

building construction design

SPRING 2026

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Cover image: Tobermore
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Aico launches new 'Connected Home' City & Guilds Assured course



Aico, leading home life safety provider, is proud to announce the expansion of their award winning training courses with the launch of a brand new City & Guilds Assured course: The Connected Home.

Launching this February, the free, full-day course has been specifically designed for landlords and housing professionals. As the housing industry shifts towards data-driven solutions, this session explores how connected home hardware and software can provide meaningful data and actionable insights to strengthen compliance, protect residents, and support informed, proactive decision-making.

The course has been carefully refined through extensive pilot sessions with industry stakeholders, housing professionals, and internal colleagues. Feedback gathered during these sessions has ensured the content is both practical and relevant, with a strong focus on real-world challenges faced by housing providers. As a result, the training has been meticulously tailored to meet the sector's specific needs, while ensuring attendees remain up to date with the latest technologies in an evolving legislative landscape.

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY & LEGISLATION

The recent introduction of Awaab's Law has brought increased attention to indoor air quality, damp and mould, and the importance of proactive property

maintenance. With housing legislation evolving rapidly across the UK, connected home technology is becoming an essential tool for housing providers looking to demonstrate compliance, identify issues early, and improve resident outcomes.

Attendees will gain a comprehensive understanding of:

- Compliance: Navigating differing legislation and regulation across the UK, including Awaab's Law, and the requirements defined within these documents.
- HomeLINK Technology: A comprehensive overview of the capabilities and benefits of Aico's Internet of Things technology.



- Data and insights: Leveraging data-driven insights to enhance efficiency, compliance, and awareness, while maintaining responsible data practices.

This course provides a thorough overview of Aico's Connected Home Solution, covering everything from theory to practical application. Participants will be introduced to the HomeLINK Portal, gaining hands-on insight into how to effectively manage their portfolio and monitor data at scale.

- Navigation: Detailed walkthroughs of the Portal, SmartLINK App and Resident App.
- Management: Using Aico's Case Management system to assist with proactive maintenance.
- Installation: Technical guidance on system installation and device compatibility.
- Future-proofing: Insight into upcoming developments and technologies.

This City & Guilds Assured course offers housing professionals the opportunity to build confidence in connected home technology while gaining recognised accreditation that demonstrates commitment to professional development.

To register your interest in this invite-only course, please contact your local relationship manager at www.aico.co.uk/contact/.

01691 664 100 www.aico.co.uk

NEWS FEATURE



Tile specification and installation to avoid failure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NEWS FEATURE



Take advantage of the design opportunity in external porcelain tiles

Nick Bratt, National Technical Sales Manager at tile adhesive manufacturer Palace Chemicals says that the exterior porcelain tile sector provides a popular design opportunity for architects, but correct installation is key to achieving a good result.

The 20 mm thick exterior porcelain tile sector is currently one of the fastest-growing areas of the tiling market. Smaller housebuilders are leading this trend, using high-quality outdoor finishes to differentiate their offer from their competitors. Traditional concrete slabs are increasingly seen as outdated, offering limited aesthetic appeal and posing ongoing challenges in terms of maintenance and cleaning.

From an architect's point of view, the use of porcelain tiles allows for much more freedom in design, colour and style. The tiles can mimic natural stone or have any other aesthetic effect, but with the added benefits of being porcelain, which cleans more easily, is easier to maintain and offers better slip resistance than pavers. The trend is gaining significant traction among landscape professionals and is a hot topic on social media. Timber decking has increasingly been superseded by composite or porcelain alternatives, driven primarily by their durability and longer lifecycle.

The impervious nature of porcelain tiles does however necessitate a more considered installation approach. The convention is that you have to lay a minimum of 100 mm compacted hardcore, with a 50 mm bed of mortar and then the back of the porcelain has to be primed with a slurry bond coat to create a key between the tile and the mortar. However there are systems on the market, such as Palace Chemicals' own Rock-Tite system, which do all of that, but will also allow you to reduce your mortar bed depth to 25 mm, meaning less dig-out, less mixing and less material – and you also get a guarantee over the whole system.

From an architect's point of view, the design possibilities are endless. If you have dwarf walls, for example, in an outdoor hospitality area, which has been laid with porcelain tiles, you can have corresponding and matching 10 mm tiles on the vertical surfaces. For fixing you use an S1 tile adhesive which is suitable for outdoor use. All tile fixing has to be solid bedded (dot and dab is not acceptable). It is important to stop moisture getting behind the tile and causing damage. An SBR primer should also be used in order to create a key between the mortar bed and the tile vertical substrate.

If porcelain tiles are installed correctly, from a design point of view the potential is enormous, enabling the finish of the whole area to be completed in any colour and texture that you want!

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

Stannah Lifts delivers safer handling and enhanced efficiency at The Harris

The Harris in Preston, Lancashire, has significantly improved operational efficiency and staff safety with the recent installation of a Stannah dumbwaiter.

Faced with the frequent challenge of moving heavy and fragile items between floors, The Harris Cafe needed an efficient solution that would provide a dedicated internal access route, removing the need to manoeuvre goods through public areas.

First opened to the public in 1893, the Grade I listed building has stood as a cultural landmark in Preston for over 125 years, hosting world-class exhibitions and collections that have inspired generations.

The Harris has recently undergone a £19 million redevelopment designed to restore, reimagine and revitalise The Harris for the 21st century, creating a more welcoming and accessible environment while preserving its rich heritage.

The transformational Harris Your Place project has been possible thanks to the generous support of its funders and partners, including The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Preston City Council, the UK Government's Towns Fund, Arts Council England and Lancashire County Council, alongside contributions from trusts, foundations and individual donors.

