

# HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026



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Untold Living's 77-unit MMC scheme in Shropshire reshapes what retirement living developments look like, promoting independence



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James Parker

ON THE COVER

HOUSEBUILDER &amp; DEVELOPER

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# FROM THE EDITOR

London might be one of the hardest places to build new homes in the country, as shown in a new report, but it is not down to public opposition, rather planning delays. “Uncertainty” is the other key reason blamed for lack of delivery, despite “clear and active public support for new housing,” particularly recorded among Londoners under 45 years old.

The report was published by a group which exists to foster collaboration between stakeholders to get sites underway, Just Build Homes, who collated over 3,600 comments which it submitted in favour of residential planning applications. These comments, say the body, have led to approval for just under 14,000 new homes across the capital.

The Mayor of London’s consulted on speeding up housing delivery, in a process which ended in January, and the report, titled ‘Get London Building Again’ is Just Build Homes’s response,

The evidence shows that “support for new homes comes from every part of London, across all age groups and boroughs,” said the organisation. The reasons given included bringing down the price of homes, tackling the housing shortage, reducing overcrowding and addressing homelessness. However, over 60% of those backing new home construction were under 45, and three in four were non-homeowners.

Londoners backed “a wide range of schemes, including town centre redevelopments, brownfield regeneration, Build to Rent, estate regeneration and higher-density housing in well-connected locations.”

The findings were in stark contrast to a recent “sharp slowdown in delivery.” London is believed to need around 88,000 new homes built each year, yet starts and completions have fallen significantly, with most boroughs failing to meet their London Plan targets. Fewer than 10,000 homes were completed in the year to March 2024, according to Knight Frank, the lowest annual total for nearly a decade.

In its report, Just Build Homes sets out a 10-point policy plan aimed at “restoring confidence in London’s housing pipeline.” They focus on “reducing planning risk, accelerating decision-making, unlocking stalled land and widening participation in housing delivery.”

While welcoming the London Mayor’s “ambition to speed up housing delivery,” Just Build Homes’ Millie Dod said: “This report provides clear evidence that Londoners are ready for bold action. London’s housing crisis is visible in rising rents, growing waiting lists, overcrowded homes and increasing homelessness. Thousands of residents from across the capital are actively supporting new housing.”

She added: “The challenge is to match public support for new homes with decisive leadership. By embracing the reforms set out in this response, the Mayor has an opportunity to unlock delivery, rebuild confidence in the planning system and ‘Get London Building Again’.”

With so many other challenges in the capital, from the extortionate price of many sites, high demolition costs and contaminated brownfields, plus a stagnant housing market, it’s unsurprising that more and more housebuilders and developers are turning to retrofit as a far more viable proposition. We heard from housebuilders and organisations including the FMB at our recent retrofit round table that this other, admittedly more sustainable option, is also riven with further questions, particularly on at-scale delivery in the private sector.

*James Parker*

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# Bellway prepares to start work on 170 new homes in Teesside



The site layout of Bellway's Oakwood at Wynyard Park development, where construction work is set to get underway

Bellway is preparing to start construction on a new development of 170 new homes at Wynyard Park, to the north of Stockton on Tees.

The new development – to be known as Oakwood at Wynyard Park – will be on the Wynyard Park side of the A689 Hartlepool Road.

Planning permission to develop the 18-acre site was granted by Hartlepool Borough Council in December. Work will begin in the spring with the first homes due to be completed this winter.

Bellway is currently building four and five-bedroom properties at Regency Manor on the nearby Wynyard Woods Estate. The company has been building within the estate since the late 1990s and has completed more than 600 homes there.

The development will feature homes ranging from two to five-bedroom properties including four bungalows, each with two bedrooms. The three-bedroom houses will be a mix of

detached and semi-detached designs, while the four and five-bedroom houses will all be detached.

The 170 homes will include 31 two and three-bedroom affordable homes. These are made up of 21 houses for affordable rent and 10 shared ownership properties.

According to the Home Builders Federation's Housing Calculator, a development of this scale would be expected to support the employment of around 590 people and generate more than £340,000 in council tax revenue.

Landscaped green spaces will be an important feature and there will be additional tree planting to complement the nearby woodland. Surrounding areas are also to be developed by Wynyard Park into accessible public spaces. Access to the site will be via Musgrave Garden Lane and Attenborough Way.

Oakwood at Wynyard Park is part of a wider project to build 1,200 homes at Wynyard Park, which already has outline planning consent.

# Housebuilder secures planning for 100 high-quality homes in Cirencester



Keepmoat is working to deliver 100 high-quality new homes as part of a multi-million pound investment to transform land off Spratsgate Lane in Cirencester at The Steadings.

The housebuilder secured planning this month to develop the land. The homes set to be built in Cotswold stone will make up part of the second phase of the wider scheme, which is set to create 2,350 new homes, together with new education, health, community and leisure facilities.

Working in partnership with master developer Bathurst Development Limited and Homes England, Keepmoat is creating a unique mix of one and two-bedroom apartments and two to five-bedroom homes.

All the homes will feature a mix of energy-saving technology such as air source heat pumps and PV panels. Bathurst Development has completed the delivery of the new primary road, play area and landscaping of the adjoining open green spaces as well as improving local infrastructure.

Following the establishment of Keepmoat's South West region, the developer is also working on multiple live sites across the region, including in Swindon, Warminster and Weston-Super-Mare.



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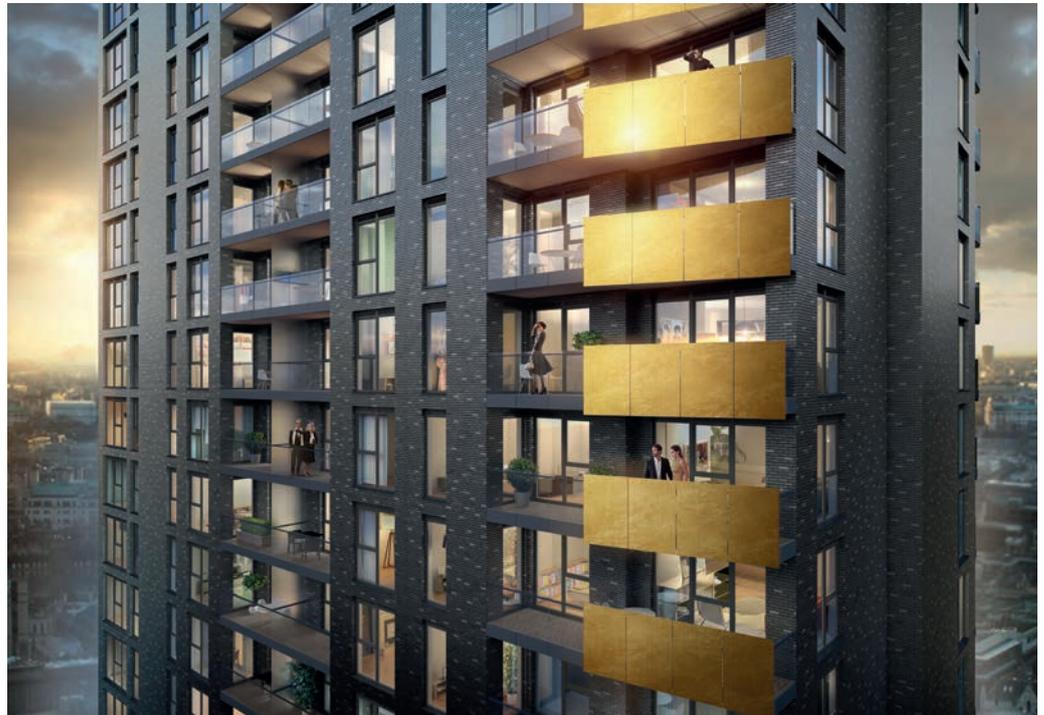
## COMMENT



Katy Davis

# Why new towns must not eclipse town centre regeneration

Katy Davis at Carter Jonas explains why the next decade of delivery depends on places we already have.



INCREASING  
TOWN CENTRE  
HOUSING IS  
NOT SIMPLY A  
RESPONSE TO  
TARGETS

**T**he renewed interest in new towns shows that the Government has recognised the value of planning as a driver of economic growth. Large scale settlements will be important in shaping long term spatial strategy and meeting housing needs.

But if we allow the political focus on new towns to dominate the agenda, we risk neglecting the places that can deliver most quickly, including our existing town centres. While Ministers talk in terms of decades, many high street schemes could be delivered within a single plan period. Hounslow's town centre regeneration, for example, moved from consent to completion in under 10 years.

In my view we do not have the luxury of choosing between new towns or town centres.

## NEW TOWNS ARE AMBITIOUS BUT SLOW

New settlements require strategic land assembly, new utilities, new transport links and often new governance structures. They can unlock long term growth but they are complicated, capital intensive and sensitive to changes in policy and markets. They rely on stable funding and political momentum over years, which is rarely guaranteed.

Town centres, by contrast, have much of the infrastructure already in place. Many sites sit within strong public transport networks and benefit from political support for change. Revisions to the NPPF to introduce a default "yes" for homes around railway stations reinforce the potential of sustainable urban locations and should strengthen the case for centrally located housing.

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New towns matter but they will not deliver the early completions needed in the 2020s. That is where town centres come in.

### TOWN CENTRES ARE READY TO GROW

The strongest argument for placing more homes in town centres is that these places are already deeply embedded in daily life. They have shops, services, schools, cultural venues and employers. What they often lack is a stable resident population that can sustain them.

The decline of the traditional high street is well known, yet public attitudes have not shifted in the same direction. Surveys consistently show that a vibrant local high street remains a key factor in where people want to live and that residents want government to support local businesses.

Introducing homes into these locations tackles several challenges at once. It makes better use of brownfield land, reduces pressure on the countryside, supports public transport and provides everyday footfall for cafes, gyms, health services and cultural activities.

Increasing town centre housing is not simply a response to targets. It is a practical way to stabilise and reenergise the places we already rely on.

### A DIFFERENT ROLE FOR THE HIGH STREET

The high street is no longer defined by retail. Much transactional activity now takes place online. People visit town centres for experiences, leisure, health and social interaction. Food, wellbeing and community uses have expanded in place of traditional shops.

Planning reform has supported this, to an extent. The introduction of Use Class E in 2020 was intended to allow a bookshop to become a nursery or a gym without needing a change of use. In theory that flexibility supports healthy town centres, but some authorities are narrowing the scope of Class E through locally specific policies designed to maintain established patterns of activity.

The concerns are understandable: noise, servicing and the loss of active frontages can all affect the environment for residents and visitors. But these issues can be addressed through good design, management and carefully drafted conditions. If change is restricted too tightly, centres risk being frozen in a pattern the market no longer supports.

On a scheme we are working on in Leatherhead, we have argued for full flexibility within Class E. If a small independent business wants to expand, or a start up wants to occupy a vacant unit, that process should not require a return to committee. Town centres must evolve, not be preserved



in aspic.

### LEATHERHEAD & HOUNSLOW LESSONS

The contrast between new town rhetoric and town centre reality is evident in the projects we are advising on.

In Leatherhead, we have submitted an application for a joint venture between Mole Valley District Council and Kier Property covering the Swan Centre and Bull Hill. The plans include up to 480 homes on a brownfield site close to the station and high street, around 10,000sqm of modern office space, a three screen cinema, new cafes and restaurants and new community and health facilities. The scheme will deliver better public spaces, play areas, walking and cycling routes and a 519 space multi storey car park.

Leatherhead faces issues familiar across many commuter towns: competition from larger centres, an ageing population and a high street that has lost some of its energy. More people live in the surrounding villages than in the town itself. Our aim is to bring residents back into the centre, including younger people who work from home but still want to go out for lunch, use a gym or just buy a pint of milk.

Hounslow offers a slightly different case. The High Street Quarter scheme has delivered more than 500 homes and over 130,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of commercial space, including a cinema and a new public square, in roughly a decade from the point at which the developer was selected and the planning application was submitted. The scheme enhances rather than replaces the existing high street and has strengthened the wider centre.

In my experience the ingredients for success are strong political leadership, local authority involvement in land ownership, excellent transport

connectivity, a mix of uses that supports activity throughout the day and night, and a focus on public realm and walkable connections.

### FUNDING, PARTNERSHIPS & THE NEXT WAVE OF SCHEMES

Town centre regeneration is complex. Demolition, remediation, heritage, phasing around existing uses and higher design standards all add cost. Viability is a challenge across most forms of development, but in town centres the margins can be especially tight.

One advantage is that local authorities often hold key land interests. This does not remove the need for a commercial return but it can unlock joint ventures and more flexible deal structures. Targeted funding, such as infrastructure funding or brownfield programmes, remains essential.

There is also a role for demand side support. An update of Help to Buy, with a location based focus on sustainable urban areas, could support first time buyers into town centre homes and reinforce local spending patterns.

Above all, what town centres need is long term commitment. The shift from one off redevelopment projects to sustained town centre strategies, backed by capable public and private partners, is both necessary and overdue. Carter Jonas now advises on centres across the country through joint ventures that share risk and reward. This model is far closer to what genuine delivery requires.

### A BROADER VIEW OF GROWTH

New towns still have a place. In some areas they are the only practical means of accommodating strategic growth and unlocking major infrastructure. But they should not be treated as a universal answer.

If we want to build 1.5 million homes and create stronger, more sustainable communities, then town centre regeneration must sit alongside new settlements rather than somewhere in their shadow. The principles now shaping successful town centres – mixed use, connectivity, stewardship and genuine partnership – should also inform the next generation of new communities.

For the Government, the real test is whether they can support both with equal seriousness. That means giving as much attention to the viability and flexibility of brownfield town centre schemes as to the promotion of new towns. If that balance is achieved, the places we already have will play a crucial role in delivering the homes the country needs.

Katy Davis is national head of planning at Carter Jonas



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## An evolution in pitched tile roofing



Roll-Out Ridge



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### INTRODUCTION

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

### AN EVOLUTION IN PITCHED TILED ROOFING

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

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

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

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

refers to the relevant Standard.

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

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

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

Great examples of good quality dry fix systems that fully comply with BS 8612 include the Manthorpe Roll-Out Dry Fix Ridge and Ultra Ridge systems. These mechanically secure the ridges to the roof structure and provide 5,000 mm<sup>2</sup> per metre of roof space ventilation at high level. A similar, matching system is also available for use at roof hips.

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

integrate with the dry ridge.

To complete its range of dry fix roof systems, Manthorpe also offers a range of dry valley troughs for use with various tile profiles and slates, as well as bonding strips for use between different roof finishes when re-roofing. Not sure we include this paragraph?

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

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

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

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## COMMENT

# Unprecedented challenges ahead

Patrick Mooney  
Housing Consultant

The social sector faces unprecedented level of challenges to deliver the Government's tough housing agenda



THE SUPPLY  
OF NEW  
SOCIAL AND  
AFFORDABLE  
HOMES NEEDS  
TO INCREASE  
SIGNIFICANTLY

Record levels of homelessness are pushing many councils' revenue budgets to breaking point as the housing system buckles under the strain of unprecedented demand for its services.

Help has now been promised and billions of pounds are to be invested by the Government, but the solutions will inevitably take time to be delivered and it could be several years before we see significant inroads being made.

