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CONTENTS

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FROM THE EDITOR

Hello and welcome to 2026, hopefully a big year for the construction sector, with not only the Warm Homes Plan imminent, but also the full Future Homes Standard and details on various other policy areas of interest. I say hopefully, because the wrangling continues, with the Future Homes Standard reportedly being watered down to please the volume housebuilders, such as removing a requirement to use battery storage for the best results from PV.

We have had the amended National Planning Policy Framework (with still no actual target for brownfield approvals), but the Warm Homes Plan for retrofit appears to have also been mired in its own approval bottleneck. This is because it's a colossal endeavour, slated to cost £15bn (including an extra £1.5bn somehow extracted from Rachel Reeves), but there has been huge clamour for clarity in the industry, in the wake of the abrupt culling of the ECO scheme at the end of last year.

It may be freezing outside currently – prompting much social media chat on how heat pumps are actually performing – but 2025 was the warmest year on record (also in the top five were 2022, 2023, and 2024). This means climate change is happening, and major contributors to global warming like gas-fuelled heating are doomed. But are the replacements going to be delivered at scale any time soon?

By the time most houses are beginning deep retrofits, our average temperatures may have increased to a level that means 'coolth' is the key word for selling homes to customers. Will heat pumps be being used for cooling as much as heating, and are installers getting themselves prepped to size designs on that basis too?

Lastly, as we embark on what may be a tumultuous year of delivery, with skills possibly being the second biggest issue next to money, it's interesting to note that the ARB is reporting that most registered architects are staying on board. After RIBA president Chris Williamson voting with his feet and cancelling his ARB registration, you might have expected more drop-offs, but many architects are keen to retain their legal professional status.

He has made the valid point that registration is lacking as it legally only protects the title of 'architect' and not the functions provided. While it is important to be able to protect the term, particularly after all the extra training, many could pivot to calling themselves 'architectural designers' and legally perform the same design work. If the ARB expanded its legal criteria to include competence, it might have an even stronger case for retaining registered members.

James Parker, Editor

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ON THE COVER...
A new SEND school in Stockport is providing a transformed education environment for vulnerable children. Cover image © David Millington

For the full report on this project, go to page 28

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RESEARCH

Report reveals ‘significant strain’ on practices from Building Safety Act

New research from building materials manufacturer, Wienerberger, reveals that updates to the Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA) are placing UK architectural practices “under significant financial and organisational strain,” due to processing product data. and calls for clearer, more transparent product information for the sector.

The report found that architects now spend an average of four hours each week verifying product information, costing UK practices around £16,700 per employee annually. Two-thirds of architects surveyed have experienced a rise in professional indemnity claims since the Building Safety Act was introduced.

And more than half (58%) don’t fully trust product information, with a clear demand for greater product transparency.

The findings, published in the new whitepaper, ‘The Cost of Compliance’, draw on an independent survey of 80 UK architects and deeper insights direct from practices including Howells, KA–Architecture and Space Group, alongside commentary from the Manchester School of Architecture and the Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI).

Wienerberger’s research found that an overwhelming majority (95%) of architects have experienced an increase in compliance related administrative tasks following the introduction of the BSA, with workloads rising by an average of 16%. For one in five architects, this went up by more than 25%.

Architects estimate that an average of four extra hours each week is now being spent checking product claims, certificates and performance data – time that could be reduced by manufacturers providing more transparent product information. Based on a typical UK day rate, this equates to around £16,700 in additional cost per employee each year.

The research also explored the extent to which architects feel more exposed under the BSA. It found that four in five (81%) architects have greater concern about potential indemnity claims, with 88% agreeing that the BSA’s introduction has “fuelled rising liability”. This sentiment was not unfounded, with two-thirds (67%) having experienced an increase in claims personally, or within their practice.

Unsurprisingly, this pressure is having a marked impact on innovation. Four in five architects agree that the added regulatory demands are hindering creativity, while seven in 10 state that they feel overwhelmed by rising workloads.

Another major driver impacting creativity is widespread distrust of product information. 58% of architects do not fully trust manufacturer product claims, with many citing missing, inconsistent or unclear data. One respondent noted: “Sometimes the specifications look perfect on paper but once we use the product onsite, it just doesn’t perform the way it promised.”

When asked what would make compliance easier, architects were almost unanimous in calling for a single and independently verified digital source of truth for product information. This was in addition to mandatory independent testing with clear visibility of results and digital tools that can “accelerate verification steps”.

The Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI), initiated by the Construction Products Association (CPA), sets clear standards for how manufacturers record, verify, and communicate product data. The consensus is that its framework could ultimately become the long-sought single source of truth for compliant product information.

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LOOKING FURTHER

MASTERPLANNING

Chetwoods-masterplanned ‘sustainability driven’ data centre campus in Southall gains consent

Chetwoods Architects and client Global Technical Realty (GTR) have received planning consent for a 32.2-acre mixed-use technology campus within the existing International Trading Estate in Southall. Designed for GTR – a $1bn European “build-to-suit” data centre platform, by the practice, who are specialists in the delivery of contemporary industrial and technology masterplans, the “transformative regeneration site will deliver a data centre campus, alongside modern industrial workspace,” said Chetwoods.

The site has been masterplanned by Chetwoods and AR Urbanism to “seamlessly blend cutting-edge digital infrastructure with the needs of an industrial site.” Recognised by the London Borough of Ealing as being of “high quality,”Chetwoods’ design will “elevate market standards for data centre schemes, combining sustainably driven architecture with flexible interior design to deliver world-class public realm improvements,” said the architects.

Four data centre buildings form the core of the development. Building upon their experience of designing and delivering both industrial units and data centres across the UK, Chetwoods’ design “prioritises sustainability, security, and operational efficiency.” The public realm includes the planting of 153 new trees, an important part of the regeneration work, alongside a commitment to achieving a site biodiversity net gain of 79.4%.

The facade treatment “takes inspiration from big data rhythms, using horizontal banding and textured over-cladding to create a visually striking identity that celebrates Southall’s industrial and cultural heritage.” Chetwoods worked closely with GTR and local stakeholders to ensure the proposals respected local character. The process was “thorough and collaborative, resulting in designs that have been responded to positively.”

The industrial campus complements the high-tech data centre facilities with modern, flexible spaces designed to support a diverse range of businesses. The development will provide industrial employment generating floorspace, ensuring a smooth transition for existing tenants while attracting new occupiers to the area. Each industrial building has been designed with photovoltaic panels, optimised daylight penetration, and high-performance materials, ensuring long-term sustainability and adaptability.

The other areas of the scheme include a series of buildings, each with a distinct identity. Union Works serves as the gateway to the development, featuring a prominent glazed office frontage that animates the streetscape. The Boat Yard, a striking canal-facing structure, incorporates curved eaves that “echo Southall’s rich waterways and canal history.” The Jam Factory, inspired by the site’s industrial past, features a distinctive sawtooth roof form that optimises natural daylight. At the heart of the masterplan, The Pavilion serves as a “dynamic community hub,” with collaborative workspaces, food and beverage, and flexible meeting areas.

A defining feature is Chetwoods’ commitment to creating a vibrant and engaging public realm. The scheme introduces a green pedestrian link from Brent Road to the Grand Union Canal, promoting connectivity, biodiversity, and active travel. The landscape strategy features a canal-side trail, a central public square, ecological habitats, and tree-lined streetscapes.

Mobility and connectivity are also key priorities within the design. The scheme promotes pedestrian and cycle-friendly routes, electric vehicle charging provision, and improved road access, ensuring smooth circulation for all users. “The masterplan also integrates seamlessly with Southall’s evolving urban fabric, enhancing local infrastructure and connectivity.”

The scheme “represents a bold vision for the future, combining high-performance digital infrastructure with a forward-thinking approach to sustainability, placemaking, and community benefit.”

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VIEW POINT

Passivhaus architect Sean Ronnie Hill explains how simple passive design measures plus AECB-aligned targets could be the key to cutting peak summer loads in UK homes.

For all the attention given to heat pumps, smart home dashboards and active cooling systems, we are still missing the simplest truth about designing for summer comfort: overheating is, above all, a fabric problem. A home that keeps heat out in summer is the same home that uses less energy in winter. A home that can reliably shed heat overnight is one that avoids mechanical cooling for most of the year. Before we reach for gadgets, we should be reaching for the basics: shading, airtightness, insulation continuity and good building physics.

Across dozens of London retrofits and extensions, the pattern is unmistakable. Overheating risk is rising, driven by climate change, denser urban sites, increased glazing ratios and the persistent assumption that 'north London doesn't need cooling.' Many of the homes we assess regularly exceed 28°C in summer without intervention. Yet with measured, fabric-first strategies, peak temperatures can often be reduced by 2-4°C – frequently enough to avoid mechanical cooling altogether.

But where do projects go wrong, and does why aligning with AECB and Passivhaus summer comfort metrics give UK homes a fighting chance in the decades ahead?

The UK's overheating problem is no longer theoretical. Historically, UK homes struggled far more with cold than heat. That balance has shifted decisively. Met Office data shows that the UK's 10 warmest years on record have all occurred since 2002. In cities, the urban heat island effect

compounds the problem, with night time temperatures in central London often sitting 4-7°C above surrounding rural areas. At the same time, the default architectural response to extensions has become glazing heavy, with floor-to-ceiling glass facing south or west and little or no external shading.

In one recent retrofit, thermal modelling showed a typical 1950s terrace with a full-width glazed rear facade exceeding 28°C for 12% of the year – well beyond the commonly accepted 1-3% thresholds. Crucially, the problem was not the presence of glass itself, but the absence of shading, unmitigated internal heat gains and night time ventilation constrained by noise and security concerns. These issues are entirely solvable, but only if they are addressed early in the design process.

Before you think about technology, start with orientation. One recurring pattern, particularly in London, is that overheating has little to do with how 'modern' or well-finished a space feels. It correlates far more strongly with where, and how, the sun strikes the building. South-facing rear extensions typically receive high-angle summer sun, which is relatively easy to control. Well designed external shading – whether brise soleil, fins, deep reveals or modest overhangs – can block 70-80% of unwanted solar gain without compromising winter daylight.

West-facing glazing is more problematic. Low-angle afternoon sun is harder to shade and often coincides with peak internal

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heat gains. In these situations, we often combine external blinds or shutters with louvred pergolas, carefully placed deciduous planting or, in some cases, a deliberate reduction in glazing area without sacrificing spatial quality.

North-facing spaces are often assumed to be 'safe,' leading to unnecessarily large glazing areas. Without insulation continuity and airtight detailing, however, they leak heat in winter and admit diffuse gains in summer. Good fabric performance matters here just as much as on sunnier elevations.

None of these strategies is inherently expensive. What becomes costly is designing a glass box first and attempting to fix it later with mechanical cooling.

The quiet power of insulation, airtightness and continuity, a persistent misconception is that insulation increases overheating. Insulation only traps heat if solar and internal gains are poorly controlled. A well insulated, airtight home with effective shading remains cooler for longer because heat transfer from outside is slowed, cool night time air is retained within the fabric, and hot external air is prevented from leaking in. In EnerPHit and AECB-aligned retrofits, we consistently observe lower daytime peaks, more stable overnight temperatures and a dramatically reduced reliance on fans or active cooling.

When insulation and airtightness are paired with MVHR, summer comfort improves again. MVHR does not cool a home, but it allows controlled night time ventilation without opening windows on noisy or polluted streets, helping homes shed heat passively without compromising security or air quality. Summer comfort emerges from the relationship between envelope performance and ventilation strategy, not from a piece of technology.

Shading & ventilation

If there is one habit UK designers and homeowners should adopt, it is this: design shading before designing glazing. External shading reduces solar gain by orders of magnitude more than internal blinds, which simply trap heat on the wrong side of the glass. Yet shading is still widely seen as optional or unnecessary in our climate.

In practice, shading alone often reduces peak summer temperatures by 1.5-3°C. When combined with night time purge ventilation, reductions of 4°C or more are possible, often eliminating a need for active cooling. Deep timber reveals, orientation specific steel fins, overhangs sized through solar modelling, and integrated external blinds can become architectural assets rather than compromises.

UK homes still rely heavily on opening windows for summer comfort. In dense urban areas, this approach often fails due to noise, pollution, insects, and security.

The most successful projects combine multiple passive strategies: cross ventilation where the plan allows, stack ventilation using stairwells, secure night time purge routes and MVHR systems with summer bypass. High-level openings such as rooflights or clerestories are particularly effective. Each litre of warm air leaving at the top of the house draws cooler evening air in at lower levels, delivering comfort gains disproportionate to their cost.

Why AECB targets matter

The AECB performance standard provides one of the clearest and most practical frameworks for UK residential design. It sets realistic limits for glazing ratios, shading, summer comfort metrics, fabric U-values, airtightness and ventilation, while remaining aligned with typical UK budgets. For many clients, the assumption is that tackling overheating requires cooling. In reality, most projects meet summer comfort targets simply by aligning with AECB benchmarks. This fabric-first approach also supports wider policy goals, from retrofit incentives to the transition away from gas and long term reductions in operational energy use.

Across Victorian terraces, post-war homes, mews houses and 1930s semis, the same lessons repeat. Glazing itself is rarely the problem; poorly designed glazing is. Shading and night ventilation consistently outperform smart thermostats. Fabric-first approaches deliver comfort in both summer and winter, while internal heat gains from appliances and lighting are often underestimated. Most importantly, overheating risk must be modelled before planning, not discovered after construction.

In one EnerPHit mews retrofit, overheating hours were reduced from 12% to under 1% through shading, airtightness, MVHR with summer bypass and secure night time purge paths. Generous glazing remained – comfort and daylight are not mutually exclusive.

Cooler thinking for a hotter future

We are moving towards a climate where homes must remain comfortable at external temperatures of 34-36°C, not the 28-30°C peaks of recent decades. Mechanical cooling will become more common, but it should remain a last resort, not a starting point.

The UK's best chance lies in homes that keep heat out, dump heat at night, use airtightness and shading intelligently, and rely on simple physical principles rather than complex systems. Fabric-first is not a slogan; it is a survival strategy for a warming climate.

Architects, clients and contractors who embrace it now will create cooler, healthier and more resilient homes – and avoid costly retrofits in the years ahead.

Sean Ronnie Hill is an architect & Passivhaus designer

TrägerHAUS / HAUS Collective / Tom Manley Photography

Richard Flisher

PRACTICE PROFILE

CPMG Architects

This established education sector specialist was transformed following a management buyout, embracing innovation and a people-focused culture, as Kim Neville reports.

Founded in Nottingham in 1997, CPMG has undergone a profound transformation, accelerated by a pivotal management buyout in 2011. Richard Flisher reflects on the evolution: "Our reputation was already strong in Nottingham, but one of our long-term goals was to expand into new regions, enabling us to be closer to a wider client network and to tap into the talent pool in major cities such as London and Birmingham."

Since the MBO, the firm has navigated its fair share of challenges as it grew, so staying flexible and open to new opportunities has been essential. Flisher explains that being better "meant gaining as much experience as possible and trying to do things differently." A result is expansion into new offices, including in China.

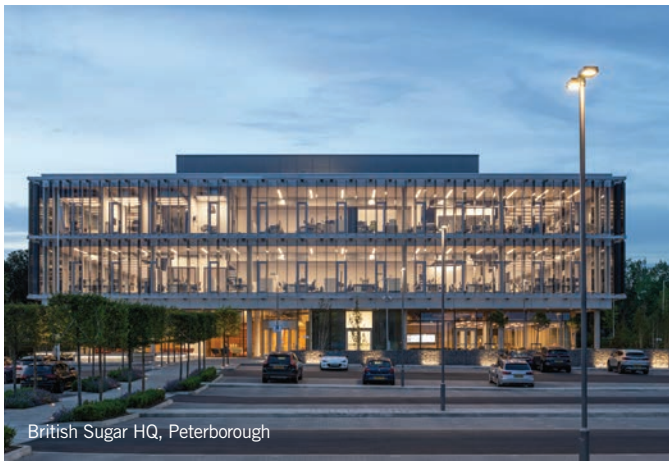
The first priority after launch was maintaining stability, as the fallout from the financial crisis of 2008 was still being felt. Flisher reflects on a seminal securing of a project to design Campsmount College in Doncaster, the first school procured under the Conservative Government following the James Review of school building: "We knew at the time it was a big project win, but we weren't aware that the school building sector would turn into our largest area of work. They had done education projects previously, but that one win "led to many bigger and better things."

Following the MBO, the firm set about assembling a new board with a strong ethos centred on becoming a people-centric practice. Flisher explains: "For us, architecture is primarily a social science because without people, architecture means nothing."

The pandemic produced another set of challenges for the firm, and they decided to relocate to another Nottingham HQ bringing cost savings and enabling a hybrid working pattern. Flisher says it was a 'bold' decision, but they "haven't looked back since." This, he believes, gives the firm a balanced way of working. While still encouraging people to be in the office to enable a collaborative learning environment, he feels it allows staff to maintain a good work-life balance, enhanced by remote working. Flisher explains: "As a professional services environment, I'm confident that a blend of office and home working can be effectively maintained."

The London studio is nearing capacity due to the practice's continued growth, and the Birmingham office has just moved to new larger premises. Flisher sees this as evidence that the company's philosophy and hard work are paying off. Hybrid working led to a transition from in-house servers to a cloud-based system.

