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CONTENTS

02.26

NEWS, VIEWS & INSIGHTS

PRODUCTS

PROJECT REPORT

FEATURES

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FROM THE EDITOR

This month's project report (Paradise SE11, Lambeth, page 20), is a fantastic example of design for disassembly, and getting towards a circular approach to making new workplaces. Also – with apologies to concrete and steel devotees – it's pretty much all-timber, apart from the lift and stair cores, which turned out to be an 'innovation' too far.

Stephen Cousins discovered how collaboration, including with the fire service, was fundamental to realising this substantial CLT and glulam building. The result of compromising on the stair cores meant that the fire officers were prepared to go further on risk in other elements of the building; making this an important example others may wish to emulate. The lack of design 'ego' apparent in creating an attractive, but fully demountable structure is commendable.

Everyone talks about the need for collaboration in so many areas, e.g. retrofit. For timber construction to really take off, it has to happen at a variety of levels. The Timber in Construction Roadmap, which Government has adopted, clearly delineates how architects, engineers and developers have to collaborate and integrate their work early in projects, for MMC and mass timber approaches to be successful.

However, for wide uptake at scale to really happen, ideas on how to collaborate with insurers, and insurance bodies, needs to be put into the foreground. Educating the sector for greater understanding of how engineered timber performs in fires is happening, but needs to continue, to counter received wisdom.

The Government is unsurprisingly continuing to collaborate with, or at least talk to, the ARB, following the ongoing Chris Williamson furore which is seeing many architects question the credibility and worth of the title 'architect' itself. Apparently, they are working on the idea of registration for architects' 'functions,' not just the name.

Even rival events Futurebuild and UKCW London are joining the collaboration club. Following show organiser Media 10's acquisition of the Futurebuild brand, it will take its place alongside UKCW London at ExCel from 12-14 May. However, Futurebuild will retain its title and differentiated identity as a more specifier-focused offering for visitors. Given the construction sector's huge (and potentially unrealistic) barriers currently, collaboration seems to be the flavour of the month/year.

A final example of fruitful collaboration is our expanded 2026 sponsored round table programme, which is already well underway. We are writing up the report for our Water Efficiency in Commercial Buildings event, and will by the time you read this have assembled experts to discuss progress on Low Energy Domestic Retrofit. As well as Biophilic Design in Commercial Spaces also taking place in February, in March and April we will host two sessions on the Future Homes Standard, as it hopefully emerges. These sessions cover heating and renewables, and building fabric respectively.

Later this year, our round tables will explore Embodied Carbon & Part Z, Passivhaus, MMC, Gateway 2, Design for Workplace Wellness, and Inclusive Bathroom Design. It's already a very hectic, but incredibly exciting year of collaborative knowledge sharing between the supply chain, specifiers and academia!

James Parker, Editor

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ON THE COVER...
Paradise SE11 was desgined by FCBS to not only becoming "London's Healthiest Workspace," but also exemplifying the principles of a circular economy and whole-life design. Cover image © Andy Stagg
For the full report on this project, go to page 20

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OFFICE DESIGN

Planning approval granted for JRA's 'reinvention' of 10 Salisbury Square

The City of London Corporation has granted planning approval for John Robertson Architects' (JRA) transformation of St Bride's House at 10 Salisbury Square. The redevelopment will offer 52,500 ft² of high-quality Grade-A office space, strategically located next to the City's new Justice Quarter.

As the first project within Original Works' portfolio, a joint venture between the developer Simten and Investor Invesco Real Estate Europe Fund III, the designs for 10 Salisbury Square showcase Original Works' "bold vision of exemplary sustainable central London office schemes, seamlessly integrating cultural sensitivity with innovation and reuse," said JRA.

JRA's design embodies an "ambitious, progressive yet pragmatic" sustainability strategy, demonstrating a "clear commitment to heritage sensitive and climate responsible development solutions." The project "prioritises tangible, carbon efficient outcomes with the intention of making a positive, long-term impact to both the local community, and wider environment," said the architects.

An opportunity to mend the urban fabric

Nestled in the historic Fleet Street Conservation Area, 10 Salisbury Square stands in close proximity to several key architectural landmarks.

The existing building, is a product of a 1980s attempt to merge two Victorian gatehouse facades within a six-storey, brown-brick office development. The result was a facade that clashed with its heritage surroundings, lacking the visual coherence, material sensitivity, and presence needed to engage with its context.

After over two decades without substantial refurbishment, the building no longer meets current energy efficiency standards and requires a major upgrade to for modern office use. The proposed redevelopment provides a much needed opportunity to resolve these architectural and environmental shortcomings, creating

an exemplary workplace development with the highest sustainability credentials that meets evolving occupier needs and enhances the surrounding historic environment alongside public realm improvements for the local community.

A new lease of life as a harmonious whole

In line with the City Corporation's retrofit first policies, JRA's design will retain more than 90% of the building's existing structural frame, focusing interventions only where necessary to improve both the building's functionality and energy performance and enhance occupant wellbeing.

Favouring localised over wider high-carbon interventions, one of the key features of the design is a four-storey oriel window, which opens up views of St Bride's Church. A modest two-storey extension with additional rooftop plant has been strategically placed on the eastern side of the building, minimising the impact on local views, particularly preserving the iconic view towards St Bride's Church's spire – famously inspiring the tiered wedding cake.

Using St Bride's House as its own material bank, salvaged components of the existing facade are repurposed to extend the building, while their removal enlarges windows, improving natural light and energy efficiency. This approach not only resolves the building's inherent design flaws but also enhances its historic integrity, ensuring that interventions are within the spirit of the original design.

To create a cohesion, a whitewash treatment is applied to the entire brick facade, unifying various architectural elements and reinforcing the building's connection to its historic Portland stone dominated context. The new, harmonised appearance creates a singular new identity and improves the setting of nearby listed buildings. and a singular new identity

Sustainability & wellbeing at the Core

Sustainability, health, and wellbeing lie at the heart of the design. The UK NZCBS pilot project is set to meet the highest environmental standards, aiming for EPC A, BREEAM Outstanding, and NABERS 5* ratings.

The building features photovoltaic panels, providing a significant portion of its remaining energy needs following optimised fabric performance for lower energy usage, while a 55 m³ water attenuation tank will capture rainwater for irrigation and toilet flushing. Occupant controlled openable windows will provide zero energy cooling, and the building's intelligent passive facade design will maximise daylight, green views, and fresh air.

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APPOINTMENT

LOM appoints Cantilena to new role driving practice's interiors specialism

London-based practice LOM architecture and design has announced the appointment of Chiara Cantilena as head of interiors, demonstrating the studio's continued commitment to delivering exceptional interior design. The new leadership role "affirms the practice's focus on design excellence across architecture and interiors," said LOM.

The practice said that the creation of this new position "highlights a focus on enhancing the studio's interiors specialism in a market where distinct personality and individuality in spaces are more valued than ever."

As head of interiors, Chiara will lead the development of LOM's interior design culture and capability, "ensuring that the practice continues to improve, evolve and rival the best in class." LOM said it is a "people focused studio," and "recognising the strength of its team, a key part of Chiara's role will be nurturing this in-house talent while building on the studio's existing design community." While interior design brings a "personalised tone of voice" to projects, LOM said it is "committed to ensuring it works in harmony with the architecture of the build."

Chiara is "passionate about sustainability and wellbeing, and ensures that inclusive, environmentally responsible design remains at the forefront of LOM's approach." She brings specialist expertise in whole life carbon interiors and modular, reusable design strategies. Through her research into wellbeing and inclusivity, Chiara, together with the wider LOM team, helps "embed environmental and social responsibility into every project."

LOM's cross-sector experience – spanning workplace, education, hospitality, and residential projects "continues to blur traditional boundaries between sectors." This approach can be seen in projects such as RocketSpace, X+Why at Unity Place,

and The Living Rooms for NatWest, as well as a major London HQ fit-out currently under construction. With strategic thinking underpinning every project, LOM combines architectural insight with creative interior detailing to design "unique spaces that not only function effortlessly but also tell a rich and distinctive story."

OFFICES

Bennetts' Cambridge office scheme secures planning resolution

Development and asset manager Stanhope and architects Bennetts Associates have secured a "resolution to grant planning permission" from Cambridge City Council for the renewal of Kett House in Cambridge.

The decision will see the development of an eight-storey, circa 160,000 ft^2 "best-in-class" office building, designed to contribute "more positively to the surrounding area and support the continued success of the CB1 business district."

The proposals, originally submitted in October 2025, and agreed by Cambridge City Council, include contemporary and adaptable office accommodation "defined by generous ceiling heights, efficient structural grids and flexible floorplates, as well as end of trip facilities," said Bennetts Associates. They also include three landscaped gardens and a collonaded public realm to "extend the character of the nearby Botanic Garden into the site." In addition, the Kett Oak sculpture will be reinstated – a popular local landmark that honours the family of Robert Kett, who led a rebellion in 1549, and depicts the oak tree where the plotters met.

Sustainability considerations have been embedded from the outset, "shaping the building's form, structure and material strategy." Plans include a hybrid timber and steel frame that aims to deliver low

embodied carbon, and stone brick facades within the design will be sourced from the UK using offcut stone. Water will be reduced through greywater recycling, blue roofs and rain gardens. Through layered habitats and green roofs, the scheme will aim to achieve over 20% Biodiversity Net Gain, while circular economy principles such as design for disassembly support long-term resource efficiency. Stanhope is targeting a BREEAM Excellent certification, NABERS 5* rating and WiredScore Platinum.

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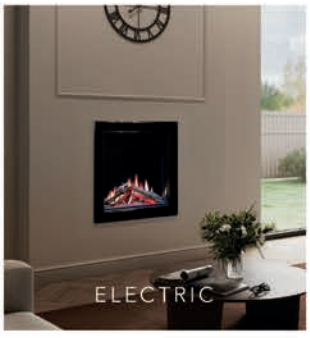

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King Edward Memorial Park, Tower Hamlets, during construction
© Patricia Rayner for Tideway

ASK THE ARCHITECT

Jennifer Dixon, director at Fereday Pollard, speaks to *ADF* about her love for the profession, and why architects must better articulate the value they bring in order to grow their presence in projects.

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO BECOME AN ARCHITECT?

My father was an architect in private practice, so there was always conversation about buildings, spaces and materials from an early age. This had an impact and encouraged my own path to becoming an architect.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE JOB?

The breadth of the subject has kept me interested my whole career. In any one day I'm dealing with design content, technical subject matter, law, human factors, heritage, social/environmental science, and of course business growth and development. There are deep specialists in the profession, but overall to get projects designed and delivered it's a polymathematical pursuit, and always interesting.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE AS A PRACTICE DIRECTOR?

Our practice is going through a period of scaling and growth, which comes with its challenges but is also exceptionally exciting. My multidisciplinary background and experience across a wide range of clients and projects in the transportation and infrastructure sectors have allowed me to bring focused direction and strategic insight to support the practice's growth, its projects and its clients. The next big challenge is to explore how our unique specialisms can be useful beyond the UK, where we have worked almost exclusively for 30 years – I'm certain that our experience in crafting the human and environmental interface with civil infrastructure interventions will be of value in countries where new infrastructure has the potential to impact negatively on both urban and rural settings and communities. Our first overseas venture, which a project to support the Ostlig Ringvej tunnel construction in Copenhagen, is the start of this growth journey.

COULD YOU DESCRIBE THE DIFFERENT PARAMETERS OF YOUR ROLE WITHIN FEREDAY POLLARD, AND HOW MUCH DESIGN WORK YOU ARE ABLE TO DO?

In my 'practice director' capacity I spend my time identifying opportunities, winning work, creating the conditions for others to do their best design work and supporting them to do so. In my capacity as a 'fee earner,' I practice as an RIBA Client Adviser, the definition of which is 'a designer who doesn't design' – I use my design experience to support client teams to understand stakeholders' needs, write design briefs, devise schedules of services for design teams and review design outputs. In short, I write the design 'question' rather than creating the design 'answer.'


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DO YOU BELIEVE ARCHITECTURE IS SOMETIMES MORE ABOUT DIPLOMACY & ALIGNING INTERESTS THAN SPACE DESIGN?
Aligning interests to create a sound brief and communicating it clearly to all parties is the foundation of a great design project. But designing buildings and spaces is definitely the main event! Architects are uniquely trained to receive and interrogate a brief, and to create design solutions that not only respond to the direct needs and demands, but also to align wider societal and environmental interests and agendas. Even after 35 years in practice, I continue to be shocked at what a small proportion of buildings globally have inputs by architects – we need to describe better what we do, how we do it and the value we add in order that a wider breadth of commissioning clients have confidence that working with an architect will create better outcomes.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE YOUR WORK/LIFE BALANCE?
I enjoy keeping active and being on and in the water; it's a brilliant way to switch off. Our projects are always attuned to the human experience and enhancing public spaces for social good, so going out and personally enjoying them is a must.

Part of Hew Locke's artwork 'Cargoes' for Thames Tideway Tunnel (plus ventilation columns behind) © Bridget Sawyers

View of Bazalgette Embankment from Blackfriars Bridge showing the scale of the new public realm © Elyssa Byrne

WHAT PIECE OF DESIGN WORK ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?
This year Fereday Pollard's 18-year involvement in the Thames Tideway Tunnel comes to fruition with the remainder of surface sites opening during 2026. It is a gargantuan achievement which is testament to the skills of the architect and landscape architect profession to work collaboratively in a civils-led environment to produce humane, people centric places. The vision for the programme was led by Fereday Pollard, and eight further design practices (Atkins, Arup, Hawkins\Brown, Gillespies, Hyland Edgar Driver, Orbit Architects, Weston Williamson + Partners, and Mott MacDonald) were involved in the design and delivery, working with over 30 commissioned artists.

NAME ONE THING THAT WOULD MAKE YOUR JOB EASIER?
The ability to be in three places at once, although I do my best! Fewer different public sector procurement portals would also be nice.

WHAT'S YOUR BIG SHORT-TERM GOAL AS AN ARCHITECT?
To consolidate our growing workload in the North West (from our new Liverpool base), and to take the specialist skills of Fereday Pollard beyond the UK into international markets.

