically ventilated home overheats when internal temperatures exceed 26°C for more than 3% of annual occupied hours.

No reliance on natural ventilation

The core challenge with PDR projects is that they often repurpose buildings designed for a completely different occupancy. Former offices were not built to house people 24/7. They typically feature large glazed facades, minimal external shading, and restricted natural ventilation. In densely built up urban heat islands, where many of these buildings are located, opening windows (if they can be opened that is) may not be an option due to noise, air pollution, or security risks. These environmental constraints effectively render passive ventilation strategies unworkable.

Part O prescribes maximum glazed areas on facades (depending on orientation), encourages the use of solar shading and glass with lower g-values to limit solar gains, whilst setting minimum openable window areas so that excess heat can be passively ventilated away. But in the case of PDR schemes, this requirement is not mandatory, leaving developers to comply only with the bare minimum ventilation requirements which are stipulated by Building Regulations Part F. The result is a proliferation of homes that are technically compliant, yet thermally dysfunctional.

A viable solution

Manufacturers work extensively with sustainability engineers carrying out dynamic thermal modelling simulations to assess overheating risk in new build developments. Elevated mechanical ventilation rates and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) with hybrid cooling must be trialled before a designer can consider resorting to air conditioning, and this approach really should be considered in PDR conversions, even if it's not a requirement.

MVHR systems offer a practical and effective approach to meeting Part F and can also assist in improving thermal comfort. MVHR not only preconditions air and filters out pollutants but also provides summer bypass functions, which can be used in combination with elevated airflows to provide free cooling when external temperatures are favourable. These systems can help maintain acceptable indoor temperatures year round and are still regarded as passive means in Approved Document O.

Where window openings are limited and insufficient to naturally ventilate excess heat, standard MVHR systems may not suffice. Hybrid cooling units working in tandem with MVHR could assist in mitigating overheating, activating when indoor temperatures exceed a set threshold (typically 23°C). The potential effectiveness of such a system should be assessed through dynamic thermal modelling.

A call for reform

The urgent need to reform policy around overheating is becoming widely recognised. The House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee recommended expanding Building Regulations Part O to include refurbishments and material change of use.

The built environment community must confront the reality that current practices in PDR conversions are insufficient for the demands of a warming climate.

Andrew Nash is residential divisional manager at Nuaire

Redesigned to deliver in tough conditions – the upgraded Evoplus range from DAB Pumps

DAB Pumps has redefined circulator performance with its redesigned Evoplus electronic wetrotor range, engineered to meet the diverse demands of heating, hot water and airconditioning systems in both residential and commercial properties. More than 800,000 Evoplus units have been installed since 2013 across 82 different countries, with its level of reliability earning it a place among the most dependable products in the market. This success has driven DAB to improve the range even further, optimising the product's looks, usability and ruggedness. Evoplus is built for efficiency. Its variable-speed inverter adjusts motor output to match system demand, saving energy and cutting costs. It's also designed to handle high condensation environments: each model has a cataphoretic coating to protect the pump body from corrosion in damp conditions, including air conditioning systems where liquid runs cooler than the room temperature, and the updated 'Small' version now includes extra separation between the motor and electronics. The new 4-button LCD interface is simple to use, while plug-and-play connections make installation quick, ideal for both upgrades and new systems.

0333 777 5010 www.dabpumps.com

Helping Scotland towards net zero public buildings standard

Fife Council's new Dunfermline Learning Campus is setting the path for the nation's Net Zero Public Building Standard, using Passivhaus Classic as a baseline. **Gilberts Blackpool** has played a pivotal background role in turning the objective into a reality. Core objectives in the building services design has been low carbon consumption, internal comfort and good indoor air quality supplied by mechanical ventilation with heat recovery contributing towards energy consumption of <58 kWh/m²/annum. To ensure the correct air quality and levels of air movement – in line with BB101 – while taking into account idiosyncrasies of the building design, Gilberts' grilles and diffusers have been used throughout the Campus' two new schools – Woodmill and St Columba's. Across the learning spaces and breakout zones, Gilberts' fixed (GD) and adjustable (GSJA) high capacity omni-directional swirl diffusers plus linear bar grilles (LG) maintain the compliant indoor air quality. Their designs mean fresh incoming air is rapidly mixed without excess noise nor draughts and used air extracted in line with each zone's specific air change and heat loading requirements.