International expansion brought a new set of considerations; the firm needed to minimise financial risks, including finding the right personnel to head the venture. Flisher says: "When we opened our studios in London and Birmingham, existing staff relocated



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and took their understanding of the practice with them, but it was always going to be different in China." The firm managed this by establishing a strong working relationship with Amy Zhao, the manager of the Hangzhou office, as well as through exploratory trips to the country. He enthuses: "Design is an international service and can take you anywhere. We are also fortunate that British design travels well and is always held in high regard."

CPMG is particularly strong in schools and healthcare facilities but also has extensive experience across a range of sectors. The firm's core services remain architecture and interior design, yet it has recently expanded its expertise into sustainability, BIM and workplace consultancy; a "snapshot" of innovation, says Flisher.

He adds that strong management is essential to ensure its mission of people-focus and diversity: "Thankfully, we're in good hands."

Design approach

CPMG doesn't conform to a specific design signature but aims to foster a perception of their work where their projects are recognised for being people-focused, as well as being driven by sustainability. Flisher explains, "Whether it's the materials we choose or the way that buildings harmonise with landscapes, our approach always seeks to involve innovation and we're proud to have many landmark projects in our portfolio." This is evidenced by the firm's groundbreaking, operationally carbon neutral Watermead Business Park project, completed in 2012. The project exemplified the desire for 'building better' and has been a springboard for a succession of successful CPMG office projects.

Flisher reflects: "While projects like this are designed around technical decisions to enable a reduction in carbon emissions, it's also vital to us that the environment which is created offers a healthy amount of daylight, airflow and social interaction." The practice uses this methodology across all project types and takes great pride in influencing how environments are shaped.

The firm adopts a consistent approach to learning initiatives, which internally is seen as very important. This has enabled CPMG to transition to new sectors. As Flisher explains, "We have broadened our knowledge and shared ideas throughout the practice, which have helped improve our projects beyond just the education sector."

The company's approach to client collaboration is fundamental and in-depth; he says they work on a case by case basis, listening and gathering an understanding of what makes each one 'tick.' Flisher explains some of the differences: "Some prefer to grow together and share learnings through the process, while others see each project as its own challenge and can remain focused almost entirely on the speed at which we can respond."

The practice takes an active interest in adopting AI technologies, using them to elevate routine tasks such as improving text and saving time on desk-based research. Flisher adds: "However, we're also using it in design work and are delighted to have an award-winning AI designer – Part 2 architectural assistant Qasim Iqbal."

The firm views awards as a great platform for recognising hard work and success, but for Flisher, it's the process, quality of work, service, and also economic sustainability that matters most. He adds, modestly: "As well as enhancing our reputation and growing into new regions and sectors, just staying in business is an achievement worthy of reflection."

Projects

The practice's portfolio includes notable projects – one which showcases the firm's depth of education sector knowledge is the Maritime Academy, a sustainability pilot scheme for the Department for Education. It comprises a sixth form entry secondary school for 1,150 pupils (900 school pupils and 250 sixth form). CPMG placed users at the forefront of the design with health and wellbeing at the heart of the proposal. The building has strong visual and physical connections to a rich external landscape, with enhanced biodiversity and excellent levels of comfort for occupants. But, as Flisher adds, "there are lots of different needs that must be accommodated with a project of this size and complexity."

A favourite project of Flisher's was the award-winning British Sugar headquarters in Peterborough, completed in 2018. Flisher fondly reminisces: "Our design lets the floor space be flooded with carefully controlled light and fresh air." It's a "very structured," building, with a lower floor focused on social interaction and collaboration, and study areas above. On the upper floors, there is also a graduation from collaborative spaces around the atrium to quiet working areas at the perimeter, next to the glazing and views out. 400 glass external louvres are fitted to the elevations, which track the sun and control internal light levels, their appearance changing throughout the day. Flisher says this project exemplifies best practice design for wellbeing: "I'm excited to be in a position to improve the way people interact with different spaces; some examples like this particularly stand out."

Future plans

CPMG has been able to navigate current economic challenges partly thanks to its relocation to a the new office before the business cost rises of recent years. He notes: "We're enjoying lower running costs while things have been getting more expensive." Productivity remains a future challenge, but the firm continues to invest in IT solutions and AI innovations to maximise it.

Looking ahead, the practice sees biodiversity net gain and embodied carbon as key areas for training, investment, and innovation, and the firm is also putting substantial focus into the energy sector. Flisher says: "A significant amount of new infrastructure is required, and forward-thinking architects are going to make a big difference on whether projected growth is achieved or not."

COMMENT

Do wood burning stoves belong in future homes?

Ben Paul of Neu Architects puts his case for why he believes architects should not specify wood burning stoves as part of future homes, based on the reality of their use.

As the UK moves toward net zero and cleaner, healthier housing, architects are increasingly asked to specify energy-efficient and resilient systems. Yet claims that modern wood burning stoves provide a "low carbon" or "sustainable" option do not withstand scrutiny. Independent evidence shows that wood burning is a source of harmful pollution, misleadingly marketed as green, and incompatible with the Future Homes Standard's environmental and health ambitions.

Low carbon, local fuel source?

Wood burning is routinely described as 'carbon lean' because trees absorb CO_2 as they grow. But burning wood releases that carbon back immediately, while new trees take decades to reabsorb it – time we do not have in a climate emergency.

More importantly, trees should be recognised for what they are: a living carbon capture system, not a fuel source. Left standing, they absorb carbon, filter pollution, cool urban areas, and reduce flood risk. Burning them undermines one of the most effective and affordable forms of carbon capture we currently have.

The UK Climate Change Committee has warned explicitly against relying on domestic biomass heating, stating that its carbon benefits are overstated when compared with genuinely low-carbon systems such as heat pumps.

The reality of what people burn

The stove industry presents an image of burning neatly stacked, seasoned hardwood. In reality, many households burn far less suitable, and far more dangerous, materials, including:

- Treated timber, releasing arsenic and chromium from CCA preservatives, and copper or borates from other treatments
- MDF, chipboard, and plywood, which emit formaldehyde, isocyanates, and phenols from glues and resins
- Painted or varnished wood, producing dioxins and furans – among the most toxic and persistent known compounds
- Unseasoned or 'green' logs, which burn poorly, waste energy, and generate dense smoke and particulates.

The stove industry presents an image of burning neatly stacked, seasoned hardwood. In reality many housebholds burn far less suitable, and far more dangerous materials

These substances are not just harmful but also carcinogenic, neurotoxic, and persistent in the environment. They accumulate in the air, soil, and even food chains.

Even with so-called 'approved fuels,' enforcement is practically impossible. Local authorities cannot police what people burn in their living rooms, so real world emissions are far worse than test data suggests.

Cleaner technology?

Even the most advanced Ecodesign stoves burning properly seasoned wood emit around 335 g/MWh of PM2.5 compared to just 0.72 g/MWh for a gas-fired boiler. So while they may be 'cleaner' than an open fireplace, they are still almost 500 times more polluting than a gas boiler (based on Defra data).

Meanwhile, they also emit ultrafine particles, PM10, carbon monoxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), formaldehyde, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulphur dioxide (SO_2), benzene, toluene, and black carbon (soot).

The industry often compares eco stoves to open fires, but that is irrelevant; open fires are already obsolete, and so extraordinarily polluting that anything will look better in comparison.

Health

Wood burning (however efficient it may be) generates pollution, which is not in question, and people will breathe it in. It is not feasible to go out and buy 'bottled' air to avoid it. Fine

particulate matter (PM2.5) is one of the most dangerous pollutants known, and linked to asthma, heart disease, dementia, and premature death.

The World Health Organisation has confirmed there is no safe threshold for exposure. Installing a pollution source inside a sealed, high-performance home directly undermines occupant health, their neighbours' health and national air quality goals. Are we happy to continue to use the life-giving shared resource, our air, to dispose of our toxic waste?

Sustainability & supply chains

The stove industry's portrayal of wood as a local, circular fuel masks its true environmental cost. Large volumes of logs are kiln-dried–consuming significant energy and many are imported from across Europe or further afield, adding transport emissions. Even domestic supply involves cutting, processing, and distribution, all of which carry carbon costs. Truly local, properly seasoned wood is scarce and cannot scale sustainably.

Crucially, burning happens far faster than growing. This

Architects have a professional and moral responsibility to protect both planetary and human health

undermines the sustainability claim and creates a carbon debt that lasts for decades to centuries. In January 2018, over 800 scientists – including Nobel laureates – warned the EU Parliament against forest biomass burning. Their message was clear: harvesting wood specifically for combustion increases atmospheric carbon even if forests regrow.

If architects and planners are serious about embodied carbon and resource efficiency, promoting the combustion of a material that could otherwise store carbon or serve in long-lived construction makes little sense. Burning wood emits more CO_2 per unit of energy than fossil fuels due to its inefficiency. Worse still, scientists caution that adding carbon now risks triggering irreversible damage, glacier melt, permafrost thaw, and ocean acidification.

The resilience argument

Stoves are often marketed as providing heat security during power cuts. But designing pollution into every home for an occasional event is not resilience – it is regression.

Cleaner, future proof options exist: battery storage, solar PV with backup, hybrid systems, or district heating redundancy. For rural homes, combining insulation upgrades with local renewable generation offers far greater reliability and comfort, without harming health.

Policy does not equal best practice

The Scottish Government's U-turn and the Future Homes Standard's allowance for stoves do not reflect scientific consensus. They reflect political compromise and industry lobbying.

Permitting a technology is not the same as endorsing it as best practice. Architects should lead with independent evidence and ethics, not follow industries whose business models depend on perpetuating combustion.

The role of architects

Architects have a professional and moral responsibility to protect both planetary and human health. We cannot ignore the evidence that domestic wood burning worsens air quality, accelerates carbon emissions, and introduces toxic pollutants into homes and neighbourhoods.

Warmth and atmosphere in a living space are products of design quality, not combustion. The notion that a wood stove adds 'character' belongs to the past – not to a Future Homes Standard built around clean air, efficiency, and decarbonisation.

Conclusion

Wood burning stoves are neither low carbon nor low impact. The industry's narrative of sustainability and resilience collapses under scrutiny. Policy may permit stoves, but architects are not obliged to specify them. Our duty is to design for health, integrity, and a genuinely sustainable future – one that leaves wood burning firmly in the past.

Ben Paul is a director at Neu Architects

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Renderings courtesy of Henderson Land

HONG KONG, CHINA
UNS

Henderson Land has officially unveiled the highly anticipated Central Yards in Hong Kong, featuring the city's first ever private Broadway calibre theatre, designed by UNS. The project aspires to become a cultural and symbolic gateway along the New Central Harbourfront.

UNS has envisioned a cutting-edge venue that reflects state-of-the-art ambitions. This distinguished destination will host a wide variety of world-class performances, including touring musicals, global premieres, flagship concerts, immersive productions, and cross disciplinary showcases, while also serving as a creative hub for a vibrant artistic community.

The theatre is part of Central Yards, an ambitious 4.8 ha site and 400 m long groundscraper that constitutes a sustainable CBD mixed-use development, integrating commerce, finance, leisure, and cultural activities on the New Central Harbourfront. According to Dr Martin Lee Ka Shing, chairman of Henderson Land, Central Yards is born from Henderson Land's commitment and love for the city we call home. As a vibrant hub where the treasures of life – nature, culture, joy and ambition come together, Central Yards turns Hong Kong into the world's grandest stage for future generations.

The theatre's auditorium is designed to seamlessly integrate the performance stage, audience seating, and essential acoustic and technical systems within an intricately sculpted lattice shell. With a capacity of over 1,100 guests, the theatre promises an unparalleled sensory experience, combining a meticulously crafted interior with advanced acoustic and lighting systems to deliver an immersive visual and auditory environment.

Alongside the lively theatre, UNS has designed an integrated visitor experience that connects with the surrounding public and office spaces. This includes the adjacent ground and first floor landscape spaces, full VIP experience, and the main lobbies of office towers. The result is a flexible indoor and outdoor setting that fosters opportunities for public engagement and cultural and commercial events, beyond the typical theatre walls.

BUILDING INSIGHTS LIVE

Practical Solutions for Harnessing the Circular Economy at Scale

The circular economy has seen piecemeal growth in the mainstream construction industry, given it's believed to be the country's largest producer of waste. This patchy progress (we are still awaiting the Government's delayed circularity strategy) is out of kilter with the powerful case for circularity – financial, carbon and reputational. Demolition often remains the default option for buildings deemed at end of life, rather than reuse.

Our round table, sponsored by Soprema UK and Amtico, brought together trade bodies, specifiers, consultants and manufacturers to share knowledge on practical approaches to circularity, from recycling products to reusing structures. Delegates highlighted positive examples, but also said there was a lack of sticks and carrots to pursue circularity at scale currently. While ESG policies remained a driver for some major commercial clients, there was much to do in order to see comprehensive adoption.

Manufacturers have long been pursuing LCA (Life Cycle Assessment) and recycling on their product lines, but how realistic is specification of truly circular solutions currently, and what are the risks and rewards? Also, are the rewards being apportioned to the right parts of the supply chain? This edition of Building Insights LIVE was a key opportunity to hear about how the industry can transition from its linear "take-make-waste" model to one that foregrounds recycling and reuse.

In November 2024, the Government set up the Circular Economy Taskforce to provide our first comprehensive national strategy for growing the circular economy; this is now expected at some point in 2026. Construction lacks the intervention that has been seen on circularity in the food industry and textiles, for example, with no mandatory regulation. Instead it has been left to enlightened clients supply chain members, and architects including bodies like ACAN to iron out the business benefits. It's estimated that full embracing of circularity could see UK businesses billions richer through greater resource productivity, but means a culture shift in the sector. What are the cost-effective approaches for 'squaring the circle' that specifiers should consider, and the data required? Our round table delved into these and other issues.

Making circular arguments

Our round table delegates highlighted the circularity challenges the industry was facing, but also the solutions it was innovating. Several said that Government targets were needed, but not prescriptive regulation. According to Ian Pritchett from eco-focused residential developer Greencore, regulation and drivers such as clients' ESG policies carried "dangers of unintended consequences if people don't

ATTENDEES

- **James Parker (Chair),** Managing Editor, Architects' Datafile and Housebuilder & Developer
- **Ian Pritchett,** Co-Founder, Greencore Homes
- **Nikhil Doshi,** Director, Hodkinson Consultancy
- **Nick Haughton,** Brand Director, Sapphire Balconies
- **Mike Leonard,** Visiting Professor, Birmingham City University
- **Pauline Metivier,** Head of Business & Sector Support, ReLondon
- **Debbie Ward,** Director, Reuse & Circular Economy, Alliance for Sustainable Building Products
- **Simon Foxell,** Owner, The Architects Practice
- **Stephanie Palmer,** Head of Sustainability at Wienerberger
- **Edward Jezeph,** Senior Manager, Homes England
- **Olivia Daw,** Materials Audit Lead, Material Index
- **Chris Halligan,** Chair of the Climate Society, CIAT
- **Thomas Hesslenberg,** Structural engineer, Elliot Wood
- **Michelle Sanchez,** Sustainability lead, RSHP architects

SPONSORS' ATTENDEES

- **Umendra Singh,** Sustainability & Impact Lead, North Europe, Soprema UK
- **Gary Wilson,** Head of Technical, Amtico

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CIRCLING BACK, BUT PUSHING FORWARD
The multi-disciplinary round table reasserted some of the issues for the construction industy, but offered some exciting examples of circularity success

really understand what the fundamental problem is." Delegates emphasised the importance of ensuring the term circularity itself was not misunderstood, for example that recycling wasn't mis-sold as 'reuse.' Debbie Ward of the Association of Sustainable Building Products said that although recycling was laudable in some respects, it faced more constraints than full material reuse; therefore 'greenwash' was a risk.

She told the group: "Where with recycling, you get the intensity of the energy and processes, reuse in situ is very low carbon." However, she added that there also needed to be differentiation between reuse in situ and putting reused products back onto the market – essentially circularity could not be seen as one catch-all, and there were a variety of relative carbon saving possibilities. And, added Ward, the overarching problem is that where the industry may "design with circularity in mind, we have to do something with all the existing buildings and materials that haven't."

Chris Halligan of the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists asserted that currently, most material reuse was "downcycling," i.e. products converted into others of lower value, and there was "a lot of greenwash" about buildings' circularity credentials. "There are thousands of buildings out there with ticks and badges saying how sustainable they are, but if you look closely, they're not." He also cited major ratings systems such as BREEAM in this context, which could lead to performance specifications of products which in themselves were less sustainable.

Success stories like circularity in modular construction and reuse of entire buildings were cited, but also the fact that the industry was working at low margins, and was resistant to the systemic change required to increase reuse of buildings and materials. Halligan: "The industry is conservative, and moves very slowly; it fears change. A lot of the answers are out there already, but aren't being adopted."

He offered the suggestion that, with "climatic catastrophe" a possibility by the end of the century, circular approaches were urgently needed in the mainstream, but wouldn't happen without major interventions in the market. "At the moment, end of life options are not costed, there's no profit in it." Instead, said Halligan, "If every material, every project, was forced to take into account the cost of the end of life situation, all of a sudden everything will be sustainable." He said however that currently, "hardly any guides or accreditation systems take end of life options into account."