GIVEN THE RECENT CONTROVERSY AROUND CHRIS WILLIAMSON, THE ARB AND THE PROTECTED TITLE OF 'ARCHITECT,' CAN YOU SEE MORE ARCHITECTS DROPPING ARB REGISTRATION?
Wearing my chair of RIBA Practice & Policy Committee hat (rather than my director of Fereday Pollard hat), I would say that Chris took this action to raise awareness of the current untenable situation regarding the lack of regulation of the function of the architect – which runs contrary to the interest of the public and civil society. He did not expect or intend that other practising architects follow suit, but it has certainly opened up productive debate which is long overdue.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT BEING A WOMAN IN A SENIOR ROLE GIVES YOU PARTICULAR SKILLS TO BRING TO ARCHITECTURE, OR IS IT WRONG TO FOCUS ON GENDER?
Yes, it does! Logically it must be true that a more representative gender balance at all levels, and in any industry, must improve outcomes.

Jennifer Dixon is director at Fereday Pollard

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SITE LINES

How human-centred design turns strategy into supportive spaces

Barbara Clarenz at AtkinsRéalis explores how human centred architecture translates care strategy into lived experience, creating supported housing that feels genuinely like home – not only for residents but also staff.

Does it feel like home? That question guided a supported living project in Horley, Surrey, from my first visit to the former library site through to the first residents moving in.

It sounds simple, but it is a demanding test. 'Home' is not a checklist or a regulatory threshold; it is a lived condition. It is independence that feels natural, privacy that does not need defending, and access to community without obligation. Critically it must work for the people who live there, and the people who provide care. When either is compromised, the sense of home quickly disappears.

However despite good intentions, too much specialist housing falls short of this test. It may be compliant but it can feel clinical, accessible yet isolating, technically competent, but emotionally thin.

Sustainability is often treated in the same way – in the sense that it is measured, reported, but not always felt. For architects, the real challenge lies in translating care strategy into places that support everyday life with dignity, clarity and ease.

Designing independence without isolation

Supported independent living sits at a careful balance point between autonomy and care. Push too far towards independence and residents can feel cut off; lean too hard into support and daily life begins to feel supervised.

The brief for Horley, part of Surrey County Council's Supported Independent Living Programme, was explicit: enable adults with learning disabilities and autistic people to live independently, within their local community, supported in a way that feels proportionate and respectful.

The response was architectural rather than symbolic. Horley was conceived as a small, legible neighbourhood rather than a single facility disguised as housing. Front doors are clear and recognisable, buildings are domestic in scale. Privacy is the default condition, with sociability offered by choice rather than design pressure.

This thinking led to two complementary residential typologies.

AT HOME IN HORLEY
AtkinsRéalis designed the scheme to support people with learning disabilities including autism, to help them live more independently in a 'proportionate' and 'respectful' way

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‘Home’ is independence that feels natural, privacy that does not need defending, and access to community without obligation

A compact apartment building provides six self-contained homes for residents seeking maximum autonomy, each dual aspect with a private balcony or ground floor terrace.

Alongside this, two shared townhouses offer five ensuite bedrooms each, arranged around a generous kitchen and living spaces where shared life emerges naturally. Both layouts are calm and intuitive, reducing cognitive load and supporting confidence in daily routines. Variety is not an add on here, but is fundamental to dignity.

Making care environments work in practice

An environment that feels like home must also enable care to function smoothly. At Horley, architecture was developed in close collaboration with Surrey’s Adult Social Care team, occupational therapists, operators and specialists. Lived experience shaped the brief, particularly the small spatial frictions that can erode wellbeing over time such as glare across dining tables, echoing rooms, corridors that feel over exposed or confusing.

As such the design responses were deliberately straightforward, ensuring circulation is clear and concise, daylight is generous but controlled, acoustic separation is planned in, not retrofitted. It was important that staff routes keep support close without becoming visually dominant, ensuring help is always available while independence remains the foreground experience.

Operational clarity was treated as a form of care in itself which means storage is appropriately sized and logically placed in order to reduce clutter and unnecessary movement.

Sightlines allow supervision where required, without slipping into surveillance. Durable, low maintenance materials were selected to ensure the buildings retain their dignity over time because when environments reduce friction, staff wellbeing improves and the service operates with greater consistency and calm.

Predictability, choice & emotional safety

For neurodiverse residents in particular, belonging is closely tied to predictability so environments that are visually noisy, behaviourally ambiguous or overly stimulating can undermine confidence and independence, even when provision is well intentioned.

At Horley, careful attention was given to emotional legibility, looking at how a space is read, understood and trusted over time. This included consistent material palettes, clear thresholds between private and shared areas, and layouts that avoid unnecessary decision making.

Critically, choice is embedded at multiple scales so that residents can choose when to engage, where to retreat, and how visible they wish to be within the community. This might be as small as selecting a quieter route through the site or as significant as choosing between an apartment or shared house setting.

Architecture here does not prescribe behaviour but supports personal agency. Staff benefit too, working in spaces where boundaries are clear and everyday interactions feel calm rather than reactive.

Safety, in this context, is not about control but reassurance. Robust detailing, good sightlines and passive supervision enable

support to be discreet and responsive. Over time, this consistency builds trust between residents, staff and place. When people feel safe without feeling managed, independence becomes sustainable, and belonging stops being an aspiration and becomes an everyday condition.

Sustainability as lived experience

Sustainability at Horley was approached as something people would feel rather than simply measure. The scheme follows a fabric first, all electric strategy aligned with LETI climate emergency principles, supporting net zero readiness. Photovoltaic panels provide onsite renewable energy, while orientation and passive measures help maintain comfortable internal conditions without unnecessary complexity.

Landscape plays a central role in this lived sustainability. A gentle loop walk supports predictable movement for instance, pergolas provide shaded places to pause and allotment planters enable shared, purposeful activity.

Over time, layered planting softens boundaries between communal, semi private and private spaces, allowing residents to choose how they engage with nature and with one another. For residents and staff alike, sustainability is experienced through stable temperatures, fresh air, access to green space and lower energy costs.

The value created at Horley is shared as residents benefit from choice over privacy, sociability and routine, supported by spaces that are calm, legible and ordinary in the best sense. Staff work in an environment that supports the complexity of care rather than adding to it. Operators gain buildings that are robust, efficient to run and aligned with long term care and climate objectives.

Post occupancy evaluation and ongoing feedback will be essential, allowing the environment to evolve alongside the service. Small, informed adjustments can make a significant difference when learning is part of the design process.

So, does it feel like home? If that question continues to guide decision making, care strategy becomes place, and place becomes opportunity. The Horley scheme demonstrates that specialist housing can be safe, sustainable and operationally clear, while still feeling genuinely lived in, warm, and free.

Barbara Clarenz is head of residential London and the South East at AtkinsRéalis

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NEWS FEATURE

Tile specification and installation to avoid failure

Nick Bratt, national technical sales manager at tile adhesive manufacturer Palace Chemicals considers some pointers which will help specifiers avoid problems. More detail on these and other issues is contained in the company's RIBA-approved CPD entitled: Successful specification of wall & floor tiling and how to avoid common failures (palacechemicals.co.uk/technical-services).

While suitability of substrate is critical to ensuring the success of a tiling project, as discussed in our previous column in this publication, another aspect highlighted in the CPD presentation is the specification of the right type of tile adhesive for the project. Cement-based adhesives are commonly specified for tiling and offer high bond strength for a variety of substrates. However in line with environmental targets set out by the Government and by industry, specifiers should look to choose more environmentally friendly construction products which align with carbon reduction goals.

For example lightweight, high yield adhesives containing recycled low density blown glass are now available, which have a reduced environmental impact and additionally offer up to a 50% weight reduction compared to conventional cement-based adhesives. These adhesives are suitable for fixing all tile types, including large format and natural stone.

Another factor is the use of the correct application methods for the adhesive, in accordance with the requirements of BS 5385-1, the Code of Practice for Ceramic and Natural Stone Wall and Floor Tiling.

The first approved method is the notched trowelling method. This involves applying the adhesive to the substrate using a trowel as a floated coat, which provides a sufficiently deep and level base coat of adhesive applied to a wall or floor to create a flat and stable substrate for the installation of tiles. Applying the adhesive on to the substrate surface and combing through with a notched trowel creates a series of ribs into which dry tiles should be pressed with a twisting or sliding action to compress the ribs and achieve as much of a solid contact between the two surfaces as possible. The alternative buttering method is suitable for awkward tiling positions, such as around openings and restricted areas where a notched trowel cannot be used. When using this method, spread the adhesive evenly over the entire back of each dry tile with a trowel. The bed thickness should be slightly greater than the final thickness required to allow for proper adjustment when pressing or tapping each tile into position.

Finally the notched trowelling and buttering method should be used for fixing large tiles and tiles with ribbed, deep keyed or heavy buttoned back profiles. A thin coating of adhesive buttered over the backs of the tiles should fill the deep keys before placing the tiles into position on a combed adhesive bed. There should be no significant increase in the bed thickness.

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

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

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Images © Foster + Partners

ICOLO E BENGO AEROTROPOLIS, SOUTH AFRICA
FOSTER + PARTNERS

Working with Angola's Ministry of Transport, Foster + Partners has developed designs for the Icolo e Bengo Aerotropolis, which will serve as a regional hub in Central and South Africa, and "reinforce Angola's global presence," said the practice. The masterplan "aligns with Angola's future aspirations and projected economic growth, while responding to the country's heritage and unique ecological landscape." Located on a 13,480-hectare site – approximately 40 km inland of downtown Luanda – the new "aerotropolis" will surround the recently completed Dr Antonio Agostinho Neto International Airport.

Three vibrant new districts – to the north, west, and south of the airport – are joined by a verdant green loop, and activated by the masterplan's surroundings. A high-rise business and cultural district to the north connects with Luanda's city centre, while a low-rise research and innovation quarter to the west joins up with an existing residential neighbourhood. On the south side of the site, a hospitality driven district provides an array of new resorts, hotels, villas, and sports facilities, which overlook the adjacent Quisama National Park. This luxury destination "allows visitors to immediately immerse themselves in the country's spectacular natural landscape."

The 42 km green loop is integral to the scheme – weaving Luanda's rich ecology through all areas of the masterplan – and creating places for residents to relax, exercise, and socialise together. The loop provides a safe environment for sustainable travel with an integrated network of public buses, trams, and cycle paths. It is also an important part of the masterplan's holistic service distribution and drainage strategy, channelling rainwater away from the development and towards the Kwanza River.

The masterplan "sets out a new way of living," by providing sustainable energy sources and incorporating passive design strategies. The development is powered by green energy, with 3 km^2 of photovoltaic panels alongside the airport's runways. By aligning the urban grid with the runways and the direction of the prevailing wind, natural ventilation is increased across the public realm, creating a cool and comfortable environment throughout the day. Foster + Partners has set out a phased approach for the project, which will begin with the business and cultural district on the north side of the masterplan.

INSPIRA SP, SÃO PAULO
TRIPTYQUE

The Inspira SP building, located in the Paulista Avenue region, is a "contemporary response to a consolidated urban context marked by the cultural and corporate intensity of São Paulo," according to designers Triptyque Architecture.

The tower is based on a peripheral concrete structural grid, "the project's primary feature." This powerful structure "addresses the city, affirming its presence in the urban landscape."

By moving the load-bearing elements to the periphery, the structural grid frees up the internal spaces, allowing each floor to be occupied in a "free, flexible, and reprogrammable manner," said the architects. "This condition ensures adaptability for different programmes over time."

"More than just a building, Inspira becomes a green infrastructure," said the architects. A continuous system of planters, integrated into the concrete structure, allows vegetation to "colonise and contradict the authoritarian geometry of the building."

"Between the neutral and the artificial, greenery spreads, recomposes the native biome, and gives the tower a mutable and dynamic dimension."

The building then becomes an "active support for a changing landscape, introducing new layers of use, perception, and enjoyment. It also establishes a delicate relationship with the ground and the sky, understood as the diluted extremities of its construction system."

On the ground floor of the building, Inspira SP's tower "opens up to the city," via both a public 'grandstand' and a lush garden, thereby "dissolving the boundary between building and urban space," said Triptyque Architecture.

At the top, the structural grid folds horizontally, "completing the architectural gesture," the architects continued.

On this elevated plane, a "small forest connects the architecture to the horizon, transforming the roof into a continuous expanse of vegetation." The architects concluded that Inspira "thus presents itself as an elegant and slender building, but always in dialogue with the two dimensions that anchor it: collective life on the ground and the open vastness of the sky."

Photos © Maíra Acayaba

BUILDING PROJECTS

PARADISE SE11
LONDON

Mass movement

A mass timber office building in Lambeth doubles down on sustainability goals by slashing embodied carbon and incorporating a fully-demountable structure designed to drive reuse instead of demolition. Stephen Cousins reports.

Dante's description of Paradise in *The Divine Comedy* is of a celestial realm of increasing spiritual enlightenment. If the pursuit of sustainability is an attempt to take architecture one step closer to that higher plane, then arguably the Paradise SE11 office development in Lambeth, south London, is within touching distance.

The six-storey, 63,250 ft^2 office block was designed by architect Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios (FCBS) for developer Bywater Properties, to achieve a new standard for workspace design. The aim was not only for it to become "London's Healthiest Workspace," but also to embody the principles of a circular economy and whole-life design.

