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August 2026

SCAN ME

Designing walls for a tighter regulatory climate – P34

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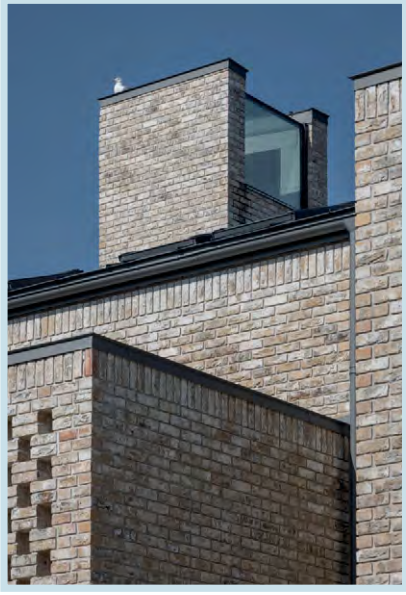
KD1

on the cover

Kate Painter, Strategic Marketing Manager – Specification at **wienerberger UK & Ireland**, explores how tightening regulatory demands are reshaping wall design, highlighting the need for clearer system thinking, robust data and a more coordinated approach to compliance. **See page 34 for further details.**



welcome...

...to the August issue of ABC&D magazine...

This month's architectural studies both focus on female-centred usage, beginning with a deep delve into Adam Richards Architects' design for St Raphael's Health & Wellbeing Centre at Mayfield Girls School in East Sussex (P. 04). The Centre is the world's first new building to combine a cross-laminated timber structure with a natural limestone brick masonry outer wall, and sets a new benchmark for environmentally responsible health architecture.

Our second project article explores Brooke House by GRID architects – a new affordable residential development for women on behalf of Women's Pioneer Housing in Acton (P. 10). The scheme delivers 102 affordable homes that have been specifically tailored to the needs of single women in London.

August's Hot Topic sees Rekha Thawrani make the case for change in supply chain relationships on P. 16; Richard Hilson explores how architects and specifiers are successfully implementing security into design on P. 21; Dr Phil Wu looks at why solar has the potential to make a huge difference to commercial buildings on P. 26; and on P. 30, Portakabin offers advice on tackling the education maintenance backlog.

Kate Painter examines how tightening regulatory demands are reshaping wall design on P. 34; Simon Wilson looks at the critical role of access control in healthcare environments on P. 40; and on P. 44, Mike Jones explains how basements can provide a cost-effective option for both businesses and landlords if managed correctly.

...from all at ABC&D...

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Photography: Lorenzo Zandri

a new typology for school *healthcare*

***Adam Richards Architects** has completed St. Raphael's Health & Wellbeing Centre at Mayfield School, East Sussex. The purpose-built facility integrates medical treatment, counselling and teaching within a single, sustainable building.*

Reflecting the practice's commitment to innovation and sustainable design, the project is the world's first new building to combine a cross-laminated timber (CLT) structure with a natural limestone brick masonry outer wall. It marks a new benchmark for environmentally responsible health architecture....

Mayfield is a Catholic boarding and day school for more than 350 girls, founded in the 19th century and centred on a restored medieval palace. Pastoral care is fundamental to its ethos, expressed in the school's philosophy, "walk beside the girl". Recognising the growing national need for high-quality health buildings across the UK, the school commissioned St Raphael's in spring 2020 as a dedicated centre that supports both mental and physical wellbeing.

Fully operational since September 2024, the centre replaced the school's former infirmary and has been a great success, used daily by up to 10% of pupils. It serves as a safe haven, providing medical treatments, wellbeing check-ins, confidential conversations, school counselling, life skills education, and personal development for ages 11-18.

Adam Richards Architects' design for St. Raphael's adopts a clear site strategy that gathers the existing buildings behind

Sustainability is embedded throughout: the CLT structure lowers embodied carbon, the limestone can be reused, and the building is fully electric. This is a building that speaks to people's hearts; it's open and welcoming, but also safe and consoling...

Adam Richards

into a coherent ensemble, creating the sense of a walled town set against the landscape. The building's form is inspired by Renaissance fortifications and medieval monasteries'. To the north, a long limestone wall establishes a defined edge and forms a new gateway to the school. To the south, a new planted courtyard is shaped by a cloister-like glazed corridor and a deep, canopied bench that offers shelter from prevailing winds and creates a calm, sunlit threshold.

At the centre of the plan, a communal kitchen forms the social heart of the building, anchored by a long custom-designed table designed by Adam Richards and handmade by Sussex joinery workshop, Fisher Morrisson. This space opens onto a secluded "secret garden", a tranquil green space overlooked by all treatment and counselling rooms, ensuring access to light and air while maintaining privacy. A sequence of thresholds and smaller transitional spaces allows pupils to move gradually from the activity of school life into a quieter, more protected environment.

The centre includes counselling rooms, a treatment room, an isolation room and a four-bed dormitory, supported by a generous reception area. Designed to be welcoming, discreet and non-threatening, the building also functions as an informal refuge, a place where pupils can pause, share a hot chocolate and recharge.

The interiors adopt a domestic sensibility, expanding the language of care beyond clinical norms. Warm timber linings, soft daylight and calm proportions create an atmosphere that is hygienic without feeling clinical. Curved forms and rounded detailing, from lighting to built-in seating, draw on a cloister's curved form whilst contributing to acoustic softness and spatial comfort. Adam Richards Architects also sourced all furniture for the project, ensuring consistency in material quality, durability and tone throughout.

St. Raphael's is constructed from natural, non-hazardous materials and designed as an all-electric building to minimise both embodied and operational carbon. The cross-laminated timber (CLT) frame replaces conventional steel or concrete, significantly reducing embodied carbon while sequestering carbon over the building's lifespan. Internally, the timber structure is left exposed wherever possible, reducing the need for additional finishes and associated material use.

The limestone bricks, developed by Polycor, are laid in lime mortar to enable

future disassembly and reuse, and their manufacturing process is substantially less carbon-intensive than fired clay brick. These pale stone elevations establish a material dialogue with the school's historic buildings while contributing to high thermal performance. Air-source heat pumps and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery further support long-term energy efficiency and environmental responsibility.

The single-storey building occupies a previously underused part of the campus, formerly home to temporary structures and parking. Its siting preserves the historic core of the school while rationalising and improving access across this part of the site. The scheme introduces level, wheelchair-accessible entry, clearer pedestrian routes and direct ambulance access, and keeps close proximity to the sports pitches. The practice has worked with the school since 2019, initially developing a feasibility study and campus masterplan.

With St. Raphael's, Adam Richards Architects' establishes a new sustainable design model for school health provision, showing how contemporary architecture can support student wellbeing.

Adam Richards of Adam Richards Architects, said: "Across the UK there is a growing need for spaces that support young people's mental and physical wellbeing in an integrated way. With St. Raphael's, our ambition was to create a building that is both technically progressive and deeply contextual, while responding to the historic setting while expressing a confident contemporary identity.

"The project demonstrates how architecture can support wellbeing. Natural materials and soft daylight create a calm atmosphere, while the plan balances privacy with openness and connects every room to light, air and garden space. Sustainability is embedded throughout: the CLT structure lowers embodied carbon, the limestone can be reused, and the building is fully electric. This is a building that speaks to people's hearts; it's open and welcoming, but also safe and consoling."

Richard Gordon, Bursar at Mayfield School, said: "Pupil wellbeing has, for a number of years, emerged as a critical issue in education. Wellbeing was therefore at the heart of the school's brief and ARA's subsequent design proposals responded entirely to our needs.

Adam Richard Architect's deeply thoughtful approach to Mayfield as a whole, and our wellbeing centre as a project, is a 'game-changer' and has raised the bar significantly for future projects."

Deborah Bligh, Headmistress at Mayfield School, said: "It has been truly rewarding to witness the continued development of our wonderful St. Raphael's Centre over the past year. This dedicated space has become an inclusive and welcoming environment where all our pupils can feel supported and valued."

External images: Jack Hobhouse

supporting single women *in london*

Brooke House, a new residential development by ***GRID*** *architects, has completed in Acton, west London, delivering 102 100% affordable homes for women on behalf of Women's Pioneer Housing (WPH) in partnership with L&Q. The 15-storey building replaces an outdated estate of 39 flats with a significantly expanded and future-facing housing offer, tailored to the needs of single women in London...*

Located on Gunnersbury Lane, the scheme provides 100 one-bedroom and two two-bedroom homes, more than doubling the capacity of the original site while substantially improving living standards. All homes meet contemporary space standards, are accessible and adaptable over time, and are supported by shared amenities that promote wellbeing and a sense of community.

Developed in close consultation with residents, the project directly addresses the shortcomings of the previous accommodation, where units fell below minimum space standards and offered limited accessibility. At Brooke House, all existing residents have been offered a new home, with apartments that are significantly larger, dual aspect, and better suited to independent living as needs evolve. Ten homes are fully wheelchair accessible, while features such as lifts, step-free access and dedicated mobility scooter storage support an ageing resident profile.

The scheme is underpinned by a clear social ambition: to provide safe, secure and affordable homes for women who might otherwise be excluded from the housing market. Women's Pioneer Housing, founded in 1920 by suffragists, continues its long-standing mission to support single women through access to high-quality housing. Brooke House reflects this legacy in a contemporary context, responding to ongoing challenges around affordability, housing insecurity and access

The ambition from the outset was to replace outdated accommodation with homes that are not only larger and more efficient, but genuinely supportive of long-term, independent living...

Colin Veitch
GRID Director

to suitable accommodation for single occupants in London.

Architecturally, the building is composed as a series of interrelated forms, with a 15-storey central element flanked by lower wings that respond sensitively to the surrounding landscape and neighbouring buildings. The material palette draws on the local context, combining red brick with lighter horizontal bands of reconstituted stone to create a cohesive and legible façade. The design references the nearby Art Deco Gunnersbury Court through its symmetry, expressed entrances and carefully detailed brickwork, while establishing a distinct identity appropriate to its civic role.

A key aspect of the scheme is its landscape-led approach. The majority of existing mature trees have been retained, informing both the massing of the building and the organisation of external spaces. A series of gardens – including sensory, activity and woodland zones – provide opportunities for residents to spend time outdoors, while a communal roof garden offers accessible planting areas above the tree line. Together, these spaces support both social interaction and quieter moments of retreat, contributing to residents' physical and mental wellbeing.

The development adopts a low-energy strategy, incorporating air source heat pumps, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR), photovoltaic panels and waste water heat recovery systems. The building is fully electric, with no reliance on gas, and is designed to reduce operational energy use while improving comfort and air quality.

Delivered by HG Construction, the project was completed ahead of programme and reflects a collaborative approach between client, design team and delivery partners. Brooke House is conceived as long-term social infrastructure – balancing density with dignity, and addressing both immediate housing need and the evolving requirements of its residents.

Project lead and GRID director, Colin Veitch, said: "Brooke House is the result of a highly collaborative process with Women's Pioneer Housing, L&Q and the wider project team, shaped through ongoing dialogue with residents. The ambition from the outset was to replace outdated accommodation with homes that are not only larger and more efficient, but genuinely supportive of long-term, independent living. It's rewarding to see that realised in a building that improves day-to-day life while contributing positively to the wider neighbourhood."

Save Space. Divide Space. Transform Space.

KD200

*From compact homes and adaptable workplaces to hospitality and commercial environments, every space is expected to deliver more. Architects, designers and developers are looking beyond conventional solutions, embracing products that improve functionality while enhancing the overall design. At **ECLISSE**, this philosophy is captured in three simple ideas: Space Saving. Space Dividing. Space Transforming...*

Space Saving begins with intelligent door systems that maximise every square metre. Pocket door systems remove the need for a traditional door swing, freeing up valuable floor space and creating more efficient layouts. Whether specified for residential or commercial projects, they offer greater flexibility in furniture placement, improved circulation and a cleaner, more open feel.