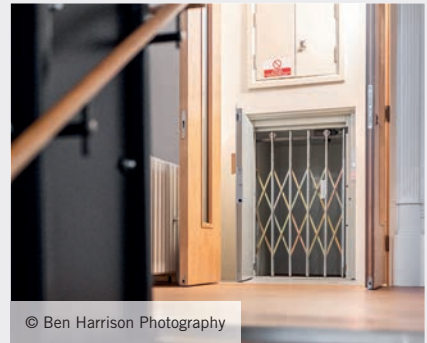
The work

The refurbishment project included repairing the building to restore its architectural appeal while upgrading its infrastructure for modern use. This involved refurbishing 18 galleries, a new cafe with the installation of a Stannah Microlift dumbwaiter, plus visitor shop and event venue, as well as improving accessibility and enhancing visitor experiences.

Accessibility has been central to the design, with new circulation routes and inclusive features ensuring that every visitor feels welcome and represented.

Preston City Council has led the project in collaboration with Conlon Construction Ltd, who oversaw the major structural works, and HUB Build, responsible for the interior fit-out. Buttress Architects served as lead architects for the restoration, while Ralph Appelbaum Associates developed the overall design strategy and visitor experience.

Direct Access provided accessibility consultancy to ensure inclusive design across



© Ben Harrison Photography

all spaces, with Ridge and Partners LLP and Focus Consultants supporting the project's delivery and quality assurance. Stannah Lifts managed the installation and provides ongoing maintenance of the dumbwaiter.

The solution

Stannah Lifts recommended a floor-level loading Microlift as the most effective solution for The Harris Cafe. Unlike traditional dumbwaiters that load at waist height, the floor-level Microlift allows items to be transferred directly on and off the lift using small trolleys, roll cages or pallets. The floor loading design significantly reduces the need for strenuous lifting and drastically lowers the risk of back injuries and other manual handling-related accidents. Its impact is being appreciated by staff.

The Microlift dumbwaiter features a galvanised steel supporting frame that can be erected quickly with minimal on-site building work and does not require a load-bearing shaft. With a 100 kg capacity, the Microlift 100B model provides fast and reliable transport of goods between floors, offering a cost-effective way to mitigate manual handling risks while improving operational efficiency.

To complement the surrounding environment, the Microlift car and landing entrances are finished in a durable grey baked-enamel coating, delivering both functionality and a clean professional appearance.

The results

The installation of the Stannah Microlift has delivered significant improvements in providing safe loading, transporting goods to the first and second floors of galleries

and exhibitions.

By providing a dedicated internal route for transporting heavy and fragile items between floors, the dumbwaiter has made it easier for staff to manoeuvre goods, reducing manual handling risks and improving safety.

Fitted with a modern VVVF (Variable Voltage Variable Frequency) drive system, the Microlift delivers improved energy efficiency without compromising performance or lifting power. This advanced drive technology ensures smoother operation, reduced power consumption and lower long-term running costs.

As a result, the Microlift now facilitates reliable and controlled movement of goods between floors while offering a quieter, more efficient and energy-efficient solution for the client's daily operations.

Timothy Joel, assistant director, head of culture for Preston City Council, shares: "The installation of the new floor-loading Microlift dumbwaiter from Stannah Lifts has greatly improved café operations and ensures safer handling of bulky items. It's safer for our staff, streamlines workflows, and allows us to focus on further improving operational efficiency."

With the redevelopment complete and operational logistics improved, The Harris is now better equipped to manage high visitor numbers and support its growing programme of exhibitions and events. As a result, the refurbished building is expected to attract an additional 100,000 visitors each year, building on its existing annual footfall of 350,000.

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

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."

01250 872 261 www.proctorgroup.com

Advanced launches SmokeGo: Complete smoke control made simple

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

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

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



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

Giving users complete confidence in performance and compliance, SmokeGo meets the highest industry standards, with

approvals to EN54 Parts 2 and 4, and full compliance with ISO 21927-9 and BS 7346-8.

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

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

0345 894 7000
advancedco.com/product/smokego

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Also, in September we successfully completed recertification by LRQA for ISO 9001, 14001 & 45001, which is a tremendous achievement and vital in



KAZ SPIEWAKOWSKI
MANAGING DIRECTOR, GEZE UK

Reflecting on 2025 and looking ahead.

assisting us operationally in a world where compliance and validation of compliance is critical to success.

LT: Were there any particular challenges in 2025?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Advanced to Showcase Connected Fire Safety Solutions at The Fire Safety Event 2026

Advanced will be exhibiting at The Fire Safety Event 2026, taking place from 28-30 April at the NEC, Birmingham, where the company will showcase its latest intelligent fire and life safety solutions designed to support safer, smarter buildings.

Visitors can find Advanced at Hall 4, Stand D85, where the team will be demonstrating a range of connected fire and life safety solutions, including SmokeGo, EvacGo and AdvancedLive.

SmokeGo, Advanced's new dedicated smoke control solution, has been developed to make smoke control simpler, faster and fully compliant across a wide range of applications. Approved to EN54 Parts 2 and 4, SmokeGo provides reliable automatic and manual control of smoke control fans and dampers, with intuitive configuration and clear system operation to simplify installation, commissioning and ongoing management.

Also on show will be EvacGo, Advanced's evacuation alert system designed to support



compliance with BS 8629 in residential buildings. Built using proven MxPro 5 technology, EvacGo provides fire and rescue services with clear, simple control of evacuation alert zones, supporting safe and effective evacuation strategies.

Throughout the event, the Advanced team will also be delivering live demonstrations of AdvancedLive, the company's secure, smart, real-time platform for monitoring and managing Advanced fire systems.

AdvancedLive provides users with complete system visibility anytime, anywhere via computer, tablet or mobile device, helping them monitor system status, receive real-time alerts and manage maintenance more efficiently. Visitors will also be able to preview further enhancements planned for the platform, designed to extend its role within smart, connected fire systems.

By bringing together fire detection, smoke control, evacuation and system intelligence, Advanced's presence at FSE 2026 will highlight how connected solutions can support improved visibility, faster response and more efficient compliance across modern buildings.

Advanced looks forward to welcoming visitors to Hall 4, Stand D85, where its team will demonstrate how connected fire safety solutions are helping to create safer, smarter built environments.