Following London's lead

Delegates celebrated the successes which London clients and boroughs have achieved on circularity, with the GLA promoting retrofit and reuse over recycling for developments. They also acknowledged a contrast with the rest of the country. However, Pauline Metivier of ReLondon said that while there were "front runner developers" in the capital who were proving the concept by measuring circularity on projects, even London was only doing reuse in a "very minor fashion, because there is no market at scale."

She said a lack of demand meant a lack of supply, with the former stemming from "a lack of [central] planning," and that the industry was "at a juncture where there needs to be much more alignment about what good looks like."

Nick Haughton referred to a Government circularity scheme in the Netherlands which had been "fairly widely adopted on larger residential schemes; they get extra points for certain sustainability credentials – one of the big factors is reuse of materials."

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Delegates such as Haughton cited "commercial barriers" to building reuse, which could be as straightforward as building elements not meeting architects' aesthetic requirements, and their refurbishment leading to a "bunch of other challenges." Haughton added that "getting reused elements underwritten by structural engineers" wa a further constraint.

Stephanie Palmer, head of sustainability at Wienerberger, and also chair of ISEP's Circular Economy Steering Group, explained how London was setting the agenda. "It is pretty far ahead because the GLA has provided a clear framework for decision making." She said this was setting a precedent on projects meaning design teams "are expected to go through the same process in the next application."

However, she said that more broadly, across Government, this clear definition of circularity policy was lacking. "I appreciate that that needs to be tailored for different sectors of the construction industry, but if there is an overarching definition and a goal set behind that, then actually everyone can use their skills towards meeting that." She also cautioned that such a goal should "not be prescriptive about how it's achieved."

Palmer said that she had attended a meeting with Government representatives who said they weren't planning to put a definition into the upcoming circular strategy, and she "would be really disappointed if that doesn't happen, because it will mean that everyone outside of London, where standards are being developed through their planning system, will treat every project on a case by case basis." She said this would mean "the learnings aren't shared as well, because every contractor will treat different projects differently."

Raising reuse & data's potential

The evolution of data on reused materials – as well as more standardisation of reused products and grading systems – was beginning to address structural and other considerations. Delegates said this was particularly needed given a heightened focus under the newly toughened safety criteria across the industry, particularly for taller residential buildings. The conversation also covered the importance of centralising data on materials used, the need for better construction data repositories, and the potential of legislation and policy to drive sustainable practices.

There was consensus on the need for comprehensive ratings that include circularity, energy performance, and other factors to drive market demand for sustainable products. The delegates emphasised the importance of government policies to unlock supply chain barriers and support reuse infrastructure, and the conversation also highlighted challenges in data collection for material passports and the need for better information and transparency.

Design teams are increasingly designing out waste in projects using not only reuse and recycling approaches, but also digital tools which can obviate the waste traditionally taken for granted in construction. Integrating supply chains can also assist project teams and housebuilders, but is not a simple solution.

The group gave some positive views on measurement and reporting options, such as material passports, LCAs, but pondered how the resulting data be managed, and made available to specifiers in a credible way. But Mike Leonard of Birmingham University said the parameters being used for data made it "suspect in huge areas – we're not really tracing the source of products, where they're coming from; the whole journey, we still think that it's appropriate to measure carbon from the port of entry to the UK."

NUDGES TOWARDS CIRCULARITY
Mike Leonard of Birmingham University advocates encouraging building users to embrace circularity via 'nudges,' rather than legislation for the market

He added: "We're not necessarily thinking about the longevity of the product, and end of life reuse in full terms, so we've got a lot to do. I think that's why embodied carbon is not part of the Future Homes Standard at the moment, because the government actually understands that the data isn't, isn't complete."

Edward Jezeph said that lack of data on homes' construction and makeup was a fundamental challenge for Homes England, apart from information submitted for planning – "We build a home, and immediately afterwards, we don't know how it was built; we have no construction information register." He asked how data could be harnessed in products and materials to provide this in future, such as using RFID, to "transfer construction information into operational information," and therefore "unlocking the commercial reality of reusing materials."

Thomas Hesslenberg of Elliott Wood wondered why this was the case, and explained how they had developed 'The Building Archives' – a digital platform aiming to provide a comprehensive resource of structural drawings of existing buildings to assist designers proposing reuse by giving them hard-to-find information. He said that the firm was now looking to grow this collaborative endeavour via engaging structural engineering practices, "and hopefully architects" to place their drawings on platform to make it "an essential database of major buildings."

Simon Foxell said it was "a very big question, it would be a system with a lot of parameters, and there are questions around

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the accuracy and accessibility." He gave an example of the "very fragmented" TV and film industry which was making a concerted effort to bring in a more coordinated data approach to solving circularity challenges. On individual product data, Umendra Singh of Soprema mentioned that CPR, the European product regulation system, had developed a digital product passport, which will also be a model used in the UK for centralising data.

Creative approaches & incentives

The round table delegates delved into the realities behind the principle of building reuse, and agreed that a maxim of 'reuse first – don't see demolition as a default' should be applied. The key was in identifying how best to assess existing assets and materials, in order to drive mainstream design for disassembly and reuse. However currently, the business imperatives in the UK lead to more tokenistic efforts, said Nick Haughton, in the absence of comprehensive schemes such as are being used overseas. "Should we be knocking down the buildings we are building today to make aggregate?," he asked. "It seems ridiculous, but unless we are doing something like the Netherlands, the capitalist procurement process will drive us towards the minor things."

Debbie Ward described the materials 'harvesting' approach to provide a systematic inventory of reused materials. "It's knowing what's in your asset, and not leaving it till the pre-Demolition Audit stage," she said. When major works are planned, a clear process would enable the market to see "we're going to have x number of structural steel beams, bricks, whatever; and potentially marry up the materials that are already available within the geography of where you're doing your project, and then fill the gaps with new."

However, she said this wasn't yet available: "At the moment there's not enough knowledge of the existing materials, so you are spec'ing all materials new and potentially picking up the odd bit of existing material, if you can." She said that the driver for increasing circularity would "always come down to cost" and that subsidies were needed to offset the cost increases of reuse.

An architect by training, Olivia Daw explained how she has taken a career shift responding to the need for the industry to fully embrace reuse of materials, and plug some of the gap Ward identified. She is now Materials Audit Lead at Material Index, a team of contractors, architects, engineers and software developers focused on enabling material reuse at scale, which catalogues buildings' materials before deconstruction, provides 3D audits for BREEAM, and GLA planning applications. However, she said that increasingly, clients are using their auditing services "to just increase reuse or know the value of their existing asset." Daw added: "We are seeing more and more demand for reused materials, so what we are trying to do is connect all the dots." This means unlocking more potential for clients to "offer up materials to the reclamation industry, in turn offering specifiers the ability to specify them."

As well as offering a range of information such as on embodied carbon, Material Index also provides an online marketplace of reclaimed and refurbished materials. Daw said that their services have been taken up particularly by larger commercial clients such as British Land and Derwent, but also in the education sector (universities), residential, smaller office and industrial buildings.

She captured the realities of achieving the ambitions of Government, who have stated they are looking to drive circularity far wider. "Policy is driving diversion from landfill and setting reuse targets; Westminster has mentioned achieving 25% reuse by mass. To achieve something like that, you really have to look at reusing structure."

Growing the circular economy so it becomes a mainstream proposition in construction comes down to realistic incentives for the supply chain, but arguably more importantly, the end client, from commercial clients to homebuyers. Delegates such as Ian Pritchett of Greencore highlighted the role of government incentives, and industry-based finance schemes such as the Greener Homes Alliance developed by Octopus and Homes England to provide a 1.25% discount on homes for developers, as being crucial.

Circularity incentives could include measures like preferential development finance or adjustments to stamp duty or council tax, as advocated by Ian Pritchett. Such 'behavioural economics' interventions were going to be key going forward, he said, although politically controversial.

Edward Jezeph of Homes England gave a revealing insight into the incentives that the agency was providing for smaller developers to embrace circularity, in the form of "alliances with lenders, to increase their risk appetite to lend support to SMEs, and embed sustainable objectives." He added: "There are a lot of developers out there who do want to deliver better, more sustainable housing, but the economics are challenging. So we can create those incentives, especially with institutional capital."

Gary Wilson of sponsor Amtico said that the French Government was using taxation as an incentive to drive upcycling of product back into the supply chain, but it was imposed on flooring businesses. He said "at the moment they've got a lot of material they don't know what to do with" as a result, but questioned whether companies would invest without such a 'stick' being applied.

Solutions: Sponsors' Question Time

Our two sponsors, Amtico and Soprema UK proposed two very different questions for the panel, the former looking at what business models could be developed to help incentivise circular procurement. Amtico's Gary Wilson posed his firm's question to the group as follows: "How do we design circular business models that work for long-lifecycle products such as flooring, where replacement may happen only every 10-20 years?" He also asked a related question: "What would it take to make closed-loop takeback systems commercially viable across the UK and beyond – possible incentives?

The answers delved across the subject and encompassed many of the previous practical factors discussed, in even more depth in terms of delivering the information on assets and materials the industry needs to fully take up circularity opportunities. Stephanie Palmer said that "looking at the internal structure was super important, because although 20 years might be long life for an interior fixed product, it's not for the structure." She recommended an ISEP publication on business models and proposed more manufacturers could set up processes to accept 'second life' materials, and "share the value with customers" (of offsetting cost of raw materials.) Also,

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING
Delegates agreed that to achieve the Government's proposed goal of 25% reused material in projects, there would need to be a focus on reusing building structures

manufacturers needed to look at incentives for customers to return materials, as they "can't wait for you to come and pick them up."

Architect Simon Foxell said the "most obvious business model" was the "well developed rental market for floor finishes, a direct transfer of new for old products." Wilson said that Amtico's takeback scheme saw around 20% being recycled due to the products' installation methods, with around 80% downcycled. He said there were challenges with recycling at scale due to bespoke designs, but that using a certain screed interface would enable a product to be lifted for reuse as "pretty much virgin material." Foxell agreed that the systems where "materials get locked together," were where problems with recycling arose.

Mike Leonard said that reusing products raised issues around their traceability, once a building was sold for example, and wondered whether Golden Thread approaches to asset management could be the answer. Wilson said Amtico's takeback scheme included the company recycling other firms' products when required.

Olivia Daw cited the example of Saint-Gobain providing "skips and segregation advice" to contractors, as well as "making it very clear what needs to happen early on for them to be able to take back that product." She said that this helped reduced the "friction" which was caused by adding "any additional processes" for contractors, and avoided arguments later on in projects. She also advocated similar clarity in possible incentives introduced for manufacturers, to help them drive circularity within individual product lines.

Soprema directly levelled their question at the Government, asking whether there was a need for a more legislative 'stick' based approach to drive circularity in construction. Umendra Singh from Soprema asked: "Does everyone feel there needs to be more done through legislation? They have probably lost the appetite for carrots, or a certain size or shape, so some stick is required?"

Nick Haughton of Sapphire said that the amount of new requirements being imposed on the sector recently could be endangering businesses' sustainability, and that circularity was competing with a range of other priorities. "The average manufacturer who supplies into HRBs has roughly seen about 40% of their revenue slip, which means that they're not being able to invoice 40% of what they have in factories." He added, "It's a huge challenge to the industry."

Umendra Singh pushed back against the idea of an opposition between driving circularity and the building safety agenda, saying "circularity is also saving life."

Debbie said that labour "should be viewed as a renewable, and hopefully what we could end up with is that the actual end cost isn't any different, but you're actually penalising harmful products, harmful materials, harmful practices."

Mike Leonard steered the topic away from legislation towards incentivising building users – "rather than handing over lots of new technology and kit and hoping everything will be fine, can we work more collectively with the people who are living in our buildings, and make them think about what they do around the circular economy that could have a huge effect, without legislation, without more regulation, more with nudges?"

Simon Foxell of The Architects Practice concluded on the power of standards: "There is also something about having good standards that everyone can comply with and know what to do, that actually is cost effective, rather than being a burden. We've got to the

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THE POWER OF ASSET DATA
The round table discussed how building audits could provide the details on existing assets to unlock the benefits of circularity

point where the agenda has got to the point where anyone can do anything, so long as they meet a certain performance. But it would be a lot cheaper for all of them to work to the common standard."

Conclusion

The but a cultural shift in the industry to promote circular economy principles, but also education of both consumers and the wider construction sector on circular economy approaches.

Lastly, the Government should be encouraged to embed circularity considerations in their decision-making and provide funding for education and awareness. Some good sources of education and information were cited, including the Supply Chain Sustainability School, mentioned by Debbie Ward of the ASBP.

Thomas Hesslenberg said he was looking forward to the imminent recommendations due from the Government's Circular Economy Task Force, regulation, although their publication is now delayed. He said: "A lot of hard work has been done by that group; there'll be some sensible things that come out from it."

The industry is already overwhelmingly seeing the pursuit of circular approaches as important, (a 2025 survey of 500 construction professionals (by Holcim) found that 97% of UK construction businesses saw the circular economy as important, and 57% had implemented specific circularity targets, a "big increase on 2024," according to the report authors. But it is arguably about application of that ambition now, in practice.

The survey also said demand for products made with recycled content has increased dramatically; 94% of respondents saying it influences their supplier choice. Recycled aggregates for example are seeing exponential increase, but still only represent around 30% of the total used. Our round table discovered a picture of an industry of two halves in terms of its journey to circularity, and it revealed some clear ideas on how to help lagging firms close the gap.

ROUND TABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Chris Halligan, CIAT:** A centralised, universal, holistic assessment system, and also take into account the actual cost of climate change; the effects of products on climate.
- **Gary Wilson, Amtico:** If we don't incentivise people to go down that circularity journey, I don't think they will do it off their own back.
- **Stephanie Palmer, BDA:** Treat old buildings and new buildings very separately – physical banks could work well for existing buildings, but a new system needs to be set up for new buildings, which operates in the future state.
- **Ian Pritchett, Greencore Homes:** Very clearly define the outcomes we are trying to achieve, in as simplistic a form as possible, and identify the (mainly financial) carrots and sticks that will achieve the outcomes.
- **Simon Foxell, The Architects Practice:** We need to address sustainability along with building safety, we desperately need better information, consistent data comes back fairly rapidly from existing building stock. And we desperately need a national research organisation to give credibility to information around building products.
- **Nick Haughton, Sapphire Balconies:** Incentivise buyers to care; could the Building Safety Regulator open up information such as on EPDs and ESPR to the public in the same way as planning information? Move the national standard up, without penalising early adopters.
- **Debbie Ward, ASBP:** Make it easier to do a harvest map, so rather than getting specifier catalogues out, you actually look at the materials already available in the local area. And record that; turning the traditional approach on its head. Also, knowing what your asset is, and not leaving it to the Pre Demolition Audit.
- **Umendra Singh, Soprema UK:** Embed circularity in decision making, whatever you are proving, and if you have a team, train your team, educate them, make them aware. They will ask you questions, and it brings the whole industry up. And involve manufacturers at the early stage; we have solutions.
- **Mike Leonard, Birmingham City University:** We need to try to encourage people to buy and build buildings that are going to last 150 years. And get behind UK manufacturing, because we're not going to solve our climate change problems by importing products from all over the world.
- **Thomas Hesslenberg, Elliott Wood:** The Government needs to listen to the recommendations coming from the Circular Economy Task Force.

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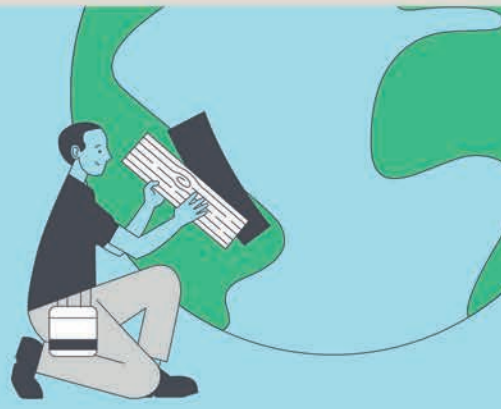

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BUILDING PROJECTS

All inclusive

LISBURNE SCHOOL STOCKPORT

A new SEND school in Stockport is providing a transformed education environment for vulnerable children, with architects AtkinsRéalis setting the bar high for inclusive education design that also embraces nature. Roseanne Field reports

On the site where a disused school once sat, closed in 2012 due to declining pupil numbers, now sits a modern replacement for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. It has been designed by AtkinsRéalis with inclusivity at its heart.