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Informative & entertaining round table events

Always looking for new ways to engage with our audience, *ADF* now hosts round table events. With constant updates to building regulations, round tables are an ideal way to gauge industry concerns/problems, to future-proof your marketing strategy. Hosted by our Editor, James Parker, we ask a diverse selection of our readers to attend, providing us with insights across the full spectrum of our audience. Sponsoring a round table enables you to position your brand/company as a voice of authority within the industry.

insights.netmagmedia.co.uk/round-tables

The need for continuous mechanical ventilation

Modern homes require continuous, mechanical ventilation systems to ensure optimal air quality. A professionally designed, efficient, quiet, and economical ventilation system is vital for maintaining comfort and health in 21st-century homes. **Vectaire** can supply MVHRs, dMEVs, and MEVs as well as units designed to cooling units to reduce the risk of summer overheating, and an in-line cooling/heating unit module which can be integrated with Vectaire MVHRs. All these products help prevent mould growth, unpleasant odours and condensation and contribute to a comfortable home environment.

01494 522333 www.vectaire.co.uk

Duŝo: a leaner, smarter approach to leisure-centre showers

Designing shower systems for leisure centres is about more than just choosing the shower model. Behind every fitting, a thermostatic mixing valve (TMV) is essential to maintain safe water temperatures and reliable performance. With the Duŝo sport shower column, Horne combines robust product design with system-level thinking to make that coordination simple.

Resource efficiency – A compact footprint, off-site assembly, fewer components and lighter material inventory reduce environmental impact and simplify installation.

Water & energy saving – Timed shut-off, integral flow regulation and a shorter mixed-water dead-leg minimise wastage of re-cooled water between shower sessions, while lowering overall water consumption.

Smarter installation – Three Duŝo can be supplied from a single upstream Horne 15 TMV, reducing hardware and simplifying

maintenance. For larger installations, the higher-capacity Horne 20 can feed six Duŝo columns simultaneously, making back-to-back layouts across male and female changing rooms especially efficient.

Lower lifecycle cost – Fewer TMVs mean fewer service visits, spares and replacements. Planned preventative maintenance becomes quicker and more achievable, helping leisure operators avoid costly reactive failures. Horne's valve sizing tool is also available to assist design teams in selecting the optimal configuration and performance – a feature that may particularly appeal to architectural technologists and building services engineers.

Built for reality – Rather than multiplying hardware for marginal gain, the Duŝo is engineered to balance user safety, operational efficiency and long-term durability in real-world leisure facilities.

For more information on the Duŝo shower column and Horne's range of thermostatic mixing valves, visit www.horne.co.uk. Both the Duŝo and Horne TMVs can also be specified directly via NBS Source, giving design teams a straightforward route to accurate, up-to-date specification data.

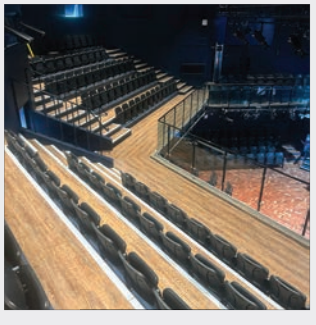
01505 321455
b.link/DusoSport

Cistermiser delivers enhanced water control efficiency for Radisson RED upgrade

A major bathroom refurbishment at the Radisson RED London Heathrow has been completed with significant improvements in water efficiency, hygiene and user experience – supported by the specification of **Cistermiser** infrared sensor taps and urinal control solutions. The £2 million transformation of the hotel's 250 bathrooms focused on maximising sustainability and long-term cost savings without compromising guest comfort. Cistermiser's proven washroom water management technology played a key role in achieving these objectives. Cistermiser's Sensazone and Infrared Taps were specified to replace dated manual fittings in all en-suite bathrooms. The Sensazone system controls the water supply to each washroom area using ceiling-mounted PIR motion sensors, activating water only when the space is occupied. Complementing the Sensazone units are Cistermiser's mains-fed infrared sensor taps, which were selected for their durability, low-maintenance design, and instant hands-free activation. In addition to the en-suite upgrades, Cistermiser's Easyflush Direct urinal control valves were installed in the hotel's communal washroom areas.