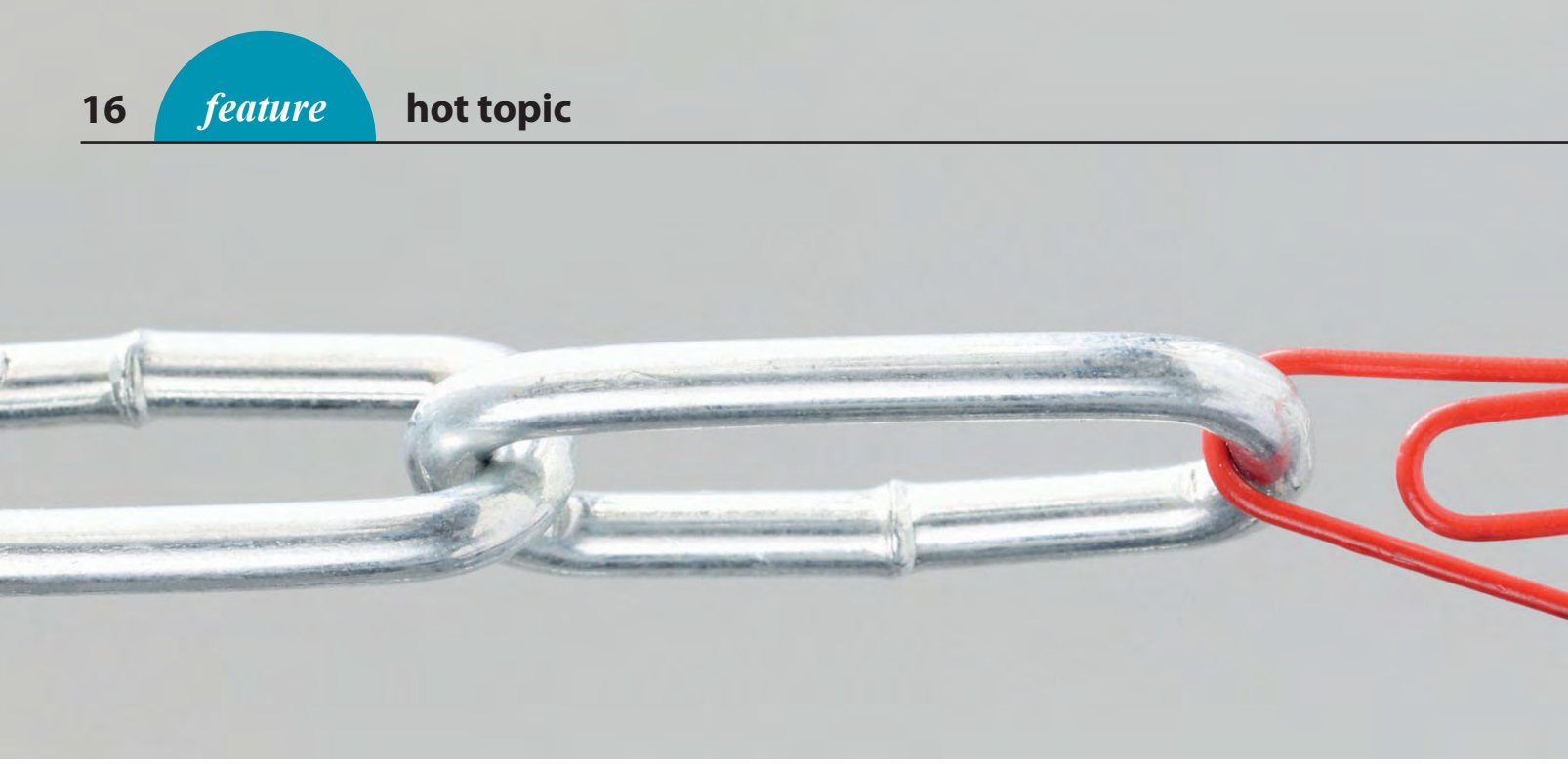
Space Dividing is about creating interiors that adapt to the needs of the people using them. As open-plan living continues to evolve, the ability to define spaces without permanently closing them off has become increasingly valuable. Sliding door systems provide the flexibility to separate or connect rooms as required, supporting everything from hybrid working and multi-generational living to collaborative office environments and hospitality spaces. The result is an interior that can respond effortlessly to changing needs throughout the day.

Space Transforming focuses on the finer details that elevate a design. Flush hinged doors create uninterrupted wall lines and a refined architectural finish, allowing doors to blend seamlessly into their surroundings. By reducing visual clutter and emphasising clean, minimalist detailing, they transform the perception of a space while maintaining the practical performance expected in modern buildings.

Together, these door frame solutions demonstrate that doors are no longer simply functional building components. They are integral to the way a space is experienced, influencing movement, flexibility and visual harmony. By considering how spaces are saved, divided and transformed, designers can create interiors that work harder without compromising on aesthetics.

As the industry continues to prioritise adaptable, high-performing spaces, ECLISSE remains committed to providing innovative door systems that support both creativity and functionality. Because exceptional interiors aren't just defined by how they look – but by how intelligently they work.

www.eclisse.co.uk



from adversarial to aligned – the case for change in supply chain relationships and why collaboration can't wait

Strong supply chain relationships have always been central to successful construction projects. Yet new research suggests that, despite decades of industry effort, adversarial behaviours remain deeply embedded and continue to undermine delivery. ***Rekha Thawrani*** *OBE, Global Director at NEC Contracts explains how trust and collaboration are now construction's most valuable assets...*

The construction sector has never been short of challenges, but a new global research report from NEC Contracts suggests that one issue sits at the heart of many of them: the way supply chains work together. Trust, Contracts and Outcomes: A Global Study of Construction Supply Chain Relationships is one of the most comprehensive investigations to-date of how trust and collaboration shape project outcomes and where the industry believes improvement is most urgently needed. The findings are both a wake-up call and a roadmap for change.

A sector under pressure

The report draws on the views of more than 1,000 built environment professionals across the UK, Australia, Peru, Singapore and Hong Kong, and confirms what many experience daily: that project delivery remains inconsistent.

Respondents estimated that only 58% of projects they had worked on in the past three years were delivered on schedule and to budget. This means more than four in ten projects missed at least one of these fundamental measures of success. The feedback mirrors findings from a recent Guardian survey of senior UK council officers in which 64% reported delays on building projects.

Three key drivers of instability were identified in the NEC research: poor estimating and job costing (42%), uncontrolled scope changes (39%), and late payment culture (33%). These issues are not new, but the data shows how significantly they continue to affect performance.

Moreover, the fact that parties often operate competitively rather than cooperatively is also widely acknowledged.

Globally, 61% of respondents agreed that built environment supply chains are inherently adversarial. Interestingly, public sector respondents were slightly more optimistic, with 49% agreeing that supply chains are adversarial and 56% agreeing that disputes are inevitable, suggesting that exposure to more collaborative approaches may already be shifting attitudes.

UK data in the report highlights particular pressure points. 63% of UK architects stated that formal external dispute resolution had been necessary often or very often in the past five years – more than double the global average of 26%. Meanwhile, 59% of UK main contractors identified late payment as their single biggest source of instability, the highest figure recorded in any market.

Trust and collaboration: valued but inconsistently practised

Despite these challenges, the research reveals a strong and consistent belief in the value of collaboration. 83% of respondents agreed that trust is critical to successful project outcomes, 81% said higher levels of collaboration help resolve issues more quickly, and 78% agreed that the most effective supply chain relationships are built on trust and cooperation.

The main factors that help minimise disputes were highlighted as effective communication (48%), clear boundaries and processes agreed from the start (39%), positive supply chain relationships built on trust and cooperation (34%), and contracts that support transparency and risk-sharing (34%). In the UK, strong client leadership also featured prominently.

Collaborative contracts: clear benefits, limited adoption

One of the most important findings is the gap between positive attitudes toward collaborative contracting and actual uptake. Across all respondents, 33% had worked on a project using collaborative contracts, 9% said their organisation actively requires their implementation, and 79% of those familiar with them feel positive about wider adoption.

Among those with experience, the perceived benefits are significant. 76% say collaborative contracts help protect their business, 74% say they improve delivery timescales, 71% say they reduce legal disputes and improper risk allocation, and 69% say they improve project profitability.

Yet awareness remains uneven. In the UK, 20% had never heard of collaborative contracts, the highest figure across all markets, and only 27% had worked on projects using them. Public sector awareness was higher (67%), though only 19% had direct experience.

The client's pivotal role – especially for local authorities

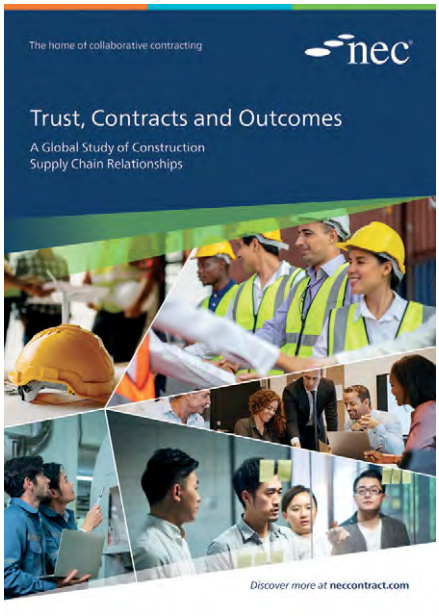
It is evident that client organisations overwhelmingly determine contract form. Around 70% of respondents said they operate primarily within traditional contract frameworks, driven largely by client specification.

For local authorities who are already under pressure to deliver more within constrained budgets, this represents both a responsibility and an opportunity. Where public sector clients have adopted collaborative contracting consistently, the effects have been felt across entire supply chains: fewer disputes, better delivery outcomes and stronger long-term relationships.

A moment for change

With industry demonstrating a clear appetite for collaboration, and the extensive training and support available, the conditions for change are in place. The message is unmistakable: more effective supply chain relationships are not just desirable; they are essential to meeting delivery challenges ahead. Better relationships build better projects, and the moment to act is now.

To download Trust, Contracts and Outcomes: A Global Study of Construction Supply Chain Relationships, visit ***www.neccontract.com/insights-supply-chain***



Stocksigns
www.stocksigns.co.uk

Stocksigns has embarked on a collaboration with the Lighthouse Charity to make essential wellbeing support more visible on site through a dedicated signage range.

For 70 years, the Lighthouse Charity has been providing emotional, physical and financial wellbeing support to construction professionals and their families across the UK and Republic of Ireland.

The Stocksigns range of impactful signage, designed to stand out in busy construction site environments, covers the areas of mental wellbeing, physical health, and financial stress, and reminds individuals that support is always available and that reaching out is a positive and encouraged step. Each sign features the Lighthouse Charity's 24/7 helpline numbers for both the UK and ROI, ensuring that anyone who needs help can access it quickly and easily.

KD202

UK Construction Week Birmingham
www.ukconstructionweek.com

As the industry enters a defining period, organisers of UK Construction Week Birmingham (NEC, 29 September to 1 October) have unveiled a bold new theme for this autumn's three-day show – The Construction Reset.

Centred around three core themes – Building Better, Building Smarter and Building Responsibly – UKCW Birmingham will present a clear focus on the issues and opportunities that matter most to construction today.