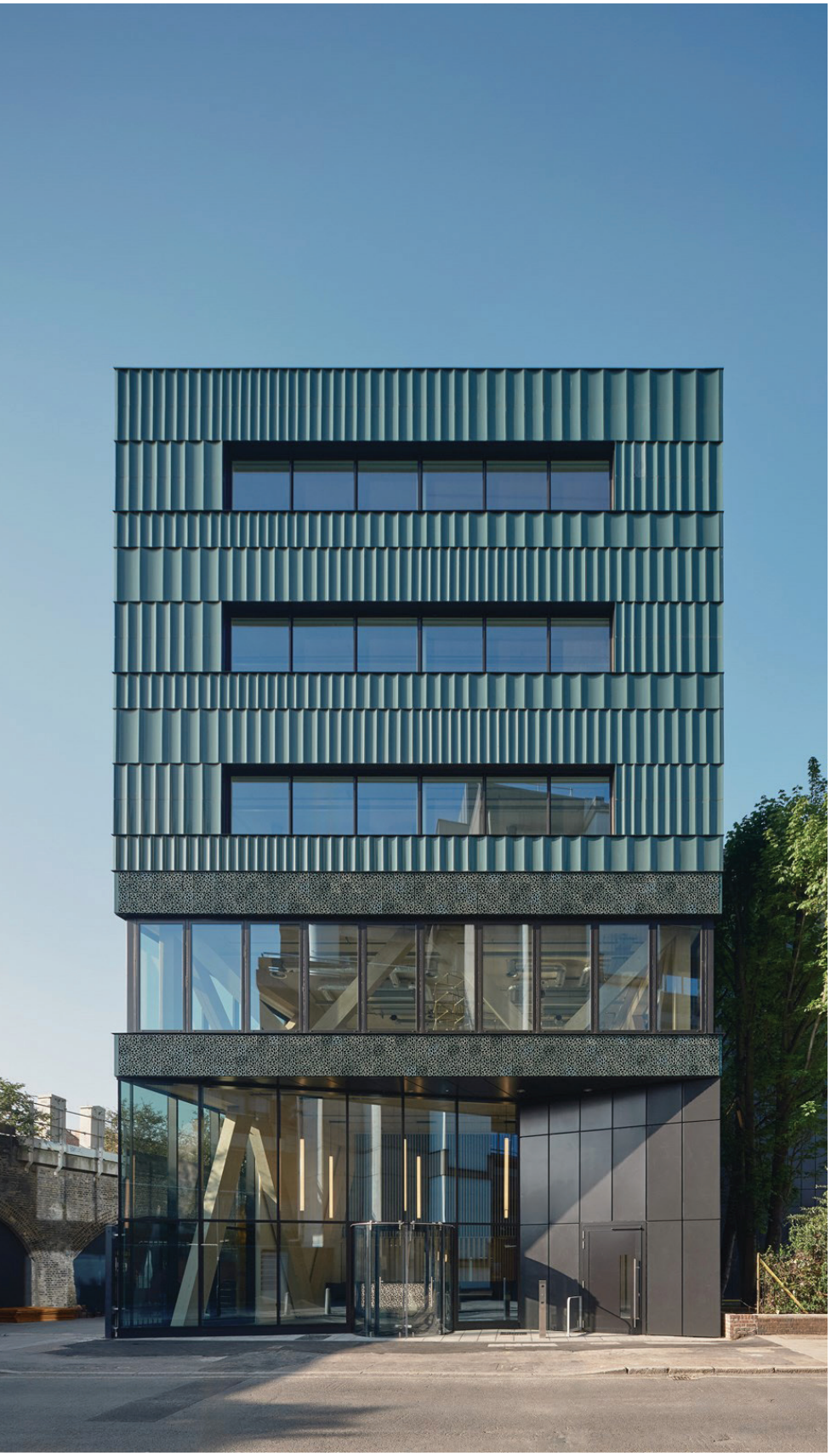
The hybrid structure, focused on a mass timber frame with cross-laminated timber (CLT) floors and glulam beams, is fully demountable, allowing for reuse in the distant future when the building is no longer fit for purpose.

This contributes to an embodied carbon footprint that is 35% below the RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge target, with over 1,800 tonnes of CO_2 sequestered in the frame, making it one of the lowest embodied carbon offices in the UK.

Designing an extensive mass timber building just months after the Grenfell Tower tragedy meant navigating a complex and shifting set of fire requirements, ultimately adapting the strategy for the facade and cores to limit risks.

Proving that the novel connection details and junctions in the demountable structure would be resilient in a fire meant developing a robust method for testing

PASSIVE SUPPORT
Air quality is passively managed with openable facades
Photography © Andy Stagg



and certifying the structure using full-scale mock ups – in collaboration with specialist sub-contractor B&K Structures.

Ambitious beginnings

Paradise SE11 is located on a hemmed-in site directly alongside the main railway line into Waterloo, just a few minutes walk from the Albert Embankment. It takes its name from Old Paradise Gardens, a small park running alongside.

The height and footprint of the building went through several iterations during planning as the block was progressively flattened to avoid impinging on protected views across Westminster and towards Big Ben.

Simon Richardson, senior associate at FCBS tells *ADF*: "Every time the building got lower, the footprint had to get bigger, just to make the project viable, now it takes up almost 95% of the site curtilage."

The initial brief didn't call for a timber building, but as the architect assessed different options with the structural engineer, it became clear that engineered wood, if used throughout, could potentially offset most of the embodied carbon and operational emissions.

Bywater got on board with the concept, however the extent of the ambition for timber were impacted by the Hackitt Review of Building Regulations and fire safety in 2018, following Grenfell, bringing concerns over fire risks to the fore.

During the design process, it was a case of "working backwards" from the position of a fully mass timber building with a "heightened focus on non-combustible materials," and a plan to thoroughly test any combustible structures to ensure safety, says Richardson.

Chunky glulam columns and beams and CLT floor slabs make up the majority of the building structure. Supporting columns run from ground to fifth floor through the middle of the building and from ground to second floor around the perimeter.

Steel columns are used above the second floor around the perimeter, as part of a drive to eliminate combustible materials from the facade, as well as provide support for the horizontal glazing.

Concrete was omitted from the scheme almost entirely, apart from in the two stair and lift cores, where a proposed all-timber solution was considered "one innovation too far" by the fire services,

CONNECTION WITH LANDSCAPE
Views across the adjacent gardens provide people with a connection with natural greenery in the heart of the city

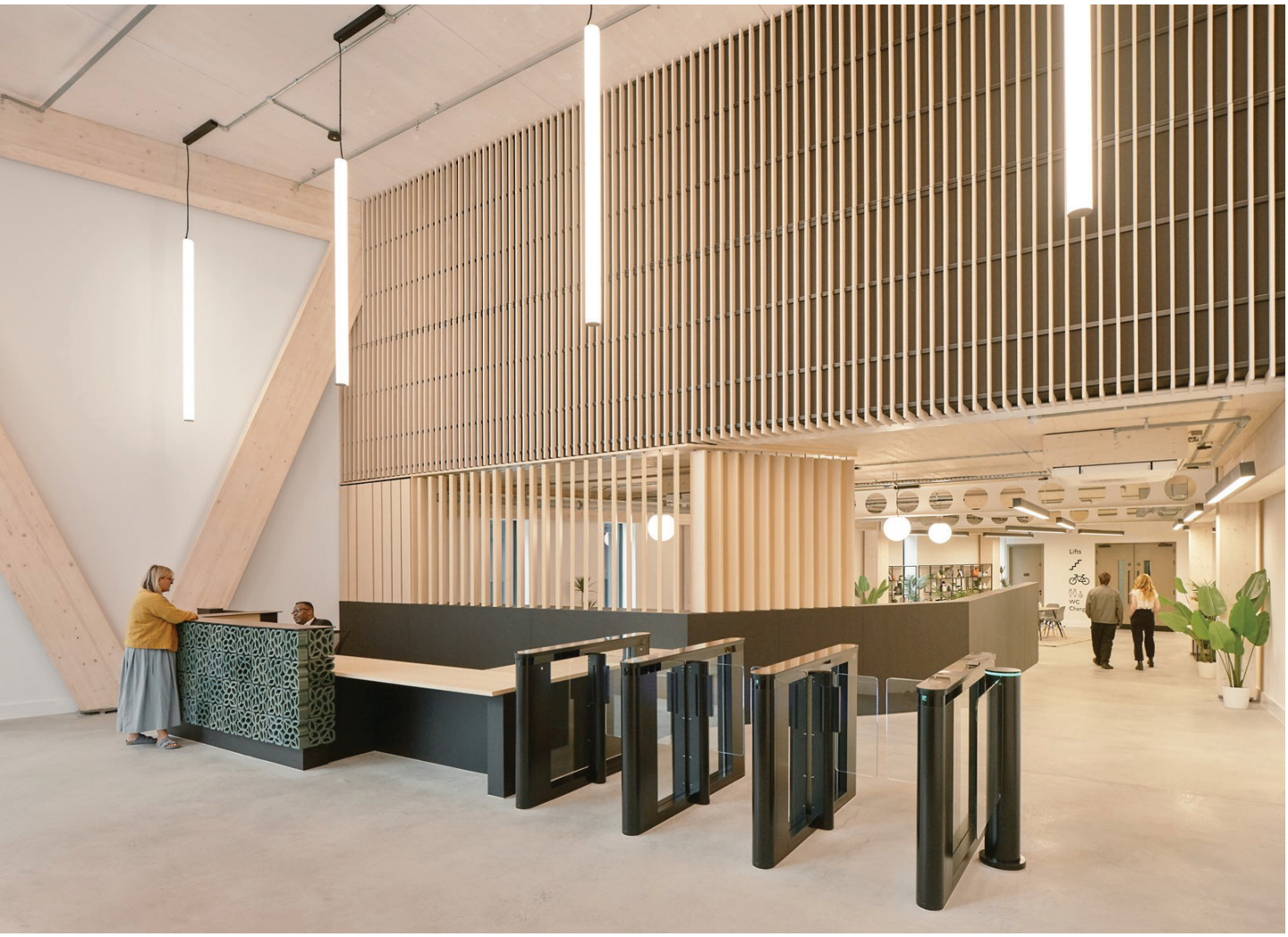
says Richardson. Resorting to concrete for the cores ensures a robust two hour enclosure rating, and according to the architect, this strategy gave fire services the confidence to permit other, higher risk elements in the building.

Close proximity to the railway line put a particular focus on combustibility of the facade, so early doors the design team had close liaison with rail services, listing out all the materials to ensure there was nothing combustible.

According to Richardson, this wasn't a requirement of legislation, but came from a need to bolster the mass timber strategy and demonstrate zero risk from the facade to the railway and the building. Even where the timber slabs project into the exterior wall build up, they are encased in a fire protection board to guarantee firestopping.

The facade is clad with two types of teal-coloured terracotta tile – a nod to Lambeth's Royal Doulton heritage – one extruded, one featuring a unique pattern co-designed with the input of local schoolchildren under the guidance of social enterprise MATT+FIONA. The childrens' tiles are applied in bands around the windows on level two.

The greenish tint of the facade is a fitting backdrop to the park, where a Grade II-listed brick boundary wall was entirely dismantled and rebuilt as part of the project, complete with repositioned headstones.



HEALTHY BY DESIGN
Designed as a 'human-centric building,' Paradise SE11's floorplates have generous natural light

Concrete was omitted almost entirely from the scheme, apart from in the two stair and lift cores

Calculating carbon

Keeping track of embodied carbon was critical for a building that's striving to be an exemplar of sustainability for the sector.

During early design, Paradise was a test case for Fielden Clegg Bradley's new carbon calculation tool FCBS Carbon, which is designed to to help architects estimate and reduce the whole-life carbon emissions of a building proposal.

"The tool is focused on comparative design, enabling users to compare one design against another to see the different playoffs for carbon," says Richardson, adding that further along in the design process, other carbon calculation tools were introduced to measure the full embodied carbon life cycle.

Material choices were constantly challenged and embodied carbon was a key criteria used to ensure emissions thresholds were not exceeded. Associated requirements were also built into the tender bidding process to ensure targets were adhered to onsite.

Efforts to limit embodied carbon weren't always successful. For example, the design team proposed to install a reused raised access floor saved from demolition to cut upfront carbon by roughly 8-10%. However, the agents were concerned about 'sellability' of the solution, which represented a significant cost uplift over new raised access floors, which were ultimately specified.

According to calculations using the software (One Click LCA*2), the project limited upfront carbon emissions (including material manufacturing, transportation, construction, and other phases, excluding renovation and disposal) to 413 kg CO_2e per square metre of floor area.


30 Old Paradise Stre
5 13,240 sq.ft
4 13,240 sq.ft
3 13,240 sq.ft
2 13,240 sq.ft
1 10,075 sq.ft
G 13,090 sq.ft

This represents an approximate 60% reduction compared to the benchmark 1,000 kg CO_2e/m^2 for new office buildings set by the Greater London Authority. Paradise sequesters over 1,800 tonnes of CO_2, equivalent to building 24 homes.

For comparison, Waugh Thistleton's 5,000 m^2 Black & White Building, completed in 2022, came in at 410 kg CO_2e/m^2.

Reducing whole lifecycle emissions is vital to help buildings underpin national net zero targets, but what about 60, 70 or 100 years down the line? What can be done to ensure that buildings aren't simply knocked down and sent to landfill?

An important piece of the puzzle is to design them with a high level of circularity so that structures, products and materials can be easily dismantled and reused at end of life, retaining their value.

Paradise's pioneering approach to design for disassembly required close collaboration between the architects, engineers, and consultants. It hinges on a strategy to exploit dry mechanical fixings and reversible fastenings, instead of adhesives, that allow components to be easily demounted in the future. About 80% of the structural wood is designed for reuse after the building's demolition.

Logical breakdown

All components were designed for logical and practical disassembly. Achieving this at interfaces between different materials, such as where steel columns interface with CLT floor slabs, was a particular challenge. Traditionally, cementitious grout would be used in connections to ensure firestopping, instead the team looked at alternative options to grouts – ultimately adopting a combination of stone wool and sealants.

CLT floor build-ups conventionally rely on a cast-in coating of cementitious screed to protect the timber, and ensure acoustic and fire performance. Instead, Paradise features lightweight cementitious boards laid on top of the floors, which, thanks also to novel connection details, can be easily taken up in future.

The disassembly strategy extends to the cladding, says Richardson: "The ceramic is dry fit, it is also hard wearing and self-cleaning, due to proximity to the railway system, helping minimise maintenance." The tiles are manufactured to last 100 years. The general move away from adhesives, to enable a demountable structure, also contributed to efforts to eliminate all VOCs from the building, helping support an anticipated WELL Gold accreditation.