03458 947 000 advancedco.com

Marmox Thermoblocks insulate Tudor reconstruction



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

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BUILDING INSIGHTS

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Sustainability – Integration of smart technology into waterproofing

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

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

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

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

Delta's HLA Plus is a sophisticated high-water level alarm designed for real-time



remote monitoring in pumping stations (sump pumps). Its unique integrated software gathers data from pump systems, crucial in Type C, Cavity Drained Waterproofing Solutions. The system detects critical events instantly, allowing for immediate action prior and during mechanical failures.

Why do we need smart technology?

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

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

operation, especially near high water tables, is essential to prevent flooding.

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

Always happy to help

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

01992 523 523 info@deltamembranes.com



Vicaima reflects key décor trends in 2026

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

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

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

Clean design as the new spatial language

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

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

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



Natural and organic as an emotional response to excess

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

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

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

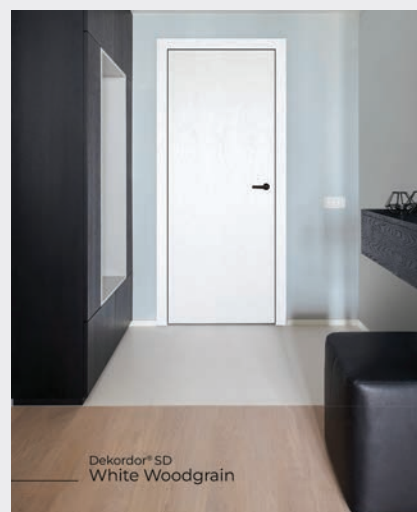
Customisation as the starting point for a complete experience

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

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

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

01793 532333 www.vicaima.com/en



Complete wetroom protection with Marmox

Waterproof floors, flexible basins, and integrated storage solutions for modern wetrooms

Designing wetrooms that stay dry, comfortable, and visually clean begins with selecting the right base. Architects, specifiers, and contractors need solutions that combine reliable waterproofing, thermal performance, and flexibility to accommodate a variety of layouts and project types. Marmox provides a complete wetroom system – featuring the reworked Showerlay, Multiboards, Tileable Basins, and Niches – offering a fully integrated toolkit for both residential and commercial applications.

At the heart of the system, the Marmox Showerlay forms a durable and adaptable foundation for any wetroom. Redesigned from the surface down, the panels now include a 100 mm fleece overhang, simplifying the formation of tanking joints between floors and walls for faster, more secure installation. Each panel is fully trimmable on all sides by up to 100 mm, making it simple to accommodate irregular layouts, tight corners, or unconventional spaces without compromising performance. The integrated drain system has also been upgraded to offer both convenience and design versatility. Architects and designers can now specify either point drains – centrally located or offset – or linear drains. Linear drains are available in a tileable version, providing a seamless appearance while maintaining high functionality. Drain grates come in a range of finishes including black, white, copper, gold, and stainless steel, allowing the wetroom's aesthetic to be tailored to the overall design scheme without sacrificing practicality.



Complementing the floor system, Marmox Multiboards provide waterproof, thermally insulated boards suitable for walls and floors. Lightweight yet robust, Multiboards are easy to cut and shape around corners, plumbing, and structural features, making them ideal for both new builds and refurbishment projects. By reducing condensation and supporting underfloor heating systems, they contribute to warm, comfortable, and energy-efficient wetroom environments. Multiboards' thermal performance ensures that floors remain comfortable underfoot while also helping to maintain consistent room temperatures.

For layouts requiring bespoke solutions, Marmox Tileable Basins provide both flexibility and style. Available in four

designs with consistent dimensions (770 x 485 x 100 mm), basins include either chrome or black bottle traps. The Infinity version conceals the drain completely, creating a smooth, uninterrupted surface, while the Linear Drain version channels water discreetly for a minimalist look. The Push Plug version allows traditional filling, and the Flat version doubles as a shelf, either standalone or in combination with other basins, offering practical options for creative layouts.