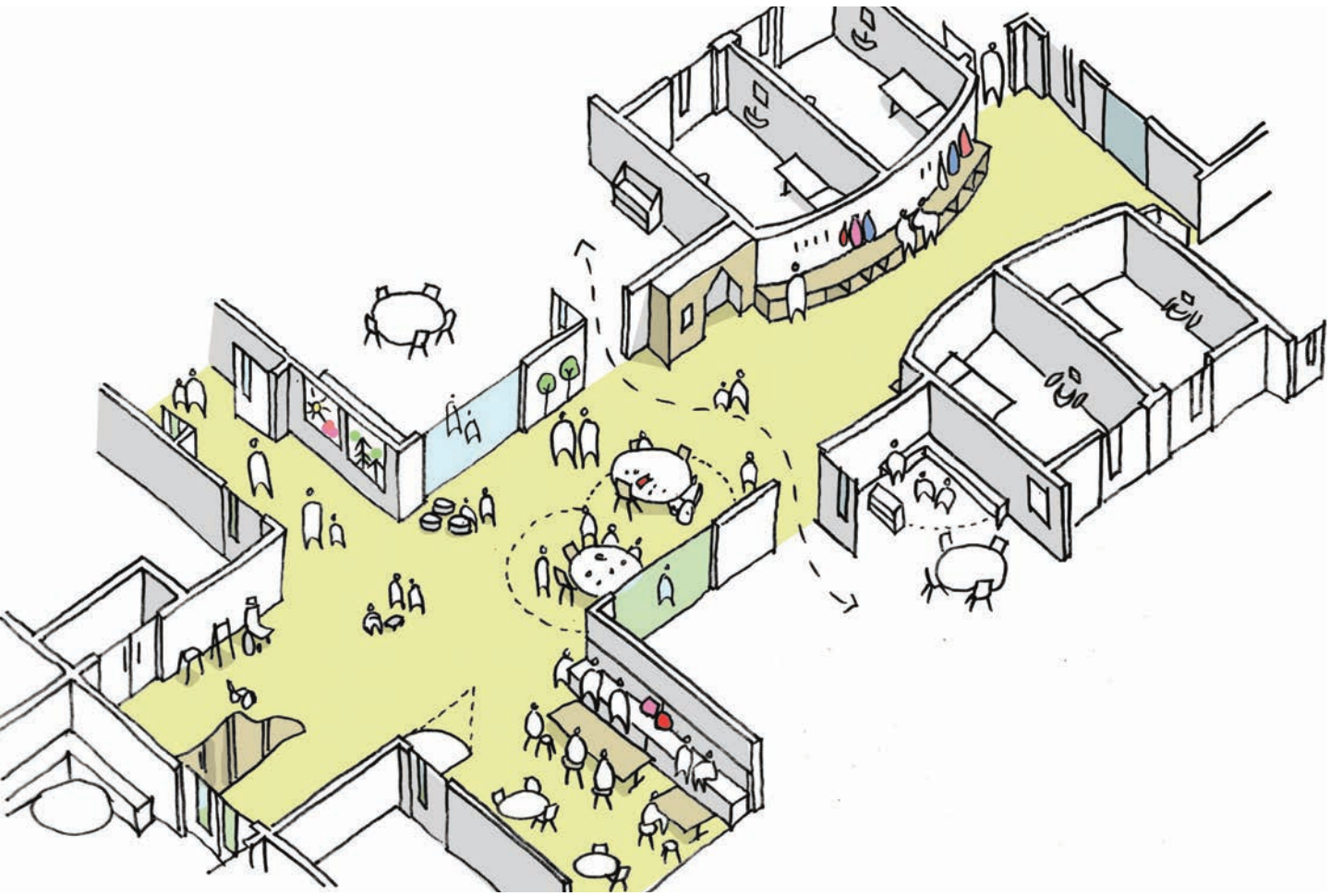
Lisburne School was designed and built exclusively for SEND pupils aged four to 11 and is situated on the site of the former Offerton High School, and adjacent to Castle Hill High School in Stockport, which is also a specialist provision. Lisburne School can accommodate over 200 pupils with complex needs such as autism, severe learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

The school is the result of a collaborative effort between Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) and multidisciplinary firm AtkinsRéalis, who have extensive experience in the education sector and were approached by the council to work on the concept.

The presence of the existing high school was the key factor for the site being chosen by the council for development, as well as the fact it borders the green belt. Combined these factors would mean the new school would benefit both from strong community links, as well as good proximity to nature – an important factor in the overall design. The overall aim for the project was to provide a SEND school which significantly raised the bar for inclusive design, in catering for the area's most vulnerable children.

Initially, AtkinsRéalis were approached for feasibility and design up to RIBA Stage 3, before handing the contract over to Kier for delivery. Although the practice had worked on schools and education facilities many times previously, the opportunity to design this inclusive school was particularly enticing, as associate architect and project lead Lorenzo Mognini explains: "Our strong education portfolio and experience

OUTDOOR ACCESS
The three two-storey blocks were designed to allow all pupils to have level access to the outdoor areas



as technical advisors for the Department of Education (DfE) made this project an attractive opportunity to apply inclusive design principles. Lisburne SEND School stands as a testament to collaboration – bringing educators, families, and designers together for a shared vision of inclusion." The practice's nearby Manchester office undertook the project delivery, while the Leeds office worked with the council as technical advisors.

With the school to serve local children and staff working in the school living within Stockport and the surrounding area, public consultations were held to give the community a voice and allow them to help shape the design. There's a "strong sense of local identity," says Mognini, which was "an important part of the project and really came through in the public consultations." The practice also held workshops with SMBC and teachers who also all contributed to, and guided some of, the design decisions.

Integrated & inclusive

The whole of the brief was centred around designing a school that would set a new standard for specialist provision, while integrating seamlessly with its surroundings and combining full inclusivity and accessibility with aesthetics.

This meant not only making the most of the green belt-adjacent location, but also being sympathetic to the existing buildings – particularly the school, and houses in the surrounding area. "The brief focused on delivering a state-of-the-art SEND school that meets pupil requirements, integrates with its green surroundings, and provides inclusive, accessible spaces without compromising aesthetics," explains Mognini. "It was key to ensure the school related to its surroundings, we needed to be

sympathetic to that."

While the objectives of the brief were clear from the outset, meeting them was not necessarily as straightforward. To minimise the impact of the school on the nearby residents, the height of the building was to be no higher than two storeys at any point which, says Mognini, was a challenge.

Other challenges encountered early on in the design process included the requirement to ensure all pupils would have level outdoor access, and managing the shared vehicular access with the adjacent high school. "Proximity to the green belt required sensitive material choices and landscape integration," adds Mognini.

The designers made a virtue of this requirement, creating an external terrace on the first floor, providing pupils access to the outdoors without having to use the stairs to get to the ground floor. "There's quite a lot of communication between the inside and outside of the building, and the landscape is part of the design of the building," Mognini says.

This is an area where the AtkinsRéalis' experience within the education sector proved fruitful as well. Work on previous projects "informed the approach," explains Mognini, "particularly blending indoor and outdoor spaces and creating shared circulation areas." Through their advisory work with the DfE and project experience, the practice had developed "extensive SEND design knowledge" which fed into the project, helping with the creation of features such as sensory rooms and physiotherapy spaces.

As clients, the council were heavily involved throughout the design and construction process, as were teachers with relevant expertise. They helped influence factors such as the layout, finishes and functional design details via design meetings held on a regular basis throughout the entire project. "It has been an ongoing conversation with those key stakeholders throughout the process, from stage zero to completion," says Mognini.

External connections

In order to meet the overarching design objectives – to "create an inclusive, accessible and aesthetically pleasing SEND school that supports diverse learning needs," Mognini explains – the design team focused closely on scale, materials choice, and layout. In the end the plan was split into "three distinct teaching and learning blocks," with each catering to a specific age group. The blocks are independent from one another, but connected by external covered areas and terraces.

Block A houses admin areas on the ground floor, with a plant room and classrooms on the first floor. Blocks B and C have classrooms on both the ground and first floors, connected by shared communal spaces. However, Mognini says the main challenge for the architects "lay in designing the three distinct teaching blocks linked by an external first floor terrace for level outdoor access and covered ground floor areas for all-weather use."

The team also had to negotiate the challenge of minimising the footprint of the

The whole of the brief was centred around designing a school that would set a new standard for specialist provision

building by designing it over two storeys rather than one, while ensuring those on the first floor would still have level access to the outside. The external terrace solved the problem of balancing reduced land take with ensuring access. "We try to reduce the footprint as much as we can which is why we opted for a two storey building instead of the more usual single storey form," Mognini explains.

The practice wanted pupils to always have a connection to nature, whether utilising the outdoor spaces or inside the school buildings. In order to facilitate this, extensive glazing was included throughout to not only allow plenty of light in but offer pupils views outside too. The large windows maximise daylight and views of the surrounding hills and woodland. When the weather allows, learning can take place outside in one of the outdoor classrooms or garden spaces the design team included to, as Mognini explains, "integrate learning with nature."

Outdoor beneficial facilities for SEND children include a sensory garden, classrooms, growing area, multi-use gaming area and a loop walk and running track. There is also a dedicated forest school area which includes dining spaces, covered play areas, habitat areas and seating.

Material choices played an important role in integrating the school with its surroundings, too. The structure itself comprises a steel frame, finished with red brick around the ground floor to "reflect local context," namely the nearby residential buildings and Castle Hill High School.

The first floor exterior, up to the pitched roof – is finished with timber cladding, chosen to add further affinity with the nearby green belt. "It provides a more natural setting and identifies the school, along with the shape of the roof," explains Mognini. "It's become quite an identity for the school."

The use of timber combined with the external terrace, outdoor classrooms and garden spaces all combine to give a strong connection with surrounding nature. "There's a big interaction between the landscape and our buildings, and we have melded inside and outside," Mognini says.

Internal access

The design minimises internal corridors, promotes open shared spaces and ensures a smooth transition between blocks via external links.

TIMBER
The first floor exterior is finished with timber cladding, to add further affinity with the landscape

Where internal corridors were necessary, they were designed to double as shared teaching spaces "to reduce wasted circulation," explains Mognini. "We try to maximise the use of space and the amount of reusable space, so not just have a corridor as a means of connecting the different areas."

One such example can be found in both blocks B and C, where two classrooms merge together in a way that the 'corridor' becomes a shared space. "By making the corridor part of the classroom and part of the teaching space we managed to maximise the use of the areas we have without wasting space on circulation," Mognini says.

While the open layout and nature of the school works well for its pupils and from a navigational and wayfinding point of view, it did also present some obstacles when it came to the more practical elements of learning environments. "Acoustics are quite a challenge due to the noise and reverberation generated in open classrooms like these," admits Mognini.

Lighting and ventilation were also carefully considered, with both designed to meet DfE standards. Lighting in particular was tailored in certain areas within the school such as the specialist sensory rooms. The 'light rooms' in particular feature sensory lighting and interactive elements such as bubble walls, an LED wall wash which creates an even wash of light across the surface, a solar projector, bubble column, fibre optics, infinity tunnel, an interactive wall and sound system.

Other specialist rooms throughout the school include physiotherapy rooms, a multifunctional sensory room which incorporates body rollers, storage swing hooks, a large swing bolster and mats for therapeutic activities, a rebound therapy room which includes a trampoline, and a soft play room equipped with various elements for active exploration and play. There is also a dark therapy room that allows for relaxation and sensory exploration, as well as therapeutic interventions with equipment including a solar projector, UV carpet, and liquid floor tiles.

Pupils also have access to a cookery room finished with accessible workstations so they can take part in hands-on cooking activities and a dance studio which features a 10 metre x 2.4 metre tall immersive wall and interactive floor. There are also CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) spaces, and a 'zen den' designed to help students who need a space to relax and self-regulate.

As well as setting the bar high in terms of the facilities on offer, the design was coordinated around achieving a BREEAM Very Good rating. This was achieved through various means, including electric heating and air source heat pumps. "The use of natural materials

The school stands as a testament to collaboration – bringing educators, families, and designers together for a shared vision of inclusion




FLAGSHIP
The school has been hailed as a 'flagship' for SEND students, and was shortlisted for two Education Estates Awards in 2025

like timber also supported sustainability goals," adds Mognini.

Celebrating success

Since completion of the school in December 2024, the school has received hugely positive feedback, with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council's Luke Green calling it a "flagship school," and headteacher Samantha Benson describing it as a "fully inclusive environment for our children to thrive in" that will "offer opportunities to raise the profile of SEND and support children across the wider Stockport community."

The project was recognised at Education Estates 2025 where it was shortlisted for two awards: Project of the Year – State Schools (losing out to another AtkinsRéalis project), and Project of the Year – Inclusive Design, which it won. These award wins "validated the team's commitment to SEND excellence," Mognini says.

The school is also a finalist in the SEND Project of the Year category at the Education Property Awards 2026, to be held in February 2026. "It's really important for us to win these awards and be recognised for our work in this area," continues Mognini. He articulates how SEND requires a different level of focus on the part of design teams: "Designing for SEND requires real understanding of the particular requirements of both children and teaching staff at the school."

The practice has also had "really positive feedback" from both the council and staff at the school since its opening, with the facilities, outdoor spaces and overall design quality all receiving high praise. However, while feedback from staff is important, Mognini says "the greatest reward is to see the pupils thriving in an inspiring and enabling learning environment." ■

Photos © David Millington

Advanced's fire protection installed in Canterbury Student Village

Fire protection solutions manufacturer, Advanced, has supplied intelligent fire panels to student accommodation in Kent to replace existing panels, as part of a £3.5m project to improve fire safety at Cloud Student Homes' Canterbury Student Village sites.

Cloud Student Homes provides students with comfortable, convenient accommodation, with 17 different types of rooms available at the Canterbury Student Village, which is easily accessible to three universities, Canterbury Christchurch, University of Kent and UCA, as well as Canterbury College. With fire safety a priority, it was vital to replace the existing fire alarm system in Kentish House, Behn Hall and Tallis Court. However, as the buildings were occupied, the challenge for the project was to keep the existing fire system working while the Advanced panels were being installed to ensure occupants were protected at all times. Advanced's high-performance, fault-tolerant

MxPro 5 analogue addressable panels were chosen to provide industry-leading protection to category L 1 for the student accommodation suites, bedrooms, high-risk areas and plant rooms within two blocks of Kentish House, two blocks of Behn Hall, and Tallis Court.

Fire engineering consultants, Endeavour Group selected fire safety specialists CSS Ltd as the contractors on the Canterbury Student Village fire alarm replacement project. CSS Ltd was responsible for the design, supply, install and handover of the project. The company installed five MxPro 5 4-loop fire panels which were networked and connected to the ARC for fire and rescue monitoring. All devices are Hochiki with input/output units connected to the existing AOV units throughout. The networked fire system had to integrate with the access control, lift and AOV systems. Endeavour Group reviewed the product design and functionality of the fire system package on the project to ensure it met the client's needs.

The Advanced MxPro 5 has a number of features that CSS Ltd finds particularly useful when it comes to installing the fire panel. These include a built-in multimeter which, measures all voltages and currents across the fire system in real time, to speed up the commissioning process. Meanwhile, the MxPro 5 panels come in four and eight loop formats to suit CSS Ltd's needs and customers' budgets.

0345 894 7000 www.advancedco.com

Protecting schools, saving budgets: Yeoman Shield keeps learning environments smart and safe

Schools face constant wear and tear – busy corridors, stairwells and breakout areas see hundreds of pupils, staff and equipment moving daily. This can lead to scuffed walls, damaged corners and escalating maintenance costs. Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School in Kingstanding turned to Yeoman Shield to protect their interiors and reduce ongoing repair expenses.

Head Teacher Robert Swanwick selected Yeoman Shield after reviewing product samples and exploring options for a long-term, cost-effective solution. Yeoman Shield's directly employed installation specialists fitted FalmouthEx Wall Protection Panels at 1250 mm high throughout corridors, dining areas and staircases. Where needed, brickwork was professionally boarded-out to create a smooth, high-quality finish. Dusty Grey panels complemented existing artwork while providing durable, impact-resistant protection.

To enhance safety and durability, the

project included corner protection, robust 110 mm White PVCu skirting with a solid timber core, and handrails. While the original 50 mm Dia. Guardian Handrail is no longer offered, Yeoman Shield now offers a new, improved version designed for enhanced durability and safety. Together, these elements create a complete interior protection system tailored for busy school environments.

All Yeoman Shield products are manufactured from rigid PVCu, making them easy to clean, resistant to commercial cleaners, and impervious to bacteria or mould—helping schools maintain hygiene and appearance with minimal effort. By eliminating constant repainting and repairs, schools can redirect budgets towards teaching and learning.

In addition to wall, door, corner and skirting protection, Yeoman Shield provides Fire Door Services, including installation, inspection, maintenance and management and fire door protection ensuring compliance with safety regulations while protecting building interiors.

Mr Swanwick praised the results: "The quality is exceptional. Six months on, there's no sign of wear, and the installation teams were professional, efficient and understood the realities of working in a school. I am a very happy customer."

Yeoman Shield delivers complete interior protection and Fire Door solutions, backed by a nationwide installation service trusted by schools across the UK.

0113 279 5854 www.yeomanshield.com

Ongoing benefits of technical support shown by Wraptite® installation at new high school

Specialist contractors working on a new high school in Dumfries have shown the ongoing benefits of technical and learning support when it comes to delivering low energy construction. Having already used the A. Proctor Group's external air barrier, Wraptite®, on a previous project, they have now applied that experience to another LEIP-funded school project.

As a self-adhesive membrane that is both airtight and vapour permeable, Wraptite is designed to contribute to precisely this kind of building performance and fabric specification. Although Dumfries High School is not targeting Passivhaus certification, Wraptite's credentials are boosted by its status as a Passivhaus-certified component.

Installed to the outside face of external walls, Wraptite helps to achieve higher standards of airtightness by simplifying detailing and reducing the number of penetrations. At the same time, its vapour permeability allows the passage of moisture vapour out of the structure,

avoiding any increase in condensation risk.