Central to The Construction Reset will be a refreshed Main Stage programme, bringing together industry leaders, policymakers, clients, contractors, manufacturers and innovators to showcase what's already working, where real progress is being made and the practical actions that can accelerate delivery, improve productivity, drive sustainability and unlock growth.

Martin Hurn, UKCW Birmingham Editorial Director, said: "Based on feedback from our visitors, exhibitors and partners, we're transforming the event from a traditional exhibition into a more connected, curated marketplace where the industry comes together to do business, discover innovation, build relationships and share practical solutions.

"At the heart of The Construction Reset at UKCW Birmingham will be connecting all of the elements of the supply chain to drive us forward - clients, contractors, consultants and suppliers."

Sponsored by Wyre, HotelPlanner and Build Warranty, UKCW Birmingham will feature over 250 leading brands; 200 speakers and over 150 hours of CPD accredited seminars across four stages, alongside a series of built-for-purpose sections.

Face-to-face networking remains at the heart of the multi award-winning show, including insightful industry roundtables and meet the buyer sessions in the Build Connect Networking Lounge, with the exhibitor floor bringing it all together as visitors connect directly with suppliers and partners.

KD203

Kirklees Council
https://businesskirklees.com/thrive/

A start-up scheme supporting new businesses and entrepreneurs by helping them turn their ideas into reality is back after a successful first year.

Thrive is a fully funded, specialist start up programme supporting health, wellbeing and life science innovator and entrepreneurs at an early stage of their innovation journey. It is part of the Huddersfield Health Innovation Incubator (HHII), and is run in partnership with Kirklees Council, the University of Huddersfield and 3M Buckley Innovation Centre (3MBIC).

The first Thrive cohort delivered as part of the HHII programme began in October 2025, supporting 17 entrepreneurs through a structured programme of workshops, mentoring and presentation to their fellow participants, professionals and mentors. Participants also benefitted from funded co-working space at The Glass Box, creating a collaborative environment where ideas could be tested and refined.

Building on this success, a new group of budding entrepreneurs have joined the second Thrive programme which started in April 2026.

David Shepherd, Executive Director for Place, said: "The ongoing demand for Thrive from early stage start-ups is testament to the success of the programme to date Thrive is a key part of wider regional efforts to foster innovation and entrepreneurship within the health and wellbeing sector across West Yorkshire, and complements wider plans to establish a health innovation district in the Station to Stadium Enterprise Corridor, anchored by the University's National Health Innovation Campus.

"Each Thrive participant is assigned a dedicated mentor, carefully selected to provide tailored guidance aligned with their individual business needs. This personalised support ensures that participants receive the expertise required to advance their projects.

"As many founders are at the early stages of their entrepreneurial journey, Thrive provides a structured environment to turn their ideas into a sustainable business, help them grow and provide opportunities to expand their workforce and create more jobs the area."

Sonya Braddock, Founder of Mindfit, was from the first Thrive cohort programme. Sonya's business, delivers mental fitness and performance training for individuals, leaders, and organisations who want to think clearer, manage pressure better, and perform at their best without burning out.

"I joined Thrive because I reached a point where I knew I needed more than passion and instinct. The standout part of this experience for me has been working with my business mentor. He's helped me make sense of my messaging, sharpen my focus, and put structure and strategy around my vision. The clarity I now have around direction, planning, and next steps has been transformative."

KD204

Style Group acquired by dormakaba to support future growth

Style Group has been acquired by dormakaba and will become part of the company's Global Movable Walls business. The acquisition marks an important milestone for Style, strengthening its position for future growth while ensuring complete continuity for customers and partners.

For customers, it is very much business as usual. Style will continue to operate under its existing name, with the same experienced team, the same customer contacts and the same commitment to delivering industry-leading movable wall solutions, installation, service and aftercare throughout the UK.

The acquisition builds on a long-standing relationship between Style Group and Dorma Hüppe, bringing together Style's expertise in specification, installation and customer support with Dorma Hüppe's manufacturing excellence and the global strength of the dormakaba Group.

The move provides Style with access to additional resources, innovation and international expertise.

www.style-group.co.uk

ARDEX GROUP UK awarded BSI Kitemark for Service Excellence

The **ARDEX Group UK** – manufacturer of high-performance flooring, tiling and general construction brands across the UK – has been awarded BSI Kitemark for Service Excellence, recognising the company's unwavering commitment to delivering outstanding customer experiences across its operations.

This respected certification, issued by the British Standards Institution (BSI), is a mark of quality and trust, demonstrating that an organisation consistently delivers a high standard of service and places customers at the heart of its business.

David Lyman, UK General Manager at ARDEX Group UK (pictured) said: "We are delighted to have achieved the BSI Kitemark for Service Excellence. This recognition reflects the dedication and passion of our teams, who work tirelessly to support our customers, respond to feedback and continually improve the service we provide. While we are proud of this achievement, we remain focused on raising the bar even further."

Achieving this certification highlights the ARDEX Group UK's dedication to best practice in customer service, complaint management and continuous improvement – further reinforcing its reputation as a trusted partner to customers across the flooring, tiling and construction sectors through its ARDEX, BAL and DUNLOP brands.

www.ardex.co.uk

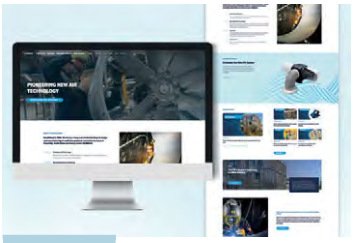
New transport hub opens with effortless automated access

TORMAX UK has delivered a complete door automation solution for Frostree at the new Bishop Auckland Bus Station, on behalf of Durham County Council. The installation incorporates a combination of TORMAX iMotion door operators to automate 12 key passenger access points, creating efficient movement from the bus station interior, through to external boarding areas.

The installation includes 8 iMotion 2202a single sliding door operators, 2 iMotion 2203 bi-parting door operators and 2 iMotion 2203 single sliding door operators. Specified for their robust engineering and compact design, iMotion drives are designed to meet the demands of high-traffic environments where durability and ease of operation are essential.

Featuring intelligent door drive technology that allows precision control, the systems are designed to optimise energy efficiency. The iMotion motor's gearless and brushless design reduces mechanical wear, minimises maintenance, and delivers consistent, reliable performance throughout an extended lifespan.

www.tormax.co.uk



KD206

Nuaire launches new website in landmark 60th anniversary year

Nuaire has unveiled a brand-new website at *www.nuaire.co.uk* designed to make it easier for customers to access product information, technical resources and expert guidance across its extensive ventilation portfolio. Launched during Nuaire's 60th anniversary year, the new website combines a fresh, modern design with improved functionality, enabling consultants, contractors, developers, housing providers and facilities managers to quickly find the products, information and support they need. Visitors can explore Nuaire's market-leading residential and commercial ventilation solutions, including its popular MRXBOX MVHR range, Drimaster positive input ventilation systems, XBOXER commercial air handling units and the latest commercial and residential heat recovery technologies.

Website updates from DELABIE

DELABIE has recently launched new versions of its websites, including the UK site – www.delabie.co.uk. More modern, streamlined, and high-performing, this redesign strengthens the consistency of the Group's digital identity and supports its international expansion. This development is part of the Group's transformation and paves the way for the integration of the DELABIE, KWC Professional, and DVS product portfolios, scheduled for 2027.

Prep like a pro with new Franke Box Pro workstation sink range

Franke's new premium stainless steel Box Pro range transforms the sink into a professional-style preparation zone designed for streamlined cooking, effortless organisation and everyday wellbeing. Developed through the lens of professional-grade design, the sinks marry advanced functionality with a refined, modern aesthetic. At the heart of the design is an intelligent 3-level system that transforms the traditional sink area into a multifunctional workspace. Integrated ledges positioned on both the front and back walls allow accessories to glide smoothly across the sink, creating dedicated zones for rinsing, chopping, draining and organising, all within easy reach.

Humanscale expands Ocean Collection

The new Freedom Ocean chair combines **Humanscale's** renowned ergonomic design with reclaimed fishing nets and ocean plastic. It expands the Ocean Collection of sustainable, high-performance seating by Humanscale. This release reinforces Humanscale's commitment to combating ocean pollution by transforming discarded materials into sustainable workplace solutions. Building on the legacy of Niels Diffrient's iconic Freedom Chair, hailed as "the gold standard in office seating" and featured in the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, the Freedom Ocean reimagines this ergonomic classic through the lens of sustainability.

Sculpting kitchen innovation

The modern kitchen has evolved far beyond a place for cooking, it's a space where creativity flows through food preparation and style makes a statement. Recognising this evolution, **Franke** has developed two new Pescara tap models, the Semi-Pro (pictured) and the J Pull-Down uniting professional performance, exceptional functionality and sustainable design in a solid stainless steel finish. The Semi Pro model is built from premium stainless steel and features a slim, refined handle which houses an extremely small 25mm cartridge for precision control, while a laminar aerator in the spout delivers a crystal clear, non-splashing water stream with very low noise. The flexible hose offers dual spray options, with a reach ideal for rinsing round bowls and helping with food prep, smoothly docking and held securely into its magnetic holder.

New utilities range wows the workplace

Keller's versatile, durable, and stylish utility room range of units makes it possible to design this popular "work" room in a beautiful way; and it has recently been extended. With a series of tall, base and wall units, and interior fittings, a bespoke utility room can be created, where ease of use and design go hand in hand. The cabinetry is available in all melamine decors while the interior comes in white, mist or graphite. The base unit for washing machine and dryer is equipped with a metal support frame for the safe placement of appliances and the designer can choose an option with or without a storage tray for a laundry basket. The extra deep high unit is equipped with a suspension system with hooks for storing a vacuum cleaner and various cleaning materials. The utility room range has been tested by the renowned testing- and certification centre TUV Rheinland in Germany on several aspects such as stability, sustainability and mechanical safety.

why every smart building needs a security-first design *strategy*

One of the biggest challenges for architects and developers right now as they continue to embrace smart building technology, is that every connected system is also opening potential vulnerabilities. How to stay connected, and resilient. Drawing on insights from the SIA's 2026 Megatrends Report, ***Richard Hilson*** *of PFL – Access Management explores how architects and specifiers are successfully implementing security into design, rather than it being a late-stage technical addition...*

From IoT-enabled access control and touchless entry systems to integrated building management platforms, modern buildings are fast-becoming interconnected ecosystems as we seek improved efficiency, sustainability and user experience.

But, while we start to realise the efficiencies we crave, we need to stay ahead of the curve, and the criminal, from a design perspective.

The SIA report offers a great helicopter view of where the built environment is heading. No longer conceptual, or the vision of 'tomorrow's world', AI-driven automation, connected infrastructure, cloud-managed systems and unified security platforms are rapidly transforming how buildings are designed, accessed and operated.

A consideration for architects and specifiers however, which the report raises, is around whether buildings are becoming smart faster than they are becoming secure?

Across commercial developments, public buildings and critical infrastructure, connected technology is now deeply embedded into everyday operations. Access control systems are managed via smartphones and mobile credentials, while sensors monitor occupancy, energy usage and environmental performance in real time. Likewise, building management systems increasingly control lighting, HVAC, lifts and surveillance.

All this is delivering enormous operational benefits, but it is also reshaping risk and introducing vulnerabilities.

AI and automation are redefining building risk

A significant trend is the adoption of AI-driven automation across security and operations, which is moving at a heady pace as smart buildings become autonomous.

Systems can now automatically adjust environmental controls based

Continued on page 22...

on occupancy, identify unusual access patterns, optimise energy usage and trigger alerts without human intervention.