The prevalence of non-standard details, alongside extensive use of timber throughout the building, demanded the construction of a full-scale mock-up for fire testing to ensure everything was compliant with building regs and would function as intended.

"Significant testing was needed to demonstrate that the timber will 'self-extinguish,' as part of the fire strategy," says Richardson, "We built a mock-up of a one bedroom studio over two floors, including the glulam columns and all the connection details, then monitored it as it was burnt."

While most of the structure performed as anticipated, some of the connection jointing was adjusted to ease installation and to eliminate a small gap that occurred due to the tight tolerances.

According to the architect, researching, procuring and carrying out the tests was a "very costly exercise," but the project was fortunate to have financial backing from Japanese logging and timber processing company Sumitomo Forestry, which became interested in the project during

"Significant testing was needed to demonstrate that the timber will 'self-extinguish' as part of the fire strategy"

With over 1,800 tonnes of CO_2 sequestered, it is one of the lowest embodied carbon offices in the UK

the planning stages and wanted to help support innovation in timber buildings. The company ended up forming a 50/50 joint venture with Bywater Properties to develop the scheme.

"Lots of projects don't go ahead because there has not been the investment to enable the testing, so we were very lucky to have Sumitomo onboard," says Richardson, "Now Bywater has committed from first principles to look to use timber and test if it's the most practical options for every project it does."

With reuse now built into the building's DNA, the question is how to ensure that any future developers of the site make use of the structure and actively disassemble it rather than simply knocking it down?

"This building could last 100 years and disassembly is already a growing industry, in 30, 40 or 50 years it's going to be much more commonplace," concludes Richardson, "The most helpful enabler for that process was making it a design constraint from day one." ■

WHY DESIGN FOR DISASSEMBLY?

Designing buildings that can be deconstructed or disassembled enables building structures, materials, products, and components to be kept in the loop instead of wasted – this is the core principle of a circular economy, which should ultimately lead to a more sustainable built environment.

According to the UK Green Building Council, a circular economy aims to 'maximise reuse' and 'minimise impact and waste.' Designing for deconstruction helps support this by reducing the amount of demolition waste – caused by knocking buildings down rather than reusing their components - that goes to landfill, also reducing the carbon emissions that come from remanufacturing and reprocessing materials. It also leads to greater flexibility in the way spaces are used.

Deconstruction must be designed for in the early stages of a building project to ensure that disassembly will be effective, potentially many decades in the future. Not properly considering deconstruction at the design stage will make material recovery more costly and time consuming leading to less reuse and more waste. UKGBC circularity economy guidance outlines some of the key considerations on disassembly and circularity at each of the RIBA stages. At present, the majority of buildings are not built for deconstruction or disassembly, due to the perceived additional cost and time involved.

Q&A with Kaz Spiewakowski: Reflecting on 2025 and Looking Ahead

GEZE UK marketing manager Lewis Tandy caught up with Managing Director Kaz Spiewakowski to discuss the company's performance in 2025, plans for the year ahead, his personal journey and his outlook on the industry.

LT: Hi Kaz, thanks for sitting down with me today. Let's start with the big picture, how was 2025 for GEZE UK?

KS: Hi Lewis, no problem. Overall, I'd say 2025 was another positive year for us. It wasn't without its challenges and despite difficult trading conditions we made real progress across the business. There was significant uncertainty in the market but we stayed focused on doing the right things which really showed in our results.

Importantly, we didn't just focus on turnover. We focused on improvement across the business, including improving our relationships with customers and partners, which puts us in a much stronger position heading into 2026.

LT: What were some of the key achievements from last year?

KS: There were quite a few, actually. Firstly, from a business point of view, we improved our customer service which is an ongoing process requiring training and change in behaviour and while we have improved, we intend to continue this improvement in the coming year.

I'm also pleased to say that we exceeded our profitability targets for the 2024/2025 financial year, which is a good result and not to be underestimated in what is a tough economic environment. Clearly its pleasing to say that we are on a strong financial base which while keeping our shareholders happy, allows us to invest in people and processes to improve the business but also gives our suppliers confidence in dealing with GEZE.

It was great to see GEZE recognised at the National Fenestration Awards, where we won 'Fire Door Product of the Year' for the Slimdrive EMD-F Powered Swing Door Drive.

Also, in September we successfully completed recertification by LRQA for ISO 9001, 14001 & 45001, which is a tremendous achievement and vital in assisting us operationally in a world where compliance and validation of compliance is critical to success.

LT: Were there any particular challenges in 2025?

KS: Like most businesses, one of our biggest challenges in 2025 was managing increased costs across the board. From materials and logistics through to energy and operational expenses, pressures continued to rise, and that's something the whole industry has had to navigate.

The key for us was finding the right balance, absorbing costs where we could, being transparent with customers and making smarter decisions internally. It pushed us to look closely at how we operate, improve efficiencies and focus even more on delivering great value and service to our customers.

LT: Turning to 2026, what's the focus for GEZE UK?

KS: The main theme for 2026 is improving processes and efficiencies to deliver sustainable, sensible growth. We want to keep moving forward, but in a way that's right for the business and our customers.

We're planning to introduce some exciting new products, including the TS 7000 door closer, "my GEZE Control" a smart solution for networking doors, windows and safety systems, while continuing to build on the strengths of our existing range, like our PACE [Pedestrian Access Control Equipment] line. As always, our focus is on delivering solutions that help create safer, more efficient, and better-performing buildings.

Education will be a major focus for us in 2026. We're keen to expand our CPD offerings, helping architects and specifiers tackle increasingly complex requirements with confidence.

We're also committed to investing in our people and strengthening our team where needed, ensuring we continue to deliver the best value and expertise to our customers.

In short, there is lots planned for 2026, so watch this space!

LT: What's your outlook for the industry as a whole over the next few years?

KS: I think there's nervousness about the year ahead but overall the sector is forecast to grow, albeit a small amount, which is positive. Cost pressures and regulatory requirements aren't going away but there's still significant activity in the sector with a real focus on improving building performance and delivering better long-term value, which is positive.

At the same time, the industry will need to address the ongoing skills gap. Finding and developing young talent to replace experienced tradespeople retiring from the sector is going to be crucial. Collaboration, training and creating clear career paths will be key if the industry is going to keep up with demand and continue delivering high-quality projects.

For any general enquires, please contact GEZE UK via the website or email.

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

Beauflor awarded EcoVadis Gold for sustainability performance

The cushion vinyl division of Beaulieu International Group has been awarded the EcoVadis Gold medal, recognising its strong performance in sustainability, ethics and responsible business practices. With an overall score of 80/100, **Beauflor** ranks among the top 5% of companies worldwide assessed by EcoVadis and the top 2% within the manufacture of plastics products industry. "Our EcoVadis Gold rating reflects excellence across all four pillars: Environment, Labour & Human Rights, Ethics and Sustainable Procurement," says Nele Tack, general manager, Beauflor. "It confirms our commitment to continue making meaningful progress in a responsible and transparent way." EcoVadis is one of the world's leading sustainability assessment platforms in global supply chains, evaluating companies on 21 environmental, social and ethical criteria. A Gold rating confirms that a company's policies, actions and results meet high international ESG standards. Within its industry, Beauflor's performance stands out even further, ranking top 2% overall, top 4% for Environment, top 3% for Labor & Human Rights and Sustainable Procurement, and top 1% for Ethics.

info@beauflor.com www.beauflor.com

ARDEX UK and Building Adhesives Ltd retain certification and achieve gold status

ARDEX UK and **Building Adhesives Ltd** are proud to announce they have both achieved Gold Certification for five years of continuous CO_2 reduction and have retained their ISO 14064-1 certifications for Green House Gas reductions. Both companies have retained their certification following successful external audits and peer reviews. The certifications, issued by Achilles' Carbon Reduce (powered by Toitu) scheme and verified to ISO 14064-1:2018 standards, recognise the ongoing commitment of both organisations to measuring, managing, and actively reducing their carbon emissions. Both businesses continue to make significant progress toward delivering the ARDEX Group's Building Tomorrow sustainability strategy and remain firmly on track to achieve carbon neutrality across Scope 1 & 2 emissions by 2030. Both BAL and ARDEX have demonstrated significant emission reductions over a rolling five-year reporting period. BAL has delivered a 16% reduction in Category 1 & 2 greenhouse gas emissions, meanwhile ARDEX UK has achieved an even greater reduction of 21% across the same categories.

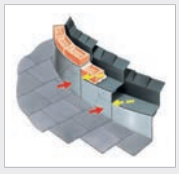
01782 591100 www.bal-adhesives.com

Diffusion appoints Matthew Cooper

Following a highly successful year of innovation, awards, and a product expansion, **Diffusion** has appointed Matthew Cooper as Sales Director, marking a significant step in the company's next phase of growth. 2025 was a landmark year for the British heating and cooling equipment specialist with the launch of its New Modular Highline 275 fan coil range, followed by major industry recognition, including winning 'Air Conditioning Product of the Year' at the HVR Awards. Commenting on this appointment, Matthew said: "I am excited to be joining a company that has had so many years of success."

020 8783 0033 www.diffusion-group.com

Goretti Dampness? Chandra Dampness?



Winds challenge traditional stepped running flashings, as rain drives under running flashing edges. Once rain is just a few millimeters under the running flashing edge, it is in contact with the back of the flashing and the brickwork that is meant to be kept dry. Approved Type X Cavitrays with integral flashings are different. The flashing overlapping configuration arrests rain, blocking the gravitational and lateral permeation path (see dotted lines). **Cavity Trays Ltd of Yeovil** manufactures proven performance trays for straight, concave and convex cavity walls.

01935 474769 www.cavitytrays.co.uk

Marmox Thermoblocks insulate Tudor reconstruction

The reconstruction of a rambling old farmyard close to Ely in East Cambridgeshire is making use of well proven **Marmox** Thermoblocks, specified in three widths as the ideal solution for tackling thermal-bridging around the building perimeter as part of a well-insulated design. Mitchell's Barn is replacing a sprawling complex of dilapidated tin cowsheds and a rather more attractive oak barn which was founded on a plinth of Tudor era bricks. The original planning permission allowed for the reconstruction of the latter structure, but when the owner, Ben Hughes came to dismantle the outer envelope, much of the timber was found to be rotten while the bricks showed significant frost-damage. The work which got under way earlier in the autumn, is therefore seeing both 215 mm and 140 mm wide Thermoblocks being used to support a 800 mm high brick base which will then carry the conserved oak beams, creating a traditional looking inner ambience. Ben concluded saying: "The work is progressing well and my bricklayer, Danny, has had no issues with laying the Thermoblocks or cutting them where it has been necessary."

01634 835290 www.marmox.co.uk

Sustainability – Integration of smart technology into waterproofing

Achieving Net Zero is a top priority in the built environment. The industry advocates for a holistic carbon approach, considering emissions from operational energy use and embodied carbon in materials and construction processes. Organisations worldwide are striving to reduce their environmental impact and promote sustainability.

Delta prioritises ethical conduct and integrity in all operations. Delta is dedicated to environmental stewardship and sustainable practices. The Delta HLA Plus is built for longevity, meeting current needs while considering future generations.

Delta's HLA Plus is an advanced high-water level alarm offering real-time remote monitoring via the Delta Pumps App. It provides a simple dashboard and protects pumping stations without subscription fees. The HLA Plus connects to any pumping station and offers essential proactive and preventive functions. Ideal for property owners, facilities managers, engineers, and contractors.

Moisture, vapour, and water ingress accumulation poses significant risks to properties with basements or lower-ground floors. Sump pumps function as a critical element of a Type C waterproofing solution, preventing structural damage from groundwater, rain, or leaks. Correct installation and maintenance of sump pumps (packaged pumping systems/basement drainage solutions) not only avert flooding but also prevents long-term property deterioration, safeguarding your investment and the building's resilience.

Delta's HLA Plus is a sophisticated high-water level alarm designed for real-time remote monitoring in pumping stations (sump pumps). Its unique integrated software gathers data from pump systems, crucial in Type C, Cavity Drained Waterproofing Solutions. The system detects critical events instantly, allowing for immediate action prior and during mechanical failures.

Why do we need smart technology?

Implementing effective strategies to prevent and mitigate risks in construction projects, particularly in niche markets like structural waterproofing, is crucial for ensuring safety, compliance, and project success.

In an ever evolving and competitive construction industry, the Delta HLA Plus is set to revolutionise risk mitigation and accountability. Structural waterproofing, crucial for any below-ground construction, ensures durability and resistance against dampness. The 'Type C' Waterproofing System, defined by BS 8102:2022, is a sustainable solution for new builds and retrofits, managing water penetration with a cavity drainage membrane (CDM) and mechanical pumps. Continuous pump operation, especially near high water tables, is essential to prevent flooding.

The HLA Plus is a great tool for pump servicing companies to improve productivity, making more efficient use of the people and resources available. Smart technology that is designed to reduce site visits for correcting errors – or to prevent them in the first place. The Delta HLA Plus focuses on digitising the process, enabling real-time monitoring, and allowing remote, high-accuracy verification.

Always happy to help

Whatever the needs of your project, you can rely on Delta's Technical Team to ensure you get the right advice, support, and practical help at exactly the right time its required. Call or email today.

01992 523 523 info@deltamembranes.com

DELTA MEMBRANES

Clay brick in contemporary design

Robert Flello at the Brick Development Association explores how clay bricks combine tradition with design flexibility, offering architects greater freedom.

Few materials have shaped the built environment as profoundly as clay brick. Recognisable across centuries of construction, it embodies continuity, reliability, and a deep connection with place. Yet brick is not simply a relic of tradition – it is a material evolving to meet the needs of modern design, environmental responsibility, and ambitious architectural expression.

As attention increasingly focuses on sustainable practices and the principles of circularity, clay brick offers a particularly compelling narrative. Formed from natural resources, designed for longevity, and reusable at the end of a building's life, it is a material that contributes meaningfully to a low-impact built environment. Just as importantly, innovation in manufacturing and product range provides new avenues for creativity, allowing clay brick to remain both timeless and forward looking.