The Wraptite membrane at Dumfries High School was the responsibility of specialist contractors Cairnhill Structures, as part of designing, supplying and installing the complete structural framing system and other associated works.

Working with a product like Wraptite for the first time, especially when required to deliver a low energy design target, can be daunting – as our case study about Liberton High describes.

For Cairnhill Structures, they had previously used Wraptite on another school project. "We installed it on the Monifieth Learning Campus project," said Carlos Simoes, contracts manager – framing at Cairnhill Structures. "As part of that project, we arranged an installation and training workshop at our factory in Coatbridge with Linda Kay and Lewis Stanley."

Linda and Lewis are regional sales manager and business development manager at the A. Proctor Group respectively.

Experience is particularly vital when it comes to working with the variable nature of the Scottish climate. "Installation during the Scottish winter can be particularly difficult," noted Carlos. "However, as Wraptite is self-adhesive, installation is a relatively simple and fast process. It also provided excellent weather protection for following trades."

While the A. Proctor Group had delivered training on a previous project, support did not end there, as Carlos described: "Linda visited site on several occasions throughout the installation process to carry out site inspections."

01250 872 261
proctorgroup.com/products/wraptite

CARLISLE® Construction Materials celebrates NFRC Scottish Roofing Award win

CARLISLE® and Site Group won the Green Roofing category in the NFRC Scottish Roofing Award for the Tynecastle Student Accommodation project in Edinburgh, which features CARLISLE®'s high-performance RESITRIX waterproofing system. The redevelopment of the former B-listed Tynecastle High School by S1 Developments combines the retention of the building's historic facade with two new student accommodation blocks. The roofing design, developed collaboratively by CARLISLE® and Site Group, delivers exceptional environmental performance through the integration of CARLISLE®'s RESITRIX® hybrid EPDM membrane and ALUTRIX® vapour barrier membrane, and features blue and green roof systems and solar PV technology. Across five roof areas, the design incorporates approximately 3,000 m³ of rainwater attenuation to manage stormwater sustainably. CARLISLE® provided full technical support throughout the project, including specification advice, on-site inspections and quality assurance. Site Group carried out the roofing installation, including blue and green roof systems, offering specialist design and training support.

info.uk@ccm-europe.com www.ccm-europe.com/gb

Gerflor and Gradus leading the way at Dunfermline Learning Campus, Scotland

A major milestone in Scottish education has been achieved with the opening of the Dunfermline Learning Campus in West Fife. **Gerflor** has played a key role in the project's success, supplying over 14,000 m² of high-performance flooring solutions including Taraflex® sports flooring, DLW Marmorette Linoleum, Tarasafe Safety flooring, and Powershock 300 rubber tiles. Alongside this, Gradus accessories including stair nosings and a variety of trim finishes were also supplied, the combined package of products from both Gerflor and Gradus were specified for their exceptional durability, safety, and style to meet the needs of the various areas across the facility. Maggie Smith, Scotland team leader at Gerflor, said: "We were able to offer a comprehensive flooring and accessories package that not only met the project's functional and aesthetic requirements but also delivered significant cost efficiencies. By tailoring our solution to align with the budgetary goals without compromising on quality, we demonstrated the value of working with a supplier who can provide both innovation and cost-effectiveness."

01625 428922 www.gerflor.co.uk

Gilberts helps deliver net zero in Newcastle

Gilberts Blackpool has played a key role in helping the new Callerton Academy achieve carbon neutral status. Callerton Academy features diverse green building services technologies designed to achieve NZCIO (net zero carbon in operation). The sustainable technologies include cross ventilation designed and engineered by Gilberts, a green roof, photovoltaic panels and an air heat source pump. Leybourne Urwin building services engineers working for TGA Consulting Engineers and principal contractor Morgan Sindall had the task of delivering the sustainable goals. Leybourne Urwin chose Gilberts for the air movement specialist's technical ability to answer the scheme's challenges of balancing intense energy usage with net zero operation. Gilberts' Mistrale Fusion Deo MFS-HR stand-alone hybrid ventilation with heat recovery units and Mistrale 75 passive natural ventilation units now feature across the building's facades. With its high heat recovery capability which out-performs any similar units on the market, the MFS-HR system ensures airflow into and out of the teaching spaces and administration offices is in line with latest Department for Education (DfE) criteria.

01253 766 911 www.gilbertsblackpool.com/natural-ventilation-solutions

ARDEX Group Wins Prestigious BASA Award for Sustainability

ARDEX Group is proud to announce its success at the BASA Showcase 2025, where the company won the Best Sustainability Initiative. The award recognises ARDEX Group's Building Tomorrow programme, which commits the company to achieving full Carbon Neutrality by 2045, and Carbon Neutrality for Scope 1 & 2 emissions by 2030. This ambitious strategy includes initiatives such as: replacing finite raw materials with circular solutions, reducing CO_2 emissions across operations, promoting diversity, equality, and ethical business practices and prioritising local sourcing. Earlier this year, ARDEX Group also received a Gold Certificate from the Achilles Carbon Reduction Programme, marking five consecutive years of CO_2 reduction at its UK plants. This BASA accolade follows another sustainability win at the Tile Association Awards 2025, making it the company's second major sustainability award this year. In addition to the sustainability award, ARDEX Group was shortlisted in the Innovation category for its BAL Micromax Grout-Effect Sealant, and, as a manufacturer shortlisted for multiple awards, was also shortlisted in the Best Manufacturer category.

01440 714939 www.ardex.co.uk

Paul Blake joins Brett Martin as specialist sales manager for polycarbonate and facade systems

Brett Martin has announced that Paul Blake has joined its daylight systems sales team as specialist sales manager for the UK & Ireland. Bringing seventeen years of experience, Paul will support customers with the specification and installation of Brett Martin's multiwall systems, Marlon Clickfix and Toploc. Paul has gained a thorough understanding of the construction sector and polycarbonate daylight systems in his previous roles. Having worked within the industry since 2008, he brings excellent insight into customers' needs along with a practical understanding of common pain points. At Brett Martin, Paul's remit currently covers two market leading polycarbonate multiwall solutions. The first is Marlon Clickfix, an architectural facade and glazing system that has been utilised across multiple sectors: from the new studios of the Royal College of Art to large scale warehouse and distribution facilities. The second is Toploc, a new system for the UK market that is suited to pitched and curved roofs. These two versatile solutions offer numerous options for architects, designers and specifiers looking to increase exposure to natural light for building occupants.

07966 272538 paulblake@brettmartin.com

Altro's latest sustainability report published

Altro has published its latest sustainability report, providing a comprehensive overview of the company's ongoing commitment to sustainable practices, with an increased focus on transparency and accountability. 'Building better futures' contains detailed information on Altro's environmental impact and efforts to reduce carbon emissions; initiatives and programs that promote social responsibility within its communities; innovations in sustainable product development and supply chain management; as well as key performance metrics and benchmarks that track the company's sustainability goals.

01462 489 516 www.altro.com

Kerakoll publishes 2024 Sustainability Report

With its 2024 Sustainability Report, **Kerakoll** explains the progress made using a mix of vision, precise targetting and concrete actions. A journey that takes shape through daily actions and manifests itself as concrete plans that involve every corporate function and create a lasting positive impact. The report is not only a reporting tool, but also a compass: a document that enables the company to be transparent about its progress, reflect on critical issues and outline a roadmap that evolves through listening, measurement and continuous improvement.

01772 456 831 www.kerakollgroup.com/en/reporting

Harlequin works with architects and specifiers **worldwide**

Harlequin provides a turnkey solution for all performance spaces, from initial design to expert installation, offering advice and guidance every step of the way. With an extensive range of sprung floors, vinyl floors, dance mirrors, ballet barres and dance studio equipment, Harlequin can provide everything a good performance space requires.

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GEZE Wins 'Fire Door Product of the Year' at the National Fenestration Awards

GEZE UK is delighted to announce we have been recognised at the National Fenestration Awards 2025, winning the 'Fire Door Product of the Year' category for our 'Slimdrive EMD-F Powered Swing Door Drive System'.

The awards took place at Doncaster Racecourse on the 25th October 2025 and welcomed the fenestration industries leading companies from across the UK. Founded in 2013 in response to extensive support for an independent and all-inclusive event, the National Fenestration Awards aims to recognise all facets of the UK fenestration industry by inviting everyone to nominate and vote on who they think deserves recognition for a range of categories.

This award highlights GEZE's commitment to delivering innovative, compliant, and intelligent solutions to the door and access control industry.

Kaz Spiewakowski, Managing Director at GEZE UK, said: "I have to say I'm proud that GEZE has achieved success at the National Fenestration Awards 2025, winning the Fire Door Product of the Year Award for our EMD-F Powered Swing Door Drive. We take great pride in this recognition, as it highlights the EMD-F as an industry-leading fire door product."

The GEZE EMD-F is one of our most established powered swing door drives, designed for safety, accessibility, and smart building integration. It has undergone extensive and rigorous testing, including fire testing, to ensure compliance and reliability in a variety of individual fire door applications. Paul Carroll, GEZE UK's Technical Manager, added: "Our commitment to stringent testing provides both GEZE and our customers with confidence in the EMD-F's ability to meet demanding application requirements. It's a testament to the quality, performance, and innovation that underpin all GEZE products."

At GEZE, continuous product development remains at the core of the company's philosophy. The market-leading EMD-F, along with its more powerful family member, the Powerturn F, is multifunctional, intelligent, and networked - designed to meet the evolving needs of modern buildings. These products not only ensure accessibility but also open escape and rescue routes during fire or panic events, allowing controlled access, and robust fire protection.

GEZE's commitment to integration is further strengthened by the availability of KNX and BACnet interface modules and our own building automation system, enabling seamless networking of GEZE products. This ensures precise monitoring and reliable operation of automated doors, windows, and safety technology across the building network.

Andy Howland, Sales & Marketing Director, at GEZE UK concluded: "Once again, GEZE is very proud of this award for the EMD-F Powered Swing Door Drive. It's an acknowledgment of our ongoing drive to exceed industry standards and deliver safe, intelligent, and connected solutions."

info.uk@geze.com
www.geze.co.uk/en

03-05 March
Excel, London

futurebuild

Call to action at Futurebuild '26

Under the headline theme of 'Connect', Futurebuild 2026 is shining a light on the need for collective action in order to drive sustainable change, strengthen competitive standing and support a thriving built environment. There are a raft of heavyweight partners on board to reinforce the message that now is not the time to stand still – or backtrack – on sustainability.

Bringing industry bodies together

High-profile industry bodies are getting behind Futurebuild's mission to facilitate more purposeful collaboration and insightful debate in the main conference area sponsored by Mitsubishi Electric. This includes contributions from RIBA and CIBSE. addressing the business case for adaptive reuse, as part of Futurebuild's hard-hitting main conference programme.

The CIOB, meanwhile, is chairing a panel that considers the industry's collective and individual responsibilities to push back on projects that turn unethical. Leading industry representatives will also explore how to encourage culture change to embed the circular economy in a more concerted way.

Knowledge programme

While the bigger-picture political issues are being addressed in the main Futurebuild and National Retrofit Conference Arenas, the wider knowledge programme will bring a carefully curated balance of visionary and practical content.

Staying true to Futurebuild's ethos to be an event that's shaped by the industry, for the industry, it's been a long standing strategy of the show organisers to elevate the content across all areas by inviting industry bodies to run a series of stage 'takeovers.' Several supply chain associations are enthusiastically on board compiling 133 hours of CPD content that equips visitors, exhibitors and attendees to take tangible action and address increasing design and safety standards, rising material and labour costs, and the ongoing challenge of meeting ambitious sustainability targets.

Seminar stage takeovers

Lead sponsor Holcim are fronting the Buildings & Materials stage where the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), Architects Declare, and Woodknowledge Wales are steering an agenda centred on the transition to a regenerative built environment – breaking down what this means for places, processes and supply chains.

The Association of Sustainable Building Products (ASBP) are shining a light on the scaling up of regenerative materials, and potential implications for fire safety, while the Traditional Sustainable Buildings Alliance are honing in on regenerative design from a retrofit perspective. Impact sessions on healthier buildings are also being held by The Good Homes Alliance and the Passivhaus Trust.

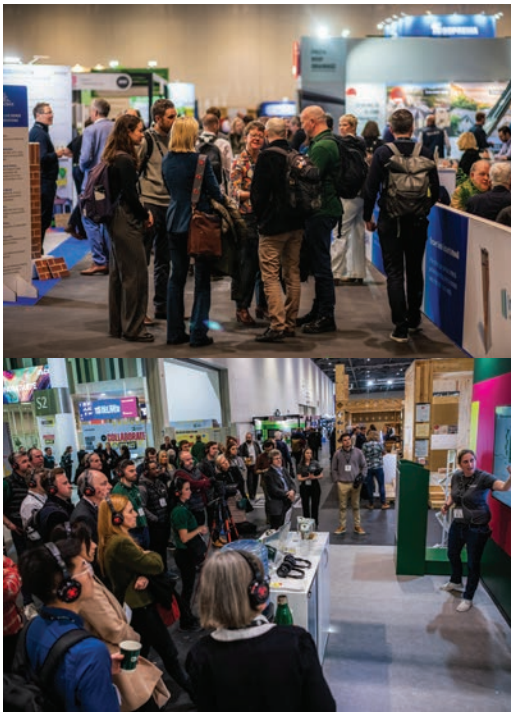
On the Placemaking stage speakers will tackle the theme of urban resilience and how to provide a healthier quality of life for all in the face of 'future' threats which are already occurring. Industry organisations including UKGBC, ICE and CIWEM will contribute to the resilience discussion, and recovery from adverse events.

Innovation at the heart

Innovation is central to the discussion across all areas of the show but the 2026 event is flipping the script and exploring how existing knowledge can be better used, rather than solely exploring novel technical solutions.

To register, please scan the QR Code.

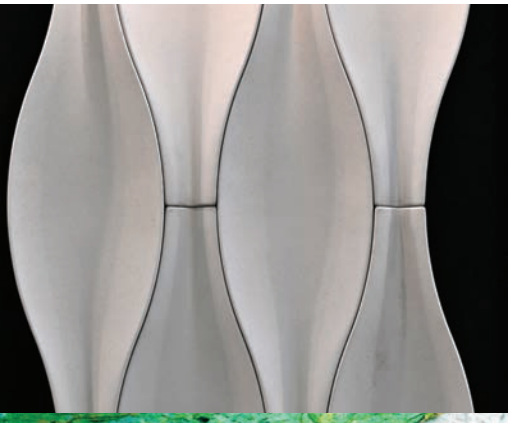
Article supplied by Futurebuild



Addressing the business case for adaptive reuse, this session is part of Futurebuild's hard-hitting main conference programme

03 - 05 February
Business Design Centre, London

Surface Design Show 2026



From 3-5 February 'SDS26' will showcase the very best in materials and surfaces for architects and designers to explore and interact with. This years' theme is 'Material Evolution' and will stress a rethinking of newness and how the industry can make the shift from waste to worth. The show will encourage exhibitors and visitors alike to celebrate thoughtful design and redefine what it means to be new whilst championing circular systems, material transparency and inventive reuse.

Over 180 exhibitors will be showcasing the best in material innovation with surfaces for both exteriors and interiors ranging from hand crafted ceramic tiles to stunning marble walls, bespoke wood veneers and everything in between. Many of the thousands of surfaces and materials on display will be launched at the show, making visitors the first to explore new innovations in the industry.

The 2026 edition promises to be bigger and better than ever with returning features including Surface Spotlight, Stone Tapestry, Innovation Gallery, Green Grads and the Surface Design Awards. SDS has also announced a new partnership with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), serving as a host partner for two of RIBA's most significant annual events.

Studio Justine Fox will be managing the curation of the designer hub for SDS26, using its expertise in applied colour psychology, colour insights and colour ergonomics to make the space one of the show's standout areas.

The Green Grads will once again grace the innovation gallery with their experimental projects that push the boundaries of design and materiality. Last year included materials and products made from tennis balls, breadcrumbs and ground coffee. This year we will continue to see the best of what Barbara Chandler's Green Grads have to display.

The ceramicist Andra Munro will be returning for 2026, bringing her expertise in porcelain and craft to the BDC, last year she created a beautiful entrance to show featuring an intricate wall. For 2026, Andra will be creating something even bigger.

The show will also host a range of powerful speaker sessions with over 55 industry leaders debating and exploring a range of topics including designing for neurodiversity, surfaces for art, material literacy and colour forecasting.

The highly anticipated Surface Design Awards ceremony will be held during the show, welcoming the shortlisted entrants along with visitors to a drinks reception on the evening of Wednesday 6 February. The awards celebrate excellence in material and surface innovation with categories highlighting both projects and products that have pushed boundaries in outstanding design. This years judging panel includes directors and principals from the UK's leading architectural practices along with industry experts and includes Muyiwa Oki-President RIBA, Tina Norden, Principal at Conran & Partners, Tim Gledstone, Partner at Squire & Partners, Barbara Chandler, Founder of Green Grads and Roddy Clarke, Design Journalist among others.

SDS26 is a must in the design calendar to explore all creative things within the material and surface world.

Register today by scanning the QR Code.