But this also creates dependency, which us mere humans take for granted. Disruption to one platform can quickly affect wider operations, and If an automated building management system is compromised, manipulated or taken offline, the consequences can extend far and wide.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) in the USA have been quite vocal on the risks to smart infrastructure, highlighting how poorly secured operational technology environments are becoming attractive targets for cybercriminals.

But it's one thing to understand operational vulnerability, yet another to design an intelligent, or smart, environment with processes in place to combat it.

Removing silos – but concentrating risk

Another major trend is the growth of unified platforms, where multiple building functions are integrated into single operational ecosystems.

Access management, surveillance, visitor systems, HVAC controls and occupancy management can now operate through interconnected platforms designed to streamline operations and improve visibility. All of which are transforming the user experience, and ultimately improving public safety.

But we must be wary that the removal of silos, including those which saw physical and cyber security operating independently, can also create concentration of risk. Especially now we see hybrid threats across physical, cyber and aerial domains.

For instance, a compromised access management platform could potentially affect physical entry points across an entire building. A vulnerable building management system may provide pathways into wider corporate networks. And increasingly, cyberattacks are targeting operations, not just data.

There have been well-documented cases of breaches through smart technology, too. Albeit around seven years ago, one 'infamous' incident involved cybercriminals gaining access to a North American casino network through a smart fish tank thermometer, ultimately allowing them to extract sensitive data from the organisation's systems.

In addition, the UK's National Protective

Security Authority (NPSA) has highlighted how HVAC systems and building automation controls can create potential vulnerabilities within modern buildings if security is not properly considered. It warns that building automation and control systems should be carefully secured, with organisations needing clear oversight of who can access and control systems remotely.

As smart infrastructure becomes more deeply embedded within commercial developments, building resilience is increasingly dependent on securing both physical and digital environments together. And the risk escalates, with (massive) IoT, which is designed to extract data from multiple, potentially hundreds of thousands of smart technology points, in commercial and domestic settings across the globe.

Smart technology is becoming a standard expectation within many commercial and public sector environments now, especially as we strive for a 'frictionless' user experience, and convenience. This is changing how buildings are being specified and at the same time, ESG priorities are driving the use of smart sensors and automated energy management systems designed to optimise performance and sustainability.

However, the IBM X-Force Threat Intelligence Index highlights how operational technology and connected infrastructure environments are becoming increasingly attractive targets because of the disruption attackers can cause through them. Likewise, many smart buildings still rely on legacy operational technology and outdated software environments, creating additional vulnerabilities when integrated with newer connected platforms.

The challenge here for architects and developers is one of convenience and connectivity over resilience. Namely, are buildings being designed around operational efficiency without sufficient consideration of recovery, fallback, and system segregation?

Personally, I think we've moved way past this and have much greater focus upon the holistic approach, which incorporates operations, and security across all layers.

Why architects and specifiers are now central to resilience

Today, architects and specifiers are playing a much more influential role in shaping how resilient buildings become. Decisions around integration platforms, infrastructure pathways, connectivity, access flows and operational technology now directly influence long-term security.

This is particularly relevant in commercial real estate, healthcare, transport, energy, data centres, and critical infrastructure environments where continuity is absolutely vital, and has become just as important as physical protection.

The goal is to create buildings that are both intelligent and resilient - environments where security is embedded into design from the outset, rather than retrofitted later in response to emerging threats. From what I hear in my everyday conversations with prospects and suppliers, that is very much the case. We are ahead of the curve, and we need to be, because the curve will always be where the threat, the criminal mind, is.

The future of smart buildings will not be defined solely by how connected they become, how easy it is for people to move around, or how technology has forged forwards like a reconnaissance mission ensuring everything is ready when a visitor or member of staff arrives. I believe they will be defined by how resilient they are designed to be, and as buildings continue to evolve into interconnected digital ecosystems, physical and cyber security will become increasingly intertwined.

This also means resilience, access governance and security need to be considered alongside sustainability, efficiency and user experience from the earliest stages of design. Because the smart buildings of the future, those that haven't even entered the mind let alone the drawing board, will undoubtedly be more intelligent, more automated and more connected than ever before.

Lorient introduces Planet FSR 6000 finger guard system with fire-rated certification

KD5

Balancing everyday safety with fire door compliance is a growing priority for building owners, facilities managers and specifiers. In response, **Lorient** has strengthened its UK finger-protection offering with the introduction of the Planet FSR 6000 roller finger-guard system, a solution that combines effective injury prevention with certified fire performance.

Door-related finger injuries remain a significant concern, particularly in schools, healthcare facilities and public buildings. Around 30,000 children are treated in A&E each year following door-related finger injuries, with many of the most serious incidents occurring at the secondary closing edge, where the exposed hinge cavity presents a crushing hazard.

Developed specifically to address this risk, the FSR 6000 features a constant-tension roller mechanism that forms a continuous protective barrier as the door opens and closes.

A key development for the system is its recent successful fire testing to BS EN 1634-1:2014+A1:2018, achieving certification on FD30 and FD60 timber door assemblies. This enables finger protection to be incorporated on timber fire-resisting doors without compromising fire safety requirements, supporting compliance in safety-critical applications.

Suitable for timber, metal, PVC and glass doors, the FSR 6000 is compatible with both manual and power-operated doors.

www.lorientuk.com

FIREFLY® FB180 batts build compartment walls atop Midlands apartment block

A month-long contract to upgrade the fire protection to a residential building in a popular suburb South-east of Birmingham has been undertaken using **FIREFLY** FB180 ablative batts, together with other products from the manufacturer's range, to provide a fully tested system solution.

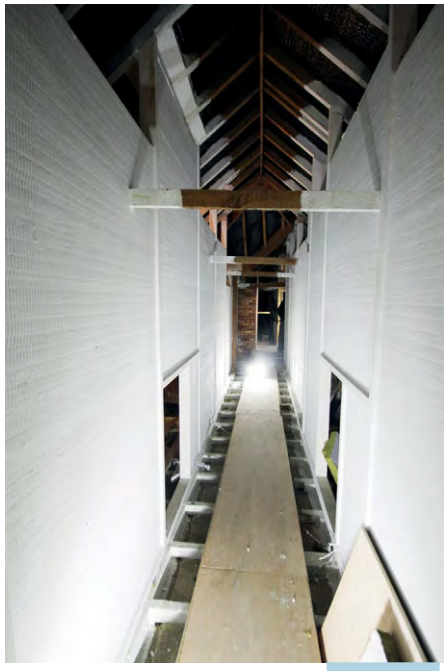
As a specialist in the field of passive fire protection systems serving customers across multiple sectors – carrying FIRAS as well as IFC certification – Coventry based KRASI Fire Protection was appointed to carry out all the upgrades within the roof-space to the late 20th century residential development. As well as undertaking the design work, KRASI installed a temporary walkway within the roof zone and began erecting studwork partitions to either side of the central access corridor, creating a framework into which the FIREFLY FB180 batts could be built. This construction was then treated on both sides with more of the ablative coating, while the manufacturer's very versatile Penowrap was used to protect service penetrations.

The Contracts Manager for KRASI, Daniel Oldacre commented: "We were awarded the project by the property company which owns the development and decided to install the FB180 fire batt system to achieve the specified fire rating in terms of both integrity, 90 minutes and insulation, 60 minutes. The total installed area was in excess of 200m^2 incorporating the cavity closer at the head to achieve full compliance. Meanwhile, access through the barriers for any future work in the compartments has been facilitated by installing a total of eight FR120 access hatches which form part of an integrated, fully tested system. Everything has gone smoothly and the Technical Manager for FIREFLY, Chris Boam, visited site to inspect the work and confirm that everything had been carried out in accordance with the standard details."

Chris Boam, commented: "Having visited the site during the works, I was impressed with the quality of the installation completed by KRASI. The batt walls have been installed to a very high standard and it was clear that attention had been paid to ensuring the details followed FIREFLY guidance throughout.

The 1200 x 600mm batt sheets are 60mm thick and feature the specially formulated ablative coating on both sides of the layered, non-combustible mineral fibre which has a density of 180kg/m^3.

info@tba-pt.com
www.tbafirefly.com



KD6

jobsafe calls on construction firms to make real-time incident reporting standard as HSE investigation costs climb

jobsafe, the health, safety, security and environmental (HSSE) incident reporting platform, has called on construction firms to put the jobsafe app on every worker's phone. The company argues that the single biggest factor in the cost of a safety investigation is not the incident itself, but the quality of the record left behind.

Construction remains one of the UK's most closely watched industries for health and safety enforcement. HSE's latest annual figures show 25 construction workers were killed in Great Britain in 2025/26 – still the highest total of any sector, even after a sharp fall from 35 the previous year – with falls from height accounting for around half of all construction deaths. A further 50,000 construction workers self-reported a non-fatal injury over the three years to March 2025, a rate significantly higher than the all-industry average.

Wendy Dalton, CEO of jobsafe said: "These headline numbers are concerning, but they only tell part of the story. In practice, most incidents and near-misses on UK construction sites are still logged the way they always have been: from memory, on paper or in a phone note, hours or days after the event. By the time an HSE inspector, insurer or solicitor asks exactly what happened, the site team is often reconstructing events from recollection rather than record – and that gap is precisely where investigations lengthen, disputes harden, and costs escalate.

"Once HSE identifies what it terms a 'material breach', every hour of an inspector's time becomes chargeable to the business under the Fee for Intervention scheme, now set at £188 an hour and invoiced every two months for as long as the investigation runs."

jobsafe claims that a case that takes even a few weeks of inspector time can add five figures to a firm's bill before any fine is considered, and recent HSE prosecutions against construction firms have ranged from £50,000 for a fall through an unglazed window to £800,000 after an apprentice was injured in a stairwell collapse. Cases involving a fatality or serious injury routinely take anywhere from eighteen months to five years to reach court, with legal fees and civil compensation claims running alongside the fine itself.

jobsafe is designed to close that gap. Every worker on site can log an incident or near-miss directly from their own phone the moment it happens, with a timestamp, GPS location and photo evidence captured automatically rather than reconstructed from memory the next morning.

www.jobsafe.cloud

P C Henderson relaunches Securefold Pro – Now accredited to the latest PAS 24 Standard

Sliding and folding door hardware manufacturer, **P C Henderson**, has recently re-tested its trusted external folding door hardware system, Securefold Pro, to the latest PAS 24 2022+A1:2024 security standard.

Designed for residential and commercial applications with doors up to 100kg each, Securefold Pro has been enhanced to support specifiers, fabricators and developers working on upcoming housing projects.

What is PAS 24 and why does it matter?

PAS 24 is the UK's benchmark standard for enhanced security performance of door sets and windows. The standard defines how products must perform under a range of manual and mechanical attack methods commonly associated with forced entry. The testing process simulates real world burglary techniques and includes stringent assessments of strength, durability, and overall hardware reliability.

What has changed in the latest PAS 24:2022 + A1:2024?

The newest standard reflects a significant shift in how security is assessed – moving beyond traditional forced-entry tests to address the latest burglary techniques. This includes modern burglary methods such as super glue, freeze sprays and water as well as clearer testing procedures and more accountability for assembly and installation. Crucially, the latest PAS 24 standard is also the primary route to compliance with Approved Document Q (ADQ) of the Building Regulations.

What this means for Securefold Pro

The reintroduction of Securefold Pro with PAS 24:2022+A1:2024 certification demonstrates P C Henderson's ongoing commitment to delivering products that meet the highest levels of security and compliance. This allows fabricators to have confidence in delivering certifiable solutions, and for specifiers and developers it supports compliance with Approved Document Q.

www.pchenderson.com

KD215

Innovative Building Protection for a Changing Climate

As buildings and people face rising temperatures, greater environmental demands and increasing fire safety requirements, the need for smarter, longer-lasting building solutions has never been greater.