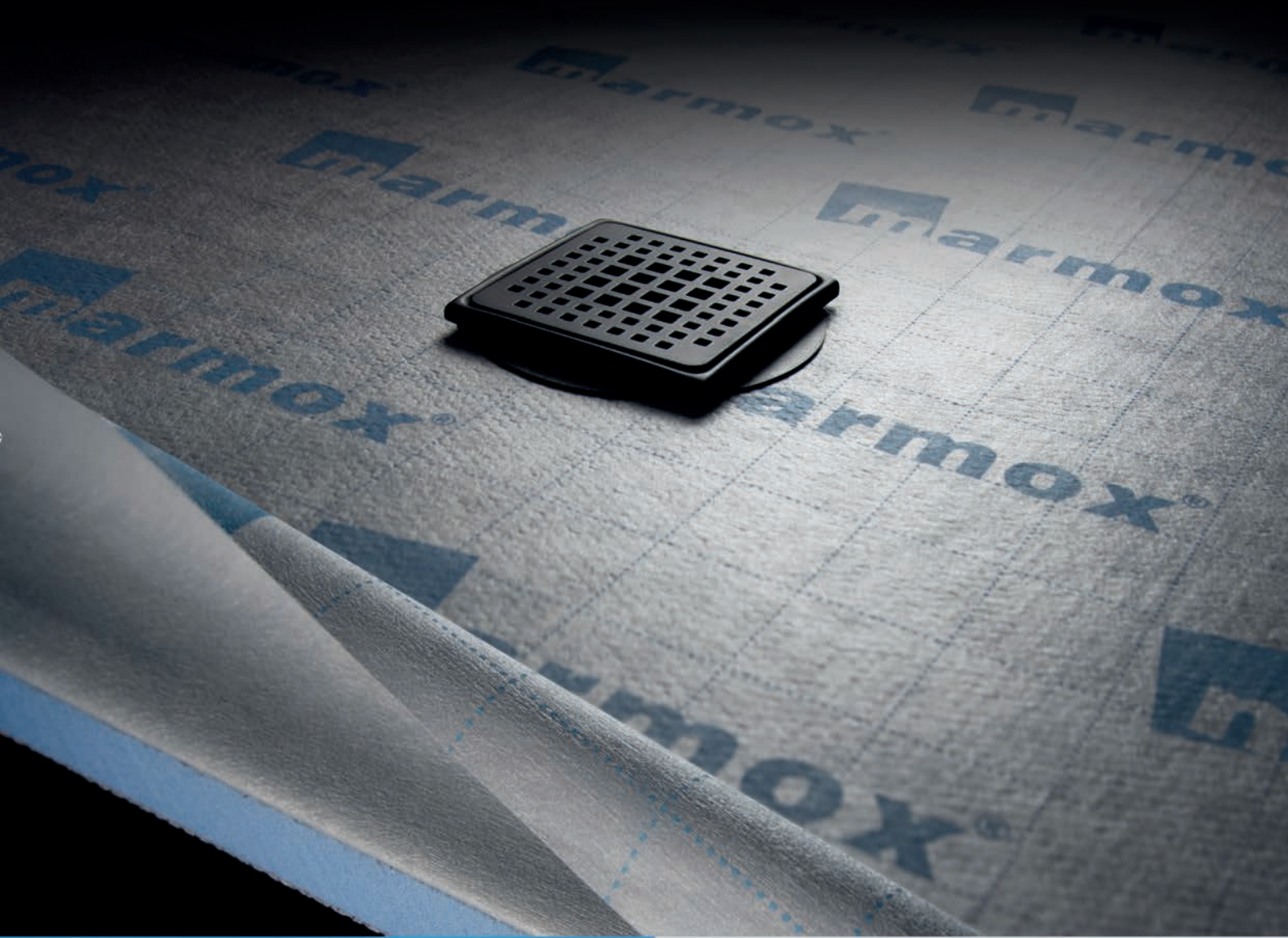
To complete the system, Marmox Niches provide integrated, stylish storage. Available in two sizes – 1200 x 400 x 150 mm and 600 x 300 x 100mm – these niches fit seamlessly into walls, offering practical solutions for toiletries, decorative elements, or accessories, and enhancing the overall wetroom design.

Together, the Showerlay, Multiboards, Tileable Basins, and Niches form a comprehensive, specification-ready wetroom solution. Flexible drainage options, trimmable panels, thermally insulated walls, and versatile accessories make it possible to design and install wetrooms efficiently while maintaining high standards of aesthetics and durability. Whether for a compact ensuite, a luxury wetroom, or a full bathroom renovation, Marmox ensures that every wetroom remains dry, comfortable, and built to last.



01634 835290
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Showerlay Wetroom System Reworked from the surface down



Fully waterproof. Engineered for modern wetroom layouts.



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E: sales@marmox.co.uk

EGGER supports housebuilders with product-specific EPDs

Underlining 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-

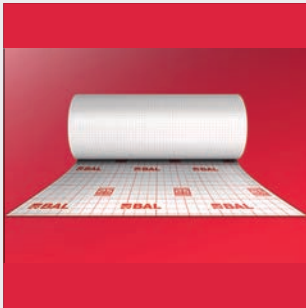
specific lifecycle information available at their fingertips, our customers can have confidence when it comes to accurate carbon modelling."

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 hard-wearing, 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.

01434 602191
to.egger.link/building

Introducing BAL Rapid-Mat in White – new colour, improved performance



BAL is pleased to introduce our improved BAL Rapid-Mat thin uncoupling mat - now in white.

This latest development provides the same trusted performance installers rely on for tiling onto problematic substrates with movement, with additional improvements to make every installation smoother and more efficient.

The move to a white mat – with red gridlines and markings - provides enhanced visibility for setting out plus easier to see wetting out of the adhesive, helping installers easily confirm full coverage during installation. Add to this the improved roll-out and mat stability, and you've got a system designed to speed up workflow without compromising reliability.

And the benefits don't stop there: the updated mat colour also delivers a 2.5% CO₂ reduction in the production of the non-woven fleece — a small change that supports our ongoing sustainability efforts.

BAL Rapid-Mat: a fresh new look, with all the performance you expect.

01782 591100 www.bal-adhesives.com/products/rapid-mat

Rocking CaberAcoustic for a quiet life



Favoured by specifiers who need to consider solutions to noise pollution in today's busy, building world, CaberAcoustic from **West Fraser** is a versatile, economical sound-reducing flooring system which reduces both impact and airborne transmitted sounds. It can be laid over concrete and timber floors and is available in 18 mm and 22 mm thicknesses. Recommended to be laid and fitted with D3 PVA glue in the tongue and groove joints, CaberAcoustic achieves 19 dB reduction in sound transference

when installed on its own; it reduces sound but will not completely proof buildings from the transference of sound. Greater reductions are reached when used within a system for noise transference reductions.

uk.westfraser.com

The opinions of the architectural community



As part of netMAGmedia's research offering, ADF has been increasingly harnessing the knowledge and views of its focused readership to produce 'Industry Viewfinder' white papers based on reader surveys.

These are documents which contain unique insights and data on a wide range of topics that are currently fuelling debate in the industry,

from Passivhaus to Part L. This audience research, providing real-world experience, provides us with the opportunity to better understand the needs of our readers and tailor our content accordingly.

insights.netmagmedia.co.uk/whitepapers

Senior supports landmark West Yorkshire regeneration scheme

The regeneration of a historic industrial building in Wakefield is anything but 'run of the mill' thanks to an inspired design by Hawkins/Brown and a high-performance fenestration package supplied by Senior Architectural Systems. Part of the group of buildings formerly known as Rutland Mills, which are located close to The Hepworth art gallery, the once derelict property has been given a new lease of life and a new name, with Gradient Mill now providing five-storeys of modern commercial office space.