More than 350,000 people are currently staying in unsuitable and very costly temporary accommodation, such as overcrowded and dirty B&Bs. Meanwhile there are over 1.3 million households across the country stuck on local authority waiting lists for the offer of a tenancy on a social rented home, which promises both lower rents and greater security than the private rented sector.

In an effort to make a real change to the lives of a significant number of these people the Government has recently issued two big policy changes - a new homelessness strategy designed to end the use of B&Bs and a new investment plan to build at least 280,000 new social and affordable homes over the next five years.

#### ENDING THE USE OF B&BS

The Government launched its long-awaited National Plan to End Homelessness, a strategy promised in its election manifesto

and supported by £3.5bn of new funding. Its main objectives are to:

- Halve the number of people sleeping rough long term
- End the unlawful use of B&Bs for families
- Prevent "thousands" more households from becoming homeless in the first place.

In a bid to prevent more households from becoming homeless, the Government will bring forward legislation for a new 'duty to collaborate' that will require public bodies to work together to prevent homelessness, particularly where it is linked to people being discharged from prisons, social care and hospitals. Homelessness among these groups has increased by a staggering 22% in the last year.

There are many thousands of children staying long-term in B&Bs right now even though the existing law already sets a six-week limit on the length of their stays. In addition to the new prevention measures, the strategy will boost the supply of "good-quality" temporary homes, backed by £950m through the fourth round of the Local Authority Housing Fund.

The Government also said it will work to improve the "quality and suitability" of temporary accommodation by enforcing "strong protections" against poor housing conditions, including out-of-area placements.

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The strategy includes plans for a National Workforce Programme to equip frontline teams with essential training and expert advice. The Government said progress will be tracked through national reports, which will be overseen by the Inter-Ministerial Group on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping to ensure “transparency, accountability and momentum”.

Housing Secretary Steve Reed said: “Through our new strategy, we can build a future where homelessness is rare, brief and not repeated. With record investment, new duties on public services and a relentless focus on accountability, we will turn ambition into reality.”

### DOUBLING NEW HOUSE COMPLETIONS

For the homelessness strategy to work effectively, the supply of new social and affordable homes needs to increase significantly and this is where a £27bn investment by Homes England should assist by providing the funds and framework for 280,000 new homes to be built by 2030. Steve Reed described this as the “biggest boost to social and affordable housing in a generation”.

Homes England is the Government’s housing and regeneration agency. Its chair Pat Ritchie, said “Our early analysis suggests that over the next five years we will support the delivery of approximately 280,000 new homes and unlock land that is capable of supporting almost 400,000 homes.

“We estimate that agency-supported gross housing completions will almost double by the end of this parliament, from around 40,000 completions per year in 2025-26 to more than 80,000 completions per year by 2029-30.”

She added: “Through partnership and a deep understanding of local needs, we can create a much-needed step change in the delivery of new homes, including social housing, and affordable communities – directly addressing the needs of current and future generations and ensuring everyone can have a safe place to live and thrive.”

The plan puts collaboration with mayors, local leaders and partners at its heart, to deliver high-quality, safe and sustainable homes in thriving, inclusive communities and contribute towards the Government’s overall ambition to build 1.5 million new homes in this Parliament.

The agency is restructuring itself to deliver a stronger regional focus and in early 2026 it is due to publish plans for the launch of a National Housing Bank. The new Strategic Plan responds to what house builders and housing organisations have long called for – more tailored support, more flexibility, longer-term funding and the ability to support delivery at scale.

### HIGH LEVELS OF NEED

The need for both initiatives was demonstrated by fresh research from Shelter which revealed that 382,618 people in England, including 175,025 children are without a home this winter, an increase of 8% in the past year and equivalent to one in every 153 people now experiencing homelessness. This reflects sharp rises in the number of people sleeping rough and record numbers of families with children stuck in temporary accommodation.

The charity’s shocking figures reveal that:

- 350,480 people are homeless and living in temporary accommodation (TA), most of whom are families with children. This is the highest number of people in TA since records began
- At least 4,667 people are sleeping rough on any given night – a 20% increase in one year
- An estimated 16,294 additional single people are staying in hostels or other homeless accommodation
- At least 4,031 people are in accommodation provided by social services.

According to Shelter, the dire shortage of social homes, unaffordable private rents and the freeze on housing benefit are pushing more people into homelessness and trapping them there.

Temporary accommodation is only ever intended for emergency, short-term use (with a maximum stay of just six weeks for families with children), but the lack of alternative options means people are increasingly stuck in it for much longer. The charity’s research shows households spend an average of nearly three years in temporary accommodation while attempting to access a stable home.

Conditions in temporary accommodation are often terrible with entire families crammed into one room in a rundown B&B, having to share beds, with inadequate or non-existent cooking and laundry facilities. Others may be placed in grotty bedsits that are miles away from their children’s school, their work, and crucial support networks – completely destabilising their lives. For those not entitled to temporary accommodation, sofa-surfing, a bed in a night shelter or sleeping rough may be their only option.

### A COUNTRYWIDE PROBLEM

While over half of the people who are homeless in England live in London, Shelter’s data reveals that the housing emergency is not limited to the capital alone, with sharp rises in homelessness recorded across much of the country. In

the North West, the number of people recorded as homeless has grown by 15% in the last year, and in Yorkshire and the Humber and the West Midlands it has risen by 11%.

In east London, Newham is the local authority with the highest rate of homelessness in the country with one in 18 people recorded as being homeless. Outside of London, Slough is the worst affected local authority, with one in 43 people homeless, followed by Hastings with one in 60 homeless and Manchester and Birmingham where one in every 61 people are homeless.

Until more genuinely affordable social housing is built, one of the only ways people can escape homelessness is if they are able to afford private rents. But this is almost impossible when housing benefit is frozen and so far out of sync with private rents. Shelter is urging the Government to help people who are homeless by unfreezing housing benefit so that it covers at least the bottom third of private rents.

Commenting on the figures Sarah Elliott, chief executive officer at Shelter, said: “It’s unthinkable that as winter sets in, more than 382,000 people are without a safe place to call home.

“Every day at Shelter we hear from parents who are terrified of waiting out another winter in appalling temporary accommodation. Cut off from family and friends in a bleak emergency B&B that’s miles away, they watch as their children’s breath hangs in the air and mould climbs the walls.

“We urge the Government to help the families who are homeless right now by ending the freeze on housing benefit. This would immediately lift thousands of children out of temporary accommodation and into a home. While we campaign for change, our frontline services will continue providing direct support to those facing homelessness this winter and beyond.”

The Government resisted the calls to lift the cap on housing benefit levels in the most recent Budget. But failing to take this sort of action could stymie the new homelessness plan and this decision might be revisited, just like the child benefit cap was lifted after a long campaign by lobbyists and growing numbers of backbench MPs. The Inter-Ministerial Group on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping will be monitoring the impact of the new policies, alongside other influential politicians like Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham. We can be sure they will raise their concerns in public if they do not see meaningful change and a change in both waiting lists and the numbers in temporary accommodation.



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## THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE

# Sustainability through placemaking

John Bowden at Keepmoat discusses how housebuilders must approach sustainability in 2026 – advocating a strategy that puts placemaking at the centre of developments.



## HOUSING PROVIDERS MUST EMBED SUSTAINABLE THINKING INTO EVERYDAY OPERATIONAL DECISIONS

**S**ustainability in housebuilding can too often be approached as just energy efficiency alone. Whilst essential, it only represents a small part of the wider sustainability picture.

True sustainability requires a holistic approach that spans the entire lifecycle of housebuilding and the operation of a sustainable business, from land selection and construction methods through to placemaking, skills development, and long-term community wellbeing.

As attitudes towards sustainability continue to evolve across the sector, one question continues to be asked: What does sustainability actually look like in practice?

### BEING A TRUE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Integrating resource efficiency and climate focused planning into every stage of a development can be challenging.

Collaboration between planners, architects, engineers, builders and commercial teams must take place as early as possible to ensure sustainability is

at the forefront of key decisions.

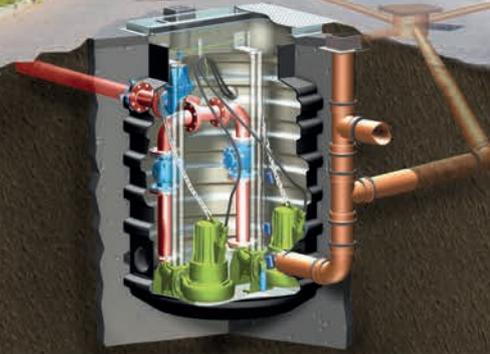
This early intervention ensures the combined skillset of a multidisciplinary team is identifying opportunities for improved energy performance, efficient use of materials and options for low-carbon construction methods. It also ensures schemes are shaped by local context, responding to environmental constraints, transport links and community requirements.

Clear objectives and measurable outcomes are also key, particularly as many projects have targets not just for energy performance but for social and environmental impact. Sustainability should be considered throughout every part of a business - including the strengths of the teams who will ultimately be delivering it.

Actively feeding into the skills pipeline by investing in apprenticeships and local jobs also contributes to overall sustainability goals. Policies should deliver tangible benefits for sustainable communities, with progress tracked.



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## PLACEMAKING AS THE FOUNDATION OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

At Keepmoat, placemaking is central to delivering long-term sustainable outcomes and thriving communities across the UK.

In our approach to sustainable communities, focus extends beyond individual homes and into wider communities. The priority is creating well connected areas where people feel safe and have access to green spaces, parks and public transport.

Taking on land opportunities near local amenities such as shops, schools and healthcare services, developments become self-sustaining, vibrant communities rather than isolated collections of homes.

Access to high-quality green infrastructure also plays a vital role. Green spaces, parks and natural features not only enhance biodiversity but also support mental and physical wellbeing, offering residents places to relax, socialise and connect with nature.

Ultimately, sustainable placemaking is about creating neighbourhoods where people want to live, not just today but for the long term – places that are resilient, inclusive and adaptable as communities and climates continue to change.

## INVESTING IN LOCAL SKILLS & FUTURE TALENT

One of the most pressing challenges facing the housebuilding sector is the skills shortage – addressing this issue is not only critical for business resilience but also forms a core part of a sustainable operating model.

In total, the housebuilding industry must attract around 240,000 people across a wide range of roles, including bricklayers, groundworkers and electricians – yet the pipeline of talent is falling far short.

Prioritising local recruitment not only helps to reduce skills shortages but also strengthens ties with the communities that benefit from new developments. By offering apprenticeships, work placements and career opportunities for local people, housing providers can create a pipeline of talent while boosting regional economies.

Embedding these opportunities within neighbourhoods ensures that the approach delivers positive outcomes across the board, including improved wellbeing, stronger local economies and reduced environmental impact.

At Keepmoat, our social value managers work closely with schools, colleges and training providers to support young people across the country through targeted skills development, educational partnerships and hands-on construction experience.

The Yorkshire East team has recently employed eight apprentice bricklayers

working on sites in Hull, Hornsea, Driffield and Scarborough. This important partnership and upskilling initiative with the NHBC forms a vital part of Keepmoat's social value strategy, addressing the UK's construction skills shortage while investing in communities and supporting people close to its developments.

## SUPPORTING WELLBEING ACROSS OPERATIONS

Sustainability also extends to the people delivering our homes. By creating a resilient, supported workforce Keepmoat is functioning as a fully sustainable business.

As part of our commitment to employee wellbeing, Keepmoat recently partnered with The Lighthouse Charity, a construction charity that supports the wellbeing of people working within the homebuilding sector, including mental health, physical wellbeing and financial support.

This new partnership forms part of Keepmoat's 'Valuing Difference' initiative, dedicated to upskilling department leaders and managers to support employees. Teams are equipped with tools to enable effective mental health and wellbeing conversations, including signposting team members to health services and benefits.

Supporting our workforce is not a separate sustainability initiative; it is integral to building a responsible, future focused business.

## SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

Sustainability is an ongoing journey rather than a fixed target; housing providers must embed sustainable thinking into everyday operational decisions – from procurement and construction to long-term property management. Initiatives that are fully integrated into operations, rather than treated as one-off projects will deliver the most lasting impact.

Innovation and continuous improvement are central to this approach and technology is playing a key role in Keepmoat's ongoing mission to create sustainable homes.

Ultimately, sustainability in housing is about creating tangible, human-centred outcomes, energy-efficient homes, resilient communities and a robust talent pool. By moving sustainability from policy into practice, housebuilders can create neighbourhoods that not only meet environmental targets, but also improve quality of life for residents and colleagues.

John Bowden is sustainability director at Keepmoat

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### DOUBLE ROMAN

Shown in Rustic Red



### SQUARE TOP

Shown in Brown



### THIN FLAT

Shown in Rustic Red



### ROUND TOP

Shown in Anthracite



### MULTI-RIDGE

Shown in Terracotta



## Proctor Group supports construction academy training apprentice roofers

A collaboration between Proctor Group and one of the north-east's leading independent training providers is helping to share knowledge about up-to-date roofing products and practices.

Optimum Skills Ltd, based in Gateshead, operates three construction academies



training young people in slating, tiling and flat roofing (as well as bricklaying, joinery and groundworks). They work with all major roofing contractors in the north-east, helping apprentices through pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programmes.

Collaboration with construction product manufacturers is a unique aspect of their approach. Proctor Group is working with Optimum Skills on an ongoing basis, donating rolls of their BBA-certified air permeable underlay, Proctor Air®, and delivering a mix of theory and practical sessions to the apprentice intake.

"As an independent training provider, we have the flexibility to offer something different," said Rachel Armstrong, Partnerships Manager at Optimum Skills. "The number of apprentices in pitched roofing is so high, and we really appreciate the willingness of companies like Proctor Group to support and celebrate what we're doing."

Giving apprentice roofers the chance to get hands on with the latest products is essential to developing their knowledge, and giving them the chance to share what they learn with their colleagues on site.

"I'm very against 'death by PowerPoint!'" said James Brown, roofing tutor at Optimum Skills, who is developing the course. "We're tradespeople, we want to be hands on. When



Proctor Group demonstrate the bubbler that shows how air passes through the Proctor Air underlay, you see faces light up."

Keira Proctor, managing director at Proctor Group, commented: "We're delighted to support Optimum Skills in their mission and looking forward to delivering more sessions about physics in roofs. As a fourth-generation family business, nobody understands better than Proctor Group the importance of passing on knowledge and skills to the construction professionals of the future."

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## Vent-Axia publishes eBook guide



Vent-Axia has published an eBook 'A Guide to Meeting Part O with Confidence'. Aimed at UK housebuilders, the publication provides guidance on overheating, helping to identify solutions that balance comfort, compliance, and performance. As new residential properties have become more thermally efficient, to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions to help meet

the 2050 Net-Zero target, they are increasingly prone to overheating. Recognising the seriousness of the issue, the UK government introduced Approved Document O of the Building Regulations in 2021. Vent-Axia's eBook aims to provide an understanding of the regulation and how and when ventilation can be applied to help mitigate overheating.