0118 969 1611 www.cistermiser.co.uk

Quantum Flooring Accessories elevate theatre safety and design



As part of a major refurbishment at Forest School in London, **Quantum Flooring Accessories** played a central role in delivering a safe, durable, and design-led flooring solution for the school's Drama Theatre. The space, frequently used for performances and events, required compliant stair finishes that could withstand heavy footfall while complementing the updated interior. To meet these requirements, Quantum supplied its QR-SF125R stair nosing profile in Polar Grey – a specification chosen for its exceptional slip resistance, long-term durability, and sleek aesthetic. Supplied undrilled, the profile offered on-site flexibility for precise fitting across bespoke stair layouts, ensuring a high-quality finish throughout. The QR-SF125R is designed specifically for high-traffic environments like educational and public buildings. Its robust aluminium construction and subtly contrasting colour support both safety and visual guidance, while integrating seamlessly into modern interior schemes. By delivering a product that met both functional and design criteria, Quantum Flooring Accessories helped create a safer and more professional environment at Forest School.

0161 627 4222 www.quantumprofilesystems.com

AKW launches new virtual showroom

AKW is pleased to announce the launch of its easy-to-navigate and use virtual showroom. Freely accessible to all via www.akw-ltd.co.uk/virtualshowroom, it features eight different bathrooms that are fully fitted out with AKW products. Created with specifiers, installers and end users in mind, the virtual tool helps those who can't visit the company's two physical showrooms in Droitwich Spa and Middlewich explore AKW solutions in realistic room settings. The spaces in the virtual showroom include a dementia-friendly bathroom, options for retirement and care settings, and wet rooms and bathrooms suitable for social housing. Three display walls also feature shower seats, grab rails, and electric and mixer showers. The virtual showroom is also highly interactive, with many of the products in the bays offering quick links to specification sheets or videos for visitors to access more information. It is also possible to alter the colour of some of the bathroom wall panels and see AKW's Bathroom for Life – a bath-to-wet room and wet room-to-bath solution – in action.

01905 823298 www.akw-ltd.co.uk/virtualshowroom

Dekordor® HD Expressions: Durable laminate doors with distinctive wood character

Vicaima, a major European player in the design and manufacture of advanced interior door solutions, has announced the launch of Dekordor® HD Expressions, a new collection of durable and versatile finishes. Engineered to fuse the authentic beauty of woodlook with additional resilience, the range offers a flexible solution that meets the dual demands of the modern construction market: providing architects and designers with sophisticated aesthetics, while assuring developers, contractors, and property owners of the enduring, certified performance required for any high-quality project.

The Dekordor® HD Expressions range is a statement of character, celebrating the detailed grains, tones and textures that make wood a timeless choice. The collection presents a curated palette of finishes, ranging from distinct, pronounced textures such as HD Wild Oak and Nova Walnut to the clean, smooth surfaces of HD Oak and Citric Walnut. This versatility empowers contractors and interior designers to craft unique interior narratives, from stark modern minimalism to richly layered, textural schemes.

Beyond its visual appeal, the range is engineered to deliver excellent durability across a wide spectrum of demanding environments. The high-density (HD) surfaces offer reliable resistance to scratches, abrasion, stains, and heat, ensuring long-term surface integrity. This robust performance makes it perfectly suited for a myriad of applications where robust solutions are sought, such as in hospitality, corporate offices, or public buildings, while its distinctive wood character brings a sophisticated aesthetic to discerning residential developments, healthcare facilities, and educational institutions.