The new Gradient Mill office building in Wakefield is the latest addition to the ambitious Tileyard North regeneration scheme which has created the UK's largest creative industries hub outside of London. The new building has been delivered by Morgan Sindall Construction, with Wakefield based specialist contractor Neu-Glass fabricating and installing Senior's SF52 aluminium curtain wall system, alongside the

manufacturer's patented PURE[®] aluminium windows and doors.

Combining a slim frame with strength and thermal efficiency, Senior's popular SF52 aluminium curtain wall system has been installed to the ground floor level alongside robust PURE[®] Commercial Doors that provide safe and secure access to the building. On the upper floors, large glazed openings have been created using Senior's low U-value PURE[®] aluminium windows which help to minimise heat loss and flood the offices with natural light to create a more comfortable interior space. Smaller window units have been installed to the top floor, which is open to the underside of the steel truss roof, echoing the character of the adjacent mill buildings and providing a dramatic, light-filled workspace.

The project team, led by Hawkins/Brown, has worked hard to repair and retain as much of the fabric of the original buildings as possible. It was vital that the new glazing



units complemented the nineteenth century architecture and a provided an efficient interface with the existing structure.

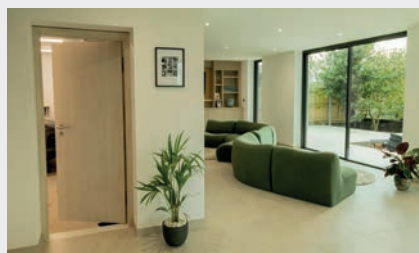
As a Yorkshire based business, Senior was well placed to meet the demands of such a large and complex contract as all of the company's products were manufactured in nearby Rotherham and Doncaster, for timely transportation to the site in Wakefield.

01709 772600 www.seniorarchitectural.co.uk

Hörmann delivers a complete door solution – inside and out

A contemporary renovation project in Leicestershire has been completed with the installation of a comprehensive suite of high-quality residential doors from Hörmann UK, showcasing the brand's ability to deliver cohesive solutions both externally and internally. The family home features a Hörmann sectional garage door and aluminium entrance door, complemented inside by a range of side-hinged, pocket, and fire doors.

Externally, the property features a Hörmann LPU42 double-sized sectional



garage door, designed with a 42 mm thick door leaf that delivers excellent thermal efficiency – making it an ideal choice for the integrated garage. For added convenience and security, the door is fully automated with a Hörmann Supramatic P motor, operated by two hand transmitters. The door is finished in elegant Silkgrain, perfectly complementing the home's modern architectural style, while the Agate grey (RAL 7038) colour harmonises seamlessly with the external cladding and overall material palette of the property.

A Hörmann ThermoSafe high-performance aluminium entrance door with a glazed side panel was selected to complement and match the style and premium finish of the sectional garage door. The door features a 73 mm thick leaf, delivering excellent thermal efficiency with ThermoSafe doors being able to achieve U-values as low as 0.8 W/(m²·K). Equipped with the latest multi-point locking systems, it provides enhanced security and peace of mind against forced entry and achieves acoustic



insulation of 30 dB. To harmonise with the garage door and the home's exterior aesthetic, the entrance door is finished in a silk matt Agate grey on both sides and features modern polished stainless-steel handles and concealed hinges for a flawless, contemporary finish.

Internally, the project was completed with a total of 12 Hörmann ProLine Duradecor doors, including nine side-hinged, two pocket, and a 30-minute fire door connecting the integral garage to the living area of the house. Constructed from high-quality timber materials with a vibrant, textured laminated surface, the doors deliver a clean, sophisticated finish that complements the home's modern interior design.

info@hormann.co.uk www.hormann.co.uk

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Avoiding overheating when using large glazing

HOW TO PREVENT OVERHEATING IN GLASS EXTENSIONS: EXPERT TIPS FROM SOLARLUX UK

From glass canopies and verandas to wintergardens, bifolding doors and curtain walling, glazed extensions are widely used in UK architecture.

Glazed extensions bring many functional and aesthetic advantages to a property. However, large areas of glazing can also raise the risk of overheating if they are not carefully planned. To reduce this risk, appropriate design and specifications should be implemented.

THE BALANCING ACT BETWEEN THERMAL EFFICIENCY AND OVERHEATING

The problem of overheating can be partly attributed to the high levels of thermal efficiency that the building regulations require. Large glazing features can contribute to increased interior temperatures by several degrees.

WILL A GLAZED EXTENSION BE TOO HOT OR COLD?

Solarlux wintergardens are engineered to ensure thermal comfort, quality and aesthetics. Our glass structures can include low-G glass, triple glazing, ventilation, shading, bifolding doors, sliding doors, heating, lighting and automation. Combined, these elements help to maintain a stable temperature throughout the year, whatever the weather.

OVERHEATING PREVENTION: WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN SPECIFYING LARGE GLAZING

Some of the most common pitfalls to avoid when specifying glazing are:

- Check the orientation of the glazing and its exposure to direct sunlight
- Specify Solar control glazing
- Consider external shading strategies
- Ensure adequate ventilation for cooling and moisture control
- Carry out thermal modelling



- Ensure compliance with Approved Documents L, F and O

"At Solarlux, our glazing systems are designed with aesthetics, comfort and performance in mind. By working with our specialist partners early in the planning process, architects and homeowners can achieve a perfect balance of light and thermal efficiency," says Jeevan Matharu, Marketing Manager at Solarlux UK.

info@solarlux.com www.solarlux.co.uk

Freefoam announces new box end fascia board for 2026

Freefoam 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

Proctor Group membranes used in next generation SIP technology

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

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



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

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

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

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



housing associations, and social housing providers in particular.

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

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

Certified Security Bollards from Hörmann

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

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

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



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

Durability and long-term performance are also a key consideration, with Hörmann bollards being manufactured using corrosion-resistant materials and robust construction methods, helping to reduce costs through low maintenance requirements and extended

service life. Automatic variants incorporate intelligent control systems and integrated heating, ensuring reliable operation in demanding environmental conditions often encountered in exposed urban locations.