A material made for circularity

Circular design seeks to minimise waste, maximise resource efficiency, and keep materials in use for as long as possible. Clay brick aligns naturally with these principles. Its durability means buildings can last for centuries with little maintenance, and when structures do eventually reach the end of their life, clay bricks can often be reclaimed, reused, or recycled into new applications.

Unlike materials that degrade or lose integrity when reused, clay brick retains its character and performance. Reclaimed bricks not only extend the lifecycle of the material but can also add unique

Clay brick supports both contextual sensitivity and striking individuality

texture and history to new projects. Where recycling is preferred, brick can be reprocessed for aggregate or other secondary uses, closing the loop in the material's lifecycle.

Design freedom with clay brick

Beyond its circular credentials, clay brick offers remarkable design freedom. Its modularity supports everything from highly regular, ordered facades to expressive, non-linear compositions. Bonds, patterns, and detailing allow elevations to be enriched with rhythm, depth, and subtle play of shadows.

Surface textures and colours provide an equally rich palette. From traditional reds and buffs to deep blues, whites, and experimental tones, clay brick supports both contextual sensitivity and striking individuality. Finishes can be smooth and refined, rustic and handmade, or innovative in glaze and surface treatment. The flexibility to specify across scale, tone, and detail ensures clay brick is never limited to one style or era; it adapts to the vision of the designer.

Innovation in product ranges

Far from being a static material, clay brick is the subject of continuous innovation. Advances in production have enabled new forms, slimmer profiles, and units designed to integrate with modern construction methods. These developments support both creative ambition and practical delivery, ensuring clay brick remains aligned with contemporary building practices.

At the same time, digital design and manufacturing have widened the scope for bespoke products. Complex geometries, special shapes, and intricate detailing can be achieved with accuracy, expanding the language of what is possible in clay brick. Combined with prefabricated brickwork systems and panelisation techniques, these innovations mean that clay brick can support both unique artistry and efficient project delivery.

Sustainable design language

The enduring presence of brick in urban and rural settings reflects more than just its visual and cultural resonance; it also demonstrates a wealth of technical performance benefits. Whether used to reference local vernacular or to create a contemporary statement, brick communicates permanence, identity, and a reassuring sense of continuity.

In today's context, where materials are scrutinised for both their impact and their meaning, clay brick offers strength on both fronts. Its circular principles provide confidence in environmental responsibility, while its natural thermal mass helps regulate internal temperatures, reducing reliance on mechanical heating and cooling. Exceptional durability minimises maintenance needs, and the potential for reuse or recycling at the end of life reinforces its alignment with a low-impact, circular approach. Combined with its evolving design possibilities, these qualities allow clay brick to support originality in architecture while delivering long-term environmental performance.

Looking ahead

Clay brick's story is one of continuity and renewal. It connects present construction with deep tradition, while simultaneously adapting to meet new challenges and opportunities. Its role in supporting circular design, coupled with expanding product innovation, ensures it remains one of the most versatile materials available to those shaping the built environment.

For those tasked with delivering buildings that are both sustainable and distinctive, clay brick provides not just a construction solution but a medium of creativity. It is a material that respects the past, answers to the present, and is ready for the future.

Robert Flello is chief executive of the Brick Development Association

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Eurobrick's technical expertise delivers precision finish for McDonald's Buxton

Eurobrick Systems recently supplied its X-Clad cladding system together with specially sourced stone slips for a new McDonald's restaurant in Buxton, working closely with long-term client A.E.P. (Modular Construction) Limited to achieve a high-quality finish on a complex and technically demanding project.

Although the completed building appears simple at first glance, the design featured multiple stone sizes and detail bands running around the structure, demanding meticulous estimating and layout planning and design input to ensure perfect alignment of the components.

Eurobrick's 25 mm X-Clad system was installed onto sheathing board, providing a robust, insulated backing for the stone finishes. In total, Eurobrick supplied 419 m² of cladding, with the stone sourced to complement the local architecture and meet planning conditions.

The finish included two types of stone slips and additional stone features:

- Dunhouse Buff Pitched face stone – this is a natural quarried stone. Eurobrick's technical team visited the quarry to confirm specifications and around 356 m² was supplied.
- Dunhouse Buff Ashlar stone – natural stone used for false window infill panels, totalling 14 m².
- Procter Cast Stone Ashlar (Bathstone colour) – a manufactured stone used for perimeter feature bands, totalling approximately 50 m².

The project included a number of architectural feature details in Procter Cast Stone Bathstone finish, including lintels and cills for windows and false windows, a cornice detail around the building perimeter, and coping to the top of the main structure, corral area and boundary walls. Eurobrick also supplied a large cast surround for the main entrance, which was built in seven sections.

Stone slips were delivered elevation by elevation to co-ordinate with the build schedule. The bespoke production process at the quarry required careful planning to ensure the correct materials were available on site when needed. To achieve precise alignment, the design incorporated five different corner types, helping to avoid small cut pieces around window openings and ensuring a clean, consistent finish.

James Ball from the technical team at Eurobrick said: "On the face of it, the building looks simple, but it was anything but. It required detailed day to day management liaising regularly with A.E.P., the installers on site and the quarry. Natural, quarried stone is an expensive material and it had to be right!"

Eurobrick has worked with A.E.P. for more than 25 years, providing high-quality brick and stone slip systems for modular construction projects across the UK.

Mark Lawrence, director at A.E.P. (Modular Construction) commented: "Eurobrick have been trusted suppliers for many, many years. Their products are good quality and they always provide excellent service. Eurobrick's technical team went above and beyond in estimating, overseeing the production of the stone slips and closely managing delivery schedules to ensure the right materials arrived when needed. Buxton was a complex project and Eurobrick's attention to detail contributed in no small part to its successful completion. The new restaurant looks terrific, and we and our clients are delighted."

Eurobrick has been supplying McDonald's various contractors for over 30 years and remain at the forefront of the UK's brick and stone slip cladding industry. Its systems – including X-Clad, A-Clad, P-Clad, and I-Clad – are widely used across modular, retail, education, and residential sectors. Renowned for quality, service, and technical expertise, Eurobrick continues to deliver innovative cladding solutions that combine traditional aesthetics with modern efficiency.

0117 971 7117
www.eurobrick.co.uk

Proctor Group membranes used in next generation SIP technology

Factory-fitted Proctor Group membranes were part of the successful construction of the Ultrapanel demo house. The building envelope for a three-bedroom home, from sole plate to ridge, was erected in a single day using Ultrapanel Building Technologies' Category 2 MMC SIP system.

The system features the vapour permeable Proctorwrap Reflect® membrane in its external wall panels. An innovative new cold roof panel features the air permeable, low resistance (APLR) Proctor Air® underlay.

The two membranes allow SIP panels to be delivered straight to site and installed quickly, providing a watertight building envelope in a matter of hours. Panels can be specified to meet a range of regulations and standards (including the Passivhaus standard), while minimising risks associated with moisture.

Proctor Group worked closely with Ultrapanel Building Technologies to establish membrane specifications tailored to the offsite manufacture of the panels.

For example, Proctor Air is usually supplied in 1 m wide rolls, to allow for easier manual handling on the roof. However, in a factory environment, the production line can handle heavier products. Proctor Group therefore supplied a bespoke 3 m wide roll to suit the width of the cold roof panels.

Proctor Group's sales director, John Johnston, attended the demo house construction day and said: "At a time when labour costs are so expensive, Ultrapanel's SIP system will likely be very appealing to housing associations, and social housing providers in particular.

That could make a real difference to whether the UK can achieve its ambitious housing targets."

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SPW+ equals a great new addition to Senior's window range

Senior Architectural Systems has added further strength to its extensive product range with the launch of the new SPW+ Tilt & Turn Open In aluminium window system.

The new SPW+ aluminium window system has been developed to offer a convenient and cost-effective solution for projects where slim sightlines, thermal performance and speed of installation are all required.

Designed to provide a flexible solution where thermal targets may vary depending on the project, SPW+ can be installed with both double and triple glazing options to meet U-values of between 0.94 W/m²K and 1.3 W/m²K when calculated as a commercial CEN standard window.

The new system has also been designed to work seamlessly with Senior's aluminium Louvre Guard, without the need for any additional profile materials to keep costs and labour time on site to a minimum.

Thanks to its thermal performance and slim profile design, the new SPW+ aluminium window offers customers a cost-effective option for a variety of projects from high-rise residential accommodation to education and healthcare facilities.

The 1,500 mm wide by 2,400 mm high window system also meets the security requirements of PAS24, and like all aluminium fenestration products manufactured by Senior, can be powder coated to virtually any colour at the company's in-house facility.

Suitable to use in both residential and commercial projects, the new SPW+ aluminium window builds on the popularity of Senior's established SPW600 aluminium window and its patented low U-value PURe® range to give fabricators, installers, contractors and architects even more choice.

To find out more about Senior Architectural Systems' SPW+ Tilt & Turn Open In aluminium window system, please visit the website or search for Senior Architectural Systems on LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.

01709 772600
seniorarchitectural.co.uk/architectural-systems/spw-plus-window

TORMAX iMotion Operators Automate V&A East Storehouse Entrance

TORMAX UK was contracted by Spec-Al Facades to install its advanced iMotion 1301 door drives to automate a pair of heavy, bespoke swing doors, that form one of the main public entrances to the new V&A East Storehouse Museum. The iMotion door drives feature robust, gearless motor technology that delivers smooth, silent operation while comfortably handling the significant weight and height of the custom stainless-steel and aluminium door leaves. Their precise control software manages door speed, inertia and safety, ensuring dependable, predictable movement that supports steady visitor flow into one of London's newest cultural destinations. The TORMAX iMotion 1301 drive is engineered without gears or brushes, ensuring exceptionally low wear, long service life and minimal maintenance. Its high-torque motor enables confident automation of oversized swing doors, while adaptive controls manage factors such as wind load and levels of foot traffic. The system is fully compatible with access-control integration, safety sensors and building-management interfaces, providing architects with a flexible solution for complex public buildings.

sales@tormax.co.uk

Kingspan and Zestec launch an innovative funded solar roofing solution

Kingspan has partnered with Zestec Renewable Energy, a wholly owned business within Octopus Energy Generation funds, to deliver a groundbreaking solution for building owners: funded solar roofing for refurbishment projects. This innovative approach combines roof renovation with integrated solar PV technology, enabling owners to future-proof their assets without the burden of significant upfront capital expenditure. Ageing roofs often prevent building owners from capitalising on the benefits of solar. This new combined offering addresses this challenge head-on by integrating roof refurbishment with renewable energy generation. Using PowerPanel, owners can replace or overclad existing roofs with FM-approved insulated panels that incorporate advanced photovoltaic technology. These systems deliver exceptional thermal performance, fire safety, and energy output, up to 475 Wp per module, while enhancing the building's aesthetics and market appeal. Kingspan's technical excellence underpins the solution. QuadCore® insulation technology delivers U-values as low as 0.11 W/m²·K, improving thermal efficiency and compliance with evolving regulations.

01352 716100 www.kingspan.com/gb/en/campaigns/innovative-solar-roofing-solutions

Titon expands SF Xtra Sound Attenuator range

Titon is pleased to announce the expansion of its SF Xtra Sound Attenuator product family with the introduction of a new 4000EA vent and canopy variant further enhancing the company's offering for high-performance acoustic ventilation solutions. Independently tested in accordance with BS EN 20140-10:1992 and ISO 140-10:1991, the new 4000EA variant with 75mm vent and canopy achieves Dn,e,w (C; Ctr) = 40 (-1;-3) dB when open and Dn,e,w (C; Ctr) = 49 (-1;-4) dB in a closed position. Key benefits include a cost-effective sound-attenuating ventilator suitable for both indoor and outdoor use, with adaptable combinations of ventilator sizes (V25, V50, V75 mm) and canopy sizes (C25, C50, C75 mm) to meet differing acoustic specifications. It is designed for retrofit applications, fitting over a 13 mm slot and being compatible with Trimvent® Select, Trimvent® 4000 Hi Lift, or Trimvent® Select Xtra slot sizes. The unit also features a durable construction, manufactured from aluminium 6063A T6 with POM component parts, while a high-performance gasket and compression closing action improve sealing, particularly under adverse conditions.

enquiries@titon.co.uk www.titon.com

Launch of conceal system for Hardie® Panel

James Hardie has announced the launch of the Conceal System for Hardie® Panel, a new mechanical concealed fixing system designed to deliver a flawless finish, improved durability and simplified maintenance for fibre cement soffit installations. The Conceal System for Hardie® Panel has been engineered specifically for use with 11 mm Hardie® Panel and Hardie® Architectural Panel, providing a concealed fixing solution that removes the need for visible rivets while maintaining strength, performance and ease of installation.

info@jameshardie.co.uk www.jameshardie.co.uk

Architects' Datafile website

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

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Getting ahead of the standards

Bradley Hirst of Knauf Insulation explains why designers must uplift thermal standards ahead of the Future Homes Standard, in order to futureproof homes.

The Future Homes Standard (FHS) is still working its way through consultation at the time of writing, but the fundamentals are clear. New homes will need to produce 75 to 80% lower carbon emissions than those built under 2013 regulations, with an expectation that low-carbon heating and higher fabric performance become the norm. Although the timeline for implementation has been delayed several times, many architects and housebuilders are already changing their approach to the way homes are designed.

For architects, the most useful way to think about "building ahead" is not by chasing a single notional target, but by focusing on delivering real thermal performance that stands up to increased scrutiny and prepares homes for low and zero carbon (LZC) technologies.

What we know about the FHS

In England, the 2022 uplift to Building Regulations, through Part L and Part F, was designed as a stepping stone towards the FHS, tightening limiting U-values and raising expectations on ventilation. Part O was also introduced, making overheating mitigation a new but essential consideration for residential design.

A central part of how future compliance will be demonstrated is through comparison with a notional dwelling. There are two proposed specification options: one that maximises carbon savings through measures such as solar PV, decentralised ventilation and wastewater heat recovery, and a second, leaner route that uses fewer technologies but still delivers at least 75% carbon savings compared with 2013 regulations.

In both cases, the actual dwelling must meet or outperform the notional benchmark in key metrics such as primary energy use and carbon emissions when assessed using the new Home Energy Model.