0344 856 0590 [www.vent-axia.com](http://www.vent-axia.com)

## Reginox UK announces National Sales Manager



**Reginox UK** has announced Jessica Hitch as its new national sales manager. Jessica joins the business from luxury tile and home interiors brand Fired Earth, where she headed up specification sales for commercial and residential projects for 12 years. Jessica, who will also serve as area sales manager for the South East and London, steps into a role held by Rebekah Tomkinson, who has left Reginox after 12 years to pursue a long-

held ambition to work in education. Dave Mayer, Reginox UK commercial director, says: "Jessica's experience in specification sales, and contract and project management, will be invaluable as we continue to build on the excellent work we've done in this sector, particularly over the past 10 years."

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## Housebuilder & Developer website



The Housebuilder & Developer (HBD) website is an online provider of past and present products and news items for the housebuilder and developer. [hbdonline.co.uk](http://hbdonline.co.uk) is a one-stop source for all the latest press releases providing any visitor with access to information about products and services that they may require. From the website, you can find links to digital issues that have live

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# Ask the Manufacturer: IDSystems



*Housebuilder & Developer's* James Parker speaks to IDSystems' David Clarke, to discover how the 2021 changes to Building Regulations have driven the specification of better glazing systems for new build and retrofit domestic projects.



## HOW HAVE THE CHANGES TO PART L THERMAL REQUIREMENTS IMPROVED GLAZING SPECIFICATION?

The tightening of Part L since 2021 has made thermal performance a core driver of glazing specification rather than a secondary consideration. There is now a far greater focus on U-values, thermal bridging and whole-system performance, with glazing being recognised as a critical part of the building envelope. Improvements in glass technology mean that frames, rather than glass, are often the weakest point, which has driven better frame design and more considered system engineering.

Overall, Part L has raised standards, retired older, poorer performing systems and pushed manufacturers to develop higher performance products without abandoning aesthetics.

## HOW HAVE YOU SEEN SPECIFIER AWARENESS AMONG DEVELOPERS CHANGE OVER THE YEARS AROUND GLAZING SYSTEMS, EVIDENCED IN THE AUDIENCE RESEARCH WE'VE UNDERTAKEN?

Specifier awareness has increased significantly over the past three to four years. We were part of research with *Housebuilder & Developer* that

showed relatively low awareness among housebuilders, including limited understanding of upcoming changes around Part L and Part O as well as the path to Future Homes Standard. Since then, knowledge levels have improved markedly. Developers, architects and housebuilders are now much more conscious of regulatory compliance, thermal performance and long-term implications of product choices. This awareness has filtered down from architects to developers and end clients, creating more educated and discerning customers who no longer simply replicate previous specifications for new projects.



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### WHY HAVE SLIDING DOORS OVERTAKEN BIFOLD DOORS TO BECOME THE GO-TO OPTION FOR GLAZED DOORS ON EXTENSIONS, RENOVATIONS & NEW-BUILD PROJECTS?

Sliding doors have benefited from several converging factors. Thermally, they are capable of outperforming bifolds because they have more glass and less frame, and frames are now the weakest thermal element. Aesthetically, they offer larger panes, slimmer sightlines and uninterrupted views, which suit contemporary design trends. Practically, sliding doors are easier to install and maintain, and in the British climate they remain closed for most of the year, making visual aesthetics more important than full opening width. For developers, they also offer a better balance of performance, cost, longevity and compliance.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH A SUPPLIER WHO PROVIDES THE ENTIRE DESIGN & MANUFACTURING SERVICE?

A fully integrated supplier offers greater control over quality, performance and regulatory compliance. By designing, manufacturing and installing in-house, companies like IDSystems are not constrained by third-party system limitations and can engineer solutions specifically to meet building regulations. This reduces risk, avoids passing responsibility between parties and ensures accountability throughout the project lifecycle. It also allows earlier and more meaningful collaboration with architects and developers, leading to better coordinated, more reliable outcomes.

### WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS YOU'RE SEEING ON RESIDENTIAL DESIGNS OF HAVING TO MANAGE THE BALANCE BETWEEN PARTS L & O OF THE REGS?

Designers increasingly have to find a compromise between maximising the amount of glazing against thermal efficiency (Part L) and overheating risk (Part O), particularly on south-facing elevations in London and the South East. This has led to more considered facade design, sometimes reducing glazing areas, and greater use of shading strategies such as overhangs, brise soleil and integrated design solutions. There is a growing recognition that the whole building envelope must work together, as excessive glazing can undermine energy efficiency if it leads to increased reliance on use of energy-hungry air-conditioning units.

### WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR TRICKLE VENTS? DO YOU STILL HAVE TO INCLUDE THEM OR HAS MECHANICAL VENTILATION MADE THEM OBSOLETE?

Trickle vents remain a regulatory



requirement under Part F of Building Regs and therefore must still be included for most new-builds (and extensions and replacement work). However, they are sometimes seen as an undesirable and somewhat illogical solution, as they can compromise airtight, thermally efficient systems. Mechanical ventilation is becoming more common and may reduce reliance on trickle vents in the future, but for now they remain part of compliance. There is an expectation that future regulations may address this more holistically.

### ARE YOU SEEING INCREASED MARKET SHARE FOR ALUMINIUM VERSUS PVC, DRIVEN BY SUSTAINABILITY?

Yes, aluminium is increasingly favoured, particularly in higher-end residential and developer projects. It is associated with high performance, durability, slimmer frames and premium aesthetics, all of which align with current design and sustainability expectations. While not stated as a wholesale replacement for PVC across all sectors, aluminium's performance credentials and longevity contribute to its growing appeal, as it has

infinite recyclability.

### WHY ARE BONDED SYSTEMS TO BE TREATED WITH CAUTION?

Ultra-slim bonded sliding door systems permanently fix glass to the frame, which creates long-term risks. If the glass breaks, replacement often requires the removal of the entire panel and reliance on the original manufacturer still producing that system. This can be costly and problematic years later, especially if the manufacturer or system is no longer available. Non-bonded, dry-glazed systems where the glass is secured in place by beads allows double or triple glazed units to be replaced independently, offering better long-term serviceability, reduced risk for developers and homeowners, and greater resilience over the lifespan of the building.

*To listen to the full Building Insights podcast with David Clarke, scan the QR code.*



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## RETIREMENT LIVING PROJECT REPORT

# Modern methods of community-building

Untold Living's new MMC-built private retirement community in Shropshire aims to reshape what retirement living developments look like, away from a solely 'care led' model to promoting independence. Roseanne Field reports.

Providing a good range of retirement living options is increasingly important in the UK, with an ageing population together with a general shortage of housing stock forming a double-whammy of constraints. It's estimated that by 2040, there will be a shortfall of one million 'senior living' homes, highlighting the urgent need to build suitable housing, and in turn free up homes for younger buyers.

Retirement living provider Untold Living focuses on serving the demand for good quality retirement housing; the company specialises in creating Integrated Retirement Communities (IRCs), which provide well-designed, as well as affordable housing options for older adults. The emphasis is on creating a community that allows residents to live as independently as possible,

rather than being dominated by a 'care-first' philosophy.

Untold Living's approach to finding new locations for developments means finding the areas most in need. This is how Shropshire came into contention, a county where over a quarter of the local population is aged over 65, and 44% are over 50. Untold Living set about acquiring a site to build a community that "can respond to the pressing need for more homes for older people in the county," explains the firm's CEO Scott Orr. He adds: "Ultimately, demand will be proven through occupation and long-term performance, but the early indicators are encouraging."

A site was available in the small market town of Newport, owned by a vendor who also owned Chantry Court, a retirement home in Wiltshire. Untold Living acquired

both sites in one transaction which, says Orr, “provided a strategic opportunity to bring forward a complementary retirement living development in Newport.” The development – Sundew Court – is a 77 unit IRC, funded by OakNorth Bank and Matter Real Estate – backing which Orr says “reflects strong confidence in both the local market and Untold Living’s long-term operational model.” The project is being constructed by main contractor McPhillips, and project managed by TPI, who are overseeing delivery and coordination across both the professional and construction teams.

The team’s confidence in the local demand was boosted by a scheme located a mile away from the project that was completed recently and achieved full occupancy within 12 weeks. This was despite factoring in the difference in tenure between the two projects: “That scheme is partly supported by local authority nominations, whereas Sundew Court is a 100% private-pay product positioned at a higher price point,” explains Orr. He admits that “as a result, the expected fill rate is intentionally more measured, reflecting both the premium offer and the target market.”

#### A DIFFERENT APPROACH

From the outset of the project, Untold Living applied the same strategy at Sundew Court that it does to all of its projects, namely “to create a high quality retirement community that prioritises independence, hospitality and long-term, bespoke care,” explains Orr. “This differs from the traditional care-led model, by providing care where necessary, and prioritising community as part of a good quality resident experience.”

While Untold Living’s provision caters to retirees who are able to continue living largely independently, the provider is simultaneously conscious that residents’ needs can change. It therefore sold the site’s adjoining land to Zephyr X to develop a 70-bed care home to be operated by care home group EQ Care. “By bringing together independent living, nursing care and specialist dementia care within a single site, we are delivering an integrated continuing care model,” says Orr. “This will allow residents to stay near their community as their needs change, and couples to stay together if their needs diverge.”

The 77 units at Sundew Court comprise 16 two and three-bedroom bungalows and 61 one and two-bedroom apartments. When designing the overall layout of the scheme, careful consideration was given to the distribution of the different home types. The development is arranged as three clusters of bungalows which are referred to as ‘lodges,’ and two large

apartment buildings – one named Wren House, and the other partitioned into two (with no through access) named Swan House and Dove House.

The decisions on size and style of the units was made by “assessing local demand and long-term sustainability,” says Orr. Working within the parameters of the existing planning framework, he says that the mix of apartment type was “carefully considered,” and includes one and two-bedroom homes; “this was considered most suitable for assisted and independent living residents.”

It was decided that the bungalows – which will be for sale as opposed to rent – would be two and three-bedrooms to “appeal to a different purchaser profile, typically homeowners downsizing but still seeking generous internal space and privacy,” Orr explains.

The site came with existing planning consent, which had allowed for a “higher density scheme” – the team instead “prioritised a mix of spacious homes and ample community spaces,” says Orr. Untold Living worked with Gaunt Francis Architects who were appointed to lead the architectural design, bringing their specialist experience in later living and “community-focused residential environments.”

The designers were conscious that to meet Untold Living’s goal of creating a community that prioritises independence, amenities needed to “support thriving daily life, social interactions and discreet care provision, rather than to replicate a clinical environment,” Orr says. The layout was therefore designed to offer every resident a private home they can live fully independently in, combined with communal areas that allow them to socialise, run groups and form friendships.

The existing planning permission on the site meant the team were able to avoid potential delays that could have arisen, with the caveat that they worked within the existing approved design parameters. It allowed the team to spend more time fine tuning other elements of the project without the constraint of planning approval, as Chris Walker, building director at McPhillips explains: “The ‘oven-ready’ planning consent provided a solid foundation that enabled the team to focus on refining the construction methodology rather than navigating complex planning processes.”

#### PREPARING FOR AN MMC BUILD

Before construction could really begin, a large amount of groundworks had to be undertaken. A substantial muckshifting operation was followed by a significant installation of hardcore to create suitable working conditions for the project team.

However, as is often the case with large



**WHILE UNTOLD LIVING’S PROVISION CATERS TO RETIREES WHO ARE ABLE TO CONTINUE LIVING LARGELY INDEPENDENTLY, THEY ARE CONSCIOUS THAT RESIDENTS’ NEEDS CAN CHANGE**



## THE BUNGALOWS APPEAL TO A DIFFERENT PURCHASER PROFILE, TYPICALLY HOMEOWNERS DOWNSIZING BUT STILL SEEKING GENEROUS INTERNAL SPACE AND PRIVACY

projects, the team faced some unexpected challenges when they discovered that “ground conditions varied significantly across the site,” explains Walker. “This phase wasn’t as straightforward as we initially anticipated. It resulted in us having to use different foundation solutions for the bungalows and the apartment blocks.”

Despite the complications, McPhillips were fortunate that the winter weather was mostly on their side, allowing them to make swift progress and ultimately finish this element ahead of schedule, meaning work could begin on the foundations in early 2025.

Another aspect that required careful and thoughtful planning was access to the site – which was only possible through an existing housing estate. Walker praises contractor McPhillips’ approach to this, saying it “exemplifies their commitment to considerate construction practices, particularly given the unique challenge of building within an established residential community.”

The team’s usual construction approach has had to be entirely reconsidered in order to minimise their impact on the site. A range of measures have been introduced to ensure potential or unavoidable disruption is minimal, including traffic marshals to direct vehicles during particularly busy times, and restricting delivery times. They are also continuing to strive to keep the road clean for nearby residents. “This considerate approach

has extended beyond mere compliance, reflecting McPhillips’ philosophy that construction should enhance rather than disrupt local communities,” says Walker.

The decision by McPhillips and Untold Living’s decision to “embrace modern methods of construction (MMC)” for the project, with their offsite speed and effectiveness benefits, was in fact driven by the access challenges. “The challenge presented by the location and access to the site led to the decision,” Walker explains. The results “demonstrate how environmental considerations can lead to innovative solutions that benefit both the community and the construction process.”

The apartments have been constructed using a light gauge steel frame system, with the pre-manufactured steel panels supplied by specialist contractor Remagin from their facility in Leeds. The panels arrived onsite with windows, insulation, cavity trays and brick ties already installed, under “controlled factory conditions,” explains Walker. “The MMC approach delivered dramatic efficiencies, with the main apartment block structures erected in just 12 weeks – 40% faster than traditional construction methods,” he adds.