A key advantage of the Expressions range is its ability to create fully coordinated interiors. The finishes can be seamlessly applied across Vicaima's extensive product portfolio, including doors, frames, wall panels, and skirting. Furthermore, these finishes are available on Vicaima's certified performance solutions, including Portaro® and Easi-fit fire-rated (up to 90 minutes), acoustic (up to 45 dB), and security door sets (including SBD), enabling an aesthetic continuity that achieves an unexpected harmony between design integrity and technical requirements. All products are FSC® certified, reflecting Vicaima's commitment to sustainable sourcing.

The integration of Dekordor® HD Expressions into Vicaima's portfolio provides a significant advantage for the specification market. It streamlines the design and procurement process by offering a single, reliable source for solutions that are both aesthetically aligned and technically certified. This synergy empowers architects and designers to maintain consistent visual language throughout a project – from residential spaces to high-performance common areas – without the complexity of managing multiple suppliers. Ultimately, it ensures that the specified design intent is perfectly matched with the required fire, acoustic, and security performance, guaranteeing a result that is cohesive, compliant, and built to last.

Visit the website to discover the new Dekordor® HD Expressions range.

01793 532 333 www.vicaima.com

New urban oasis created at the Natural History Museum

The previously underused five-acre gardens around the Natural History Museum in London have been remarkably transformed in a scheme by architects Feilden Fowles. Working closely with landscape architects J & L Gibbons, and a design team including Gitta Gschwendtner, engineers HRW and Max Fordham, a new urban oasis has been created alongside a Nature Activity Centre supported by AWS and Garden Kitchen cafe. The project rejuvenates the grounds of this well-loved museum and creates an immersive timeline of the evolution of the earth which is now fully accessible for the first time. Geological eras are represented in banded strata of rock and the garden now features a full-size bronze Diplodocus called Fern. The result is a tactile living laboratory called the Urban Nature Project.

The Nature Activity Centre and Garden Kitchen blend in harmony with the green space and have been designed in close association with the museum's scientists with thought and care, using natural materials with low embodied carbon. The frame is created from UK limestone under a Douglas fir roof with cedar shingles. Douglas fir doors, windows and columns adorn the inside. Working with acoustic consultants Max Fordham, Troldtekt wood wool acoustic panels have been utilised through the ceilings to help combat reverberating sound and create a calm and welcoming atmosphere.

Troldtekt's wood wool acoustic panels are Cradle to Cradle Certified® at Gold level and manufactured using wood from certified forests (PEFC/09-31-030 and FSC®C115450), positively contributing to a building's BREEAM, WELL or LEED points. Panels can also be manufactured with FUTURECEM® which achieves an approx. 30% lower carbon footprint than that of Troldtekt based on white cement. Depending on the panel specified, reaction to fire is classed in accordance with EN 13501 as B-s1,d0 or A2-s1,d0 respectively.

Available in a wide variety of different structures and colours, they combine optimal sound absorption with an award-winning design. The Troldtekt range has a minimum expected life cycle of 60 years coupled with excellent resistance to humidity and tested to meet ball impact standards. Panels can be supplied as natural wood, unpainted based on FUTURECEM™ offering a reduced carbon footprint or finished in almost any RAL or NCS colour.

Samples, case studies and technical guidance are available from Troldtekt's website or see product listings on NBS (https://bit.ly/3vxoTfq) or Material Bank (www.materialbank.eu).

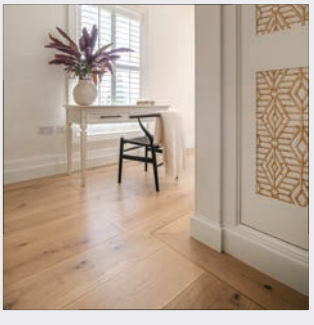
sales@troldtekt.co.uk www.troldtekt.co.uk