Article supplied by the Surface Design Show

Tile of Spain to exhibit latest collection at Surface Design Show 2026

Returning for another year, **Tile of Spain** is delighted to be exhibiting at the Surface Design Show in February 2026 at stand 401. Showcasing the newest collections from a selection of its manufacturers, the show offers visitors an opportunity to see the very latest in Spanish tile innovation, design and technology.

Thanks to developments in manufacturing processes, Tile of Spain will be presenting some of the most interesting and exciting tile designs yet. Featuring collections from leading Spanish manufacturers – including ADEX, Apavisa Porcelánico, Arcana Cerámica, Cerámica Ribesalbes, Cerámicas Aparici, Cevica, Cristacer, Dune Cerámica, Equipe Cerámicas, Gayafores, Greco Gres, Museum Surfaces, Oset, Porcelánicos HDC, Realonda, Undefasa and Vives Azulejos y Gres - the stand will showcase a rich spectrum of design possibilities. A true celebration of the versatile, durable and authentic nature of Spanish tiles, the collections on display will showcase the rich qualities and expansive creative potential that define Spanish ceramic craftsmanship.

www.tileofspain.com

SURFACE DESIGN SHOW STAND 401

ARDEX to exhibit at SPATEX 2026 – Celebrating 30 years of innovation in wet leisure

ARDEX Group UK is proud to announce its return to SPATEX 2026, the international pool, spa, and wet leisure exhibition, as the event celebrates its 30th anniversary. Taking place at the Coventry Building Society Arena from 3rd to 5th February 2026, ARDEX will showcase its comprehensive range of high-performance products and systems designed specifically for swimming pools, spas, and wet leisure environments. At Stand D1, visitors can expect live mini-pool demonstrations showcasing ARDEX's innovative underwater pool repair systems in action through a custom-built display. There will also be exclusive giveaways, including the popular ARDEX "RED" 30-litre mixing bucket and a range of other promotional items. In addition, attendees will have the opportunity to meet the ARDEX team and gain expert advice on pool preparation, waterproofing, tiling, and grouting solutions. What's more, on the Thursday morning, ARDEX Business Development Manager Charlie Gilchrist will present "A Brief Guide to Pool Preparation and Tiling" at the ISPE Workshop Arena, offering practical insights and best practices for professionals in the wet leisure industry.

01440 714939 www.ardex.co.uk

Huw Poppy returns to Breathing Buildings

Breathing Buildings has announced the return of Huw Poppy in his new role as Operations Director. Huw, who originally joined Breathing Buildings in 2011 and previously held the position of Sales Director, brings 20 years of experience in the ventilation sector. He returns with extensive expertise across low-energy ventilation design, project delivery, and on-site technical support. Huw will be responsible for strengthening operational performance across product development, technical design, and servicing. He will also work closely with consultants and M&E contractors, providing technical support.

01223 450 060 www.breathingbuildings.com

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.

insights.netmagmedia.co.uk/whitepapers

EJOT UK extends specifier support with NBS Source partnership

Leading construction fastening solutions manufacturer EJOT UK has strengthened its support for architects, engineers and specifiers by partnering with NBS Source, further improving online access to the digital information on its core anchoring and flat roofing products.

EJOT's decision to become an NBS Source Partner has been driven by the growing pace of digital transformation within the construction sector, coupled with the strategic and objective evolution of the platform in recent years. These factors support EJOT's broader strategy to integrate digitalisation efficiently throughout the building design and specification process.

It adds a further dimension to how the company provides access to its library of products, many of which are already supported by detailed technical datasheets, installation guidance and third party certification such as European Technical Assessments (ETAs), as well as from internationally recognised bodies including FM Approvals.

Within the EJOT product range now available on NBS Source are the majority of its concrete screws, through-bolts, resin anchors and heavy duty mechanical anchors. These include its LIEBIG Safety Bolt and Superplus BLS anchors, which are renowned globally due to their excellent performance characteristics and modular design that overcomes many of the common challenges associated with post install anchoring in concrete and hard base materials.

Several of EJOT's most specified flat roofing fastening solutions are also listed on the platform. These include the EJOT HTK 2G tube-washer with TKR fastener combination, an FM Approved thermally-broken fixing for roof membranes and insulating materials to steel and timber substructures, and the EJOT JBS-R and EcoTek adjustable tube-washer combination for fixing tapered insulation to concrete roof decks.

EJOT's fastening systems and products are regularly deployed in safety critical applications where accurate information, certification and test data has always been vital to inform and support decisions at the specification stage.

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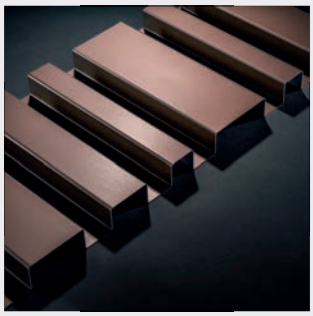
Maximum design freedom for the facade – Kalzip Flexform facade



With the Kalzip FlexForm® facade, **Kalzip** is launching a new generation of meander facades that offer architects and planners maximum creative freedom. This system is a logical further development of the proven TF800R facade. The folded aluminium profiles enable relief-like structures, clean lines, and rhythmic facade compositions. With the new Kalzip FlexForm® facade, the company provides a selection of technically tested profile shapes for efficient planning and reliable execution. For bespoke design requirements, the Kalzip FlexForm® Ultra facade offers a solution in which architects can define their own profile shapes with variable angles, depths, and pitches. Kalzip supports this process with technical consulting, feasibility studies, sampling, and project-specific manufacturing. The new system is also available in a wide range of high-quality surfaces and colours. These include the AluPlusPatina surface finish, which provides an elegant, matte metallic appearance in bronze, copper, and gold tones. A high-performance coating (HPC) option is also available, allowing colours and gloss levels to be freely selected. The HPC coating provides excellent UV and weather resistance.

enquiries.uk@kalzip.com www.kalzip.com

Hörmann enhances coastal protection with LPU 42 PremiumPlus sectional garage door

Hörmann UK has introduced the LPU 42 PremiumPlus sectional garage door – a high-performance upgrade engineered specifically for maritime environments. Building on the trusted durability of the Hörmann LPU 42 range, the PremiumPlus option features enhanced corrosion protection and long-term weather resistance. Each door leaf has a high-quality protective coating with cut edge sealing, while a premium frame includes door hardware, tracks, and connection rails finished in Grey white (RAL 9002) powder coating for increased protection. To further improve performance, doors with S, M, and D-ribbing benefit from additional ribbed filler profiles to enhance sealing between section transitions and ribbing areas. A recent installation in Dundonald, Kilmarnock featured two LPU 42 PremiumPlus doors, replacing the property's previous garage doors that had suffered visible wear due to the proximity of the coast. Hörmann replaced them with two smart matching Anthracite grey (RAL 7016) M-rib Silkgrain sectional doors, each measuring 2,286 x 2,125 mm. One was fully automated for frequent use, while the second was manually operated.

01530 516868 www.hormann.co.uk/home-owners-and-renovators/garage-doors/sectional-garage-doors

Brett Martin spans Center Parcs' subtropical swimming paradise with sustainable rooflight solution

Brett Martin's Marvault rooflights have been installed as part of a multi-award-winning refurbishment at Center Parcs' Whinfell Forest holiday village. The customer required a solution that would increase the thermal efficiency of the large, subtropical space in order to reduce heating costs and the sites carbon emissions. Brett Martin's vaulted multiwall polycarbonate rooflight system, which covers an area of approximately 2,785 m^2, provided the ultimate solution, enabling the existing roof to be kept whilst reducing heating usage by 11.14%. The team from Center Parcs reached out to Brett Martin in the hope of finding a solution that would continue to allow the maximum amount of natural light into the space, whilst improving environmental and cost efficiency. Brett Martin put forward its Marvault rooflight system which utilises aluminium and polycarbonate to create a barrel-vaulted shape. This shape increases light penetration and enables spans of up to seven metres to be bridged with no restriction on length. This suited the requirements of Center Parcs as the existing roof utilised long unbroken rooflights that spanned four metres and ran from 30 m to 61 m in length.

024 7660 2022 www.brettmartin.com

UK-made roofing accessories range

The **Don & Low** Roofing Accessories are expertly designed as the perfect match for the company's popular roofing membranes including Roofshield®, RoofTX® and MultiTX®. Don & Low's brand-new range of roofing accessories consists of Eaves Protection, Dry Fix Systems, Tile Vents and GRP Valleys & Bonding Strips, providing excellent performance, long-term durability and total peace of mind for every build. Each accessory is developed in full compliance with British Standards and undergoes independent BRE testing, ensuring it meets the highest levels of quality and safety.

www.donlow.co.uk

Tata Steel reveals results of industry research

Tata Steel has shared the results of its latest research, commissioned for its Colorcoat® brand. The survey found that the top three drivers influencing cladding specification decisions were fire performance, long-term aesthetics and durability, and a long product lifespan. Looking at its own product range, the company surveyed the reasons why people specified its Colorcoat® pre-finished steel, with the brand's colour range and durability two of the principal reasons. Lindsay Andrews, marketing manager – Colorcoat®, said: "The Colorcoat® brand has long been synonymous with high-quality pre-finished steel."

colorcoat.connection@tatasteeleurope.com www.colorcoat-online.com

Early stakeholder engagement matters

Richard Tocher at Permarock explains how facade system suppliers can bring greater benefits if engaged at the earliest stages of new build or refurb projects.

It's well understood that an externally insulated facade, when properly designed and installed, can yield benefits in terms of thermal performance, reduced energy demand and consequent cost-savings for building occupants. However, if system suppliers can be brought into the project team at an early enough stage, they can deliver other important benefits for clients, specifiers and end users.

Here, 'early' will often mean prior to contract award. External wall insulation system providers may be prepared to work 'at risk' in order to maximise the effectiveness of a project team's proposal, particularly when working alongside trusted stakeholder partners. If they can do that, they can influence plans for the insulation and facade elements in ways that could ultimately produce performance enhancements, more accurate and robust detailing, lower whole lifecycle costs, and potentially, faster project mobilisation from the onset.

Planning support & mobilisation

Planning consents can sometimes hamper speedy progress and on some schemes, the associated delays can limit the pathways and funding available to the client. System suppliers can play an important role here by providing planners with material samples, colour swatches, digital visualisations and other useful assets. They can also provide condensation risk analyses and U-value calculations to bolster the case for approving the scheme. Such data can be persuasive, particularly on retrofit schemes set in communities that are subject to fuel poverty and deprivation.

Planning consent may also sometimes depend on being able to replicate the appearance of local architectural styles. External wall insulation systems inevitably require the creation of new facades and, consequently, local authorities may have concerns about preserving the character of the built environment. These concerns can often be allayed if the supplier is afforded the chance to develop suitably tailored finishes. For example, brick slips can be supplied in special colour matched shades and various textures to match the appearance of traditional local brickwork.

The same products can also be used to reproduce features such as soldier courses, quoins and decorative bonding patterns.

Community support

System suppliers can also support meaningful community engagement. For schemes that involve large numbers of separate homes, suppliers should be willing to attend pre-commencement community events. Here, they can provide residents with samples and visualisations, information about the energy savings likely to result from retrofit works, and answers to relevant questions about the installation process itself. This all helps to encourage community buy-in, especially if residents can also be given a say in the final choice of colours and finishes. In turn, the willing support of local householders can help to minimise no access issues and associated delivery delays.

System design

When involved at an early stage, an external wall insulation specialist can also bring valuable experience that may inform the overall architectural design. This may be true of virtually any building, but it's especially relevant to retrofit schemes that involve non-traditional properties.

Through past experience of working on unusual, solid walled or non-traditional archetypes, a system supplier may be aware of cold bridging risks at particular interfaces. Previous pull out tests and inspections might also have identified other substrate specific risks. These risks can then be taken into account as part of the initial design phase rather than having to be addressed through subsequent onsite adaptations. That, in turn, can produce savings on time, labour and materials, and give the whole stakeholder team more certainty on scheduling and project costs.

Similarly, the system provider's experience can help the wider team to adopt best practice design and installation techniques from the outset. This promotes a 'right first time' approach, and helps all parties to avoid the additional costs and delays associated with learning lessons along the way.

Aesthetics

By providing access to the right products and expertise, a good EWI supplier should be able to help specifiers devise plans that yield longer-term savings on routine maintenance. Depending on their location and orientation, building facades will routinely be exposed to wind blown dirt, microorganisms and atmospheric pollution – factors that can potentially lead to discolouration or unsightly growths. However, many modern finishes offer features that help to preserve a brighter, cleaner appearance – for example, a tendency to shed dirt through the effects of ordinary weathering, and special preservatives that inhibit organic growth.

System suppliers can provide condensation risk analyses or U-value calcs

Quality & reporting

Pre-commencement collaboration with a system supplier can enable specifiers to propose products, methods and delivery arrangements that support improved quality assurance. For example, the supplier's technical team can produce system designs and standard detailing that can be referred to in early meetings with clients, installers, site managers and others. These can form part of method statements, risk analyses, and site specific training for installers. Reputable suppliers should always be willing to provide such support to assist specifiers and clients in finalising their designs.

Similarly, early engagement with the system designer and other stakeholders affords more time to define KPIs and to agree on channels for reporting the results of routine quality inspections.

Given sufficient time to prepare, suppliers may be able to produce certain complex elements of an EWI system offsite, in controlled factory conditions. These pre-cut components can then be supplied to the installer as a means of speeding progress and ensuring proper treatment of challenging interfaces. For EWI systems, such interfaces might include door and window reveals, vents and pipework, and – where required – roofline closure systems.

Whether the scheme is looking to meet or exceed the demands of Building Regulations, PAS 2030/2035 standards or other performance requirements, early dialogue with an experienced system supplier should be considered essential.

Richard Tocher is sales & technical director at Permarock

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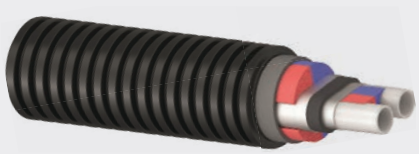
New Uponor Ecoflex Thermo VIP pipes

GF have introduced the next generation of Uponor Ecoflex VIP pipes which marks a major step forward for medium-to-large local heat network infrastructure. The launch announces a new range of highly efficient, flexible, pre-insulated heat distribution pipes, specifically engineered for local and district heating networks where a reduced outer pipe diameter is critical – enabling faster installation, improved handling and lower environmental impact.

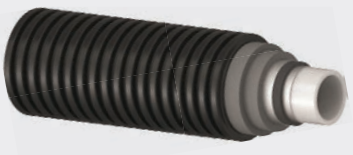
The new portfolio includes Ecoflex VIP Thermo Twin 2.0 and Single pipes up to 140 mm all with exceptional thermal performance. The VIP Thermo twin 2.0 offers an ultra-compact, flexible outer diameter and this smaller footprint significantly reduces heat loss while also shortening installation times compared to steel pipes and traditional flexible pipes insulated with hard foam.



GF's expanded pre-insulated pipe now includes Ecoflex VIP Thermal up to 140 mm diameter, designed to meet rising demand for medium-to-large scale local heating and cooling networks. Featuring a best-in-class insulation lambda value of 0.004 W/mK, the vacuum-insulated panel (VIP) layer delivers minimal energy loss, helping operators unlock greater long-term efficiency and sustainability.

The Ecoflex VIP system is completed by a comprehensive accessory ecosystem for heating, cooling, and domestic hot water distribution, built to ensure high safety, durability and reliability. Longer coil lengths and fewer required joints further increase network resilience by reducing potential weak points during installation.

To support design and specification, Uponor also provides extensive engineering services, including expert network planning assistance, product training, and on-site technical support. BIM data is readily available through the Uponor BIM platform, streamlining digital workflow integration for contractors and consultants. Key features of the new generation Ecoflex VIP range:



- Uponor Ecoflex VIP Thermo Single from 40 mm to 140 mm diameter
- Uponor Ecoflex VIP Thermo Twin from 2 × 25 mm to 2 × 75 mm
- More compact and flexible design for improved handling
- Outstanding heat loss performance with low U-values
- VIP insulation with a low Lambda value of 0.004 W/mK
- Longer coil lengths and reduced need for joints for more reliable installation
- Durable construction combining high-density polyethylene (HDPE) corrugated outer jacket with cross-linked PE-Xa service pipes with Oxygen barrier
- Versatile application for both local and district heating or cooling networks

01923 381212 www.uponor.com

Gilberts delivers the low-down

Gilberts is delivering the low-down on how building services can meet the challenge of the changing office landscape. Gilberts' uniquely-designed GFS floor swirl diffuser brings new dimensions for designers and users of the internal space. Its performance characteristics mean GFS can help towards WELL, LEED and BREEAM accreditation. Gilberts' GFS circulates air from the floor void with no need for direct ducting. As a result it can be positioned anywhere across the floor plan. And GFS maximises agile offices: all that is needed is repositioning of the diffuser- often just swopping a floor tile- with no need to reconfigure the air circulation paths nor ducting. The patented design enables the choice of horizontal or diagonal (45°) swirling omni-directional or diffused airflow at floor level. Heating and cooling is quickly and effectively delivered where the occupants are. Whilst predominantly used for air supply, GFS can, like all Gilberts' swirl diffusers, also function as the ventilation extract, further simplifying the design & specification process. Gilberts has a proven track record in supporting creation of stimulating work environments.