For the bungalows, McPhillips utilised timber frame, with the roofs built at ground level before being craned into position. “This technique not only speeds up the construction process but significantly improves site health and safety,” Walker says. “Using MMC enables

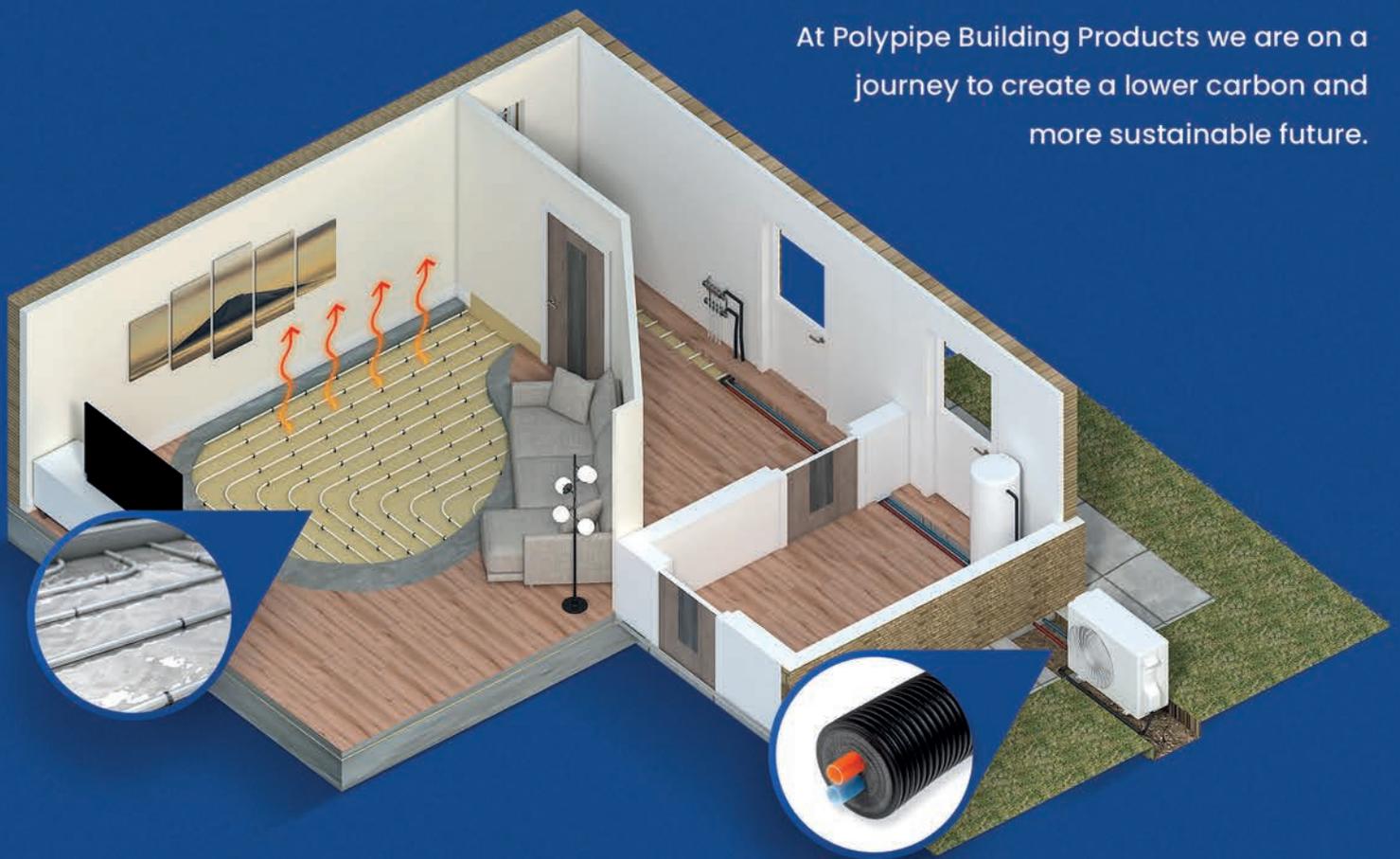
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us to significantly reduce the workforce required at height and provides superior quality control through factory conditions, rather than weather-dependent site work.”

Walker believes that harnessing the benefits of MMC is a “game-changer” for the sector, commenting that McPhillips are “proud” to demonstrate McPhillips’ commitment using the method to provide much-needed homes locally. “We’re not only helping meet the rising demand for retiree housing, but we’re also helping to address the wider housing needs in the Newport area by freeing up larger homes for younger families,” he says.

As well as benefitting the project from both speed of construction and safety points of view, Walker explains that it also has consequential sustainability benefits: “The factory-based manufacturing process reduces waste, while the reduced number of vehicle movements through the housing estate minimises carbon emissions and disruption for the local community,” he says. “The project is a replicable model that could be implemented across more towns in the UK to address the critical shortage of senior living accommodation.”

The project is due for completion in summer 2026; landscaping work is yet to be undertaken but plans include designated areas for wildlife such as bees and butterflies, a pond for the residents’ enjoyment, and tree and shrub planting around a wildlife path.

#### ACCOMMODATION A CUT ABOVE

Swan House “forms the operational and social heart of the scheme,” says Scott Orr. It houses the development’s main communal facilities: the restaurant, bar, hair salon, town hall space, offices, sales office, plant rooms and the care and support teams. Closely adjacent to the onsite support services, the assisted living apartments are located within this block, allowing residents access to the services they need while retaining their privacy and independence. “The facilities in Swan House are core to Untold Living’s mission to create a place not only where residents live, but where they can thrive and develop the type of community they want to live in,” Orr says.

The safety and security of residents was also a priority throughout, with Orr describing them as “fundamental considerations.” There is controlled fob access alongside 24/7 onsite human support. There are also technological safety measures, including pendant alarm systems and a tablet-based communication platform in every apartment.

While residents’ safety was a priority, Untold Living were conscious of the overall aim to promote independence over nursing care. “The design deliberately avoids overtly clinical features,” Orr says. “Instead, safety is embedded discreetly through thoughtful planning, technology and staffing. Specialist architects and



  
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interior designers have been involved from the earliest stages to ensure that these measures are integrated seamlessly into the living environment.”

The promotion of independence extends beyond the design and physical elements of the scheme, forming the core philosophy of Untold Living’s model. At Sundew Court, the communal spaces allow residents to enjoy life while accessing care if they need it. “They are actively encouraged to shape the culture and daily life of the community,” explains Orr. “We want them to feel it’s their home, and that their involvement and contribution is valued. The aim is to avoid passive occupancy and instead foster a sense of ownership, belonging and shared purpose.” The presence of the neighbouring Zephyr X care home is emphasised by the operators, allowing residents to feel safe in the knowledge that they can stay within the community should their care needs ever evolve.

Though not yet fully completed, Sundew Court is currently “ahead of target in terms of prospect generation,” says Orr, adding that the local community has been engaging positively. “Overall the early reaction suggests strong interest and a positive reception to the scheme’s ethos and offer.”

#### A CRUCIAL ROLE

Designing good quality retirement living is undoubtedly important for the UK as a whole, but it also presents unique challenges to developers. The proportion of so-called ‘non-saleable’ space at a retirement living development is one of the “most significant differences” when compared to a traditional residential development, Orr explains. At Sundew Court approximately 20% of the total

area is for social and operational use, substantially impacting the gross-to-net economic viability of the project.

Aside from this, the key goal for Untold Living with their retirement living developments is to design a space that fosters community and social interaction in new ways. For this project these benefits are being trialled by events that have included musical performances and history talks ahead of the opening, to “give people a taste” of what retirement living can provide, Orr explains.

This philosophy is backed up by McPhillips’ Walker, who says the approach to retirement living versus a standard residential development is in the “emphasis on creating supporting communities rather than simply providing housing.”

Walker also points out how the project is in the context of a wider challenge facing the UK on meeting demand: “The fundamental challenge facing retirement housing delivery is the scale of national demand versus current supply capacity,” he says. “Currently as a nation we are falling woefully short of the Government target of 50,000 units per year for seniors housing and demand is only going to go up.”

Orr echoes this sentiment, but emphasises that this bolsters the case for good development, which is able to provide healthcare benefits to users: “Well designed schemes can reduce pressure on health and care services while significantly improving quality of life for residents.” He adds that it is a key responsibility of providers to think about the wider benefits: “A concerted effort to develop the quantity and quality of these options is not only good business, but socially necessary.” ■

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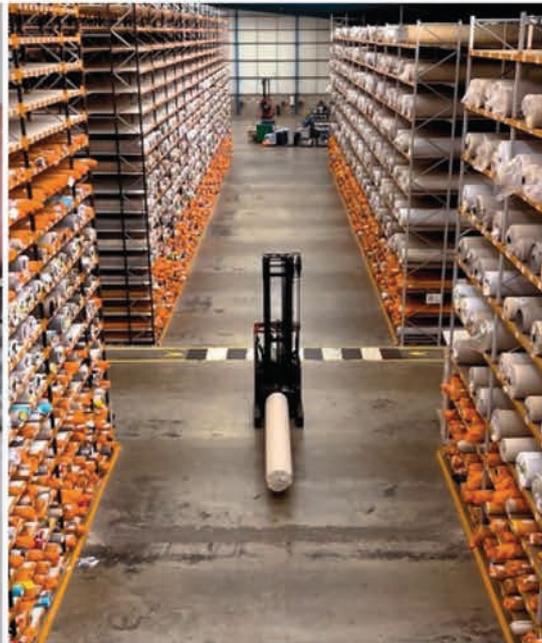
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# Practical Solutions for Harnessing the Circular Economy at Scale

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

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

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

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

## Making circular arguments

Our round table delegates highlighted the circularity challenges the industry was facing, but also the solutions it was innovating. Several said that Government targets were needed, but not prescriptive regulation. According to Ian Pritchett from eco-focused residential developer Greencore, regulation and drivers such as clients' ESG policies carried “dangers of unintended consequences if people don't really understand what the fundamental problem is.” Delegates emphasised the importance of ensuring the term circularity itself was not misunderstood, for example that recycling wasn't mis-sold as ‘reuse.’ Debbie Ward of the Association of Sustainable Building

### ATTENDEES

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

### SPONSORS' ATTENDEES

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



**CIRCLING BACK, BUT PUSHING FORWARD**

The multi-disciplinary round table reasserted some of the issues for the construction industry, but offered some inspiring examples of circularity success

Products said that although recycling was laudable in some respects, it faced more constraints than full material reuse; therefore ‘greenwash’ was a risk.

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

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

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

He offered the suggestion that, with “climatic catastrophe” a possibility by the end of the century, circular approaches were urgently needed in the mainstream, but wouldn’t happen without major interventions in the market. “At the moment, end of life options are not costed, there’s no profit in it.” Instead, said Halligan, “If every

material, every project, was forced to take into account the cost of the end of life situation, all of a sudden everything will be sustainable.” He said however that currently, “hardly any guides or accreditation systems take end of life options into account.”

**Following London’s lead**

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

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

Nick Haughton referred to a Government circularity scheme in the Netherlands which had been “fairly widely adopted on larger residential schemes; they get extra points for certain sustainability credentials – one of the big factors is reuse of materials.” Delegates such as Haughton cited “commercial barriers” to building reuse, which could be as straightforward as building elements not meeting architects’ aesthetic requirements, and their refurbishment leading to a “bunch of other challenges.” Haughton added that “getting reused elements underwritten by structural engineers” was a further constraint.

Stephanie Palmer, head of sustainability at Wienerberger, and also chair of ISEP’s Circular Economy Steering Group, explained how London was setting the agenda. “It is pretty far ahead because the GLA has provided a clear framework for decision making.” She said



### NUDGES TOWARDS CIRCULARITY

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

this was setting a precedent on projects meaning design teams “are expected to go through the same process in the next application.”

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

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

### Raising reuse & data’s potential

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

There was consensus on the need for comprehensive ratings that include circularity, energy performance, and other factors to drive market demand for sustainable products. The delegates emphasised

the importance of government policies to unlock supply chain barriers and support reuse infrastructure, and the conversation also highlighted challenges in data collection for material passports and the need for better information and transparency.

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

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

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

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

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

Simon Foxell said it was “a very big question, it would be a system with a lot of parameters, and there are questions around the accuracy and accessibility.” He gave an example of the “very fragmented” TV and film industry which was making a concerted effort to bring in a more coordinated data approach to solving circularity challenges. On individual product data, Umendra Singh of Soprema mentioned that CPR, the European product regulation system, had developed a digital product passport, which will also be a model used in the UK for centralising data.

### Creative approaches & incentives

The round table delegates delved into the realities behind the principle of building reuse, and agreed that a maxim of ‘reuse first – don’t see demolition as a default’ should be applied. The key was in identifying how best to assess existing assets and materials, in order to drive mainstream design for disassembly and reuse. However currently, the

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### STRUCTURAL RE-ENGINEERING

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

business imperatives in the UK lead to more tokenistic efforts, said Nick Haughton, in the absence of comprehensive schemes such as are being used overseas. "Should we be knocking down the buildings we are building today to make aggregate?," he asked. "It seems ridiculous, but unless we are doing something like the Netherlands, the capitalist procurement process will drive us towards the minor things."

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

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

An architect by training, Olivia Daw explained how she has taken a career shift responding to the need for the industry to fully embrace reuse of materials, and plug some of the gap Ward identified. She is now Materials Audit Lead at Material Index, a team of contractors, architects, engineers and software developers focused on enabling material reuse at scale, which catalogues buildings' materials before deconstruction, provides 3D audits for BREEAM, and GLA planning applications. However, she said that increasingly, clients are using their auditing services "to just increase reuse or know the value of

their existing asset." Daw added: "We are seeing more and more demand for reused materials, so what we are trying to do is connect all the dots." This means unlocking more potential for clients to "offer up materials to the reclamation industry, in turn offering specifiers the ability to specify them."

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Solutions: Sponsors’ Question Time

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

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

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

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

Olivia Daw cited the example of Saint-Gobain providing “skips and segregation advice” to contractors, as well as “making it very clear what needs to happen early on for them to be able to take



### THE POWER OF ASSET DATA

The round table discussed how building audits could provide the details on existing assets to unlock the benefits of circularity

back that product.” She said that this helped reduced the “friction” which was caused by adding “any additional processes” for contractors, and avoided arguments later on in projects. She also advocated similar clarity in possible incentives introduced for manufacturers, to help them drive circularity within individual product lines.

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

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

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

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

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



#### DIVERSE MIX

The circularity at scale round table was another example of Building Insights LIVE bringing a unique mix of specifiers, experts and suppliers together

Simon Foxell of The Architects Practice concluded on the power of standards: “There is also something about having good standards that everyone can comply with and know what to do, that actually is cost effective, rather than being a burden. We’ve got to the point where the agenda has got to the point where anyone can do anything, so long as they meet a certain performance. But it would be a lot cheaper for all of them to work to the common standard.”

#### Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

#### ROUND TABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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The Classic and White TRV4 models are Class 1 rated for efficiency by the European Valve Manufacturers Association, positioning them among the most energy-efficient TRVs available, which is an important factor in helping homeowners manage heating costs.

Each TRV4 is engineered with a liquid sensor for precise temperature control, non-stick internals for a more durable solution with minimal maintenance, and a double gland seal to protect against water leakage. A top seal also allows the valve to be removed and replaced without draining the system, while replacement gland seal kits are also available when required. Additionally, the plastic insert inside the valves prevents limescale in hard-water areas to ensure that the valve will open once it gets to heating season and the system is turned back on.

The TRV4 range offers a wide temperature control span, from frost protection up to a maximum of 30°C. Range-limiting pins

are supplied with every valve, allowing homeowners to work with their heating engineer to set minimum and maximum temperatures if desired to reduce wasted energy and help keep bills under control.

### RT RANGE

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The RT414 builds on these features with an ergonomically designed cap and non-stick internals, providing reduced maintenance requirements and a more durable lasting solution. A plastic insert helps prevent limescale build-up, ensuring the valve opens fully when the heating system is restarted.

To allow minimum and maximum temperatures to be set if the homeowner desires, both the RT212 and RT414 are also supplied with range-limiting pins.

### AUTO-BALANCING TECHNOLOGY

Auto-balancing options are also available across the TRV4 and RT414 ranges, helping to ensure homes benefit from a well-balanced system, which can be achieved quickly and efficiently. Once fitted and set, which takes just minutes, the valves automatically regulate flow through each radiator based on system demand.

This ensures consistent heat distribution throughout the property, supports correct boiler condensing and maintains performance regardless of adjustments elsewhere in the system. Once the auto-balancing valves are installed and set, they will ensure that radiators permanently receive the correct flow rate regardless of other TRVs opening and closing or changes to the system.

Proven to reduce energy usage by an average of 8.8% and ensure there are no cold spots around the property, auto-balancing TRVs help lower household energy bills while

simultaneously enhancing comfort levels. To achieve optimum performance, auto-balancing valves should be fitted to all radiators, including the by-pass.