The Home Energy Model (HEM) will replace SAP as the methodology underpinning regulatory compliance.

While modernising the structure of the model should make it more flexible and easier to use, the implications for building design are significant. Energy use will be more accurately simulated and assessed, placing greater emphasis on closing the gap between design intent and as-built performance.

Building ahead of the FHS means getting the fabric right first

‘Building ahead of the Future Homes Standard’ means getting the fabric right first

Fabric first is the key to LZC

Solar PV, heat pumps and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) often dominate the conversation around future homes. While the exact requirements for these technologies are still being confirmed, they are expected to play a central role in meeting future carbon targets. Their effectiveness, however, depends on a well-insulated building envelope, combined with controlled ventilation and sufficient airtightness.

Heat pumps, for example, must be correctly sized for the spaces they serve. If excessive heat is lost through the building fabric, the effective heating demand increases, reducing efficiency and undermining performance even where the system has been correctly specified. The lower the space heating demand, the smaller and more efficient the low-carbon heating system can be, and the easier it becomes to avoid high peak loads and uncomfortable temperature swings.

This makes an efficient building fabric essential to the goal of reducing overall energy consumption that LZC technologies are designed to achieve.

Building ahead

Taking a fabric first approach to home design means considering how material choice affects as-built performance, and where standard practices may need to change to ensure thermal efficiency.

Loft insulation is a good example. It is highly cost effective, relatively simple to install, and has a substantial impact on thermal performance. Many architects are already specifying insulation depths well beyond the current minimum of 270 mm, with some designs accommodating up to 500 mm. This maximises roof performance and provides flexibility elsewhere in the overall energy strategy.

Change is also evident in cavity wall design. Despite a modest increase in building footprint, 150 mm cavities make it easier to achieve lower U-values using full-fill insulation such as glass mineral wool. Wider cavities reduce thermal transmittance and allow the use of insulation that is more tolerant of site conditions and less prone to air gaps, helping to deliver consistent thermal performance in practice.

Making homes ready

Honey, founded in 2022, is one example of a housebuilder deliberately working ahead of the incoming standard by focusing on buildability and measurable outcomes.

At Thoresby Vale in Nottinghamshire, Honey has delivered homes designed to exceed the likely direction of FHS targets. The specification includes fully filled 150 mm cavities, upgraded party wall insulation to prevent thermal bypass, and loft insulation installed to a depth of 500 mm, thereby achieving a reported roof U-value of 0.09 W/m²K.

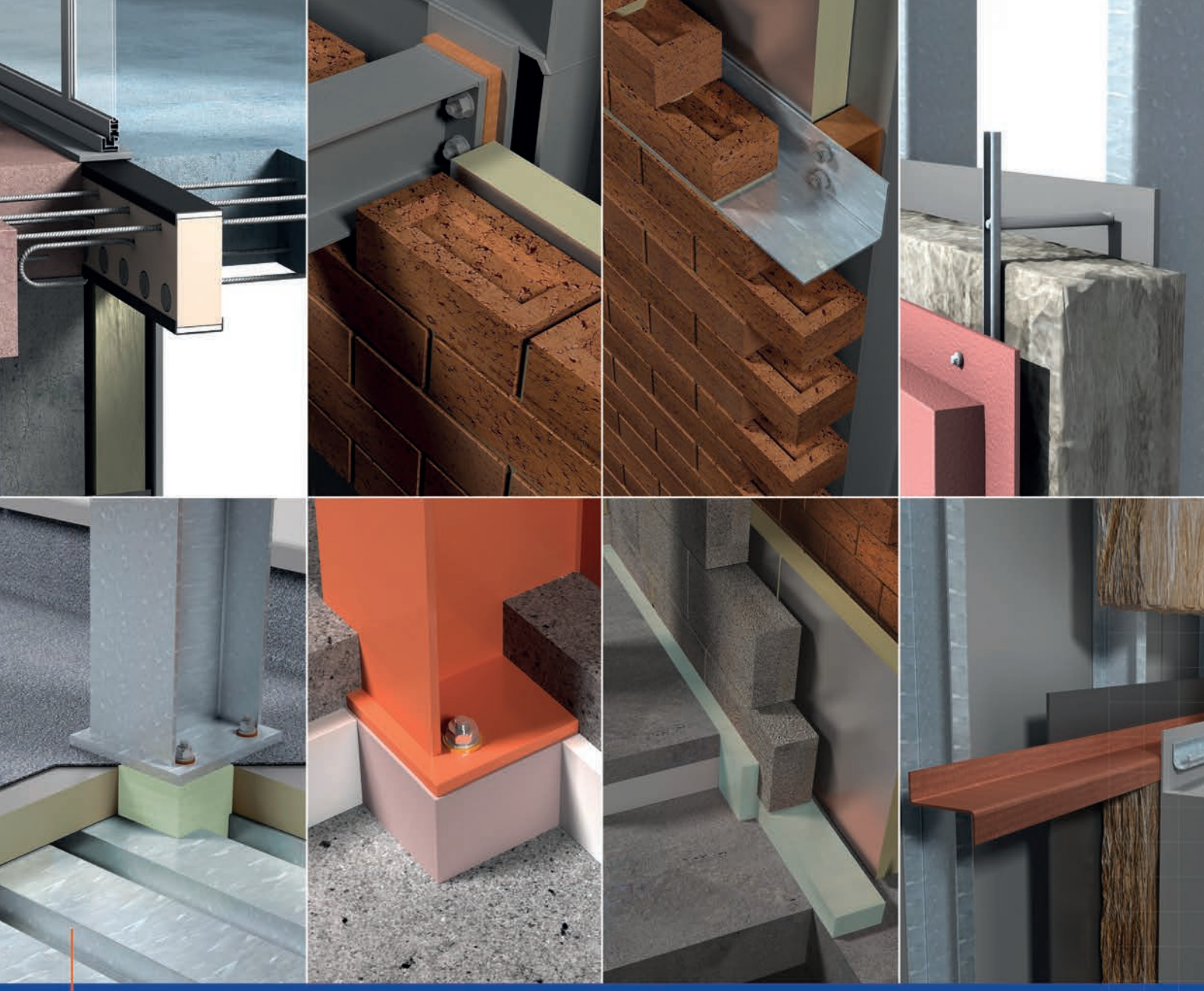
One early completion achieved an EPC A rating with a score of 92, air permeability of 3.9 m³/h.m², and operational CO_2 emissions of 1.4 tonnes per year, compared with a UK average of around six.

The future is stricter, but also more testable

Standards are tightening because outcomes matter: running costs, health, comfort and national carbon targets. With more detailed and nuanced assessments available through the Home Energy Model, understanding of how to close the performance gap should continue to improve.

Building ahead of the FHS means getting the fabric right first, enabling low and zero carbon technologies and delivering real thermal efficiency in new homes.

Bradley Hirst is technical services manager at Knauf Insulation



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Sanivite+ solves laundry drainage challenge

A property in Alton, Staffordshire sits in an elevated position with driveway and compact stone garage beneath the level of the house. The laundry room is housed in the garage which presented a common but problematic drainage issue: no direct access to the drainage system. Waste water needed to be pumped upwards to the existing soil stack. Homeowner Ed Shenton turned to **Saniflo's** Sanivite+. The Sanivite+ is engineered to handle the unique demands of grey water from washing machines, dishwashers, and sinks. The unit automatically detects incoming water and discharges it efficiently and quietly.

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Heat loss calculator and radiator sizing software

The heat loss calculator and radiator sizing software package from **Stelrad** has been updated and is now even more comprehensive and simple to use for installers and specifiers. There are improvements to both the Basic Heat Loss Calculator and the Advanced version incorporating the latest recommended room temperatures and air changes from NHBC Standards 2024 Ch.8.3. and associated Ts&Cs that include the latest CIBSE u-values used. The new version incorporates improved styling for better match with colours layout and typography and improved compatibility with modern browsers.

0800 876 6813 **www.stelradprofessional.com**

Panasonic Powers vertical strawberry farm

Grow Dynamics were commissioned to deliver a vertical farm research facility in Suffolk dedicated to strawberry and vanilla cultivation, installing four **Panasonic** 14kW adaptive ducted twin split systems. Grow Dynamics selected Panasonic's advanced low-temperature heat pump technology as part of the overall system. The Panasonic PACi NX low-temperature units were recommended for their energy efficiency, performance and reliability. This configuration delivers precise and consistent climate conditions, enabling accurate control of the crop environment and supporting the testing of new crop varieties.

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Heating and cooling have to be part of the masterplan

David Patrick at Dimplex explains why key decisions around heating, hot water and comfort cooling must now be considered holistically at the masterplanning stage – including electricity load implications – rather than left until detailed design.

For architects working on new residential developments in the UK, masterplanning has always been about more than simply arranging buildings on a site. It is the stage at which long-term performance, compliance and quality of life are established – as the sector moves rapidly toward all-electric, low-carbon homes.

In today's regulatory and environmental context, setting the framework for how a development functions as a whole, energy strategy is a core part of the masterplanning phase. The transition away from gas, combined with rising concerns about overheating, means architects must consider electric heating, hot water and low-carbon comfort cooling together from the outset.

Electric heating and cooling systems offer clear benefits for carbon reduction and future compliance – however, it's crucial to ensure early engagement with Distribution Network Operators (DNOs). Building this vital partnership early on enables accurate load modelling at the masterplanning stage, avoiding costly reinforcement or delays later. When these requirements are considered up front, architects can integrate them cleanly into building form, roofscapes and landscape design, allowing them to be accommodated without compromising internal layouts or external space.

Comfort cooling

Alongside heating and hot water, comfort cooling is emerging as a defining issue for UK housing design. Rising summer temperatures, increased airtightness and higher internal heat gains mean overheating risk is now a planning, compliance and reputational concern. The challenge is to address this without resorting to energy intensive air conditioning that undermines carbon targets.

Building orientation, massing, glazing ratios, shading and landscape design all influence cooling demand, so low-carbon comfort cooling technologies must also be considered at the masterplanning stage.

Meeting policy & future standards

The proposed UK Future Homes Standard (FHS) and tightening local planning policies are pushing developments toward ultra-low-carbon operation. A site -ide approach to electric heating, hot water and comfort

cooling allows architects to coordinate fabric performance, renewable energy such as solar PV and smart energy management. This holistic strategy supports compliance while improving occupant comfort and reducing energy bills.

From a commercial perspective, early energy planning reduces risk. It avoids late stage redesigns, improves programme certainty and helps control capital and operational costs. From a design perspective, it enables architects to create homes that are comfortable year round, resilient to climate change and aligned with the UK's net zero trajectory.

Ultimately, masterplanning today is about anticipating the demands of tomorrow. By embedding low-carbon heating, hot water and comfort cooling strategies at the very start of the process, architects can help deliver residential developments that are not only compliant and efficient but genuinely fit for the future.

Innovation in action

The Silvertown regeneration in East London is fast becoming a benchmark for low-carbon residential design. The development is leading the way by demonstrating how integrated energy systems can be specified

Accurate load modelling up front means architects can cleanly incorporate heating and cooling systems into building forms

at masterplan and building levels to deliver efficient, comfortable homes at scale. One key part of this ambitious project is the integration of Dimplex's Zeroth Energy System. This innovative system supports E.ON's ectogrid low-carbon district heating network, creating a resilient energy solution suitable for modern urban living.

The project has a bold vision to be net-zero carbon by 2025, carbon neutral by 2030 and absolute zero carbon by 2040, aligning with the London Borough of Newham's wider sustainability targets. Meeting these milestones will be achieved through the smart integration of low-carbon technologies across the development, which will ultimately deliver thousands of homes alongside commercial and leisure spaces.

For Plot six, the first phase of residential delivery, the Dimplex Zeroth Energy System provides highly efficient, low-carbon space heating and hot water to 106 affordable homes using an ambient loop maintained at around 25°C. Connected to in-apartment heat pumps, this communal network delivers excellent overall efficiency and can be specified to include comfort cooling, helping mitigate overheating risk and meet regulatory expectations.

The integration with E.ON's ectogrid district network enables energy sharing between buildings across the Silvertown site. As a fifth-generation heat network, ectogrid operates at low temperatures and can draw on local low-carbon sources and waste heat, reducing reliance on external inputs while balancing heating and cooling demands throughout the community.

For architects, the Silvertown project is an important illustration of the design potential of integrating low-carbon heating, hot water and comfort cooling early in the design process. By embedding these technologies from masterplan through to detailed delivery, it sets a replicable precedent for sustainable urban living in the UK.

David Patrick is head of specification marketing at Dimplex

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Vicaima reflects key décor trends in 2026

We are living in a time of accelerated transformation, where interiors have become emotional extensions of everyday life. The way we design spaces is now shaped by multiple factors, from technological progress to behavioural change, from regulatory demands to the growing importance of comfort, safety and, above all, wellbeing.

In 2026, aesthetics, sensory authenticity and technical performance are set to converge into a shared language. Architecture, construction and interior design no longer operate as isolated disciplines, but rather as an integrated ecosystem in which every decision has a direct impact on the experience of those who inhabit, move through or work within a space.

As one of Europe's leading players in the design and manufacture of doors, frames, wardrobes, panels and furniture pieces, Vicaima identifies three major décor trends it will be following throughout 2026.

Clean design as the new spatial language

The most relevant projects of the coming years will be those that prioritise visual continuity, where doors, walls, panels and furniture elements share a common language. This approach creates fluid, balanced and visually calm settings.

This is where the door takes a central role, becoming the link between architecture and design, and between technical performance and aesthetic expression.

This trend is reflected in the growing demand for solutions that eliminate visual breaks, simplify architectural reading and reinforce a sense of order and wellbeing. Vicaima's Portaro® Integrated responds directly to this need by allowing doors to be fully integrated into the architectural concept.

Natural and organic as an emotional response to excess

In a world defined by acceleration and overstimulation, interiors are returning to essentials. The search for authenticity is expressed through more sensorial spaces, where natural and organic elements become increasingly relevant. This is conveyed through materials capable of creating atmospheres with character and emotional depth.