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

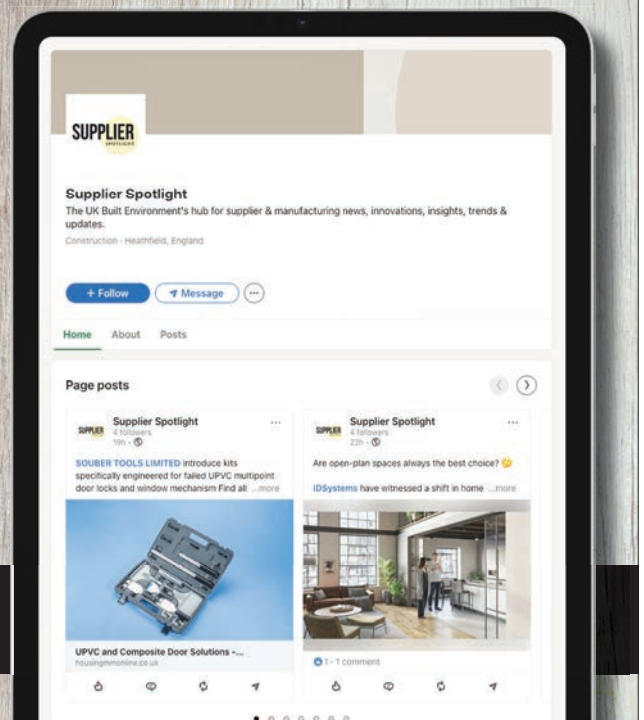
With decades of experience delivering industrial and commercial access solutions, Hörmann UK brings together German engineering expertise and local technical support to meet the complex needs of public sector clients. Its certified security bollards are already trusted across Europe, providing local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

01530 516868 www.hormann.co.uk

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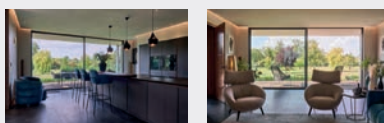
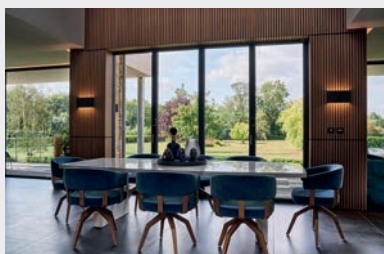
WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/SHOWCASE/SUPPLIER-SPOTLIGHT



Sliding doors and bifold doors bring the outside in

When Martin Shaw began building his dream home in the Bedfordshire countryside, he wanted the best quality for every element of the build. The picturesque spot, situated on what was a 2.5-acre paddock, is less than 100m from the River Great Ouse. To make the most of the beautiful views, Martin worked with Spectrum Architectural Glazing and Solarlux to create a highly glazed home that brought the outside indoors, while also ensuring adequate thermal performance and wind resistance for the exposed location.

Having used Solarlux products before, Martin knew about the high level of quality, performance and service he could expect. A combination of Cero III sliding patio doors, Highline bifold doors, and a bespoke glazed panel was used to create floor-to-



ceiling glazing across two storeys, providing clear views from the inside while delivering adequate thermal performance in the winter months.

"It's pure indoor-outdoor living," says Martin. "Even in winter, we can enjoy

the landscape in complete comfort without going out onto the balconies. The Solarlux sliding doors bring the outside in, and every window feels like a picture frame."

Solarlux's precision-engineered aluminium-frame systems offered the ideal combination of strength, weather resistance and elegance.

The Cero III profile incorporates a multi-chamber frame design, with internal brush seals and gaskets to manage air and water infiltration. As a result, the sliding doors can achieve watertightness up to Class 9A, as tested to EN 12208, equating to resistance against driving rain at pressures above 600 Pa, or wind speeds exceeding 100 km/h.

info@solarlux.co.uk
tinyurl.com/4t57ztdh

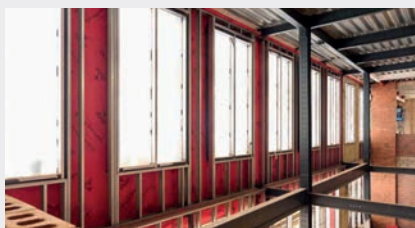
Wraptite® membrane helps to deliver building performance that will be everybody's cup of tea

More than 12,000 m² of a former tea factory is being transformed into a state-of-the-art broadcasting facility for the BBC – and Proctor Group's Wraptite® membrane is playing a part in bringing "a 100-year-old industrial building back to life for the next 100 years."

The former Typhoo factory presented a host of challenges that would not be encountered on a new-build project. Arguably one of the most important of those challenges to get right was finding a solution that could deliver a good standard of airtightness while protecting the traditional brickwork superstructure.

Wraptite provides a consistent airtight seal that contributes to meeting a project's airtightness target. Alongside that, it is also highly vapour permeable and allows the passage of moisture vapour out of the structure.

This is essential for avoiding any increase in condensation risk in buildings of all



types. It is also critical in existing buildings where the moisture transport properties of traditional masonry have to be preserved so the brick work can 'breathe' and properly dry out when wet. A vapour closed construction prevents masonry from drying to the inside and increases the risk of mould and eventual decay.

A typical new-build project sees Wraptite installed to the external face of a sheathing board that is fixed to the structural frame. Maintaining the outward appearance of the old tea factory and its existing brickwork meant applying Wraptite to the internal face

of the masonry.

The job of installing Wraptite in this relatively uncommon way fell to specialist contractors CG Reynolds, whose work package included the steel frame system, partitions and ceilings as part of the Category A fit out.