### MOTORISED VALVES

Drayton's motorised valve range includes both 2-port and 3-port options, making them suitable for Twin or Multi Zone S plans as well as Bi-Flo Y plans. Available in 22 mm and 28 mm sizes, all models feature 'snap-on' actuators alongside industry-standard dimensions and wiring, allowing for quick, straightforward installation.

Designed and manufactured in the UK for UK homes, Drayton motorised valves have been developed with ease of repair and replacement in mind, with replacement actuators and synchronous motors easily swapped to extend product life. Features such as spring return for tight shut-off, a manual lever and clear position indicator also simplify fault finding and commissioning. Precisely matched body dimensions make retrofitting seamless, allowing like-for-like replacements.

To save on installation time, Drayton's motorised valves are designed with industry-standard wiring and dimensions and include snap-on actuators that allow for quick fitting, and can also be removed or repositioned without draining the system.

Housebuilders and developers can also rely on their proven reliability, durability and long service life, delivering peace of mind for homebuyers later down the line.

### DEDICATED SUPPORT

Drayton's experienced sales team can help provide support and guidance to housebuilders and developers at every stage of the process. Meanwhile, its dedicated customer support team, based in Plymouth, is available to provide expert guidance and answer any questions during installation or for homebuyers at a later date.

0333 6000 622  
[www.draytoncontrols.co.uk](http://www.draytoncontrols.co.uk)

## Loftite by Timloc: Setting a new standard for loft access solutions



As homes become more energy efficient and airtight construction becomes the norm, even small details like loft access doors can have a big impact. Poorly sealed or under-insulated loft hatches are a common source of heat loss, undermining the performance of an otherwise efficient home. Loftite by Timloc has been developed to solve this problem with exceptional insulation, airtightness and acoustic control, helping developers meet and exceed the requirements of The Building Regulations Approved Document L1 & L2 for airtightness and prepare for the future.

Loft spaces often act as thermal weak points, especially when traditional loft hatches fail to maintain a consistent airtight barrier. This can lead to higher energy bills, reduced comfort and difficulty achieving compliance with tightening building regulations. Loftite tackles these issues through a robust design that pairs advanced insulation with high-performance sealing, ensuring reliable thermal performance and reduced air leakage.

To support a wide range of building needs, Loftite is available in three U-value options. The standard option, with a U-value of 0.35 W/m<sup>2</sup>K, meets the requirements of the Robust Construction Detail and provides dependable insulation for most residential

builds. For projects targeting enhanced energy efficiency, the 0.25 W/m<sup>2</sup>K and 0.15 W/m<sup>2</sup>K options help achieve the higher performance levels required by the Code for Sustainable Homes and the Future Homes Standard, giving housebuilders the flexibility to meet or exceed evolving regulatory expectations.

Loftite has been engineered to meet and exceed The Building Regulations Approved Document L1 & L2, ensuring strong airtightness and thermal efficiency. Independent testing by the BRE confirms its airtightness in line with BS EN 13141-1:2019 for ventilation performance and BS 5250:2021 for moisture management. This verified performance gives developers confidence that Loftite will function as specified on site, reducing uncontrolled air leakage and contributing to better overall energy efficiency.

A key feature of Loftite's design is its ease of installation. The frame incorporates two fitting slots that make the unit simple to position and secure, enabling a fast, accurate single-person installation (patent pending). This not only reduces labour time but also minimises disruption on site, an important advantage for busy build schedules.

Sam Bishop, product development manager, shares insight into the innovation behind Loftite: "Loftite represents a significant step forward in loft access solutions. We've combined

advanced insulation technology with airtight design to create a product that not only meets current building standards but anticipates future requirements. Our goal was to deliver a loft door that offers flexibility, performance, and peace of mind, and Loftite does exactly that."

Key benefits include:

- Three U-value options: 0.35 W/m<sup>2</sup>K, 0.25 W/m<sup>2</sup>K, and 0.15 W/m<sup>2</sup>K
- Compliance with Approved Document L1 & L2
- Independent BRE testing to BS EN 13141-1:2019 and BS 5250:2021
- Reduced noise transmission for improved acoustic comfort
- Alignment with the Code for Sustainable Homes and the Future Homes Standard
- Single person installation
- EPD available
- Secure key lock options also available
- Available on Timloc's industry leading next day delivery

To learn more about Loftite and how it can help your next development achieve high levels of energy efficiency and airtightness, visit the website.

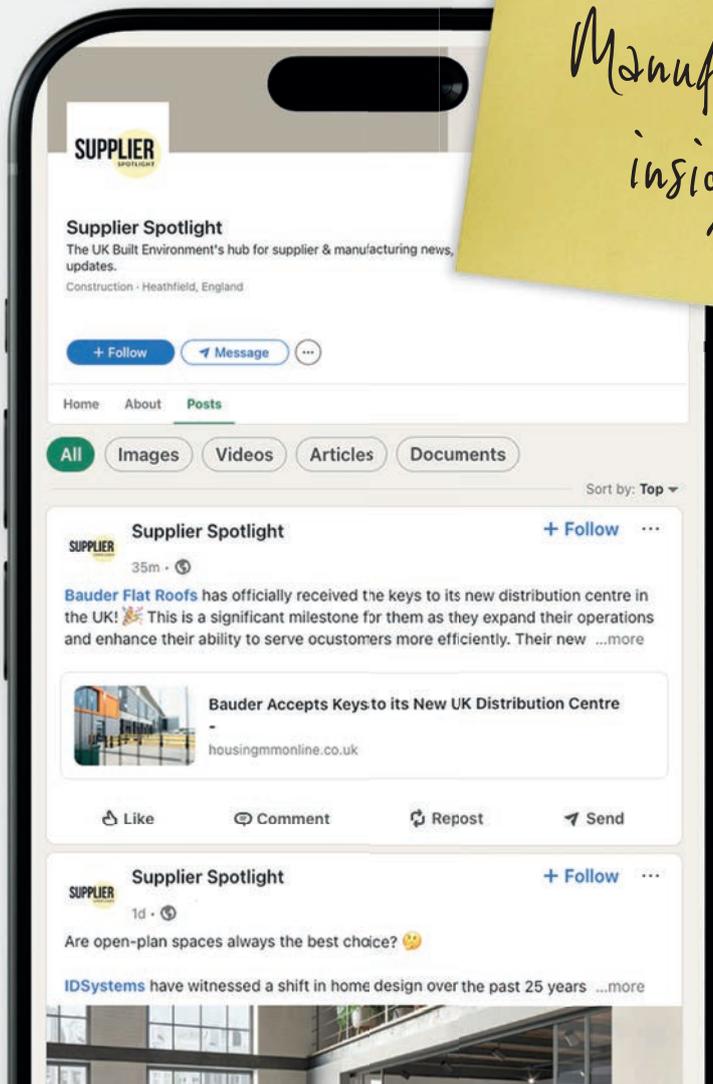
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# Proctor Group membranes used in next generation SIP technology

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



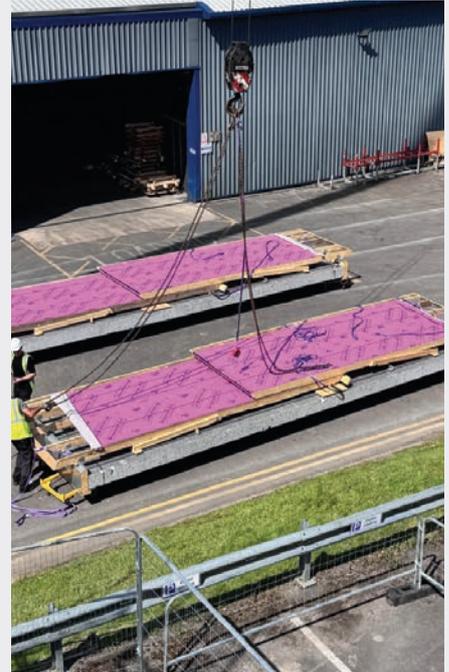
The system features the vapour permeable Proctorwrap Reflect® membrane in its external wall panels. An innovative new cold roof panel features the air permeable, low resistance (APLR) Proctor Air® underlay.

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 Ultranel Building Technologies to establish membrane specifications tailored to the offsite manufacture of the panels.

For example, Proctor Air is usually supplied in 1m 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 metre 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, Ultranel'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."



[proctorgroup.com/products/proctor-air](http://proctorgroup.com/products/proctor-air)  
[proctorgroup.com/products/proctorwrap-reflect](http://proctorgroup.com/products/proctorwrap-reflect)

## VentRidg®

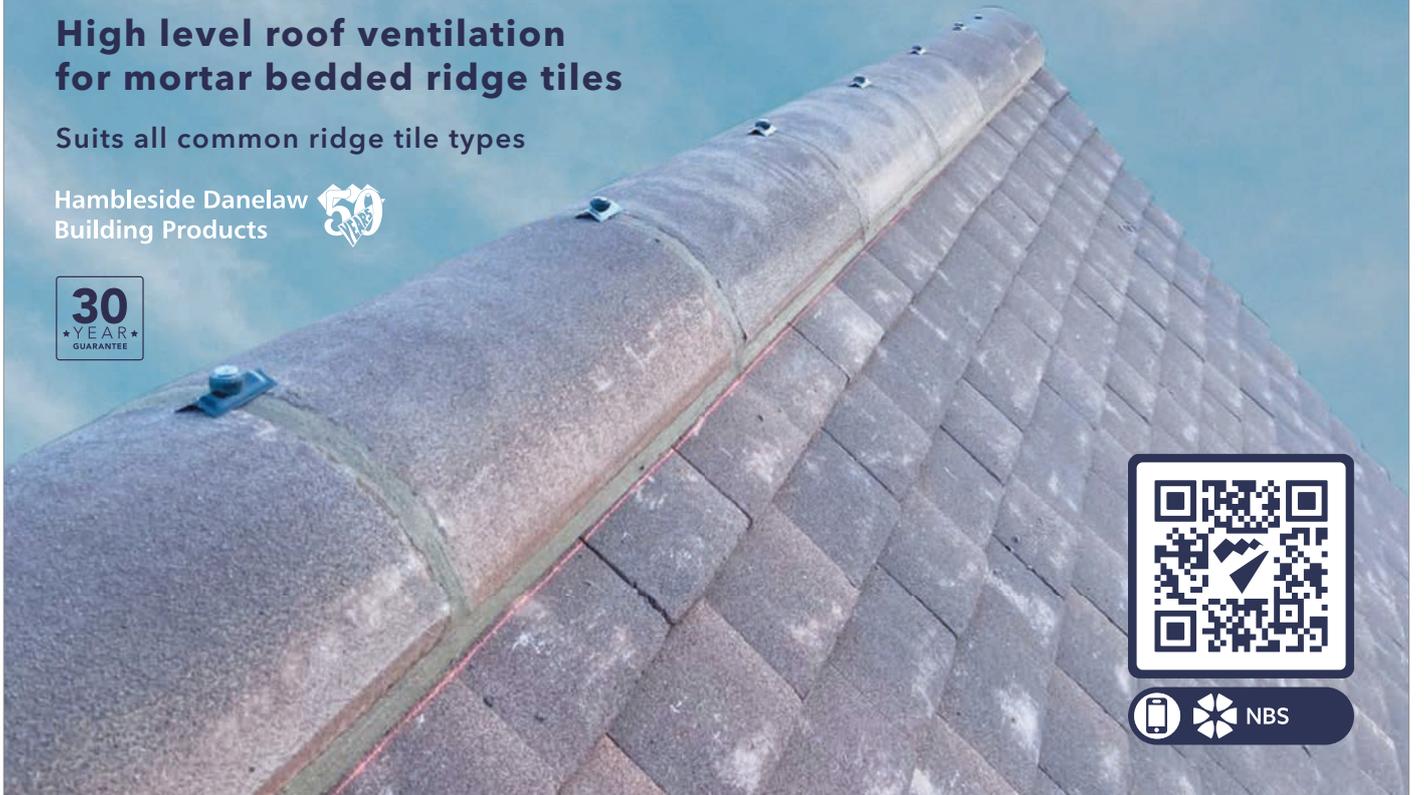
### High level roof ventilation for mortar bedded ridge tiles

Suits all common ridge tile types

Hambleside Danelaw Building Products 



Protected by pending patent application No. 2417868.3 and registered design rights



## Building for water security

Following the dry summer of 2025, the Environment Agency has warned that even with average winter rainfall some areas in Britain will still be in drought next spring, and despite the prolonged rainfall of the beginning of 2026, the UK is still recovering.

The recent weather pattern variations can only compound the existing concerns about the anticipated UK water deficit. To offset the predicted daily deficit of 4017 mega litres per day by 2050, major water companies have been developing plans to upgrade the UK's water supply and reduce current usage from 150 litres per person per day to 110.

Smart meters are seen as a significant part of the solution to reducing domestic water usage, Thames Water have recorded post installation savings of 12-17%, most major UK water companies have announced their plans for Advanced metering infrastructure, where all new connections or meters will be replaced with the latest generation of smart meters.

### GROUNDBREAKER – THE BEST LOCATION FOR SMART METERS

Groundbreaker is an insulated, surface mounted enclosure for a secure water management system and smart water meter. This locates the meter above ground, providing a better environment for smart technology over traditional underground boundary boxes, extends signal transmission and allows easy meter exchange.

The unique location of the Groundbreaker water management system future proofs the network and minimises the risk of developing future leaks. The position of the meter allows for an unjointed water supply, hence maintaining the integrity of the supply. The use of an uninterrupted supply has been recognised as best practice by Water UK and the Home Builders Federation.

In addition to new developments, Groundbreaker is ideal for redevelopment or refurbishment of properties that have architectural or water supply structures that make traditional metering options impractical.

This point of entry location makes it the perfect solution for installation in existing properties with shared supply or challenging architecture. Its location on the building also means no street furniture or liability in the highway.

### SAVE WATER, SAVE ENERGY, SAVE MONEY

Stewart Clements, Director of the Heating & Hotwater Industry Council (HHIC) explained. "It's important that those responsible for building new homes and for upgrading existing



homes – including both social and private housing providers and landlords – recognise the different factors involved in minimising energy consumption and in making tomorrow's homes the efficient properties needed to achieve decarbonisation and reach the net zero target for 2050."

*"The energy used to heat water for devices and appliances emits an average of 875kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per household per year. This is equivalent to the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from driving more than 1,700 miles in an average family car."*  
Energy Saving Trust

Whilst water efficient appliances, i.e. dishwashers and washing machines, can reduce domestic water and energy usage, much of this hot water used in 'time critical' usage e.g. taking a shower or running the tap to rinse dishes.

### LO-FLO – ADDITIONAL WATER SAVING, BUILT IN

To further improve home water efficiency, major water companies are also rolling out flow

regulating devices, such as Groundbreaker's LoFlo. These modulate the level of flow entering premises – regardless of network pressure, meaning a reduction in the level of water used by customers when 'variable use' appliances (i.e., showers, taps, hosepipes). As the flow of water into the premises is limited, then the amount used by the customer is also limited – but without providing a degradation of service, and more importantly not requiring any intervention or behavioural change on the part of the customer.