Pantone's choice of Cloud Dancer as the Colour of the Year for 2026 reinforces this perspective. It is an ethereal, soft and luminous tone that enhances purity of form, visual serenity and an intuitive sense of balance. In dialogue with this palette, natural materials, earthy tones, carefully considered contrasts and an aesthetic that values touch, texture and authenticity take centre stage. The natural and organic coexist with a more expressive and daring dimension, striking a balance between the essential and the extraordinary.

Within this context, the Vicaima Infinity range reinforces its positioning as a creative platform. In 2026, it will be renewed and expanded to include new textures that enhance the tactile and sensory dimension of projects. In parallel, Vicaima is also preparing updates to other finishing ranges, deepening the dialogue between wood, design and emotion through a contemporary interpretation of sophisticated naturality.

Customisation as the starting point for a complete experience

While aesthetics define first impressions, performance ensures longevity and quality. In 2026, technical requirements are no longer an invisible attribute. They become an integral part of the architectural concept.

This growing emphasis on performance also brings durability into the centre of the design conversation. In recent years, materials traditionally associated with highly demanding environments, such as High-Pressure Laminates (HPL), have gained renewed relevance within interior architecture. Their resistance, stability and ability to maintain appearance over time support a broader understanding of sustainability, one that values extended life cycles, reduced maintenance and fewer replacements.

In 2026, design will be more authentic, more sensorial and more integrated. Doors, as elements of transition, identity and performance, take on a leading role in a new way of thinking about space. This is precisely where Vicaima continues to define its path.

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The growth of biophilic offices

Laura Light, Concept Design Team Leader at Interface, explains how incorporating biophilic design in the workplace beyond planting alone can not only promote wellbeing for staff, but also nurture productivity for clients.

Organisations are increasingly acknowledging that workplace design plays a critical role in employee wellbeing. With a growing focus on supporting neurodiverse colleagues, many businesses are now acting on this insight by rethinking their office environments to better accommodate diverse needs.

Bringing the outside indoors

People spend up to 90% of their lives indoors, with most jobs being done indoors onsite. Office workers are expected to see less than an hour of sunlight each day in winter, with a lack of sunlight causing issues ranging from interrupted sleep to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD can lead sufferers to have low mood and energy, as well as difficulty concentrating, and with stress-related illnesses accounting for 22.9 days of sickness absences from work in 2024/25, tackling poor mental health is paramount for organisations.

In urban environments it can be difficult to access serene, natural spaces – with 68% of the world's population predicted to live in urban areas by 2050, this issue is only set to increase. Access to nature is proven to improve mental health, as being outside in nature can aid in regulating the nervous system. With this consideration in mind, it is necessary for businesses to look inwards at the design of their workplaces to understand how they can best remedy their employees' lack of time in nature, as this can greatly aid in promoting wellbeing and staving off stress-related absences.

Biophilic design

Biophilic design is all about integrating natural elements into the built environment to improve wellbeing, productivity, and sustainability. Adapting the built environment with biophilic principles can be approached in different ways, including:

- Direct contact with nature
- Maximising natural light
- High air quality
- Natural analogues (indirect connection forms such as patterns, textures and colour)
- Prospect (creating enticing sight lines throughout spaces)
- Recuperative spaces to retreat into

Flooring is the foundation of interior design, and when selected mindfully

While adding trees or water features can be a great way to incorporate biophilic design into the workplace, it can be as simple as choosing naturalistic hues and textures for walls and flooring.

Employees and businesses greatly benefit from this, as workers in biophilic offices are 6% more productive and 15% more creative compared to workers in non-biophilic offices, and report a 15% higher level of wellbeing.

Human nature

By incorporating more of the outside world into workspaces, architects have the ability to create a significant, positive impact on employee wellbeing. Experimenting with texture, colour and sources of light when designing commercial spaces can encourage employees to feel a greater sense of calm, thanks to our innate attraction to the natural world.

Understanding which aspects of commercial spaces negatively impact wellbeing is crucial in deciding how to incorporate biophilia into interior design for the workplace. For example, harsh, artificial lighting can both interrupt circadian rhythms and have negative effects on mental health, increasing the likelihood of depression, mood disorders and cognitive impairment. It can also prove overstimulating for employees, especially neurodiverse colleagues, which can lead to a lack of engagement, reduced productivity, and increased likelihood of employee burnout.

Likewise, plain, uninspiring interior design may seem cost-effective and practical, but the reality is that incorporating biophilic design into the workplace does not have to be costly, and can be as simple as designing spaces with more natural materials in mind.

Flooring is the foundation of interior design, and when selected mindfully, it can aid in curating calm spaces that avoid contributing to sensory overload. Flooring can be used as a wayfinding tactic in commercial spaces, through the use of different textures, patterns and shades to delineate separate zones. This can further aid in reducing sensory overload in the workplace, as employees sare able to intuitively move throughout the space without experiencing a barrage of information.

The impact of prioritising more natural elements and neuro-inclusive design choices is that increased employee wellbeing may save businesses money long term, as they are able to retain happier, healthier workers who take fewer sickness absences and feel more engaged and productive in their surroundings at work.

Natural choice in future

As businesses continue to learn more about how they can support their employees, selecting thoughtfully and sustainably designed floor coverings and decor that take inspiration from the natural world is a simple yet highly effective way to bring organisations closer to their goals of encouraging and developing their employees and businesses for the better.

Laura Light is the concept design team leader at Interface

Simplifying shower specification in care environments

Across healthcare, secure facilities and inclusive-design settings, shower selection can be complicated. User needs vary widely, compliance requirements are exacting, and installation programmes can be constrained by time, cost and operational risk. Horne Engineering's pre-plumbed shower systems are designed to simplify that complexity, delivering a common engineering platform that can be tailored precisely to application, user profile and regulatory context.

At the core of every Horne shower is the same robust, fully assembled architecture: a factory-tested panel that integrates healthcare-approved thermostatic control, pipework, filters and isolation protected within a durable aluminium casing. This approach benefits specifiers and contractors alike; installation time is significantly reduced, costings are more predictable, and on-site risk minimised – for much of the installation work is complete before arriving on site. Horne showers can address many different environments. Inclusive and accessible shower systems can be configured with full user control, BS 8300-compliant lever operation, single- or dual-mode, with fixed and handheld outlets, and high-contrast components to support users with reduced mobility, strength or visual perception. In contrast, ligature-resistant variants adopt carefully shaped controls, tamper-resistant components and timed flow options, making them suitable for mental health, custodial and other high-risk settings – without compromising durability or thermal safety.

For healthcare applications, an optional Thermal Disinfection Unit (ILTDU) can be incorporated within the shower (or supplied as a stand-alone device). This facilitates regular thermal disinfection of the outlet – to manage infection control risks where immunocompromised users are present. The same functionality is equally relevant in leisure, sports or campsite facilities,

particularly those subject to seasonal shutdowns and recommissioning cycles.

The wider range spans over 120 models, covering a broad spectrum of operational, clinical and user requirements. BIM models and full spec details are available directly within NBS Chorus, Revit and other BIM-enabled modelling and specification platforms via NBS Source.

01505 321455 b.link/NBS_Horne

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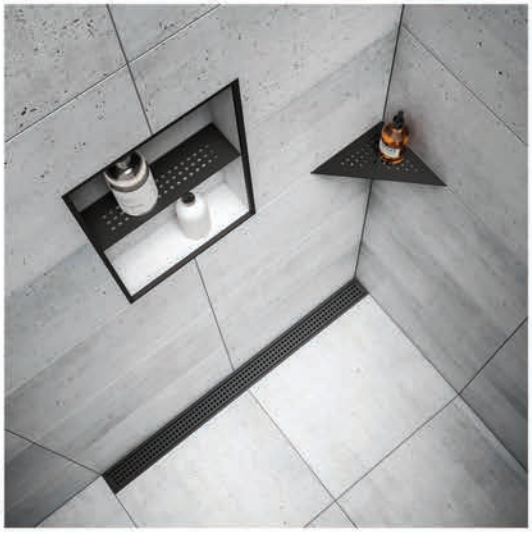

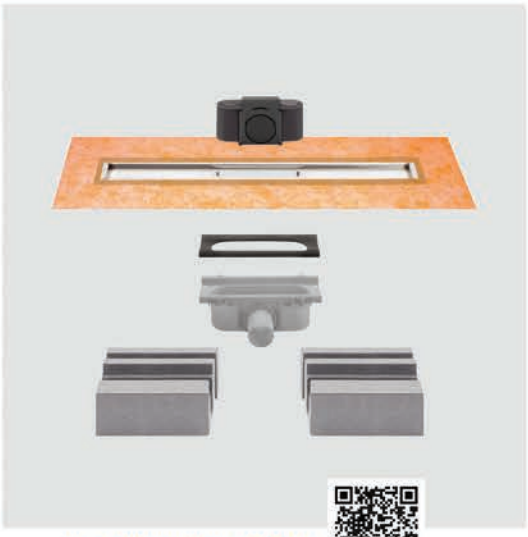

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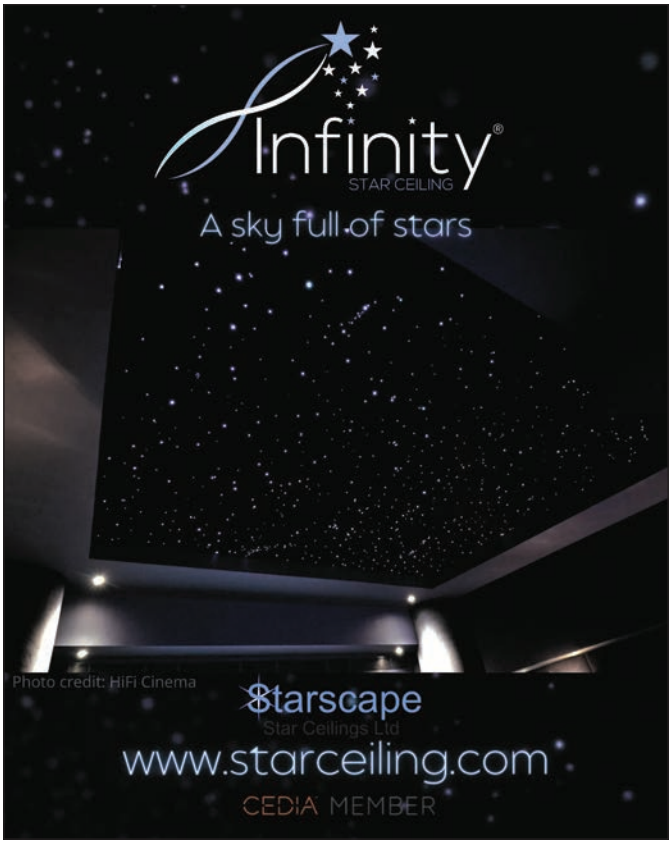
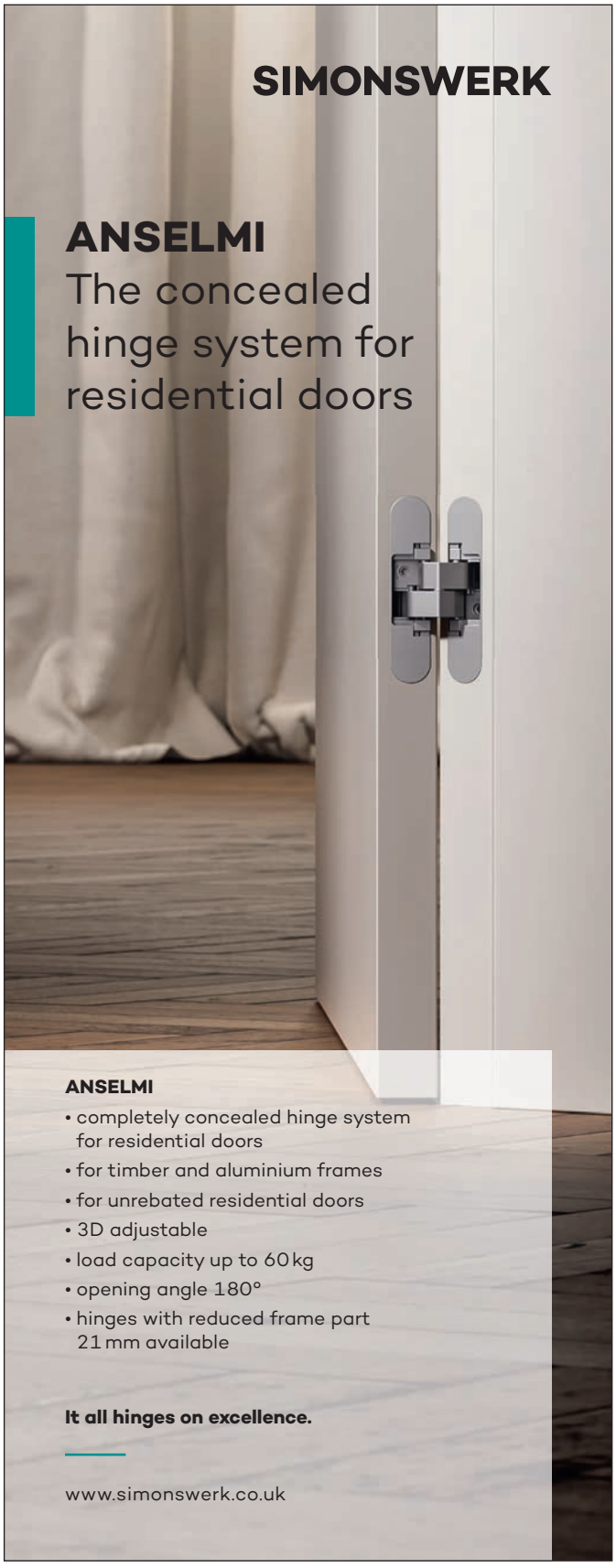
Value and longevity to social housing flooring

With the Zenura collection of sheet vinyl, **IVC Commercial** can respond to the need for cost-effective floors that enhance the lives of people living in social housing. The Zenura collection is designed to provide comfort, durability and easy maintenance to living areas in social housing while delivering excellent value for providers. The collection includes four performance levels; Zenura Style, Zenura Luxe, Zenura Ultimate and Zenura Elegance LVS. Each collection features a range of wood plank, herringbone and stone effects to bring a choice of popular and warming homely designs that will appeal to tenants. Providers can simply choose the performance level that best meets their needs, whether that's in cost or specification. Every floor in the Zenura collection achieves at least Class 23, ensuring that longevity of service is maintained. As Zenura Style, Luxe and Zenura Ultimate floors are textile backed, they are also ideal for refurbishment. For high-wear communal areas, Zenura Elegance LVS offers a super compact backing and an 'LVT-on-a-roll' aesthetic, allowing premium design effect on a budget.