Unilin Flooring updates the Moduleo LayRed range

Launched in 2019, **Unilin Flooring's** original Moduleo LayRed engineered vinyl flooring range has been used in some of the UK's most significant housing projects. The new Moduleo LayRed range comes with improved features and brand new designs to ensure it continues to be the right choice for commercial projects needing an easy to install flooring solution. New LayRed comes equipped with Hydroseal that combines with the precision fit of Uniclic® to create a surface that water simply can't penetrate: LayRed is now 100% waterproof. Scratch resistance has also been markedly improved with the Protectonite Plus® excimer coating. With added anti-abrasive protection it reduces micro scratches and heightens appearance thanks to an ability to show different gloss levels without losing its matt effect. Moduleo has also improved the bevel of LayRed with the floor now using a milled bevel that takes the pattern all the way to the edge for a more natural looking end result. Moduleo LayRed also features enhanced surface structures on selected designs. Refined Emboss (NEIR) adds many more depth levels for a richer and more realistic texture.

salesuk@moduleo.com pro.moduleo.com

Ted Todd launch six new extra wide, extra thick floors



Ted Todd, specialists in engineered wood flooring, has announced the expansion of its highly esteemed Project Collection with the launch of six new extra wide, extra thick floors. Following the successful introduction of a 20 mm thick construction option within the popular Warehouse Collection, Ted Todd have now extended this offering of enhanced construction to their most-loved toned floors in their pronounced Project collection, offering greater choice for residential and commercial spaces, without a significant increase in price. As a direct response to customer demand for wider designs with unbeatable construction, these six new variations to existing Project floors are now available for the first time in 220 mm extra wide planks with a 20 mm thickness, and generous 6 mm wear layer. The new launch includes additions to the Almond, Brindle, Caramel, Calico Petworth and Tattenhall designs in a hardened oil finish for added reliability, longevity and durability, ensuring interior projects will stand the test of time. A combination of sophistication and practicality, these engineered boards encompass what flooring industry leaders, Ted Todd stands for.

01925 283000 www.tedtodd.co.uk/collections/project

Introducing new BAL AF Max – removing the need for uncoupling mats

BAL – market leaders in full tiling solutions – have launched a new innovation into the tiling market which performs as an uncoupling and fixing system in one! New BAL AF Max is a highly flexible rubber-crumb adhesive that removes the need for uncoupling mats on problematic substrates. BAL AF Max has anti-fracture technology that absorbs lateral stress movement from the floor protecting tiles from failures. No other products are needed – just mix and fix. A high-yield tile adhesive, you can get up to 8.5 m² per bag, meaning only four bags are needed for a 30 m² area. This compares with 12 bags of tile adhesive and a 30 m roll of uncoupling mat for a traditional uncoupling install. BAL have calculated that based on a 30 m² install (the average length of a roll of uncoupling mat), BAL AF Max will save fixers and contractors approximately 40% in material costs, 70% in time saving and 70% less material weight. BAL AF Max has a pot life of 45 minutes and can be grouted in five hours. Crucially it can be used with most tile types. To support the launch of BAL AF Max, BAL are also launching a new large red 30l mixing bucket.

01782 591100 www.bal-adhesives.com

Introducing Nullifire FZ400: The Pioneering 'Movement-Tested' Fire Stopping Solution

Nullifire, a leader in passive fire protection innovation, proudly unveils FZ400 – a cutting-edge fire stopping product designed to accommodate movement, while maintaining the integrity of compartmentation.

Powered by patented GXT Technology, FZ400 provides the necessary continual relief of fatigue on fire stopping seals under deflection stress and protects service penetration seals with outstanding fire performance and movement-resilience.

The FZ400 has been rigorously tested to EN 1366-3/4, achieving up to two hours fire rating after undergoing cyclic movement, proving its effectiveness in real-world scenarios where structural movement is inevitable.

Using Nullifire's pioneering 'Movement Test,' developed with the support of Warrington Fire, the FZ400 was subjected to a groundbreaking procedure that replicates ceiling deflection. A wall was moved up and down by 30 mm more than 50 times over a two hour period, then placed in a furnace to assess performance post-movement.

FZ400 is a graphite impregnated open cell foam with a highly expansive char when exposed to heat. The water resistant film provides a cold smoke seal. This provides both flexibility and excellent fire stopping properties.