The NRv2 LoFlo can be easily and simply fitted to any meter installation or retrofitted on meter exchange or when upgrading or remediating underground meter chambers. Thus, allowing Water Companies to manage demand with little or no impact on consumers and at minimal cost to the water undertakers.

Whether it's new build or redevelopment, Groundbreaker has a range of products to design in water efficient homes.

01379 741993  
[www.groundbreaker.co.uk](http://www.groundbreaker.co.uk)

## Freefoam announces new box end fascia board for 2026

**F**reefoam Building Products is pleased to announce an exciting product update for 2026.

The popular Woodgrain FMS Magnum Square Leg Fascia (405 mm) is now available in a shorter length of 1.25 metres.

This new addition to the comprehensive roofline range has been introduced following customer feedback to make installations easier, reduce waste, and lower costs for customers.

The new 1.25 metre box end board is available in Woodgrain Black Ash and Woodgrain Anthracite Grey.

This new product has been designed with installers in mind. The shorter lengths are particularly suitable for the creation of the 'box end' of a roofline installation – where the fascia meets the bargeboard at the corner of a roof.

### BENEFITS FOR INSTALLERS

- Perfect for the quick and easy creation of box ends.
- Reduces material wastage.
- Lowers overall cost.
- Easier to store and transport.

Richard Jackson, UK sales director, explains:

"Our customers have been asking for a more convenient solution for creating box ends, and this new product delivers exactly that. It's a simple change that will make a big difference in reducing waste and improving efficiency on site."

Freefoam Building Products are committed



to developing and improving product ranges to meet market needs. "Innovation for us is about listening to installers and PVC stockists and responding with practical, cost-effective products," added Louise Sanderson, group

marketing manager at Freefoam. "This update is another example of how we're making life easier for our customers."

01604 591110 [www.freefoam.com](http://www.freefoam.com)

## Energy improvement boost for Edwardian house retrofit with sealant tape

Energy efficiency improvements to an Edwardian property in Oxfordshire have been provided thanks to ISO-Chemie's thermal insulating and load bearing bracket support system. The move sees WINFRAMER units retrofitted as part of an initiative to bring the poorly insulated solid walled house built in 1909 in Oxford, up to current energy efficiency standards. Passivhaus certified and fire rated to up to 30 minutes, WINFRAMER is a prefabricated installation frame, manufactured to accommodate cavities up to 250 mm that allows windows to be supported independently from the face of the wall regardless of any external cladding being in place. Quick and easy to install, the product's application in Oxford is seen as part of a solution to meet a wider Government strategy to reduce carbon levels in housing that has single skin walls or non-cavity walls – these buildings have a reputation for leaking considerable amounts of energy, heat and sound. The composite WINFRAMER brackets can bear heavy window loads, including bi-fold doors, to provide a reliable, strong and high-performance support frame. Installation is quick with windows attached directly and secured mechanically using either standard fixing screws or fixing lugs in the usual manner. A hinged insulation core combines with the composite structural bracket to become an integral part of the overall wall structure.

01207 56 68 67 [www.iso-chemie.eu/en-GB](http://www.iso-chemie.eu/en-GB)



## 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. SPW+ can be installed with both double and triple glazing options to meet U-values of between 0.94 W/m<sup>2</sup>K and 1.3 W/m<sup>2</sup>K 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.

01709 772600 [www.seniorarchitectural.co.uk/architectural-systems/spw-plus-window](http://www.seniorarchitectural.co.uk/architectural-systems/spw-plus-window)



# THE ROLE OF ROOFSCAPES

Nick Boulton at the Trussed Rafter Association says that with calls for faster and better housing delivery continuing to shape the sector, making practical progress relies on involving specialists.



**T**he demand to build more housing has been a long standing issue within the sector. With the Government targeting 1.5 million new homes, the industry faces familiar pressures such as a shortage of labour and the need to build more sustainably.

Price and availability of materials, together with stricter performance requirements, continue to influence project planning. Planning authorities are also placing greater emphasis on placemaking and consistency of character in new developments. Collectively, these pressures shape how projects are designed and delivered.

Trussed rafters play an important role in meeting housebuilding targets as the engineered timber designs produced by TRA members can help to deliver the consistency, predictable performance and reliable programme delivery that developers need.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ROOFSCAPE DESIGN

Roofscapes are a visible part of any housing development. They influence streetscape quality and contribute to the identity of neighbourhoods while affecting how residents experience their homes.

Developers are increasingly acknowledging this by encouraging a thoughtful mix of pitches, height variations, and roof forms.

Roof structures can also affect the functional aspects of homes, such as daylighting, privacy, density, and the adaptability of internal layouts. Attic trusses, for example, allow room-in-roof options without increasing the building footprint.

Suppliers work to ensure roof concepts can be engineered efficiently and installed safely. Complex forms such as hips and valleys can be produced accurately when integrated early in the design process. This approach can help to avoid issues

on site and ensure that design intent is delivered.

## SCALABLE CONSTRUCTION

A key benefit of trussed rafters is their suitability for efficient and high volume construction, as each truss is designed to exact specifications and produced under controlled factory conditions, resulting in consistent quality and reduced waste.

For large developments, predictable installation is important, and our members can provide components that support clear scheduling while reducing the risk of delays. Trussed rafters arrive on site ready to install, supporting shorter programmes and helping manage weather related challenges. In addition, small teams can install trussed rafters safely and quickly, which is particularly important given ongoing labour constraints across the sector. Engineered trussed rafters also meet

the structural, acoustic, thermal, and fire-safety standards expected in modern housing. They integrate with various construction methods, including masonry, timber frame, and offsite approaches. Their adaptability means they are suitable for both volume housebuilding and more technically demanding projects.

**USING CERTIFIED TIMBER**

As the industry moves towards Net Zero, material choices play a role in reaching sustainability goals. Trussed rafters manufactured by our members are made from Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) and Forest Stewardship Council-certified (FSC) timber, which ensures responsible sourcing and traceability. This supports developers' environmental reporting obligations while aligning with expectations for low-carbon construction.

Timber stores carbon during its lifetime and can reduce the embodied carbon of new homes. It is renewable, recyclable, and well-suited to circular economy principles. Its relatively low weight reduces transport emissions and simplifies handling on site.

Every member commits to responsible timber use and efficient manufacturing processes. The experience of the



members reinforces confidence that environmental aims can be achieved without compromising structural performance or practicality.

**ROOFSCAPE DESIGN AWARDS**

The TRA's annual Roofscape Design Awards highlight how engineered roof structures support good design and practical delivery. The awards showcase projects that demonstrate balanced use of form, structure, and construction efficiency.

Recent award entries include a specialist healthcare facility delivered in partnership with a trussed rafter manufacturer, a heritage building conversion that preserved original roof character while upgrading performance, and a new roofscape design for a contemporary residential scheme

integrating solar technologies within engineered timber structures.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

Delivering new homes at scale will require closer coordination across the supply chain. Early engagement between clients, designers, manufacturers and housebuilders can improve buildability and programme certainty.

Clearer planning expectations around roofscapes would improve project predictability and reduce risk. Continued investment in skills will also be important to ensure the workforce can deliver engineered timber solutions with confidence.

The trussed rafter sector already has the technical capability, production capacity, and experience needed to support housing delivery. The opportunity is to use this expertise more strategically across design and construction workflows.

Thoughtful roofscape design strengthens placemaking and long-term performance, while certified timber supports lower carbon construction. As the UK moves forward with its housing goals, the sector's experience will remain vital to achieving well designed, deliverable developments.

Nick Boulton is chief executive of the TRA

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**DAB Pumps urge to prioritise compliance**



A series of official safety warnings and enforcement notices issued in Ireland have brought renewed attention to the critical importance of product compliance in the heating and plumbing sector. **DAB Pumps** is calling on UK and Irish merchants and installers to take a firm stand against the

distribution and installation of non-compliant circulating pumps, which pose a risk to consumer safety and to the reputation of the professional trade. DAB Pumps designs and manufactures its products in line with all applicable UK and EU regulations. All DAB domestic circulating pumps carry the required conformity markings, full technical documentation, and user instructions in English to ensure proper installation and safe operation.

0333 777 5010 [uk.dabpumps.com](http://uk.dabpumps.com)

**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.

02088 420 033 [www.sfaniflo.co.uk](http://www.sfaniflo.co.uk)

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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. An additional step has been inserted for the user to choose between electric and conventional heating with a revised calculation algorithm to accommodate this change. 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](http://www.stelradprofessional.com)

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**Recoup** Waste Water Heat Recovery for Showers (WWHRS) saves up to 60% of the energy per shower use. Shower heat energy goes down the drain, WWHRS extracts that energy using it to preheat cold water that feeds the shower and/or water heater. This significantly reduces hot water demand, saving money, energy and emissions. No user interaction, no planned maintenance, no change to shower experience. Recoup has a WWHRS solution for any shower space. Please visit the Recoup website for more information.

01379 844010 [recoup.co.uk](http://recoup.co.uk)

## Cool breeze – Reducing overheating



**Vectaire's** Cool Breeze and Cool Breeze Plus are effective solutions for mitigating overheating in homes, particularly during summer months. They use the eco and environmentally friendly refrigerant R290, and meet the CIBSE TM59 assessments and Approved Document O of the Building Regulations.

For floor or wall mounting, they integrate seamlessly with a Vectaire MVHR, offering a compact and energy-efficient approach to indoor temperature regulation. The self-contained, sealed-for-life system, delivers up to 4.1 kW (or 4.3 kW) total cooling capacity without the need for an external condenser.

Cool Breeze units automatically sense the temperature of both the room and the incoming fresh air determining when cooling is required. Heat is removed from the supply air allowing the MVHR to distribute the cooled air throughout the property, providing a consistently comfortable temperature for residents.

A Cool Breeze system is ideally suited for use in new-build and retrofit applications, where regulatory compliance and system efficiency are critical, and where superior indoor air quality and comfort is required.

For more information, please visit Vectaire's website.

01494 522333 [www.vectaire.co.uk](http://www.vectaire.co.uk)

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# ENSURING SAFETY & COMPLIANCE

Ruth MacEachern at EnviroVent looks at ensuring compliance with ventilation regulations and achieving good indoor air quality in new homes.



Approved Document F of Building Regulations has set stringent requirements for ventilation in new homes, with a greater focus on energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

The updated regulations outline the requirements for ventilation systems in new homes, ensuring that indoor air quality is maintained at acceptable levels due to a required increase in airflow levels. The regulations specify minimum airflow rates, which are measured in litres per second, which are tailored to different room types and the number of bedrooms in a property. This is crucial to prevent the buildup of pollutants and to ensure a healthy living environment.

Airflow measurements must be taken using appropriate equipment and results should be documented for submission to building control. As well as the whole dwelling ventilation rate increase in the last update to Building Regulations, the requirements now state that all habitable rooms must incorporate background ventilation, regardless of the air permeability of the building, when using continuous or intermittent extract ventilation with the exception of MVHR.

## THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS IS CRUCIAL FOR ENSURING THAT VENTILATION SYSTEMS OPERATE AS INTENDED

Approved Document F works in conjunction with other regulations, such as Part L, which focuses on energy efficiency, ensuring that improvements in one area do not compromise another.

The increasingly stringent targets for indoor air quality have resulted in traditional methods like intermittent fans and trickle vents being inadequate to meet the requirements for new and renovated homes.

The latest industry legislation therefore requires a 'systems approach' to ventilation, where a continuous flow of fresh air and removal of pollutants are essential to maintaining optimal indoor air quality. This requirement is perfectly compatible with our whole-house ventilation systems, such as MVHR (Mechanical Ventilation with Heat

Recovery), c-MEV (Mechanical Extract Ventilation), and d-MEV (Decentralised Mechanical Extract Ventilation). Since ventilation became a controlled service, this means that systems must be installed by a competent person who is registered under a third-party competent persons' scheme, which is helping to drive up standards.

### IMPORTANCE OF IAQ

Poor indoor air quality can lead to significant health implications. Studies have linked inadequate ventilation to various health issues, including respiratory diseases, heart conditions and even premature death. The World Health Organisation has highlighted that household air pollution is responsible for millions of deaths annually, which highlights the need for effective ventilation systems.

Health risks associated with poor ventilation can include respiratory issues, as prolonged exposure to pollutants can exacerbate conditions like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Insufficient ventilation can create damp conditions, promoting mould growth that poses additional health

risks. In addition, indoor air can contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from household products, which can lead to long term health problems.

One of the challenges in implementing mechanical ventilation systems is managing noise levels. Updated guidelines in Approved Document F address acoustic performance, providing a framework for reducing noise in ventilation systems. Selecting ventilation systems that are proven to operate at very low noise levels can help maintain a peaceful indoor environment while ensuring adequate ventilation.

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY & VENTILATION**

With the UK government’s commitment to achieving net zero emissions, energy efficiency has become a focal point in Building Regulations. Approved Document F emphasises that ventilation systems must not compromise the overall energy efficiency of a building.

Because of the regulation changes, housebuilders and developers are taking a much more proactive approach to ventilation. This includes working closely with ventilation manufacturers early on in the design of the buildings, ensuring they can achieve compliance with the new regulations, both now and in the future.

**SELECTING THE RIGHT SYSTEMS**

Choosing the right ventilation system is vital for compliance and for good indoor air quality that benefits the health of occupants.

Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) systems are increasingly being specified to meet Building Regulations in new and refurbished homes, which not only provides a high level of indoor air quality but also recovers heat from extracted air, therefore saving energy. In addition, continuous Mechanical Extract Ventilation (MEV), which are ideal for dwellings with low air permeability as it ensures consistent air exchange.

Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) systems are also extremely effective in managing humidity levels and helping to prevent condensation and mould which can be easily retrofitted into most properties.

Housebuilders can ensure compliance with Part O of the Building Regulations (Overheating) by selecting effective ventilation solutions designed to remove excess heat and promote thermal comfort within dwellings.

**CORRECT COMMISSIONING**

The commissioning process is crucial for ensuring that ventilation systems operate as intended. This involves testing and

adjusting the system to meet the specified airflow rates and performance criteria. In addition, there is a need to maintain detailed records of the commissioning process, including any measurements and adjustments made.

Educating homeowners on the operation and maintenance of ventilation systems can also enhance their effectiveness and longevity.

There are many ways that ventilation manufacturers can work with housebuilders and developers to ensure they can achieve compliance with the latest legislation. This includes the delivery of CPDs, workshops and webinars on Approved Document F, L and O compliance. There is also an opportunity for onsite contractor toolbox talks, onsite installation support and best practice compliance training.

Some manufacturers also provide ventilation system design support for a project, which includes supplying detailed technical drawings to fully comply with your project needs, the latest building regulations and SAP requirements. This can remove some of the complexities of ventilation system design for housebuilders and contractors.

Ruth MacEachern is product manager at EnviroVent

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**HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER**

**Housebuilder & Developer**  
Publishing  
Heathfield, East Sussex · 547 followers  
A leading title within the housebuilding industry, publishing the latest news, comments and case studies.

**About us**  
Housebuilder & Developer has been an established print media title since 1998. It is now one of netMAGmedia Ltd's leading titles with a growing print subscription mailing list and digital issue, as well as a comprehensive website and digital marketing offering.