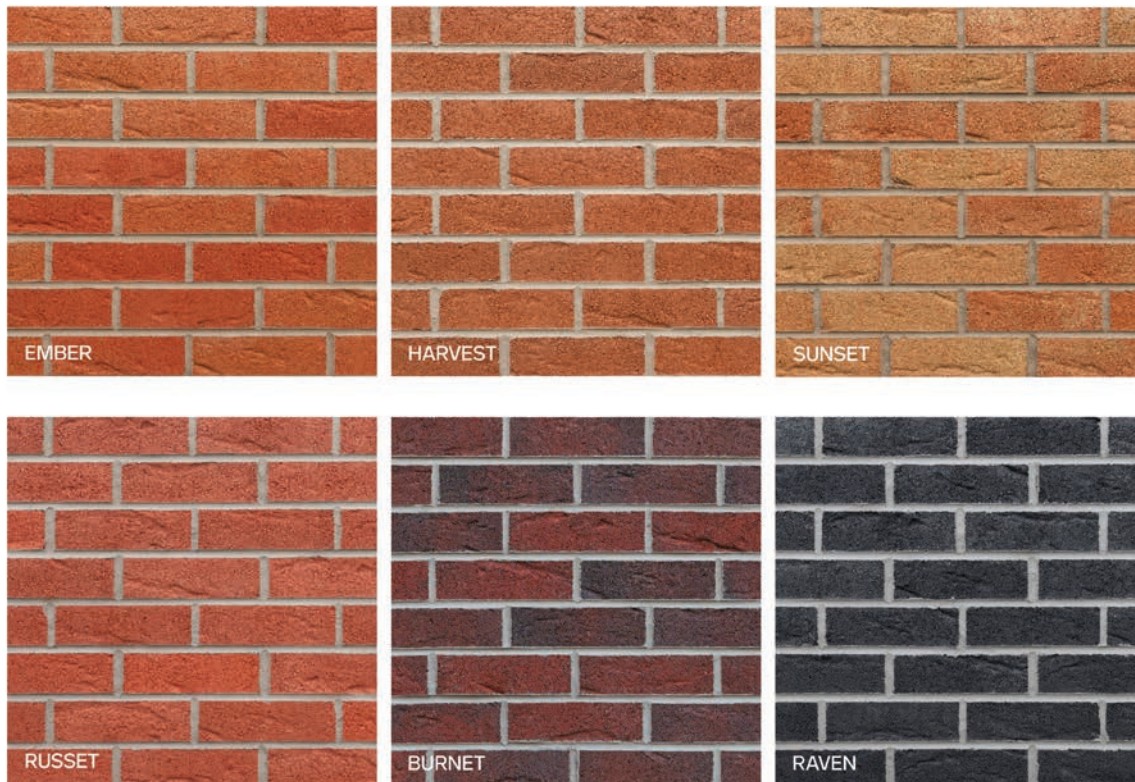
As a self-adhered membrane, a key feature of Wraptite is that it can be installed without the substrate needing to be primed.

"Proctor Group came to site a lot," said Steve Upton, operations director at CG Reynold. "They were proactive and gave a lot of support."

Broader support began in the earliest stages of the project and encompassed all aspects of the project team, starting with the architects. The Proctor Group technical team was involved with initial discussions about material choices.

01250 872 261
proctorgroup.com/products/wraptite

AG strengthens brick offering with clay-like range



AG, a Tyrone headquartered, manufacturer of low carbon paving and building products, has launched Heathfield, a new clay-like concrete brick range.

Developed by the team behind AG's market-leading Woodward range, Heathfield combines the authentic look of traditional clay bricks with the performance, cost-effectiveness, and availability of precision-engineered concrete.

Each brick is moulded directly from clay samples, with varied embossing applied across each slice offering 27 unique patterns to replicate the natural, irregular surface of clay.

This creates a non-repetitive, organic finish across elevations, delivering a timeless aesthetic while avoiding the common challenges of traditional clay.

Produced in the third generation company's state-of-the-art facilities using Enduur 1 advanced concrete technology, Heathfield offers enhanced strength, durability, UV resistance, and hydrophobic performance.

Two teardrop-shaped perforations also enhance density and structural strength compared with traditional three-holed bricks. With water absorption around 6% much lower than clay's 15-20%, and no soluble salts in the mix, Heathfield significantly reduces the risk of

efflorescence on site.

Cured with renewable energy, the range is more consistent in size than traditional clay, creating uniform bedding joints, sharper finishes, and quicker, more reliable installation while avoiding the uneven joints caused by warped, energy-intensive kiln-fired bricks.

Sustainably produced using aggregates from AG's own quarry, including limestone to enrich colour, the range delivers consistent tones throughout each brick. Currently offered in six traditional colourways, with more planned, the collection provides architects and developers with flexible design options across housing, education and commercial projects.

Building on the success of AG's Woodward bricks, named Responsible Product of the Year 2025 by Business in the Community, Heathfield delivers the same innovative, high-performance qualities as an alternative to traditional clay bricks.

Backed by a 60-year guarantee, Heathfield benefits from local production and reliable supply, with typical lead times of just 24 to 72 hours.

The newly launched range is also part of AG's broader portfolio of building products, including paving and walling solutions, providing specifiers and developers

with a complete, one-stop solution for external materials.

Commenting on the launch, AG CEO Stephen Acheson said: "The success of our Woodward range has helped shift market perceptions of concrete bricks. Through continued investment in research and development, we have built on that momentum to create a product that delivers the timeless aesthetic developers are seeking while addressing many of the challenges associated with clay bricks."

"Every element of Heathfield has been carefully considered to ensure a manufactured product can genuinely replicate the appearance of clay. We have worked closely with specifiers, bricklayers, and procurement professionals to understand the challenges faced on site and designed Heathfield to help overcome them. There is a growing appetite in the market to look beyond traditional materials in favour of solutions that deliver benefits across every aspect, from cost and availability to performance and sustainability, and we are proud to be at the forefront of this shift."

Samples of the Heathfield range are now available.

028 8952 1275
ag.uk.com



Heathfield



+ Every face
tells a story



Introducing **Heathfield**, AG's new perforated concrete facing brick with a creased, clay-like finish. Designed to capture the timeless character of traditional brickwork, without the compromises.

AG.UK.COM

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



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

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

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

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

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

colour) – a manufactured stone used for perimeter feature bands, totalling approximately 50 m².