01253 766911 info@gilbertsblackpool.com

Ultra-Fin UFH assists quest for Net Zero with supporting role in the Actors' Church

St. Paul's Church in Covent Garden

A completed contract for an underfloor heating company has demonstrated how a Grade I listed landmark building can undergo a transformation, without any traces being left on the existing historic internal fabric, while also future-proofing it for a switch to a fully renewable heating source in the coming years. **Ultra-Fin UK Ltd** has a strong presence in the heritage sector and was exhibiting at this year's Listed Property Owner's Club show at Olympia. The team met Westminster Churches Net Zero Forum Officer, Alison Moulden, who made the introduction to the Parish priest, Revd. Simon Grigg, and Parish Administrator, Phil Hunt, who took a keen interest in the potential of the underfloor heating system which is designed for joisted floors. The Parish Administrator for St. Paul's Church, Phil Hunt observed: "The Ultra-Fin system was also ideal for the project because it proved to cause far less harm to the fabric of the building than the alternatives being considered – not requiring the floor height to be built up or screeded, while it remains demountable and – valuably – it was also significantly cheaper than the other systems which would have required far more work."

020 7427 6066 www.ultra-fin.co.uk

Architects need to network

Josh Collins at Altecnic Ltd explains the vital role of heat networks in the UK's journey towards net zero and how architects could be key to ensuring their adoption.

The UK's Energy Act 2023 paved the way for a new regulatory framework for heat networks; they have a vital role in the UK's journey to net zero, but performance across the sector has been uneven. Currently being developed by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), the Heat Network Technical Assurance Scheme (HNTAS) will introduce mandatory technical standards that ensure heat networks deliver consistent performance, reliability, and efficiency across the UK's built environment.

Historically, many systems were designed without cohesive guidance, leading to high heat losses, inefficient operation, and variable comfort for residents. HNTAS has been developed to change that by defining measurable design and performance standards for every part of a heat network, from initial generation through to delivery in individual dwellings. The framework will establish minimum expectations for insulation, flow temperatures, commissioning, and maintenance, giving architects and engineers a clear benchmark for compliance and quality.

Why HNTAS matters to architects

While mechanical and electrical (M&E) consultants have traditionally taken the lead on heat network design, HNTAS will bring architects into the process earlier, and more centrally. Design coordination will now influence compliance outcomes.

Design decisions such as plant room location, riser routes, service zones, and facade penetrations all affect pipework length, insulation continuity, and heat loss. By planning these elements from the outset and working closely with M&E specialists, architects can help ensure their developments meet HNTAS efficiency requirements and avoid costly redesigns later in the project.

In practical terms, this means integrating energy centre layouts, secondary network pathways, and consumer connection points within the architectural design to optimise efficiency and space use. Early stage design collaboration will be key to achieving the performance metrics the scheme demands.

A performance-led approach

At the heart of HNTAS lies a shift from theoretical compliance to verified performance, where accountability is taken. Networks will be assessed at several stages of their lifecycle:

- Before design – ensuring concept proposals meet the required performance intent
- Before construction, validating that technical specifications align with HNTAS criteria
- Before operation – confirming commissioning quality and control functionality
- Post-operation – reviewing performance data after two years of operation to verify real world outcomes.

For architects, it signals a more active role in ensuring the success of low carbon energy systems – design coordination will now influence compliance

A successful design process will now increasingly depend on the integration of thermal, mechanical and architectural expertise

This lifecycle approach promotes accountability and continuous improvement. For architects, it highlights the importance of designing spaces that allow adequate access for metering, testing, and maintenance, factors that directly contribute to long-term efficiency.

Technical priorities

Key to HNTAS compliance will be the management of heat losses and flow temperatures. Optimised pipe sizing, effective insulation, and low temperature operation will be fundamental. Architects can support this by:

- Providing well-planned plant rooms and service risers to accommodate insulation thicknesses.
- Designing layouts that minimise pipe runs between energy centres and dwellings.
- Ensuring access for inspection and retrofit where required.

These design considerations reduce operational costs and carbon emissions, aligning building performance with client sustainability objectives.

Component performance & assurance

Heat Interface Units (HIUs) play a pivotal role in the overall efficiency and comfort levels of a network. Their ability to control heat transfer between the primary system and individual homes directly affects compliance.

Under HNTAS, specifying components that have been independently tested and verified, such as HIUs that meet recognised performance benchmarks, will help designers and developers meet the scheme's technical criteria. Independent validation provides the objective data needed to demonstrate system reliability and consumer protection, without relying on proprietary claims.

Bridging the heat network knowledge gap

For many professionals, HNTAS represents a learning curve. The scheme builds on existing best-practice frameworks such as CIBSE CP1 (2020), but it also introduces new compliance and reporting mechanisms. A coordinated, informed approach between disciplines will therefore be essential. The Building Engineering Services Association (BESA) has been appointed to develop and deliver HNTAS training courses.

Architects can prepare by enrolling in the BESA Training, engaging in technical CPD opportunities, collaborating with heat-network specialists, and ensuring their teams understand how layout and building fabric decisions influence network performance. A successful design process will now increasingly depend on the integration of thermal, mechanical, and architectural expertise.

HNTAS as a catalyst for better design

For forward looking practices, HNTAS should be seen as an opportunity rather than a constraint. The scheme supports broader design goals, where reducing operational carbon, improving occupant wellbeing, and ensuring long term building value are prioritised.

By embedding efficiency principles early, architects can help deliver developments that are not only compliant but also resilient and adaptable to future energy requirements. In mixed-use or regeneration projects, for instance, an efficient heat network design can underpin the sustainability of an entire masterplan, supporting shared energy resources and reducing peak demand pressures.

Conclusion

The Heat Network Technical Assurance Scheme marks a pivotal moment for the UK's approach to heat decarbonisation. For architects, it signals a more active role in ensuring the success of low carbon energy systems.

DESNZ is currently working on the technical documentation, and scheme pilots started in summer 2025, with formal implementation anticipated in 2026. Once the framework is in place, Ofgem will assume regulatory oversight, monitoring compliance and ensuring accountability across the sector.

By engaging early, coordinating across disciplines, and prioritising performance in both design and delivery, architects can help ensure that future heat networks meet regulatory standards, support national carbon goals, and deliver lasting comfort and value for the people who live and work within them.

Josh Collins is heat networks manager at Altecnic Ltd

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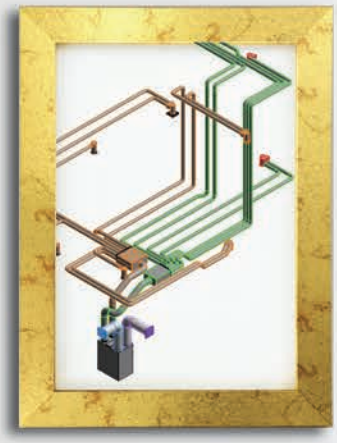

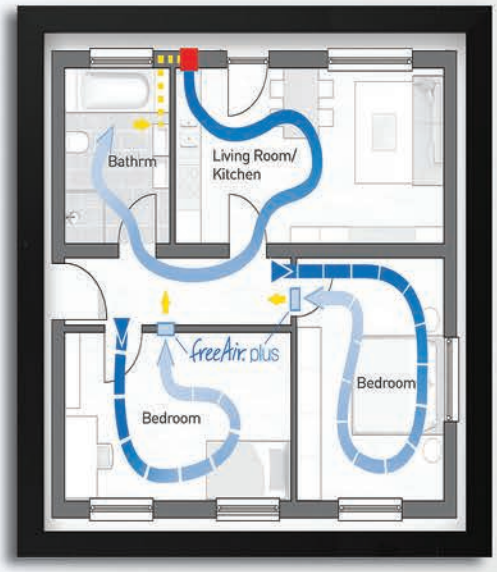

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Bridging design and accessibility with Stannah's stairlift at luxury Islay hotel

Ardbeg House, a boutique luxury hotel on the picturesque island of Islay, Scotland, has opened its doors as a truly immersive whisky and hospitality experience, with a newly installed Stannah Stairiser CR2 inclined platform lift providing guests with full accessibility to upper floors.

Featuring twelve individually themed bedrooms, the hotel combines luxury, creativity and storytelling inspired by the island's famous Ardbeg distillery and heritage. The hotel interiors include striking copper wall art, a custom-designed boat chandelier and interactive features including buttons labelled Press for Smoke, which release a smoky whisky scent. Guests can also enjoy tours of the local distillery and a quality food and drink menu with an Ardbeggian twist.

The work

Designed in collaboration with Russell Sage Studio, Ardbeg House honours the heritage of Ardbeg while creating immersive spaces that reflect the island's culture and the distillery's iconic history. Over 20 local and Scottish architects contributed to weaving Ardbeg's story into the hotel's design, which also involved seamlessly integrating the Stannah Stairiser CR2 with customised solutions. Stannah Lifts collaborated closely with Russell Sage Studio and main contractor Thomas Johnstone to supply a custom lift solution that met both the functional and aesthetic requirements.

The Challenge

The hotel required a custom solution to provide disabled access to its upper floors, which presented three main challenges. The first challenge was accessing the island, as transporting equipment involved careful planning and coordination with ferry services to ensure timely delivery and installation without disrupting the renovation schedule.

The second challenge was addressing the space constraints. The hotel had no space to accommodate a passenger lift, so an inclined platform lift was the best option. However, the staircase area was small, requiring a compact design. Following a detailed assessment of the space, a Stannah CR2 inclined platform lift was chosen as the ideal solution. The lift's slimline design further minimised wall projection, and the platform folds neatly when not in use, preserving staircase space. The platform dimensions of 800mm by 1000mm comfortably accommodate a wheelchair and user, while raised ramps and safety barrier arms ensure secure and safe operation.

The goal was to provide safe and reliable access for wheelchair users without disrupting the visual appeal of the hotel interiors. To achieve this, a bespoke colour was selected for the platform lift, ensuring it blended seamlessly with the surrounding walls and décor.

The results

The Stairiser CR2 now provides safe and reliable access to the two upper floors of Ardbeg House, allowing all guests to enjoy the hotel's immersive and unique experience. Equipped with remote call stations, wheelchair users can summon the lift independently from the top or bottom of the stairs, ensuring convenient operation.

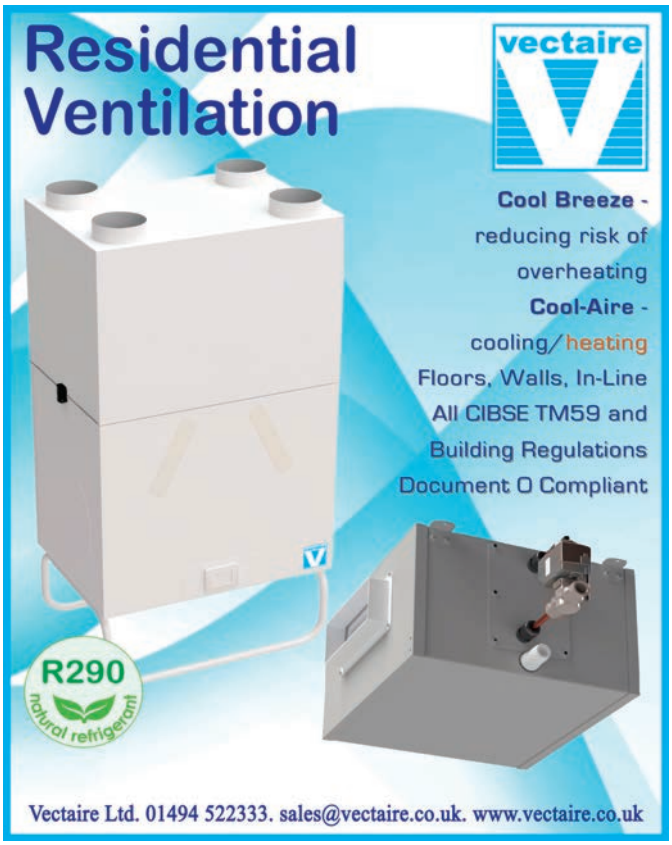
Designed for use on a curved rail, the Stairiser CR2 follows the natural flow of the staircase while keeping outward projection to a minimum. This innovative feature makes the Stairiser CR2 equally well suited for installations featuring a single turn, multiple landings or spiral configurations.

To ensure the stairlift complemented the hotel's rich Ardbeggian interiors, the rail and carriage were finished in a custom green paint specifically chosen to match the hotel's décor. This carefully considered design decision allowed the lift to feel like a natural part of the space, making the lift an integral element of the storytelling and design.

With the installation of the Stairiser CR2 completed in just two days, Ardbeg House continues to offer a world-class whisky and hospitality experience that is now fully accessible to every guest.

Dimitri De Juliis, Technical Sales Consultant at Stannah Lifts Scotland, said: "Working on Ardbeg House was an exciting challenge because it required a solution that improved access while seamlessly blending with the interiors. By customising the stairlift with a bespoke green finish, we were able to provide full accessibility without compromising the hotel's luxurious design. Careful logistical planning was also essential, as all equipment had to be transported to the island via ferry. It's incredibly rewarding to see how naturally the lift integrates into such a unique and immersive space."

contact@stannah.co.uk
www.stannahlifts.co.uk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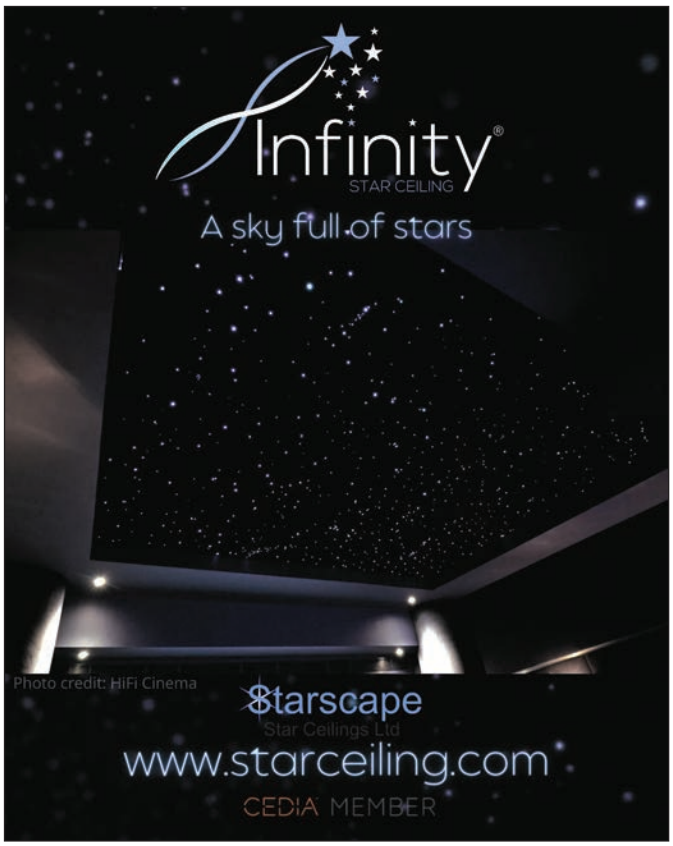
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Templeman retailing

Templeman Retailing, a family-run business with over 30 years of experience, is a leading national wholesaler of soft drinks, crisps, snacks, and confectionary, supplying vending machines and wholesalers across the UK. Supporting a network of over 4,500 vending machines nationwide, the company needed a ceiling solution for its new office in Cramlington.

Challenge

The client wanted to refurbish the entranceway of their office building to create a bold, memorable first impression. Rather than a standard ceiling, they sought a visually striking feature that would set the tone for the space.

To achieve this, the project incorporated the first UK installation of the Nexus ceiling system, a flexible grid design that allows for unique and personalised ceiling solutions by combining various shapes and colours to form distinctive patterns.

This required careful planning and precise coordination of lighting and services, ensuring the feature lights matched the black and grey Prestige tiles chosen and complemented the overall ceiling configuration.

Solution

Zentia worked closely with the architect and client to translate their vision into a practical, high-impact design. The ceiling was installed using Prestige tiles in black and dark grey as well as Zentia's Gridline system, providing both texture and depth. The client drew inspiration from Zentia's own recent head office refurbishment, which helped inform the final concept design.

Due to being specified as a system, the new ceiling and grid come with a 30-year warranty, providing Templeman Retailing additional peace of mind and assuring the durability of the ceiling.

Zentia's Prestige family provides good sound absorption and sound attenuation to create a perfectly balanced acoustical space. It is smooth and finely textured, and is ideal for a wide range of spaces including meeting rooms, waiting areas and libraries.

The refurbished entranceway now features a distinctive Nexus ceiling pattern, complemented by integrated lighting. The design creates a striking visual impact while maintaining a professional and contemporary aesthetic, demonstrating how innovative ceiling solutions can transform workplace environments.

0191 497 1000 www.zentia.com/en-gb

Upwardly-mobile inclusivity

Rebecca Goldsmith at Knauf explains how expectations are now higher for inclusive bathrooms in high-rise multi-occupancy buildings, which are often where requirements for safety, acoustics, thermal performance and durability are tested.

High-rise multi-occupancy buildings (HRMOs) now face unique regulatory obligations – providing an opportunity to raise standards for comfort, safety and future proofed living.