The magazine is published 12 times a year with an ABC-audited circulation of 12,500 UK housebuilders, developers and housing associations. The magazine offers a highly credible platform from which to communicate with the industry.

**Website** <https://www.hbdonline.co.uk/>  
**Industries** Publishing  
**Company size** 11-50 employees  
**Headquarters** Heathfield, East Sussex



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## Jackoboard® helps transform an old bathroom into a luxury wellness space

A recent project BEWI has been involved in shows how this is totally achievable using products from the company's extensive Jackoboard® range of tile backerboards and accessories. Used together as a system, the Jackoboard® products have enabled a compact bathroom with limited floorspace, and a bath that was hardly ever used, to be totally transformed into a feature room which is both more attractive and more usable. Gone are the outdated finishes and restricted space for movement, resulting in the creation of an open-plan wetroom layout with a fully tanked waterproof system and flush shower tray. Both rooms now boast modern contemporary finishes and, while being attractive, are also easy to clean. The Jackoboard® products used were 2,400 x 600 x 12 mm tile backerboard for the wall, complete with disc plugs to fix on the outside wall, screws with washers for the internal walls and self-adhesive tapes for sealing. 1,200 x 600 x 6 mm boards were used on the floor. Jackoboard® backerboards are very lightweight, 100% waterproof (meaning it's only the joints that need tanking), thermally insulating with a lambda value of 0.035 W/(mK), so they are ideal for use over underfloor heating. They also have a very high compressive strength, making them suitable to accept all types of wall and floor tile.

0870 600 3666 [bewi.com/products/jackoboard?lang=en-gb](http://bewi.com/products/jackoboard?lang=en-gb)



## Cistermiser urges action on water efficiency as extreme drought threat looms

Cistermiser is urging the construction and facilities sector to accelerate action on water efficiency, leakage prevention and smarter water management, following reports that England could face an extreme drought in 2026. Cistermiser first entered the washroom market back in the late 70s, soon after the summer drought, with an innovative water-efficient product – the hydraulic urinal flush control valve. The environmentally focused technology was ahead of its time. Concerns are growing that prolonged dry conditions could increase the likelihood of restrictions and emergency measures in some regions. While long-term infrastructure investment is essential, Cistermiser says there are also practical, immediate steps that can be taken across commercial buildings, public estates and housing to reduce unnecessary water demand without disruption to end users. Cistermiser's approach focuses on preventing avoidable water loss through a combination of leakage prevention and smarter monitoring. This includes flow-monitoring and automatic shut-off valves designed to identify abnormal or continuous water use and stop water loss before it escalates, alongside water management controls that help estates spot unusual consumption patterns – often one of the earliest indicators of hidden leaks.

0118 969 1611 [www.cistermiser.co.uk](http://www.cistermiser.co.uk)



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## BAL Waterproof 1C passes EAD certification

BAL Waterproof 1C – the one-coat ready-mixed waterproofing system – has received EAD certification for use on NHBC-approved housebuilding sites. BAL Waterproof 1C has been rigorously tested and adheres to all NHBC regulations, crucially receiving EAD certification ETA 24/1129 to comply with NHBC specified standard EAD 030352-00-0503. BAL Waterproof 1C offers a number of benefits over other EAD-certified waterproofing systems and is also certified with a full BAL tiling solution as part of EAD testing requirements. BAL Waterproof 1C is a cost-effective ready-mixed solution – which means no additional mixing is needed on site – and can be used on most common substrates without priming\*. It is ready to tile after only two hours, meaning jobs can be completed sooner. Formulated with fibre-strand technology for improved strength, it can be applied in one-coat on walls (ensuring 0.8 mm thickness) and floors (ensuring 1.6 mm thickness) with a brush, roller or 4 mm notched trowel.

01782 591100 [www.bal-adhesives.com](http://www.bal-adhesives.com)

# SMART SPACE SOLUTIONS

Wall-hung toilets are transforming modern bathroom design in new-build homes. Sonia De Gioia at Geberit explains how these space saving solutions meet homeowner expectations while offering flexibility, hygiene, and premium appeal for developers.

**A**s the UK housing market continues to evolve, developers face growing pressure to deliver bathrooms that maximise space without compromising on style or quality. Smaller footprints in apartments, urban townhouses, and new-build developments are now paired with rising consumer expectations for interiors that feel premium, calm, and considered.

Homeowners increasingly want bathrooms that are both practical and aspirational, expecting spaces to feel open and uncluttered, with design elements that elevate the overall home experience. Wall-hung toilets are helping developers meet these expectations efficiently and elegantly.

## MAXIMISING SPACE

Compact bathroom layouts are becoming the norm in modern housing developments. However, developers can no longer rely on size alone; consumers now look for design features that create a sense of space and luxury. Influenced by hotel-style interiors and spa inspired trends, today's buyers expect bathrooms to feel open, airy, and effortlessly modern. Achieving this perception of spaciousness, even in smaller layouts, has become a key consideration for both specifiers and developers.

Wall-hung toilets offer a practical solution. By lifting the WC off the floor and concealing the cistern within the wall, these systems create clean visual lines and a sense of openness. Our research indicates that 85% of homeowners prioritise bathrooms that feel spacious, while 43% associate wall-hung toilets specifically with modern, premium design and space saving benefits.

## DESIGNED FOR MODERN LIVING

Beyond aesthetics, wall-hung toilets address practical demands that are increasingly relevant to housebuilders. The absence of a base in contact with the floor simplifies cleaning, helping properties appeal to time conscious buyers. The design also contributes to the overall perception of a less cluttered,



higher-quality finish – a factor that can support stronger sales or higher perceived value in new-build developments.

From a planning perspective, wall-hung systems offer considerable flexibility. Pre-wall installation frames allow cisterns and pipework to be fully concealed, enabling toilets to be positioned in otherwise challenging locations, such

as under windows, in narrow service voids, or beneath sloped ceilings. This adaptability opens new possibilities for bathroom layouts in compact apartments or uniquely shaped rooms, supporting developers in making the most of available space without compromising design quality.

Installation technology has also



advanced, making wall-hung solutions more accessible than ever. Modern pre-wall frames are designed for ease of handling, secure fixing, and straightforward long-term servicing.

Maintenance remains simple, with cistern access discreetly provided through the flush plate, ensuring a seamless finish that aligns with modern interior expectations.

#### A FUTURE-READY SOLUTION

As bathrooms increasingly embody lifestyle and wellbeing, products that optimise space while enhancing design will remain in demand. Wall-hung toilets achieve this balance by combining visual lightness, improved hygiene, and layout flexibility, all supported by advanced installation systems that simplify specification, delivery, and long-term maintenance.

For housebuilders and developers, these systems offer a tangible advantage. They enable the creation of modern, uncluttered bathrooms that resonate with buyer expectations while maximising usable space in high-demand properties. With compact homes and apartments continuing to dominate the market, wall-hung toilets represent a forward thinking solution that aligns with both design ambition and practical realities.

Wall-hung toilets are not just a design trend; they are a practical, future-proof choice for modern developments. They allow developers to deliver bathrooms that feel premium, function efficiently, and meet the evolving expectations of today's homeowners.

Sonia De Gioia is showroom sales director at Geberit

## EGGER supports housebuilders with product-specific EPDs

**U**nderlining its commitment to sustainable construction, EGGER UK has introduced new product-specific Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) for its chipboard-based structural flooring products. These EPDs provide clearer and more accurate information about the product's carbon performance, helping housebuilders access reliable data at a time when whole-life carbon reporting is increasingly important across the construction industry.

While EGGER has always offered a universal EPD for P2 to P6 grade raw boards, generic documents naturally provide broad, average values that cannot reflect the difference between chipboard grades or upgraded surface treatments. The manufacturer has listened, understood the needs of housebuilders and gone one step further to provide product-specific EPDs.

Verified and published through the Institut Bauen und Umwelt (IB) EPD programme in accordance with EN 15804 and ISO 14025, the new EPDs are available for its EGGER P5, EGGER Peel Clean Xtra and EGGER Protect structural flooring boards. Providing readily available life-cycle inventory data, it offers additional assurances of the individual product's environmental performance.

Specialising in the manufacture of wood-based structural flooring, decorative solutions and flooring, sustainability is at the core of EGGER's ethos. On average, EGGER Protect



boards are manufactured from 55% recycled wood, 27% sawmill by-products (such as hackchips and sawdust) and 18% virgin wood, facilitating material circularity.

Speaking about this latest update, Jonathan Lynch, UK building product manager at EGGER UK, said: "Product manufacturers are increasingly being asked to provide accurate, product-specific carbon data, so customers can produce more reliable whole life carbon calculations. This is why we are delighted to offer the market product-specific EPDs for our range of structural flooring boards.

"It can be difficult to know which product is the right choice. As such, transparency is everything. By having this detailed product-

specific lifecycle information available at their fingertips, our customers can have confidence when it comes to accurate carbon modelling."

EGGER UK produce a variety of chipboard-based structural flooring boards, with one of the company's leading products being EGGER Protect. Featuring a P5 chipboard core and hardwearing, low-slip, thermally bonded layer on both sides of the board, it is favoured amongst many of the UK's top housebuilders.

Learn more about EGGER's range of structural flooring boards and view the EPDs from the website.

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# THE FUTURE IN FOCUS

Louise Walters at Designer Contracts looks at the future of new build flooring, from a shift in colour palettes to sustainable products, the importance of EPDs and how flooring materials can help meet the Future Homes Standard.

**T**he role of flooring as a foundation block in a new home is often underestimated. From its contribution to the overall design of a house to more practical considerations such as heat insulation and noise reduction, floorcoverings are a key ingredient.

Increasingly it plays a critical role in sustainability considerations too. And for housebuilders working to meet Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) requirements and the aims of the Future Homes Standard, flooring can play a pivotal role.

The big story for 2026 is warmth. That means floors which feel cosy, grounded and connected to nature – a shift from the series of greys that have dominated interiors for years. Popular tones include honey oak, caramel and amber wood tones along with beige and blonde mid-tones that balance warmth without feeling yellow. Greige is still around but with softer, sunnier undertones than cool grey.

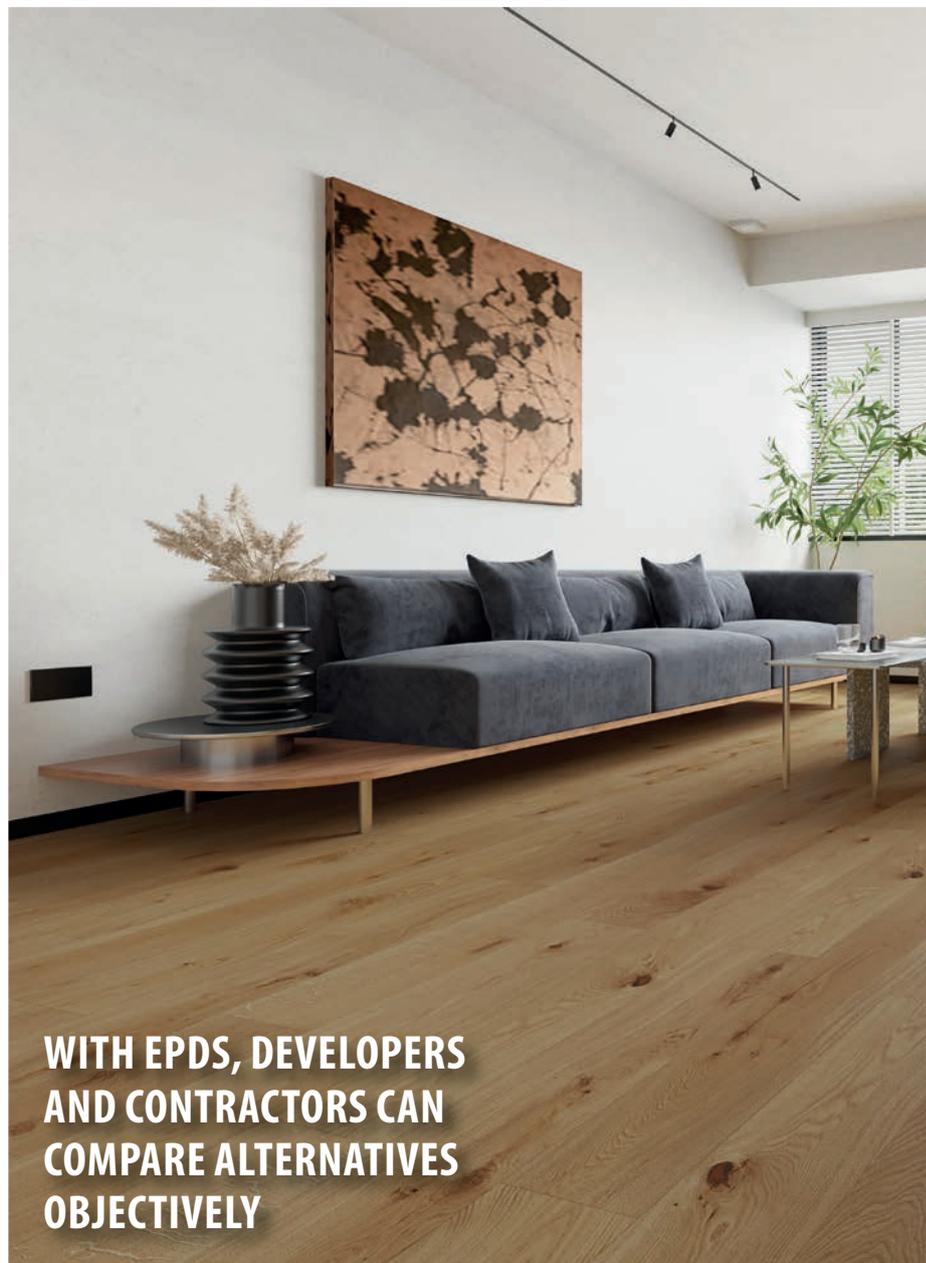
What we're seeing is that floors are increasingly part of a holistic colour statement and not just functional surfaces. 'Hard' flooring is also less about a perfect smooth finish and more about visible grain, knots and hand scraped effects.

Sustainability also remains at the heart of interior design trends. No longer just a buzzword, sustainability is becoming a market standard and a core driver of product development. Customers expect manufacturers to help them make greener choices when it comes to flooring and shared commitment is critical to the success of circularity.

One example of a revolutionary, sustainable product in our industry is SpringBond underlay. Made by the UK-based Think Group and introduced in 2019, it is made from 85% recycled fibres (plastic bottles), offering an eco-friendly alternative to PU foam, felt and rubber underlay.

SpringBond has a certified Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) certification – something else which is rapidly shifting from a 'nice-to-have' to 'must-have' standard.

EPD certification is internationally recognised and provides transparent,



verified environmental impact data across the product's entire lifecycle – from manufacturing to end-of-life management. Meeting EPD requirements involves rigorous third-party verification of environmental performance; provides complete lifecycle assessment data; demonstrates quantifiable environmental impacts; and meets strict international standards for environmental reporting.

With EPDs, developers and contractors can compare alternatives objectively

as they allow flooring to be selected on the basis of transparent metrics. People making specification decisions for new builds want hard data – and EPDs deliver that.