Developed by Envirograf®, the new patent pending ***Takta*** range combines passive fire protection with practical solutions designed to improve safety, durability, sustainability and building performance across residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and public sector projects.

taktakote — *Resists Rot, Bugs, and Fire on Wood*

taktaroof breathable membrane — *Protect your wooden roof against the increased fire risk from climate change*

taktaroof wrap — *Protect your metal roof against the increased fire risk from climate change*

taktaroof cover — *A durable, water-resistant, fire-tested, roofing material*

taktavent — *Get fresh air without bugs or fire risk*

One Range. Five Innovative Solutions.

***TaktaKote* -** Fire-retardant protective coating for external timber buildings. Helps protect against fire, fungus, wood rot and woodlice.

***TaktaRoof Breathable Membrane* -** Fire resistant breathable roofing membrane designed to reduce heat transfer while protecting roof structures.

***TaktaRoof Wrap* -** Fire and weather resistant protective roof wrap for metal roof constructions, helping improve thermal performance and durability.

***TaktaRoof Cover* -** A long-life weather resistant roof covering that protects bare wooden or existing felt flat roofs from extreme heat and weathering while providing exceptional fire performance.

***TaktaVent* -** A natural ventilation system providing controlled airflow, insect protection and integral passive fire protection without electrical power.

Designed For:

Healthcare • Education • Residential • Commercial • Industrial • Agriculture • Heritage

KD7

Why Specify the *Takta* Range?

- Developed for today's changing climate and extreme weather.
- Fire-tested passive fire protection solutions you can trust.
- Energy-efficient, low-maintenance building protection systems.
- Suitable for new-build and refurbishment projects across all sectors.
- Backed by over 40 years of passive fire protection expertise.

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the untapped asset on every *commercial roof*

***Dr Phil Wu** at Absolar looks at why solar has the potential to make a huge difference to commercial buildings ...*

One of the most overlooked assets on any commercial balance sheet is sitting in plain view: the roof. Across the UK, millions of square metres of industrial, retail and office rooftop space remain unused, even as energy costs and carbon targets climb the boardroom agenda. Solar has quietly become one of the most reliable ways to convert that dead space into a revenue-generating asset, yet a surprising number of businesses still treat rooftop solar as a nice-to-have rather than a core part of their energy strategy.

Why the hesitation? In our experience working with commercial property owners across sectors, from logistics warehouses to research laboratories to independent farms, the barrier is rarely appetite. It is data. Decision makers are asked to commit capital to a 20 to 25 year asset based on incomplete information about their roof's structural capacity, their site's actual energy consumption profile, and the true payback period once degradation, maintenance and export tariffs are factored in. Without that data, solar gets parked as something to revisit next year, and next year's energy bill arrives regardless.

This is where the picture is changing. Remote assessment tools, satellite and LiDAR-based surveys, and better monitoring data mean businesses no longer need to commission an expensive site visit just to find out whether solar is viable. A building's solar potential, structural feasibility and indicative payback period can now be modelled remotely, often within a day, giving finance teams the numbers they need before committing to a full engineering survey. Grant schemes and asset finance options have also matured alongside the technology, further shortening the gap between a promising survey and a signed-off budget.

And the numbers, when they are good, tend to be very good. A 520kW installation across two industrial warehouses can save well over 100 tonnes of CO_2 a year while cutting a meaningful chunk off the site's electricity bill, savings that compound as grid prices remain volatile. Smaller sites see the same pattern at a different scale: a 50 to 60kW system on an office building can save 8 to 12 tonnes of CO_2 annually and pay for itself well within six years; and the performance data now makes that payback period far more predictable than it once was. One retailer measured a saving of £1,700 in electricity costs at a single branch in its first month with panels installed, a figure concrete enough to justify a second and third site.

Solar's real value to a balance sheet is not just the electricity it generates, it is the volatility it removes. Wholesale energy prices have swung dramatically over the past several years, and every kilowatt-hour a business generates on its own roof is a kilowatt-hour it no longer has to buy at a price it does not control. For businesses with tight margins or energy-intensive operations, that is beyond a sustainability initiative, it is a hedge.

There is also a structural dimension too often missed early. Not every roof is a simple candidate: heritage buildings, ageing industrial units and sites with complex roof geometries can deter installers unwilling to quote for the extra engineering work. But with the right structural assessment, even architecturally sensitive buildings, including listed structures, have successfully hosted lightweight solar arrays that generate a fifth or more of their annual electricity needs without compromising the fabric of the building.

The lesson: a roof should not be written off as unsuitable until it has actually been assessed, and the range of buildings now proving solar-viable is wider than most property teams assume.

For property owners and finance directors weighing up energy strategy for the next few years, the practical takeaway is straightforward. Get the data before you decide.

A remote or structural survey costs little and takes little time, but it turns solar from a guess into a modelled, de-risked investment decision, one with a visible payback period, a quantifiable carbon saving, and a genuine hedge against a market that shows no sign of settling down.

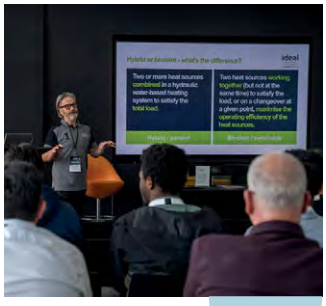
The rooftop was always there. Increasingly, so is the case for using it.

KD218

West Fraser publishes 2025 Sustainability Report

West Fraser's new Sustainability Report showcases the company's performance in 2025 across a variety of environmental, social, and governance goals and disclosed targets. Key findings include a 25% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions since 2019, keeping it firmly on track to meet its science-based targets by 2030. This progress reflects continued investment in energy efficiency and operational improvements across its global footprint. Timber continues to play a pivotal role in decarbonising the built environment. In 2025 alone, the use of wood products is estimated to have avoided 19.8 million tonnes of CO_2 equivalent (CO_2e) in Scope 3 emissions. West Fraser also emphasises the critical role of forests as climate solutions. Sustainably managed forests are not only carbon sinks; they are active contributors to the global carbon cycle.

New Ideal Commercial CPD explores practical pathway to low carbon hybrid heating systems



KD220

Ideal Commercial Heating has launched a new CIBSE-approved CPD titled 'Low carbon hybrid heating system considerations' designed to help specifiers and building services engineers navigate the complexity of designing heating systems that meet the needs of users whilst reducing carbon emissions. The CPD provides a practical, real-world overview of how hybrid and bivalent systems can support the decarbonisation of commercial buildings, while addressing the constraints that often limit the adoption of fully electric solutions. The session highlights the differences between hybrid (parallel) and bivalent (switchable) systems and how each approach can be applied depending on building requirements and operational priorities.

New CIHT guidance helps prepare for climate-related disruption

KD219

The Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation **(CIHT)** has launched a new suite of practical guidance to help the UK's local highway authorities strengthen their response to the growing threat of climate-related disruption on the local road network. The resource release comprises a flagship document, "All hazards operational guidance: responding to climate disruption", alongside six supporting operational response checklists designed to support frontline practitioners managing flooding, extreme heat, wildfires and other climate hazards. This new guidance provides a practical framework to help highway authorities move from reactive response towards proactive preparedness and operational resilience.

ESBE valves employed in full decarbonisation of University of West London College buildings

A major energy refurbishment project carried out at a University of West London College has achieved dramatic improvements to the energy efficiency of both historic and contemporary buildings, replacing the complex's gas-fired boilers with a district heating scheme fed by air source heat pumps, where **ESBE** valves are crucial to the management of the heating and hot water supply.

The year-long upgrade at Ruskin College which completed in March, was led by Norfolk based Finn Geotherm with its engineers installing a cascade of four Carrier 85.9 kW capacity ASHPs located in a central plant room, laying underground thermal mains around the site and also fitting new radiators along with large capacity DHW storage tanks in each of the teaching and accommodation buildings. Finn Geotherm also oversaw significant improvements to the properties' heat loss profiles with new roof insulation being installed while blown Thermabeads replaced existing cavity wall insulation.

Crucial to the success of the changeover, however, has been the ability of Finn Geotherm's designs to manage the variation in supply temperature required for the individual heating and hot water circuits within the four buildings. Technical Director, David Alston explained: "We had to opt for high-temperature heat pumps, capable of delivering 70+°C to raise the temperature of the hot water tanks to 60°C (for Legionella compliance), but the radiators were designed to run at a flow temperature of 50°C. It would be really inefficient to run the heat pumps continuously at 70°C so there is a switchover process managed by the BMS and involves the ESBE valves."

"Therefore, when there is a heating demand a signal goes back to the district heating scheme to raise the mains temperature – effectively an S-plan system for the hot water. The ESBE MBA121 valve allows us to close off the heating when we're in hot water mode – while we're also using the ESBE VRG131 3-port valve with ARA 659 proportional controller to regulate the temperature to the radiator circuit, with weather compensation."

All of the ESBE valves were supplied through Secon, which is one of Finn Geotherm's regular supplier of hydronics components.

KD8

Specifiers and heating engineers seeking further information on ESBE's product range and services can call on the support of ESBE's technical advisory service – or go online to view the manufacturer's helpful and instructional videos: **https://esbe.eu/uk**

KD222

Novus commences STEM building transformation for Loughborough University

Novus Property Solutions has commenced work on a £4.2m contract with Loughborough University to transform two existing campus buildings into specialist DIGI-Labs designed to support the next generation of STEM innovators.

The project will see the creation of Digi-Lab Central across the EHB Squash Courts and G Block, bringing together advanced digital technologies within a purpose-designed, collaborative environment. The facility will be home to a Proto Hologram, VR Lab, drone technology, markered motion capture, a GPU lab and a 3D immersive wall and floor installation.

Delivered by Novus' dedicated Public Services & Commercial (PS&C) division, the scheme combines design, refurbishment and reconfiguration expertise within a live university setting.

The works involve the comprehensive transformation of two adjacent buildings to create a unified, high-performance learning environment. This includes the installation of a new canopy structure to physically connect the buildings, a full internal strip-out, a new roof structure, stairwell extension and complete MEP installations. Specialist floor, wall and ceiling finishes will also be installed to achieve the required acoustic performance for advanced digital applications.

www.novussolutions.co.uk

Oxford college invests in ISO Chemie's load bearing bracket support system

KD223

ISO Chemie's thermal insulating and load bearing bracket support system has been specified for a new sustainable residential development at an Oxford college.

The move sees ISO-TOP WINFRAMER 'TYPE 1' units being fitted to support and insulate the triple glazed aluminium windows and doors installed at Wolfson College's new three-storey residential development. When completed in spring next year, the Garden Building will provide 50 high-quality student bedrooms, supported by communal kitchens, shared study areas, and a thoughtful design that prioritises community, wellbeing and sustainability.

Passivhaus certified and fire rated to up to 30 minutes, ISO-TOP WINFRAMER 'TYPE 1' is a prefabricated installation frame, manufactured to accommodate cavities up to 250mm 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 is seen as part of a solution to meet the College's ambitions to reduce carbon levels across its property estate, particularly residential accommodation that has a reputation for leaking considerable amounts of energy, heat and sound.

The composite ISO-TOP WINFRAMER 'TYPE 1' brackets can bear heavy window loads to provide a reliable, strong and high-performance support frame. **www.iso-chemie.eu/en-GB**

KD9

The Highlands' first Passivhaus school features offsite Wraptite® installation

In the Highlands, north of Inverness, students aged from 3 to 18 are enjoying the health and comfort benefits of the region's first Passivhaus-standard school.