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

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

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

Eurobrick has worked with A.E.P. for

more than 25 years, providing high-quality brick and stone slip systems for modular construction projects across the UK.

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

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

0117 971 7117

www.eurobrick.co.uk

Helping cash-strapped local authorities save thousands of pounds

Daniel Cheddie, founder and owner of Stronghold® Anchor, discusses removing the cost of scaffolding from high-rise maintenance and safety works.

Across the social housing sector, one challenge is becoming increasingly familiar. How do local authorities and housing associations deliver urgent safety-critical works in high-rise buildings when budgets are shrinking, access is difficult and residents rightly expect minimal disruption?

Having spent more than two decades working in fenestration, window installation and safe working at height, I've seen first-hand how access costs have quietly become one of the biggest barriers to progress. Too often, the cost and complexity of scaffolding delays essential window repairs, balcony upgrades and other facilities management tasks such as lift maintenance, or makes small but critical jobs financially unviable.

WHEN SCAFFOLDING BECOMES THE PROBLEM

Scaffolding has its place, but in many refurbishment scenarios it's simply overkill. Replacing one or two failed windows on a high-rise elevation can trigger scaffold costs running into tens of thousands of pounds, alongside weeks of planning, permits and disruption. In dense urban environments, buildings backing onto waterways, rail lines or public highways introduce additional complications that can make external access impractical or impossible for scaffolders.

Emergency situations highlight the issue even more starkly. A damaged or failed window in an occupied block, school or supported living scheme presents an immediate risk to everyone. Waiting days for scaffold procurement and installation is time that social landlords simply don't have.

That is precisely the problem I set out to solve with Stronghold®, which removes these barriers in scenarios where scaffolding becomes impractical or impossibly expensive. There are no permits to wait for and no external structures to erect. With trained operatives, the system can be assembled in under ten minutes by two people, allowing work to begin safely and securely almost immediately.

A SMARTER APPROACH TO HIGH-RISE WINDOW AND BALCONY WORKS

Stronghold is a self-contained internal safety system that allows window repairs and installations to be carried out entirely from inside the building. It safely spans openings of up to five metres, supports up to three engineers simultaneously and features secure anchor points that allow unrestricted movement while maintaining full harness protection.



Crucially for social housing providers, the system is fully tool-free and requires no drilling or fixings to walls or floors. That means zero damage to existing structures and no intrusive making-good works, an essential consideration in occupied homes.

It also enables a far more targeted approach. Instead of scaffolding an entire elevation or floor, teams can address only the windows or balconies that require attention, supporting phased refurbishment programmes that align with available budgets.

DELIVERING REAL SAVINGS

The benefits are not theoretical; they are being delivered on social housing projects. Clarion Housing Group, for example, has used the Stronghold on projects and it has saved them thousands of pounds. At Lakeview, a dangerous kitchen window on the seventh floor required urgent replacement and traditional access options were quickly ruled out, with scaffolding for a single window estimated at around £6,000 and a MEWP was not viable due to restricted access.

Using Stronghold, the installation team were able to complete the work safely and efficiently

from inside the property. The system was installed in minutes within a small kitchen, providing full external reach while maintaining complete control of the replacement frame and tools through integrated tethering and harness attachment points. The result was a safe installation, significant cost savings and minimal disruption for the resident.

BUDGET FLEXIBILITY WITHOUT COMPROMISING SAFETY

When access costs exceed the value of the work itself, the economics simply do not stack up. For local authorities dealing with tight budgets, short timelines and challenging access conditions, Stronghold offers a solution that prioritises safety, compliance and resident wellbeing, while delivering genuine financial and operational flexibility.

As the sector continues to grapple with competing demands and increasing scrutiny, solutions that reduce cost without compromising safety will be essential. From my perspective, removing unnecessary scaffolding from high-rise maintenance is not just a saving, it is a smarter way forward for social housing.

01992 302133 www.stronghold-anchor.com

Tobermore launches Create & Construct hard landscaping support service

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

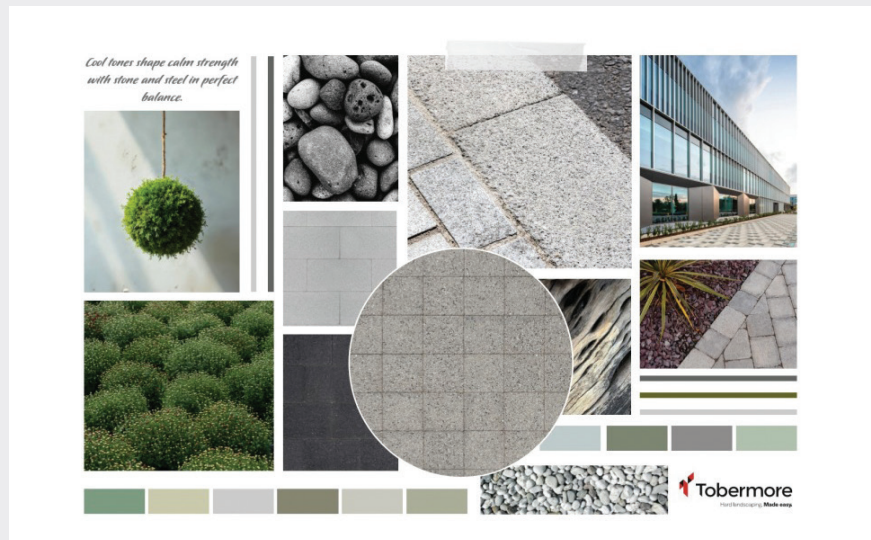
The service is designed to give landscape architects, architects, civil engineers, local authority teams and groundworkers access to a comprehensive range of tools, services, resources and advice at every stage of their project.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Create works in conjunction with Construct, which is designed to help contractors and installers take projects

from tender through construction to post completion. It includes services to ensure construction and installation are correct, help solve technical challenges, and answer maintenance and care questions for the finished project.

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

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