The updated Building Safety Act – and shifting tenant demographics – are driving expectations upwards, which requires thoughtful design, specialist technical knowledge, a meticulous approach to safety, underpinned by a keen focus on the specification of the right products, supported by a golden thread of documentation.

These buildings are home to occupants of all ages and abilities, requiring architects to marry style with the highest possible standards for fire safety, acoustics, thermal performance, and inclusive design. The bathroom is central to the 'performance core' – thus a complex design challenge in order to support the independence, dignity, comfort and safety for all users.

Architects need to work with manufacturers who understand the complexity of HRMO projects and are willing to engage directly on project specifics. They should be expert technical partners, able to support design teams with project-specific specifications backed by clear documentation, up to date, and transparent data such as fire test reports. In doing so, this will not only smooth the pathway to compliance with gateway assessments but enable designers to achieve the highest possible standards in safety, comfort and ongoing maintenance.

In any HRMO building, fire safety, acoustics, and thermal performance are foundations of good design. These pillars are interconnected; success in one area often reinforces another. For example, a fire-rated partition may also contribute to acoustic separation, and airtight thermal design can improve energy use while enhancing occupant comfort. Bathrooms in particular test the strength of these relationships. Wall systems must achieve multiple performance targets simultaneously: fire resistance, moisture protection, acoustic privacy, and structural durability to support fixtures.

Robust and efficient specification processes require manufacturers to be able to support designers

Wall systems must achieve multiple performance targets simultaneously: fire resistance, moisture protection, acoustic privacy, and structural durability to support finishes and fixtures

Fire safety

Fire safety requires a holistic approach that integrates both passive and active systems. Partition systems enclosing bathrooms and risers must meet stringent fire performance criteria, including compartmentation and resistance to fire spread.

Designers should specify wall linings with an A1 non-combustible rating – verified to EN 13501. This will help maintain protection in areas where high humidity can weaken traditional linings. The use of fire-rated boards and coordinated fire stopping ensures that compartment walls and ceilings continue to perform even under the most demanding conditions.

Moisture management

Bathrooms are constantly exposed to moisture, condensation, and temperature fluctuations. Without resilient material selection, this can quickly lead to deterioration, mould, and loss of performance. Inorganic cement boards engineered for wet areas are unaffected by water and have dimensional stability, even when fully immersed in water.

Tanking remains an essential secondary measure to ensure junctions and transitions remain fully sealed, particularly important for wetroom design. Together, these measures create a watertight envelope from wall to floor and if combined with good ventilation, the bathroom space will support the needs of occupants of all ages and abilities as they change over time.

Durability, layout & acoustics

Bathrooms in HRMOs experience heavy use and frequent cleaning but to be inclusive, the layout requires intelligent spatial planning to allow for a 1,600 mm clear wheelchair turning circle, and a carer.

Internal partitions and linings must be specified to resist wear, but also support the weight of heavy tiles and fittings. To futureproof a bathroom space and avoid the waste and cost of further remediation, it is critical to reinforce walls with additional moisture resistant boards designed for high load. This ensures safe fixing of support rails and seats if needed later.

Sound management is particularly important in mixed-use or multi-family HRMO developments. Uncontrolled noise will not only undermine privacy but increase stress levels for residents. Acoustic-rated partitions and ceilings help to control airborne and impact sound transmission, creating a calmer, more comfortable environment. Effective acoustic design also depends on intelligent spatial planning.

Thermal comfort & energy performance

Designing a comfortable bathroom for all users relies on good thermal balance, avoiding cold spots and condensation while limiting energy use. This is especially important for children and older residents who will be more sensitive to sudden temperature changes. Dry lining systems minimises heat loss and thermal performance of walls.

Achieving all these demands thoughtful design underpinned with a technical confidence in well tested products and collaboration between architects, engineers, and product manufacturers. When manufacturers engage directly with project teams and offer comprehensive transparent technical data, specifications become smarter, risks are reduced, and inclusive outcomes are enhanced.

Rebecca Goldsmith is product manager, exteriors at Knauf

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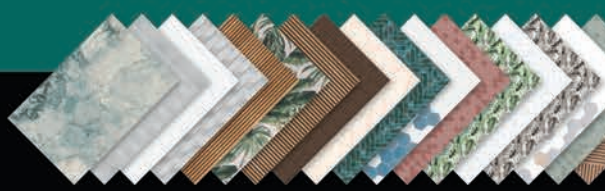

kinedo.co.uk/kinewall

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Re-charging luxury retail spaces with HIMACS

James Latham, the independent timber, panels and décors distributor, supplied HIMACS Maui for the fabrication and finishing of a new-look sink hub and cash desk at Molton Brown's St Albans boutique. The brainchild of store designers at Molton Brown; Barbara Schweier and Krupali Patel and Aspen, this project reinforces the luxury skincare and fragrance house's commitment to the very best in commercial design, materials and fabrication. Commenting on the collaboration, Krupali Patel from Molton Brown's store design team says: "Our goal was to create a space that feels as good as it looks; both beautiful and practical for our customers and our teams. This wasn't just a materials upgrade, it was about enhancing the whole in-store experience. HIMACS gave us exactly what we were looking for. It's elegant, easy to maintain, and stands up to the daily use without losing its polish. The support from James Latham was unmatched; their expertise helped us explore how to use the material in smarter, more creative ways, and the end result really speaks for itself. It captures the essence of Molton Brown: clean, classic and luxurious."

marketing@lathams.co.uk www.lathamtimber.co.uk

Dulux Heritage adds timeless elegance to Suffolk Church Hall transformation

A disused church hall on the Helmingham Hall Estate in Suffolk has been transformed into a holiday retreat with the help of **Dulux Heritage**. Claire Barton, Partner at Haverstock Architectural Practice, along with her husband and two friends, transformed a disused church hall on the Helmingham Hall Estate in Suffolk into something truly special with the help of Dulux Heritage, which bring timeless colours together with modern performance. To complement the building's character and guarantee a durable, easy-to-maintain finish, Barton and her team used Dulux Heritage Eggshell and Dulux Heritage Velvet Matt throughout the building. As well as a timeless look, these paints delivered on performance, which was a vital factor for this rental property due to the frequency of guest changeovers. The paints' durability will keep walls and woodwork protected against everyday wear, while the washable finish will make upkeep simple so the property can continue looking its best. As well as performance benefits, Dulux Heritage also offered a palette of versatile colour options that were perfectly suited to this project.

0333 222 7878 duluxheritage@akzonobel.com

N&C launch 1875 Tile Collections Catalogue

N&C is proud to announce the launch of its 1875 Tile Collections Catalogue, a special edition publication marking the company's remarkable 150-year heritage. First established in 1875 as glass, lead and colour merchants in Shoreditch, the business quickly evolved into other areas of interiors and construction, becoming renowned for producing beautifully crafted ceramic tiles at a time when decorative tiles were rising in popularity across Victorian homes. The commemorative N&C 1875 catalogue reflects showcases an inspiring range of tile collections, each selected to honour the company's legacy from era's gone by – whilst meeting the needs of today's homeowners, architects, designers and trade professionals. From elegant stone-effect porcelains to striking feature tiles and timeless classics, the collection highlights the changing styles across 150 years of evolution. The 1875 Tile Collections Catalogue celebrates not only where the company began, but how societal changes shape modern interiors across the UK. Customers are invited to explore the full collection and discover the latest designs that carry forward 150 years of expertise: https://www.nctilesandbathrooms.com/1875-tile-catalogue

08456 051345 www.ncspecifier.com

Unlocking new opportunities: FUHR expands its smart locking range with SmartAccess

FUHR has launched SmartAccess – a new smart access module that allows doors to be unlocked using a smartphone, easily, securely and without the need for Wi-Fi, internet or cloud services. Building on FUHR's long-standing expertise in electromechanical locking systems, this latest development adds to the company's growing portfolio of smart access control solutions, designed to make door automation simpler, safer and more accessible across a wide range of applications. At the heart of the system is the SmartAccess Module (SAM), a compact Bluetooth receiver that integrates directly into the motor of FUHR's electromechanical door locks. Once connected, it enables secure smartphone-based operation, eliminating the need for traditional keys, keypads or network connections. For fabricators, system houses and installers, SmartAccess offers an easy, value-adding upgrade to existing FUHR electromechanical door systems. With no complex wiring or external readers required, it's a straightforward way to deliver smart functionality that helps businesses stand out in a competitive market.

pbalfe@fuhr.co.uk www.fuhr.de/en/products/smart-access-solutions/smartaccess

Targeted fire alerts with ESPA paging: A smarter safety solution for Southampton

The University of Southampton, a multi-campus estate with a leading research institution, has recently enhanced its fire safety provision for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals through a pioneering paging system installation.

Advanced's MxPro 5 fire panels, integrated with the ESPA Pager Interface, form the core of the new solution delivered by Premier Fire Security and Scope Communications, providing targeted alerts and improved accessibility across the university.

With over 200 Advanced panels deployed across the site, including two networks of 30–40 nodes and a growing number of extinguishing panels, the university required a solution that could deliver precise, location-specific fire alerts to individuals without relying on traditional audio alarms. The ESPA 4.4.4-compliant Pager Interface from Advanced provided the ideal bridge between the fire detection system and Scope's PageTek Pro Mk2 transmitter

and EPOCBLUM pagers. The system is configured so that each building or group of buildings triggers a distinct pager address. This ensures that only relevant alerts reach the end user, reducing confusion and improving response times. Users can manually program their pagers to activate or deactivate specific locations, with password protection for added security. For nighttime safety, Scope's pillow pad and nightstand accessories ensure that alerts are received even while users are asleep.

The installation also includes a dedicated paging group for engineers, janitors, security, and fire marshals, who receive diagnostic and fault messages from the Advanced network. This group can also trigger fire messages for specific locations, enhancing operational control and coordination.

Rob Baker, Head of Technical Support at Scope Communications, said: "This project demonstrates how powerful the ESPA interface can be when paired with our paging technology. The system ensures that alerts are both accurate and accessible, and we're proud to support Premier Fire Security in expanding this solution across the university."

The long-term vision is to roll out the paging system to all student halls, allowing pagers to be reconfigured for use anywhere on campus. This approach not only improves safety but streamlines inventory and reduces costs.

0345 894 7000 www.advancedco.com

Dynamic lighting transforms Millennium Square for every occasion

At the heart of Leeds' Civic Quarter, Millennium Square is a vibrant public space, framed by iconic buildings such as the Civic Hall, Leeds City Museum, and the Electric Press. With high footfall and large-scale events like Leeds Light Night and live concerts attracting up to 5,000 visitors, the square demanded a lighting solution that combined technical performance, aesthetic excellence, and operational flexibility.

Working closely with Leeds City Council, Schréder delivered a smart lighting solution designed to enhance safety, simplify event management and create a welcoming, sustainable public space. Central to the project was the Schréder EXEDRA control platform, featuring a bespoke dashboard tailored for the council's operational and events teams. Three intuitive pre-set lighting modes allowed effortless switching between full output for events, standard operational lighting, and complete switch-off – enabling quick responses and smooth event management. Remote access via the EXEDRA app also ensured on-the-fly adjustments from any device, while on-site training ensured teams could operate the system with confidence.

A combination of NEOS and VALINTA Curve luminaires were used to provide both high-performance illumination and architectural harmony. The NEOS luminaires, mounted on masts, delivered uniform, efficient lighting that met safety standards, with smaller units providing emergency backup. Decorative VALINTA

Curve luminaires were subtly integrated into the iconic Off Kilter sculpture, creating theatrical, spotlight effects that reinforced the square's cultural identity while enhancing the visitor experience.

The result was a visually striking, versatile, and sustainable public space that supported everyday use and high-profile events alike.

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Design the key for vibrant new office space

When ABM Alliance, an events planning company, looked to refurbish a former ambulance station into its new Bristol city centre offices, they tasked Kerr Office Group with the job. The Kerr Office Group team specified a combination of **Forbo Flooring Systems**' Tessera Accord carpet tiles and Allura Flex vinyl flooring across each floor of the office space. Angela Tedder, senior technical designer at Kerr Office Group said: "We looked to Forbo for both functional and design reasons. The Tessera Accord carpet tiles are of great quality and helped to create a neutral backdrop for the wider working spaces."

01773 744 121 www.forbo.com/flooring/en-uk

Robust UK partners with HOPPE (UK)

Robust UK and HOPPE (UK) have collaborated to create new cost-effective, security tested emergency exit hardware available exclusively through Robust. The cost-effective ARRONE panic hardware for single and double doors has been successfully third party tested on Robust's PAS 24 certified doors and is available with Robust's SECUR-DOR 2.1. This exclusive range of panic hardware offers maximum versatility and seamless coordination across multiple openings on a site. Manufactured from zinc and featuring a satin nickel-plated finish, the hardware is highly resistant to scratches, wear and frequent use.

01782 592900 www.robust-uk.com

How landscape architecture futureproofs urban spaces

Kinley's Sol Russel assesses the importance of utilising sustainable urban design solutions – to mitigate the urban heat island effect, improve air quality, and create more liveable urban environments.

While sustainability is rapidly becoming a major consideration of building design and efforts to decarbonise the UK's building stock are proceeding with varying degrees of success, substantial population growth is adding a significant challenge.

In fact, the UK's second largest annual numerical increase – rising by 755,300 to an estimated 69.3 million people in the year to mid-2024, is leading to considerable urbanisation up and down the nation. The associated increase in vehicles, industrial activity and energy consumption is seeing heightened air, water and waste pollution in addition to the urban heat island effect.

With the expansion of cities putting pressure on rural-urban fringes, reducing the amount of green space and risking air quality falling below World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines, the importance of creating more liveable urban environments through effective landscape design cannot be understated.

Improving air quality & wellbeing

Despite long-term reductions in particulate matter, such as PM2.5 and PM10, and nitrogen dioxide levels, many urban areas – Manchester, London and Birmingham for instance – still exceed WHO guidelines for air quality according to reports.

To that end, taking a biophilic approach to landscape architecture design can have substantial impacts on air quality. For example, the strategic planting and delineation of vegetation can act as a 'green screen' between pollution sources, such as busy roads, and people.

Additionally, with trees and other plants acting as filters, they are able to trap particulate matter from the air while absorbing pollutants and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

This will also have long-lasting influences on the urban heat island effect, with carefully considered trees and vegetation providing shade and maximising green space to cool nearby surfaces and lower local building air conditioning costs by as much as 50%.

Enhancing biodiversity & habitat creation

In developed or urban areas, using landscape design, such as landscape edging, can create vital wildlife corridors, enabling the easy movement of species and the spread of genetic diversity. Indeed, edging can be incorporated into the design to link up existing green spaces, woodlands

Taking a biophilic approach to landscape architecture can have substantial impacts on air quality

Utilising green spaces to reduce the urban heat effect and provide relaxing, cooling and inviting environments is set to take greater precedence in coming months and years

or hedgerows to create a network of interconnected habitats.

With landscape edging acting as effective buffer zones, it offers substantial protection for more intensive habitats from wind, fire, pesticide spray drift and even human disturbance.

The specification and incorporation of sustainable materials in landscape design also play a vital role in enhancing an urban space's environmental performance. In addition to mitigating issues such as the urban heat effect, sustainable materials, such as aluminium landscape edging, are manufactured with less toxicity and require less energy to produce.

Regulating local temperatures

By defining boundaries of different landscape elements, landscape design can play a significant role in contributing to temperature regulation. For instance, aluminium landscape edging helps maintain defined areas for features such as trees and water, which are the main drivers of cooling through shading and evapotranspiration.

Furthermore, the delineation of green spaces through the use of landscape design helps maintain the intended integrity and shape of these areas. Preventing fragmentation in this way ensures green spaces remain compact and provide more reliable and consistent cooling effects.

Architects and landscape designers must also consider the benefits of strategic placement of vegetation and garden boundaries. By arranging plants and other vegetation in wind corridors, convection efficiency can be optimised – helping to dissipate heat more effectively.

Encouraging a greater sense of community

With the UK's population growth seeing cultural and social needs ever evolving, landscape design requires a holistic, forward-thinking approach that not only integrates biophilic needs but also focuses heavily on community.

Through multi-functional design, urban spaces can offer the flexibility to cater for a wide range of activities, be it recreational or community events, through to urban agriculture, ensuring they remain popular and well used by local communities in the months and years ahead.

Furthermore, designing spaces with wide and accessible paths and incorporating diverse seating options means these green spaces are safe and accessible to every member of the community.

Doing so will encourage a sense of pride and ownership in the local community and inspire residents and visitors to undertake regular care and maintenance to ensure these spaces remain aesthetically beautiful, biodiverse and beloved for many years.

The effective use of landscape design, such as beautifully designed landscape edging, was on display in a recent project at London Wall.

Together with the carefully selected plants, the specified folded top edge and corten finish of raised planter beds added contrast and composition to the landscape design and created an inviting and memorable environment where people could go to relax.

With average UK temperatures having risen significantly in recent years and urban development gathering momentum, utilising green spaces to reduce the urban heat effect and provide relaxing, cooling and inviting environments is set to take greater precedence in the coming months and years.

Landscape design will play a prominent role, emphasising the importance of working with experienced and specialised landscape edging and furniture manufacturers.

Sol Russel is specification team leader at Kinley

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