The results were outstanding: No ripping, cracking, or fibre migration; Maintained a secure, air-tight fire seal; Up to two hours of fire resistance maintained.

Hannah Eyres, technical manager at Nullifire, explained "Our Movement Test provides a complete framework for testing how GXT Technology adapts to real-life building pressures. We're proud to share a test that reinforces our drive toward data-driven solutions and gives architects and contractors complete confidence in FZ400. Feedback has been very positive. Architects and Main Contractor clients demand data driven solutions so the development and success of this test will be well received in the Construction Industry."

hello@tremcopcg.com
www.tremcocpg.com/en-gb

Get ahead of evolving fire safety regulations

The UK fire safety landscape is undergoing its most significant transformation in decades as new regulations reshape how buildings are designed, specified, and constructed.

Architects, specifiers, and designers now face more pressure than ever to demonstrate compliance right from the very first design decision.

Download Titon's free whitepaper to stay ahead of changing UK fire safety regulations and learn how Titon's FireSafe® ventilation solutions deliver built-in compliance. In this exclusive whitepaper, you'll discover:

- The regulatory changes likely to impact your projects.
- How ventilation has become a key focus in fire spread prevention.
- Common specifications pitfalls to avoid.
- Why legacy ventilation products like plastic air bricks put compliance at risk.
- How the Titon FireSafe® Air Brick Range delivers peace of mind – from specification to installation.

To receive a copy of the whitepaper please email Titon, or for more information please visit the website.

marketing@titon.co.uk www.titon.com

A new era for verification & certification

Mike Vaczi of SOPREMA discusses how recent legislative changes are fundamentally altering the construction industry's approach to product verification and certification.

The construction industry stands at a turning point in regards to building safety and product verification. Recent years have witnessed a raft of changes in how construction materials are evaluated and certified, driven by events such as the Grenfell tragedy, and intensifying environmental imperatives. Combined, these shifts have changed the responsibilities of manufacturers, suppliers and contractors in ensuring building safety and sustainability.

Today, the complexity of modern construction materials and systems demands robust verification processes that extend far beyond traditional compliance frameworks. Every component in a building must work harmoniously with others while maintaining performance characteristics throughout its service life. This complexity multiplies when considering critical factors such as fire safety, thermal performance and environmental impact – the result is an interconnected web of dependencies that requires a thorough understanding and documentation.

Independent certification plays a crucial role in providing confidence to specifiers and contractors. Third-party certification provides reassurance to specifiers that products have been tested to industry standards and will perform as stated, with independent evaluation giving confidence that materials meet performance expectations and safety requirements.

This need for robust verification became painfully clear when the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety identified fundamental weaknesses in product testing and certification following the Grenfell tragedy. Publishing its findings in 2018, the body found that many products and systems were not properly tested, which led to inappropriate or unsafe materials being used on buildings.

Legislative framework driving change

The Building Safety Act 2022 represents a watershed moment for the construction industry with the introduction of the 'Golden Thread' concept. This is a complete, structured and accessible digital record of safety critical building information that must be maintained from design and construction through to occupation. It underlines the importance of full-system testing, where all products and components are tested and certified as part of the complete roofing or facade system they are intended to be installed within.

For architects working on high-risk buildings – structures at least 18 metres in height or seven storeys tall containing two or more residential units – the Act establishes stringent requirements for product information and verification.