It's all part of a wider, environmental and ethical landscape which specifiers, developers and even the end consumer, consider. Increasingly they value and understand the importance of such operations as waste management in the quest for circularity. We ourselves work



closely with Innovate Recycle, a recycling company which has invested heavily in state-of-the-art machinery/technology to develop a circular solution, producing plastic pellets from carpet waste for the plastics industry.

According to Innovate, more than 500,000 tonnes of end-of-life carpet are produced in the UK each year, and, for

the first time, there is now a way, at volume, to deconstruct carpet and enable the reuse of its constituent materials in a wide range of industrial supply chains.

As well as the visual and ethical aspects of floorcoverings, flooring materials can also offer hugely practical considerations – even helping

housebuilders meet the aims of the Future Homes Standard (FHS).

The FHS for 2025 in England mandates new homes to be ‘zero-carbon ready’, featuring high energy efficiency, low-carbon heating and no fossil fuels, slashing emissions by 75-80%. Key changes involve stringent U-values for walls, roofs, floors, windows, improved ventilation and better insulation. The aim is for full implementation by December 2027.

In this regard, flooring can play a pivotal role in more thoughtful strategies to improve insulation, reduce reliance on traditional, less efficient heat sources and so promote low-carbon, future proofed heating solutions. The selection of flooring materials that combine these helps to ensure that new homes are not only cost-effective to run but capable of delivering the comfort, efficiency, and low-carbon performance expected of next-generation housing in the UK.

In short, flooring is evolving from a ‘finish’ to a strategic element in sustainable, healthy, future ready homes – and developers who lean into these trends will have an edge in an increasingly competitive market.

Louise Walters is commercial director at Designer Contracts

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MR offers the same benefits but with the added advantage of moisture resistance. Where there is a need for premium quality and detailed working, CaberMDF Pro provides incredibly consistent density, ensuring cutting and routing need minimal finishing. CaberMDF Pro MR offers the further benefit of moisture resistance. The ultimate product in the range is CaberMDF Industrial which is moisture resistant and designed specifically for the production of high-grade furniture and fittings.

[uk.westfraser.com](http://uk.westfraser.com)

## Housebuilder & Developer website



The Housebuilder & Developer (HBD) website is an online provider of past and present products and news items for the housebuilder and developer. hbdonline.co.uk is a one-stop source for all the latest press releases providing any visitor with access to information about products and services that they may require. From the website, you can find links to digital issues that have live

links to advertisers’ sites, as well as daily email alerts to keep you as informed as possible.

[www.hbdonline.co.uk](http://www.hbdonline.co.uk)



## Outdoor Tile Trends 2026 With Tile of Spain

María D Arráez, director of **Tile of Spain UK**, reveals her top five outdoor tile trends for 2026:

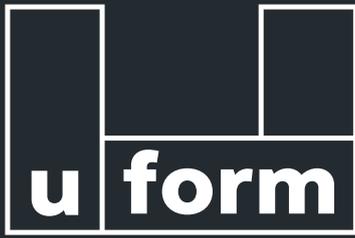
“Green isn’t slowing down in 2026, echoing our desire to reconnect with nature. It brings a timeless quality and character to patios, terraces and paths. Whether introduced as a mosaic pattern or paired with other colours, green offers a fresh aesthetic that builds on the outdoor environment.”

“Tiles will be used beyond traditional flooring and extended onto exterior walls and even furniture, such as planters and outdoor kitchens in 2026. This approach allows for seamless visual flow while benefiting from tiles’ weather resistance, slip performance and ease of maintenance.”

“Wood-effect tiles continue to be popular and 2026 will welcome a more refined style of slimline, contemporary profiles compared to larger format, rustic options. These elegant planks replicate the grain, warmth and variation of real wood while delivering the technical advantages of porcelain.”

“Soft sandy tones and sun-baked textures bring calm and warmth to gardens. Neutral colours help to create a relaxed environment and a Mediterranean-style feel to spaces that feel effortless and inviting.”

[www.tileofspain.com](http://www.tileofspain.com)



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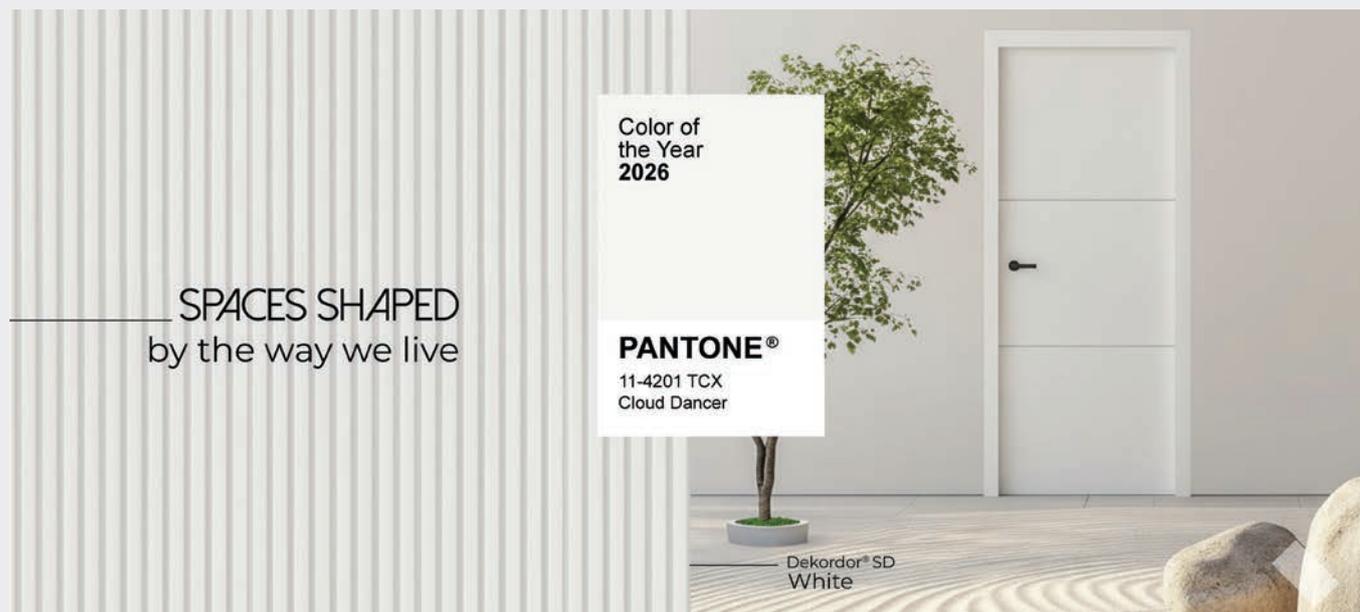
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## Vicaima reflects key décor trends in 2026



SPACES SHAPED  
by the way we live

**W**e 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 behavioral 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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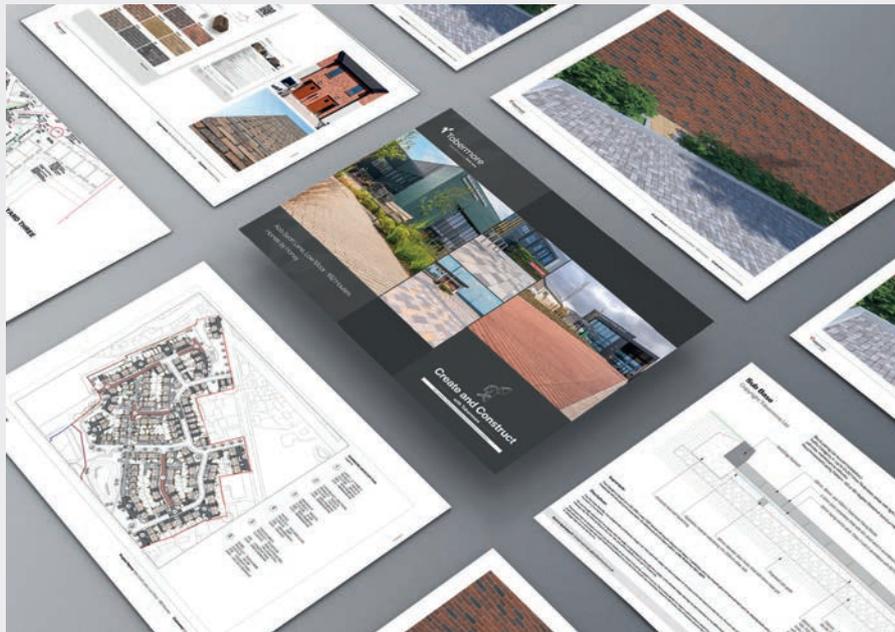


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## Create & Construct: Building confidence into every hard landscaping project



**D**esigning, specifying and building hard landscaping schemes for housing developments can be challenging. To help address this, Tobermore has introduced Create & Construct, a market-leading support hub for housebuilders. In the second article in our series, Krisa Montgomery, Housebuilding Team Leader at Tobermore, reviews more recent projects to illustrate how housebuilder and housing association teams have drawn on various aspects of the service to successfully tackle design, specification and construction challenges.

### BRINGING IDEAS TO LIFE

Working on a site with new builds and listed buildings adds complexity because hard landscaping materials must feel cohesive. At The Old Brewery in Salisbury, new housing was built alongside historic 15th-century listed buildings.

It was important that paving for pedestrian walkways and resident parking bays aligned with the historic appearance. However, visualising how products will look in situ can be difficult.

The project benefited from the visualisation and design tools available in Create & Construct. Using a 3D project visual from architect Barclay & Phillips, Tobermore presented a selection of paving options. This enabled developer Derek Warwick Developments to envision how the hard landscaping could complement the project.

Tobermore's timeless Tegula block paving in Charcoal was chosen for both the walkways and parking bays. Its antique appearance helped maintain the location's historic nature.

**DELIVERING INDIVIDUALITY WITH CONCRETE FACING BRICKS ON TIME AND ON A BUDGET**  
Housebuilders are under pressure to deliver

sustainable homes to tight budgets, and timescales. While Belmont Hall was no exception, Antrim Construction Company (ACC) embraced the idea of individuality, offering homes with a variety of finishes.

After comparing clay and concrete products, ACC chose Tobermore due to the quality and range of colours available. ACC expressed interest in incorporating a split stone product into their project. Tobermore provided a quote alongside a 'sample wall panel', which forms part of its Create and Construct service. The company decided to include Country Stone Walling alongside Tobermore Facing Bricks.

To guarantee Belmont Hall respected the natural environment, collaborating with a company committed to minimising environmental impact was paramount. Tobermore scored highly here by publishing independently verified Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs), which can be downloaded directly from the Create & Construct hub.

### STRENGTHENING A HISTORIC RETAINING WALL

Retaining wall design can be complex, especially when the work could impact surrounding businesses. To the rear of the Latches Close social housing was a 200-year-old masonry wall, which had become unstable and dangerous. The failing masonry wall had been braced with timber struts for 10 years, but had begun to move. The wall couldn't be taken down and replaced because there was a car sales business situated above it.

Clarion Housing Group contacted Engie to survey the failing wall and propose a solution. Engie consulted Tobermore's Civil Engineering Consultants, who provide 'Retaining Wall Design' as part of the Create & Construct approach. Tobermore proposed the Secura Grand Retaining Wall system to strengthen and

stabilise the existing wall, restoring land for residents and property managers.

"The free technical support provided on the complex Latches Close project was a great help," said Chris Smith, site manager, Engie.

### USING LAYING PATTERNS TO DELIVER FORM AND FUNCTION

Well-designed hard landscaping can help with wayfaring, add character and create delineated spaces for leisure and socialising. Berkley Group's The Green Quarter demonstrates how this can be achieved.

One of the UK's most biodiverse developments, the hard landscaping design needed to tie in with the local area. A functional yet aesthetically pleasing solution was required, ensuring commuter-friendly paving options.

Tobermore worked with architects, Applied Landscape Design and groundworker Kings Landscapes, throughout the design process. They provided complimentary paving visualisations, bespoke sample panels and laying patterns - services which all form part of Create & Construct.

This provided confidence in the final product selection. Artro's ability to create unique design patterns by seamlessly blending various colour tones adds originality and personality to the scheme.

As we've seen, Create & Construct helps take the hassle out of every stage of a hard landscaping project. It is free to use and combines 20 different services, encompassing everything from easy-to-use online tools to access to Tobermore's in-house design and technical teams.

Simply visit Create & Construct and move the slider to identify the services you need based on the stage of your project.

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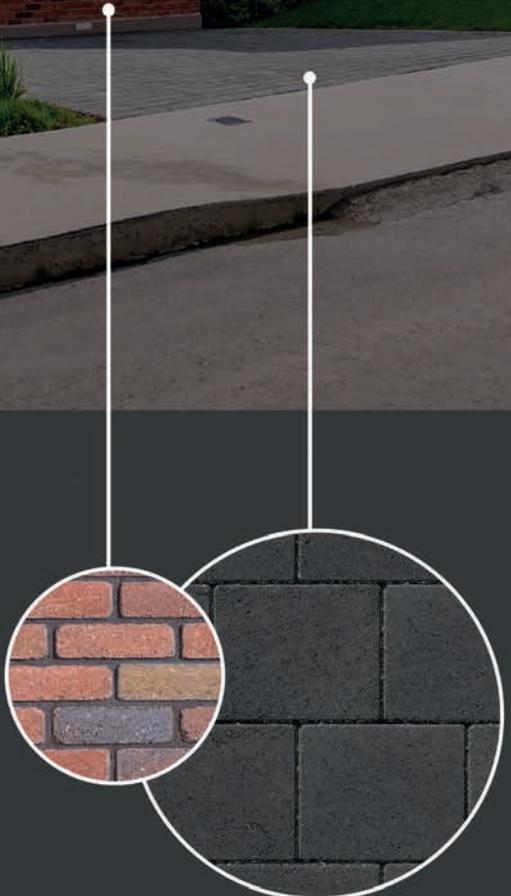
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## Marmox Thermoblocks insulate Tudor reconstruction

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. 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. Homeowner, Ben Hughes, commented: "In order to meet Building Regulations, we have gone for an insulated cavity wall with 150 mm of PIR insulation for the floor and roof, but when I was researching how to address the issue of thermal bridging at the floor wall junction, Marmox Thermoblock seemed to be the only targeted product solution. In terms of the loadings and the insulation values I am certain it will work well." 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." With a proven track record going back more than a decade, Thermoblocks are available in widths of 100, 140 and 215 mm and feature a unique design where two rows of high strength epoxy concrete mini-columns are encapsulated in sections of XPS (Extruded polystyrene).

[sales@marmox.co.uk](mailto:sales@marmox.co.uk) [www.marmox.co.uk](http://www.marmox.co.uk)

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**W** wienerberger

# What's next?

From blueprint to build, we're with you every step. Our technical know-how and trusted products support you to create homes of lasting value for the people who live in them. Let us be your partner in tackling today's challenges and supporting tomorrow's ambitions.



**Building for what's next**



# 30 YEARS OF LEGACY, AND STILL GROWING!

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

As the UK's most experienced open space management company, we take an award-winning approach that enhances biodiversity while building thriving communities.

With expertise in habitat management and ecological improvements we ensure compliance with Biodiversity Net Gain requirements - creating greener, more resilient spaces for generations to come.



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*All photos taken on Meadfleet managed open spaces.*

  
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OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT  
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