The new £72 million Tain Campus is now home to Tain Royal Academy, Tain Primary School and St Duthus School. It has been constructed to the Passivhaus standard to reduce energy consumption and create a healthy learning environment.

The external wall specification included two **Proctor Group** membranes: the Wraptite® external air barrier system to the outside of the structure, and Procheck® A2 internally.

Veitchi Interiors installed both membranes as part of their work package. They played a proactive role in determining how the project was delivered. Thanks to having their own Metframe panel factory, they proposed installing Wraptite in the factory.

Following discussions at the project's pre-start meeting, both Highland Council (client) and Kier (main contractor) were happy to explore it.

In such a northerly location, and also on the coast, weather was inevitably a factor. Removing the labour of the Wraptite installation meant the only work then needed on site was the application of tapes where required to fully seal the system against the wind and rain.

Alongside more formal Passivhaus training, Veitchi Interiors received an array of technical support from Proctor Group. Regional Sales Manager Linda Kay delivered a CPD training session on the products, followed by multiple site visits.

Wraptite is both airtight and highly vapour permeable, helping to achieve high standards of airtightness without increasing condensation risk in the structure. Its self-adhered installation is designed to ensure a consistent airtight external seal.

Procheck A2 is a vapour and airtight membrane that is also rated A2-s1,d0 when classified to BS EN 13501-1. It is therefore considered non-combustible, with no contribution to fire.

Find out more about Wraptite: ***https://proctorgroup.com/products/wraptite***
Find out more about Procheck A2: ***https://proctorgroup.com/products/procheck-a2***

tackling the education maintenance *backlog*

More than 200,000 building elements across England's school estate are now classed as deteriorating or at risk of failure, according to a new FOI dataset gathered and analysed by ***Portakabin****.*

The data, collected from local authorities, shows over 181,000 elements in poor condition and a further 22,000 that have reached end of life or require urgent replacement. From ageing roofs and brickwork to outdated heating systems and electrical infrastructure, the findings point to a significant maintenance backlog across the education estate.

Portakabin explores what this means for students, from temperature control and air quality to pressure on school budgets, and looks at how modular buildings are being used to quickly upgrade or replace ageing facilities...

An FOI dataset analysed by Portakabin, gathered from local authorities, suggests that schools throughout England are operating with thousands of elements that are deteriorating, energy inefficient or no longer aligned with modern teaching needs. With more than 200,000 of the almost four million recorded elements, now classed as Grade C or Grade D. School condition grades are typically defined as follows:

- **Grade A** refers to elements that are in good condition and operating as intended, with no significant defects.
- **Grade B** refers to elements that are generally sound but may show minor signs of wear and tear, with only limited maintenance required.
- **Grade C** refers to elements that are in poor condition, often showing major defects or not performing as they should. These issues usually require significant repair or replacement in the short to medium term.
- **Grade D** refers to elements that have reached the end of their life or are at risk of imminent failure, meaning urgent replacement is needed.

The data shows there are more than 181,000 Grade C issues across school buildings in England, alongside over 22,000 Grade D issues.

These more serious categories can include ageing roofs, decaying brickwork, poor thermal performance, outdated heating systems and ageing electrical installations, all of which can increase running costs and impact day-to-day learning environments.

Brendan Cornick, Head of Health, Safety & Environmental at Portakabin, commented: "The volume of Grade C and D level issues suggests that there are a huge number of school buildings operating beyond their intended life in England.

"We made this FOI request to try and obtain the average age of school buildings across the country. What we have found indicates that there are deteriorating or end-of-life building elements across England's entire school estate, resulting in many buildings which may not fully support modern teaching standards or energy performance expectations."

Regional analysis of school building conditions

When breaking the data down into each region of England, we can see that the North East has the highest proportion of school conditions which received a Grade C or D – more than 13,000 of the 178,000+ school conditions were graded this way (a 7.62% share).

However, London has the highest number of Grade D level school condition issues of all regions analysed, with close to 5,000 records graded in this manner. Brendan points out: "Each region has much more than 1,000 Grade D level issues though. Just one Grade D level issue should be a cause for concern, as it highlights a severe problem that most likely requires urgent attention so that a school building remains safe and structurally sound."

What the data means for students

These figures imply that many English students are learning in school buildings designed for outdated energy conditions and teaching demands instead of the ones suitable for today's requirements.

Brendan explains: "When pupils are studying in ageing buildings, they are usually based in classrooms that will be performing poorly in terms of temperature control, insulation and ventilation. "These ongoing maintenance demands can ripple across the entire school, reducing funds for digital upgrades, accessibility, student services, and even the ability to create stable, future-focused learning environments."

The appeal of modular school buildings and classrooms

Those in charge of updating school buildings which have been identified as having Grade C or D issues should look towards modular buildings to make swift but effective alterations.

Region in England	Total school condition records	Grade C level issues	Grade D level issues	Grade C & D issues combined
North East	178,396	11,929 (6.69%)	1,668 (0.93%)	13,597 (7.62%)
London	558,950	27,509 (4.92%)	4,991 (0.89%)	32,500 (5.81%)
East Midlands	390,828	19,703 (5.04%)	1,766 (0.45%)	21,469 (5.49%)
West Midlands	458,174	22,347 (4.88%)	2,185 (0.48%)	24,532 (5.36%)
Yorkshire and the Humber	388,386	17,731 (4.57%)	2,872 (0.74%)	20,603 (5.31%)
East of England	523,467	25,261 (4.83%)	2,123 (0.41%)	27,384 (5.24%)
North West	495,709	22,327 (4.50%)	2,926 (0.59%)	25,253 (5.09%)
South East	469,926	20,467 (4.36%)	2,583 (0.55%)	23,050 (4.91%)
South West	507,354	14,103 (2.78%)	1,338 (0.26%)	15,441 (3.04%)
Total	**3,971,190**	**181,377 (4.57%)**	**22,452 (0.56%)**	**203,829 (5.13%)**

Modular classrooms and school buildings can be easily and quickly integrated into existing infrastructure or serve as the foundation for a completely new development. They can also house any type of facility that an education provider may need, whether that is standard classrooms, sound-proof music rooms, spacious lecture theatres or specialist laboratories and sports halls.

Any modular building will be manufactured off site before it is transported to a school's location for installation too. This means there will be less disruption or concerns about students' safety than there would be if a traditional construction site was put in place around an educational establishment during the building work.

Simon Pollard, Manufacturing Director at Portakabin, adds: "When it comes to both permanent and temporary Portakabin relocatable classrooms, quality is guaranteed by the fact these structures are designed to meet or even exceed Department for Education guidelines. They are constructed to meet the industry's permanent building regulations as well.

"All in all, modular classrooms offer a faster, safer and more sustainable way to refresh the school estate and provide children with modern spaces to learn."

Education Estates® returns as the sector prepares for a decade of estate renewal

Education Estates® returns to Manchester Central on 20-21 October 2026, once again bringing together the people responsible for shaping, delivering and managing education environments across the UK.

For many years, the event has been recognised as the market leader for education infrastructure, creating a meeting point for everyone involved in the education estate, from local authorities, academy trusts and universities through to contractors, architects, consultants, suppliers and government representatives.

With more than 5,000 attendees expected, Education Estates® has become far more than a conference and exhibition. Across two days, Manchester Central becomes a focal point for the sector: a place where strategic conversations take place, partnerships are formed and practical solutions are explored. Attendees come to understand how others are responding to shared challenges, whether around estate condition, sustainability, inclusion, funding pressures or modernisation. They come to see new approaches in practice, engage directly with specialists and suppliers, and connect with the people capable of helping move projects and priorities forward.

Importantly, the event also offers rare access to the wider ecosystem influencing education infrastructure policy and delivery, bringing together decision makers, framework providers, technical experts and representatives from the Department for Education within one environment. Delivered in partnership with the Department for Education, Education Estates® arrives at a significant time for the sector following the publication of the Education Estates Strategy: a decade of national renewal. As organisations across education continue to respond to increasing expectations around sustainability, suitability, inclusion and long-term asset performance, the event provides a valuable opportunity to explore how policy ambitions are translating into delivery priorities across the estate.

The conference programme is delivered across six themed stages, offering CPD-accredited insight and sector-led discussion on the issues currently shaping education environments. Sessions will focus on shaping tomorrow's learning environments, improving and renewing the estate, building and rebuilding projects, sustainability, SEND and inclusion, and estate management. Grounded in live projects and operational experience, the programme is designed to support those responsible for estate strategy, capital planning, project delivery and long-term management.

Delegates can tailor their time around the areas most relevant to their organisation, while hearing directly from those leading projects and initiatives across the sector.

Alongside the conference sits the largest Education Estates® exhibition to date, with more than 220 exhibitors expected. From construction and consultancy services to digital solutions, furniture, modular buildings and sustainability technologies, the exhibition provides a practical opportunity to explore products and services designed specifically for education environments.

Several new features will also debut in 2026, including two co-located events. EdTech UK will examine the intersection between education technology and infrastructure, while the new European Universities Estates Congress will bring together professionals involved in campus development and university estate strategy from across Europe.

New networking and engagement spaces will also feature prominently throughout

the venue, including a Community Hub supporting charities and not-for-profit organisations, alongside the Fireside Exchange, a more informal discussion-led setting designed to encourage open conversation and shared learning.

The Education Estates® Awards have become a highlight of the year for the sector, recognising the projects, teams and organisations delivering meaningful impact across education environments. The Department for Education Sustainability Award also returns for 2026, with a £2,500 donation awarded to support the winning school's sustainability plans. A new Supply Chain Partner of the Year category has also been introduced this year.

Attendance at the conference remains free for those directly employed within schools, colleges, universities, government and local authorities, including governors and independent schools. Public sector delegates receive access to all conference stages and the exhibition across both days.

For private sector organisations, discounted early booking rates are currently available until Friday 11 September, with one-day delegate passes priced at £338 + VAT and two-day passes at £449 + VAT

KD226

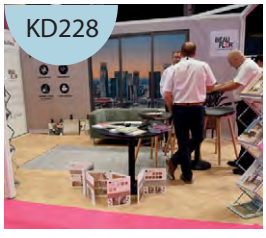
Setcrete Standard S1 Tile Adhesive

Setcrete Standard S1 Tile Adhesive is the sensible choice for high quality tiling installations that need to deliver long-lasting, durable performance, and where grouting can wait until the following day. The adhesive combines excellent bond strength with inherent flexibility to combat moderate movement and vibration, ensuring that tiling installations will maintain their integrity during day-to-day use, and throughout their lifetime. Setcrete Standard S1 Tile Adhesive is suitable for installing both wall and floor tiles, including large format tiles, and is formulated for internal and external applications. It is ideal for tiling wet rooms and power showers. It creates an excellent bond with a wide range of tiles, including porcelain, ceramic, natural stone and glass mosaics, and can be applied over both absorbent and non-absorbent surfaces, including subfloors that are subject to limited movement and vibration.

Innovation meets modular design with the new Flotex Planks collection

KD227

Forbo Flooring Systems has unveiled its refreshed collection of high performing Flotex Planks, introducing re-imagined digitally printed designs inspired by natural textures and contemporary colour stories. Launching in the first wave, the Woven and Stone ranges effortlessly combine durability with comfort, acoustics and design versatility for today's demanding commercial interiors. A long-established modular flooring solution, Flotex Planks is engineered for environments where hygiene, resilience and comfort are essential. Its ultra-dense fibre construction with over 70 million fibres per m^2, paired with a waterproof backing, delivers exceptional longevity, effortless maintenance and 19dB impact sound reduction.