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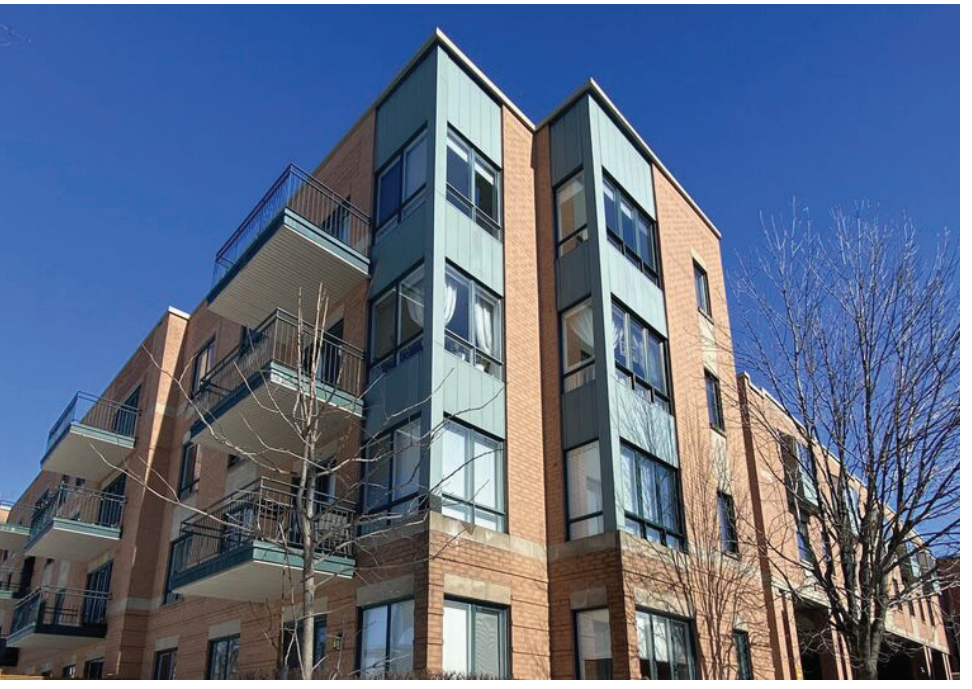

When it comes to roofing, facade and insulation products, one of the most crucial aspects is ensuring products undergo testing as a complete system

The 'Gateway' process introduced by the legislation requires detailed technical and product safety information before any work can commence on site, meaning complete test data and certification documentation are essential for project progression.

The cumulative effect of these reforms demands that every party involved in a project adopt a more systematic and disciplined product selection process. For architects, this means engaging early with manufacturers to confirm that proposed systems are certified and suitable for the intended application. It also necessitates establishing robust change control procedures to ensure that any deviation from the original specification is carefully evaluated, documented and justified.

Looking ahead, the UK Government's Construction Products Reform Green Paper 2025 proposes further significant changes to how construction materials are regulated and monitored. Among its most significant proposals is the establishment of a National Regulator for Construction Products, which will be empowered to set standards, audit manufacturers, enforce compliance and take decisive action where unsafe products are identified.

System level testing & verification

When it comes to roofing, facade and insulation products, one of the most crucial aspects is ensuring that products undergo testing as a complete system, with all components installed as they will be in the actual building. This approach allows the true fire performance to be established, as the interaction of different materials influences the penetration and spread of flame. Any changes in the buildup, such as different substrate or insulation thickness, can alter how the system performs in the event of a fire.

Documentation and transparency are key to effective certification. The Code for Construction Product Information emphasises the importance of clear, accurate and unambiguous product information, including detailed specifications, installation guidelines and performance data that must be regularly updated and readily accessible to all stakeholders.

The future of certification

Digital integration and enhanced documentation systems supporting the Golden Thread requirements will be crucial moving forward. Environmental Product Declarations are becoming increasingly important tools for demonstrating environmental impact as they provide architects with verified data to support sustainable design decisions. As the industry grapples with greenwashing concerns, these standardised declarations offer a transparent way to evaluate and compare products' environmental credentials.

Sustainability metrics will play an ever important role, with standardised environmental impact measurements and whole life carbon assessments becoming standard practice. The proposed reforms seek to align fire safety, energy efficiency and environmental performance within a single compliance framework, which will create a more holistic approach to building performance.

The successful implementation of these evolving certification requirements depends on close collaboration between manufacturers, certification bodies and industry stakeholders. Architects who understand these changing requirements and work with manufacturers who have established robust testing and certification programmes will be well positioned to meet new standards, all while ensuring both compliance and the ongoing safety of the built environment.

Mike Vaczi is technical director at SOPREMA

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