01332 851 500 www.ivc-floorsforhousing.co.uk





Creation LVT... Create without limits... Create with Gerflor... A new chapter in design!

The NEW 2026 Creation LVT Collection is meticulously inspired by the latest interior design trends. It celebrates the timeless beauty of classics including natural wood and stone finishes, with the reinterpretation of modern textures and natural authentic realism. With this contemporary collection comprising of tiles and planks, **Gerflor** introduces a new generation of flooring shaped by creativity, comfort, and a lasting respect for the planet. Available in 85 designs, 10 themed worlds, several technologies, multiple formats and sizes, the breath-taking Creation LVT range is ideal for designers and specifiers who wish to unleash their creativity. With endless possibilities, the Creation LVT collection is perfectly suited for a host of applications including housing, offices, hospitality, retail, public spaces and much more! Creation LVT can also be mixed and matched from 'floor to floor' or 'floor to wall' with Mural Revela wallcoverings, perfect for creating unique spaces that leave a lasting impression for all. Thoughtfully created to ensure that decors can be coordinated across a build environment.

01625 428922 www.gerflor.co.uk

Signature50 – A New Name for a Havwoods Classic

As a leading timber surface specialist, **Havwoods**, celebrates 50 years of design-led excellence across the world, the brand has marked this important milestone in true Havwoods fashion. To commemorate the occasion, the brand is honouring one of its most popular products with a history-defining name.

The surface previously known as Fendi will become Signature50. Known for its smoky grey tones that drift effortlessly from warm to cool, Fendi has been a perennial favourite for years. This beautiful surface has brought a distinctive blend of style, depth and intrigue to stunning interiors across the globe. These iconic characteristics help Fendi – renamed Signature50 – to remain an integral and enduring centrepiece of aspirational interiors worldwide.

With a variety of plank lengths and parquet patterns including chevron, herringbone and Versailles to choose from, this stunning board not only looks timeless, but its multi-layered engineered construction means it can keep up with the demands of modern living.

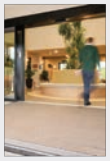
01524 737000 www.havwoods.com/uk

Refined design: Croft unveils the new Kingsmere collection

Croft is pleased to announce the launch of its new Kingsmere collection – a timeless range of door and cabinet handles – designed to bridge classic elegance and modern simplicity. Crafted with smooth contours and a refined silhouette, Kingsmere's clean classical form is elevated by small decorative collars and gently balanced proportions. The result is a sophisticated, transitional style that feels equally at home in traditional settings and contemporary interiors seeking understated detail. The Kingsmere lever is fully compatible with Croft's Classic roses and backplates, allowing specifiers and homeowners flexibility to tailor the lever's overall aesthetic. The collection is available in a wide selection of finishes, ensuring flexibility across a wide range of design schemes. The new collection includes a considered selection of products comprising a Door Lever, Cabinet Handle – available in multiple sizes for design consistency – and Appliance Pull, offered in two sizes to suit larger cabinetry and integrated appliances. As with all Croft products, Kingsmere is manufactured to the highest standards, combining craftsmanship, durability and attention to detail.

01902 606 493 croft.co.uk

Forbo contribute to net zero carbon hotel



When Zeal Hotels were looking to create a new brand of sustainable hotel at Exeter's Science Park, they turned to Westworks Interiors for their design expertise. Westworks Interiors specified a wide range of **Forbo Flooring Systems**' floor coverings, including its Climate Positive (carbon negative) Marmoleum Cocoa Decibel. Containing 43% combined recycled content derived from installation waste and uplifted post-consumer flooring, alongside internally recycled production waste and other industry recycled materials like wood flour and cocoa husks, Marmoleum Cocoa is a truly sustainable floor covering.

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

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Certified Security Bollards from Hörmann

Hörmann UK is reinforcing its commitment to public safety and infrastructure resilience with a range of certified high-security bollards designed to meet the stringent requirements of public sector and local government environments. The range has been engineered specifically to protect people, buildings and critical infrastructure from unauthorised vehicle access while supporting the operational needs of modern public spaces.

Central to their suitability for government and public projects is their compliance with recognised international impact resistance standards. All bollards within the Hörmann High Security Line are crash-tested and certified to PAS 68 and IWA 14-1, demonstrating proven performance against high-speed vehicle impacts of 30 mph and 50 mph using a 7,200 kg vehicle. This level of certification provides specifiers, planners and security consultants with confidence that the products meet the requirements for high-risk and sensitive locations.

Alongside their certified impact resistance, Hörmann bollards are designed to offer

flexibility in deployment across a wide range of public spaces and infrastructure projects. Fixed, removable, semi-automatic and fully automatic options provide a balance between permanent protection with the need for controlled access for emergency services, deliveries or temporary events. This adaptability supports effective traffic management without compromising security credentials.

Durability and long-term performance are also a key consideration, with Hörmann bollards being manufactured using corrosion-resistant materials and robust construction methods, helping to reduce costs through low maintenance requirements and extended service life. Automatic variants incorporate intelligent control systems and integrated heating, ensuring reliable operation in demanding environmental conditions often encountered in exposed urban locations.

Aesthetics are increasingly important in public sector developments, particularly within regeneration schemes and shared public spaces. Hörmann bollards are designed to integrate discreetly into the urban landscape, allowing certified security measures to be implemented without detracting from the visual and architectural quality of the surroundings.

With decades of experience delivering industrial and commercial access solutions, Hörmann UK brings together German engineering expertise and local technical support to meet the complex needs of public sector clients. Its certified security bollards are already trusted across Europe, providing local authorities and government bodies with a proven, compliant and future-ready solution for perimeter protection.

01530 516868 www.hormann.co.uk

Advanced launches SmokeGo: Complete smoke control made simple

Advanced has introduced SmokeGo, its powerful new smoke control panel designed to offer complete and active smoke management through the fire system, without the complexity.

Developed to give specifiers, installers, and end-users a smarter, more intuitive way to achieve smoke control in a wide range of buildings, it is designed to make smoke control simpler, faster and fully compliant. From dedicated to non-dedicated smoke control systems, SmokeGo makes configuration and operation quicker, clearer and easier. Integrating seamlessly with Advanced's next-generation MxPro 5 fire panels, SmokeGo allows precise control over smoke fans and dampers, both automatically and manually.

Thanks to Advanced's unique four-step configuration process and matrix-based programming, even complex setups can be completed in a fraction of the time traditionally required, replacing complex

coding (programming). Ideal for projects of all sizes, SmokeGo features built-in compatibility for up to 15 fan and damper switch cards per P-Bus and can scale further via the Advanced PENN (peripheral expansion network node module) or additional panels. SmokeGo supports the control of up to six individual fans and dampers per switch card, offering extensive flexibility for manual override and smoke compartment management.

Giving users complete confidence in performance and compliance, SmokeGo meets the highest industry standards, with approvals to EN54 Parts 2 and 4, and full compliance with ISO 21927-9 and BS 7346-8.

Advanced's software wizard handles the configuration of inputs and outputs, pre-allocating I/O modules for fan and damper control and automatically applying the necessary feedback delays. Combined with easy cause and effect programming, SmokeGo removes the need for specialist coding (programming), making commissioning faster and more straightforward.

Additional features include cascade mode for managing smoke spread across compartments, post-alarm purge functions and interlocks to ensure dampers are open before fans activate, helping to prevent over-pressurisation of ducts. Automatic testing can also be scheduled, meeting regulatory requirements while reducing engineer callouts and operational disruption.

0345 894 7000
advancedco.com/product/smokego

Tobermore launches Create & Construct hard landscaping support service

Tobermore, one of the UK & Ireland's leading construction manufacturers, has launched Create & Construct, the most comprehensive hard landscaping support hub on the market.

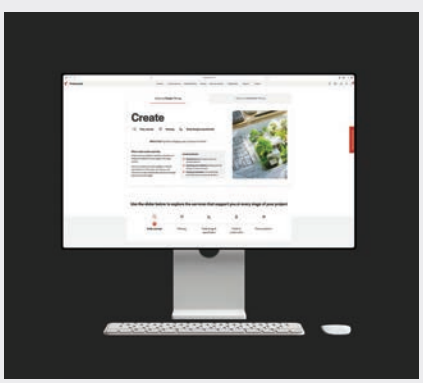
The service is designed to give landscape architects, architects, civil engineers, local authority teams and groundworkers access to a comprehensive range of tools, services, resources and advice at every stage of their project.

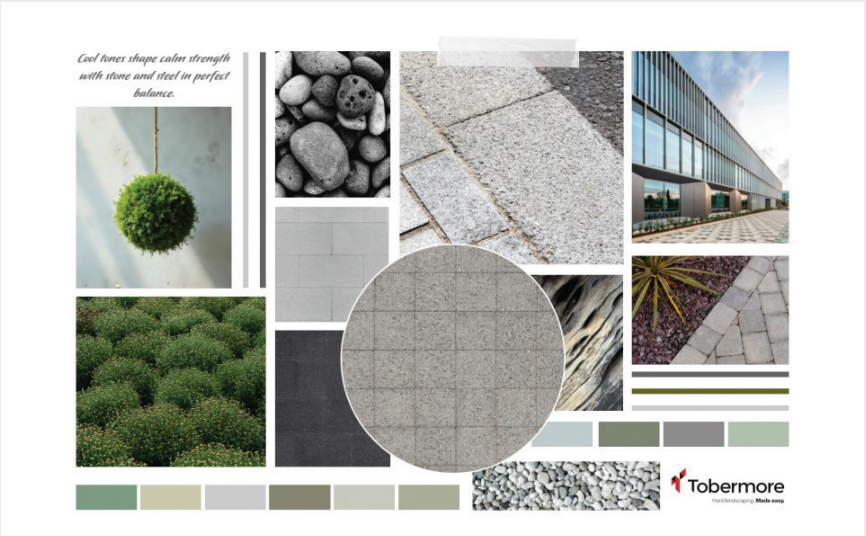
"Our research has shown that 71% of hard landscaping specifiers use a design service on most of their projects, and they value being able to access the support they need quickly," said Lisa Gow, head of specification at Tobermore. "We have designed the Create element of Create & Construct specifically to meet these needs by giving our customers instant access to a suite of free online tools and resources that help simplify the design and specification of hard landscaping projects.

"These online tools are supported by our design and technical teams, as well as our civil engineering partners, who are on hand to give tailored advice about how to address the specific challenges of each project."

Create is suitable for use during the early concept, planning, detail design and specification stages of a project. It combines 15 different services to help users shape ideas, specify the correct products, and design sustainably.

These include Tobermore's product design assets, which allow designers to select and download everything from seamless swatches and spec sheets to EPDs for multiple products at once.





This is complimented by Tobermore's extensive inspiration gallery which shows products being used in public realm, heritage, education, housing and leisure settings, amongst others. There are online tools to create mood boards, visuals and concept inspiration, as well as the option to arrange a Virtual Sample Studio session, which allows specifiers to view samples and speak to Tobermore's expert team via video call.

They also have access to Tobermore's 2D and 3D design services. The 2D service takes the design team's plans and translates them into polished, project-ready drawings. The 3D design service enables specifiers to walk clients through project-specific CGI visuals that showcase the textures, patterns, and surfaces that define the design.

There's also comprehensive technical support, including fully indemnified permeable paving design and retaining wall design.

"Sustainability continues to be an important factor on nearly every project," added Lisa. "So, we have incorporated vital information such as environmental data, permeable paving design, and retaining wall advice into the Create element of Create & Construct."

Create works in conjunction with Construct, which is designed to help contractors and installers take projects from tender through construction to post completion. It includes services to ensure construction and installation are correct, help solve technical challenges, and answer maintenance and care questions for the finished project

Create & Construct is quick and easy to use. Simply visit Create & Construct and move the slider to identify the services needed based on the stage of the project.

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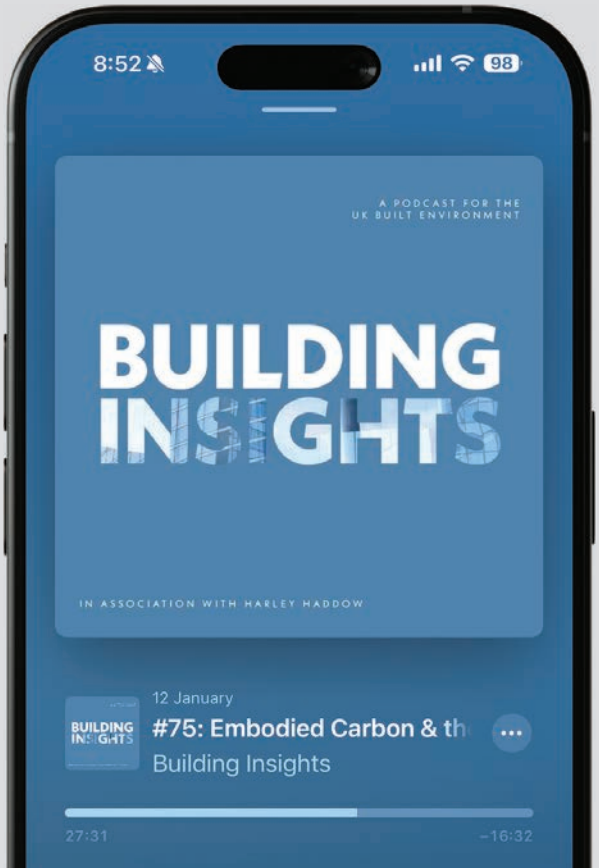

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