KD228

Showing the way to better flooring at Housing 2026

Social housing demands a lot from its flooring: easy installation and low purchase cost, durability, hygiene, simple maintenance, comfort and a design that feels homely. For specifiers attending Housing 2026, **Beauflor** demonstrated how its sheet vinyl flooring collections can fulfil all these requirements, providing a floor that copes with the practical demands of social housing, and which helps tenants to feel comfortable in their home. Beauflor offers social housing a wide range of quality, Europe-made sheet vinyl flooring. With all collections available in multiple-widths, as well as specifications designed for glue-free installation in refurbishment, it reduces the waste and drives down the cost of flooring for all social housing projects. Then, with specifications providing extra slip-resistance, improved acoustics and better hygiene; landlords and providers can find a solution that works for their specific requirements.

KD229

Junckers launches new RIBA-approved CPD

Junckers has launched a new RIBA approved CPD, New Regulations for Sports and Multipurpose Flooring. The presentation covers information on how the new DfE regulations and requirements for school buildings, both new build and refurbishments, affect the selection of sports and multi-purpose flooring. It gives candidates a good understanding of safety and performance aspects of hardwood sports floors and how longevity impacts whole life cost and the environment. The new CPD falls under RIBA Core Curriculum categories Legal, regulatory and statutory compliance and Design, construction and technology.

The 35–55-minute presentation is offered in-person or as an online seminar UK-wide.

sales@junckers.co.uk
www.junckers.co.uk/cpd

Lower climate impact per acoustic panel and more renewable energy at Troldtekt

KD230

Danish wood wool acoustic panel manufacturer **Troldtekt's** ESG report for 2025 highlights positive initiatives for both the environment and people. Key highlights include an 18% reduction in Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO2e) emissions per produced m^2, 98.8% renewable energy in production and fewer workplace accidents for the second consecutive year.

In 2025, through the use of renewable energy and new types of cement, Troldtekt A/S succeeded in producing each m^2 of wood wool panel with an 18% lower CO_2e footprint than in 2024. This was primarily achieved with the use of CO_2e-reduced cement, which is reflected in Troldtekt's new Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) from 2025.

"Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is the most important focus area for the construction industry when it comes to lowering its climate impact. We are therefore pleased to see that emissions have declined for both of the cement types we use. This has a direct impact on our customers' CO2e accounts when they choose Troldtekt acoustic wood wool panels for their projects," commented Cécile Vassort, Head of Product, Marketing & Sustainability at Troldtekt A/S.

Vassort also highlights that Troldtekt in 2025 increased its total use of renewable energy to a record 98.8%.

For further information visit **www.troldtekt.co.uk**

designing walls for a tighter regulatory *climate*

***Kate Painter**, Strategic Marketing Manager – Specification at wienerberger UK & Ireland, explores how tightening regulatory demands are reshaping wall design, highlighting the need for clearer system thinking, robust data and a more coordinated approach to compliance...*

For decades, wall design has largely been framed as an architectural expression, a means of shaping identity, materiality and performance at the building envelope. While technical considerations have always underpinned specification decisions, today's regulatory climate has evolved the role of the wall further. It is no longer just a visual or thermal boundary; it is a critical component in a project's compliance strategy and long-term risk profile.

This shift reflects a growing focus on performance and accountability across the built environment. As regulations continue to evolve, there is greater clarity around responsibilities and a stronger emphasis on evidencing compliance throughout the project lifecycle. This means that walls are frequently taking on a more defined role, not only in how they perform individually, but in how they integrate with adjacent systems and support overall building safety and durability.

The complexity behind compliance

Incorporating structure, insulation, cavity and façade, wall systems can often appear straightforward; however, in practice, they are among the most complex assemblies within a building. Fire performance, structural integrity, moisture management,

thermal efficiency, and acoustic control must all be addressed simultaneously – and crucially, verified in a coordinated way.

One of the most persistent challenges for specifiers is navigating the complexity of standards and guidance. Fire testing classifications, durability benchmarks and thermal requirements are often presented in isolation, yet real-world performance depends on how systems behave as a whole. The gap between tested conditions and as-built reality can require careful management through design and specification

Compounding this is the variability in product data. While Environmental Product Declarations, test reports and certifications are more widely available than ever, their consistency and clarity can vary. Without transparent, comparable and auditable data, specifiers are left to interpret claims that may not fully reflect in-use performance in all applications.

In this context, frameworks such as the Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI) are increasingly relevant, as they support greater consistency, clarity and accountability in how product performance information is generated and communicated.

Common pitfalls in wall design

Despite advances in materials and systems, wall design still demands careful coordination to ensure performance is delivered in practice.

Fire performance remains a key consideration. While individual components may achieve the required classifications, it is the performance of the complete wall system that ultimately matters. This places greater emphasis on consistent detailing, particularly around cavity barriers and service penetrations, to ensure fire integrity is maintained across the system.

Durability is another important factor in long-term performance. Exposure to moisture, freeze-thaw cycles and general weathering can affect how materials perform over time, making it essential to select solutions that are appropriate for their environment and supported by proven data and correct specification choices.

Junctions and interfaces also require close attention. Connections between walls and roofs, floors and openings are rarely standardised and need to be carefully designed to maintain continuity of fire resistance, thermal performance and airtightness. Addressing these details early in the design process helps support smoother coordination and reduce the need for late-stage design changes.

As projects become more complex, clarity around roles and responsibilities is increasingly important. A coordinated approach between designers, contractors and manufacturers helps ensure that wall systems are delivered as intended, supporting both compliance and long-term performance.

The growing demand for transparency

As scrutiny increases, so too does the expectation placed on manufacturers. Specifiers are no longer satisfied with high-level product claims; they require robust, verifiable evidence that systems will perform as intended.

This is driving a shift towards greater transparency in product data, including alignment with CCPI to support independent assessment and verification. Manufacturers are being asked to provide not only test results, but also clear guidance on system application, limitations, and interfaces. Digital tools and product data platforms are playing an increasingly important role, enabling specifiers to access consistent information and integrate it into project workflows.

However, transparency is not just about data availability – it is about usability. Information must be presented in a way that supports decision-making, reduces ambiguity, and aligns with regulatory requirements. This includes clear documentation of how products have been tested, under what conditions, and how those results translate to real-world applications in different build scenarios.

Design decisions that ripple downstream

One of the most significant yet often underestimated aspects of wall design is its influence on other building elements. Early specification decisions can have far-reaching implications across the entire building envelope.

For example, the choice of wall system can dictate how roofs are detailed, how floors interface with external walls, and how façade elements are supported and protected. Decisions around cavity width, insulation type, and structural system all impact how adjacent components are designed and installed.

When these relationships are not fully understood or coordinated, challenges can emerge at interfaces, such as fire stopping continuity, thermal bridging and air leakage – which are common consequences of poorly aligned design decisions. These issues are not only difficult to rectify post-construction but can also undermine compliance and performance throughout the building's lifecycle.

Early engagement and integrated design are therefore critical. Bringing together architects, engineers, contractors, and manufacturers at the outset allows for a more holistic approach to wall design – one that considers not just individual components, but the system as a whole.

Towards a more accountable future

The tightening regulatory landscape is not simply a challenge; it is an opportunity to raise standards across the industry. By placing greater emphasis on compliance, transparency, and accountability, it encourages a more rigorous and collaborative approach to design. For specifiers, this means moving beyond product selection to system thinking, understanding how walls function in context, how they interact with other elements, and how they contribute to overall building performance. For manufacturers, it means supporting this process with clear, reliable, and accessible information.

Ultimately, designing walls in today's regulatory climate is about more than meeting minimum requirements. It is about creating buildings that are safe, durable and fit for the future and ensuring that every decision, from façade to foundation, stands up to scrutiny.

Poor acoustics are becoming a liability

The Oscar Innovation Centre is the world's first Sownd Certified building.
© Antonia Stuart

By Ben Hancock, Managing Director, Oscar Acoustics

Client expectations of building performance keep rising and the criteria keep changing. Energy ratings, wellbeing credentials and accessibility standards already shape how buildings are judged and how occupants experience them daily. Increasingly, acoustic performance is being assessed the same way. For AEC firms, the gap between how a building was designed to sound and how it actually sounds is turning into a source of commercial risk.

New research from Oscar Acoustics, polling 2,000 UK office workers in February 2026, found that noise costs workers an average of 26 minutes of productive time every single day. Over a year, that is more than three working weeks per person. For UK businesses, the aggregate cost in lost productivity, staff turnover and customer dissatisfaction exceeds £40 billion annually. Despite this, only 8% of companies have installed any acoustic treatment in the past two years, and 85% have never assessed their workplace acoustics at all.

But lost productivity is only part of the story. Half of UK office workers report headaches or migraines due to noise, nearly two-thirds (63%) struggle to concentrate and a quarter (24%) have taken time off due to noise-related stress.

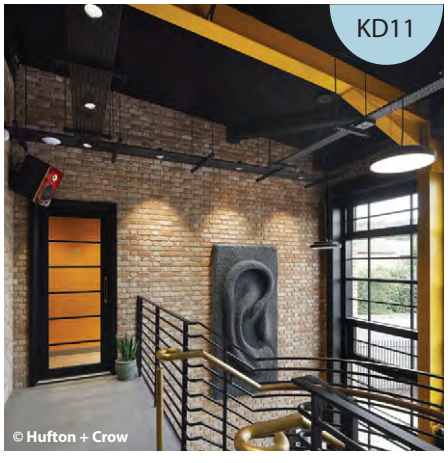
For the estimated 60% of the UK population who are noise-sensitive, including neurodivergent people and those with hearing or visual challenges, poor acoustics can make meetings, collaboration and everyday communication unnecessarily difficult, creating barriers to full participation. Audio inclusivity is an essential part of the next chapter in inclusive design.

Acoustic expectations are rising with each generation entering the workforce. Two-thirds of workers (67%) aged 18 to 24 describe their office as noisy, compared with just under half (47%) of over-55s. Two in three job seekers now weigh up acoustics when choosing where to work. Nearly half would consider leaving because of excess noise. Sound has become a material issue for recruitment and retention, making it a commercial one too.

Buildings that underperform acoustically are no longer silently endured. They generate complaints, drive remedial costs and, in some cases, cause reputational damage. My view is straightforward: acoustic design needs to be built in, not bolted on, and treated with the same rigour as energy performance or accessibility.

Firms that treat it as a specifiable, verifiable deliverable, rather than a finishing touch, are turning it into a point of difference.

Sownd Certification makes that possible. Sownd Certification gives practices and clients a measurable framework for specifying and verifying audio-inclusive spaces. Developed by Sownd Affects in partnership with Oscar Acoustics, it has been independently validated by the Institute of Sound and Vibration Research at the University of Southampton. Aligned with BS 8233, BB93 and PAS 6463, it evaluates how a space actually performs once occupied, not just how it was predicted to perform at design stage. Three



certification levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold, provide a clear framework for improvement. Certified spaces have recorded an 18% improvement in productivity and staff satisfaction of 94% against a 61% industry average.

The AEC firms leading on acoustic performance are treating the issue as a specification standard, not a snagging oversight. Sownd Certification gives you the framework to specify for how a space sounds as well as how it looks, and it gives your clients proof that their space performs. We now have the evidence, the standards and the tools needed to build spaces that resonate. For AEC firms, the question now is when acoustics enters the brief. The answer lies at the beginning of each project.

Find out how Sownd Certification sets the standard for audio-inclusive spaces. Visit https://www.oscar-acoustics.com/sownd-certification/

FASSALIME

SUSTAINABILITY: OUR COMMITMENT

EMISSIONS FROM COMBUSTION REDUCED TO ZERO

REPLACEMENT OF FOSSIL FUELS

PLANTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE NEW EUROPEAN BENCHMARKS

BIO-ARCHITECTURE
SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

CO_2

Specifying render with sustainability in mind

Every specification tells a story. Not just about how a building should look, but also about the choices behind it: the materials selected, the performance expected, the processes supported and the long-term impact considered.

Where lime-based render fits

Rooted in tradition, lime-based render systems are valued for their breathability, vapour permeability and compatibility with older and moisture-sensitive building fabric. By helping moisture move through the building fabric, they support the protection of the wall beneath.

Evidence-based system specification

Developed for specifiers who want proven lime technology with modern support, Fassalime is Fassa Bortolo's lime-based render system. Its credentials are reinforced at plant level, with strict emissions controls, lower fossil fuel use through wood waste fuel, and rainwater and wastewater recovery for production-related activities.

The choice ahead

For specifiers, the decision goes beyond the render system itself to the manufacturer behind it. Fassalime makes the specification decision straightforward by combining technical support with Fassa Bortolo's commitment to environmental protection, workplace safety and responsible production.

TO FIND OUT MORE
about Fassa Bortolo and its range of render systems and building products.
Visit **www.fassabortolo.co.uk**
or call **01684 218 305**

MEET JOHN BUCKLEY

'As part of a team committed to excellence, I believe true success comes from delivering sustainable solutions, positive performance and exceptional service. We don't just manufacture premium products, we're building strong relationships with our clients and helping them to achieve the best possible results in a shared commitment to success.'

John Buckley,
National Housebuilder & Key Accounts Manager, Fassa Bortolo UK & Ireland

KD12

FASSA BORTOLO

Colour with cork

In a natural cork texture recoloured across a 24-strong palette that ranges from blues, greens to warm terracotta, saffron and cream; Recolour from **Granorte** is a unique engineered cork floor with the performance for commercial projects.

Recolour is ideal for use in commercial offices, hospitality and retail, where its class 34 rating is comparable to other commonly used smooth planks. Unlike these planks though, Recolour brings the aesthetic and comfort qualities of cork for a floor that looks and performs like no other.

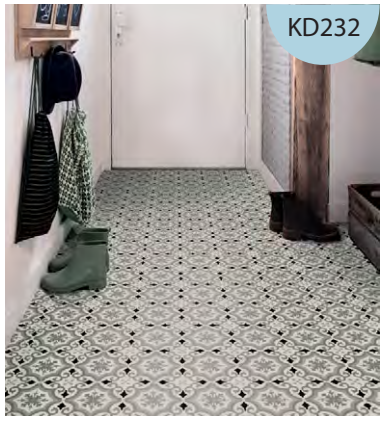
To achieve its unique look and performance, Recolour FIX features top and bottom layers of cork for glue-down installation, sandwiching a Uniclic HDF core in Recolour (click installation). Thanks to the agglomerated cork bottom layer, both specifications make the most of cork's thermal, comfort and acoustic properties, using a decorative top layer to achieve the one-of-a-kind aesthetic.

Improving lives at Housing 2026

IVC Commercial exhibited at Housing 2026, showcasing its dedicated social housing collections that are affordable for providers and developers, and which have the ability to improve lives for tenants.

Designed to provide a durable and low maintenance solution in living areas, the Zenura collection delivers a cost-effective floor that's easy to install. Across Zenura Style, Zenura Luxe, Zenura Ultimate and Zenura Elegance LVS, housing landlords can choose a specification to meet their requirements. In multiple widths to cut down on waste, these collections provide a safe and hygienic surface while giving tenants a warm, comfortable and stylish floor.

IVC Commercial also offers a range of commercial-grade compact sheet vinyl flooring to provide heavy contract (Class 34) performance. Isafe 70 is an easy to clean TRL 36+ safety flooring that can be used to provide improved slip-restraint in communal areas. It comes in a range of homely effects and withstands heavy traffic. For areas where acoustics are an important consideration, Pionieer 70 offers the same exceptional durability and homelike design with 18dB of impact sound reduction.



5 expert tips for getting the most out of LVT floors

Simple maintenance habits can help homeowners keep luxury vinyl flooring looking its best for years to come.

Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT) flooring has become a popular flooring choice for modern homes thanks to its durability, comfort and stylish appearance.

While LVT is designed to withstand the demands of everyday life, a few simple maintenance habits can help homeowners maximise its lifespan and maintain its beautiful finish.

The flooring experts at **Moduleo** have put together five practical tips to help homeowners get the most out of their LVT flooring.

1. Remove dirt and grit regularly

Small particles of dirt, sand and grit can act like sandpaper underfoot, gradually dulling the floor's surface over time.

Regular sweeping, vacuuming or using a microfibre dust mop help to remove abrasive debris before it can cause wear. High-traffic areas, like hallways, should receive particular attention to keep floors looking their best.

2. Clean with the right products

One of the biggest advantages of LVT flooring is how easy it is to clean. A damp mop and a cleaner specifically designed for vinyl flooring are usually all that's required to maintain a fresh, clean appearance. Avoid harsh chemicals, abrasive cleaners and products that leave a residue, as these can affect the floor's protective finish over time.

3. Say no to steam cleaners

Although steam cleaners are often marketed as a deep-cleaning solution, they are not recommended for LVT flooring. Excessive heat and moisture can compromise the floor's performance and may damage the adhesive or locking systems.

Instead, stick to gentle cleaning methods using a damp mop and approved cleaning products.

4. Protect against everyday wear

Simple preventative measures can significantly extend the life of an LVT floor. Use felt pads under furniture legs, lift rather than drag heavy items, and place entrance mats at doorways to capture dirt before it enters the home.

When choosing mats, avoid rubber or latex-backed products that may cause staining or discolouration.

5. Act quickly on spills and stains

LVT flooring is highly resilient, but prompt attention to spills helps prevent marks from setting. Most spills can be removed with a damp cloth, while tougher stains may require a specialist vinyl floor spot cleaner. Addressing spills quickly helps preserve the floor's appearance and reduces the need for intensive cleaning later.

www.moduleo.com/en-gb

KD13

Sustainable building with FassaLime

As the construction industry continues to prioritise sustainability, material selection has become a key factor in reducing environmental impact while delivering long-term performance. **Fassa Bortolo's** FassaLime range demonstrates how traditional lime technology can meet the demands of modern construction, offering specifiers and contractors natural, breathable solutions that support healthier, more sustainable buildings.

Produced using carefully selected natural raw materials, the FassaLime range includes lime-based renders, plasters and finishing products designed to work in harmony with both new-build and heritage projects. Their high vapour permeability allows moisture to escape naturally, helping to regulate internal humidity, minimise condensation and contribute to improved indoor air quality. This breathable performance also helps protect masonry by reducing the risk of trapped moisture and associated deterioration.

Sustainability begins long before a product reaches site. Fassa Bortolo has invested significantly in efficient lime production processes, combining decades of expertise with modern manufacturing technologies to reduce environmental impact while maintaining exceptional product quality. Responsible sourcing of raw materials, continuous investment in energy-efficient production and rigorous quality control ensures every FassaLime product delivers consistent performance with sustainability at its core.

Lime itself is a naturally durable building material with a long history of use in construction. Its compatibility with traditional substrates, flexibility, and ability to accommodate natural building movement make it an ideal choice for conservation, refurbishment and contemporary projects seeking environmentally responsible solutions.

By combining heritage craftsmanship with continuous innovation, Fassa Bortolo continues to develop systems that help create resilient, energy-conscious buildings without compromising on performance. The FassaLime range reflects this commitment, providing architects, specifiers and contractors with sustainable building solutions that support both the built environment and the future of construction.

With FassaLime, sustainability is not simply an aspiration – it is built into every stage, from responsible lime production through to long-lasting performance on site.

Info.fassauk@fassabortolo.com

healthcare access control: *the power of the key*

***Simon Wilson**, Business Development Manager (Healthcare) at Abloy UK, examines how access control plays a critical role in healthcare environments...*

Access control plays a critical role in healthcare environments, where security, safety and day-to-day operations are closely connected. From controlled drug cabinets and patient records to restricted wards and plant rooms, managing who can access specific areas and when is essential. In many cases, this responsibility still relies heavily on traditional keys.

However, as healthcare facilities become more complex, the limitations of purely mechanical systems are becoming harder to manage. The focus is shifting from issuing keys to controlling access in a more flexible, visible and accountable way.

The limits of traditional key management

Mechanical keys have served healthcare environments for decades, but they introduce challenges that become more visible at scale.

In a typical hospital setting:

- Hundreds or thousands of keys may be in circulation
- Staff roles change frequently across shifts and departments
- Contractors and temporary staff require short term access
- Sensitive areas must remain tightly controlled at all times

In this environment, traditional physical keys can create risk and inefficiency:

- Lost or unreturned keys can trigger urgent and costly rekeying, especially for high-risk areas like pharmacies or controlled drug cabinets
- Static permissions mean access cannot easily be adjusted when roles change or staff rotate
- Limited accountability makes it difficult to prove who accessed a space, particularly during incidents or audits
- Administrative burden grows as teams attempt to track, issue and retrieve keys manually

These issues directly impact staff time, operational flow and ultimately patient care.

Modern access control solutions build on the familiarity of the key but transform how it functions. Instead of being a fixed object, the key becomes part of a wider system.

This includes:

- Digital keys that can be updated or revoked remotely
- Programmable access rights linked to time, role or location
- Audit trails that record every access event
- Centralised management platforms that provide full visibility and control

This evolution allows healthcare providers to manage access dynamically,

rather than relying on static physical distribution. The result is a key that actively supports governance, compliance and operational performance.

Controlling access to high-risk and sensitive areas

Healthcare environments contain a wide range of spaces that require different levels of control. These include:

- Wards and clinical treatment areas
- Pharmacies and controlled drug storage
- Medical records and data rooms
- Laboratories and specialist units
- Plant rooms and critical infrastructure

Each of these areas carries different risks, but they share a common requirement which is that only the right people should have access, at the right time and for the right reason.

Modern access solutions support this by enabling:

- Time bound access, ensuring permissions exist only for the duration required
- Role based control, aligning access with job function rather than individual keys
- Immediate revocation, allowing access to be removed if circumstances change
- Detailed auditability, providing clear evidence of access activity

This is particularly important for areas such as pharmacies, where strict control and traceability are essential, or medical records rooms, where data privacy and compliance are critical.

Reducing the impact of lost keys

One of the most common issues in healthcare facilities is the lost key and in a traditional system, this can lead to:

- Security uncertainty
- Emergency rekeying of multiple doors
- Costly replacement programmes
- Operational disruption for staff and patients

Modern electromechanical solutions significantly reduce this impact.

If a key is lost:

- It can be deactivated electronically, removing the security risk
- There is no immediate need to replace locks
- Access rights can be reissued quickly to maintain continuity

Supporting staff efficiency in fast paced environments

Healthcare staff operate in high pressure, time critical conditions and access control should support their work not slow it down.

Modern systems improve efficiency by:

- Reducing time spent managing keys, issuing replacements or resolving access issues
- Allowing fast and flexible access changes as staff move between roles or departments
- Supporting efficient movement across authorised areas without unnecessary barriers
- Minimising delays caused by missing or incorrect keys

For example, a nurse moving between wards or a facilities team accessing multiple plant areas can do so without needing multiple physical keys or manual intervention, helping staff to focus on patient care rather than administrative tasks.

Enhancing patient safety through better control

Access control plays a direct role in patient safety, even if it is not always visible in day-to-day operations. The ability to manage and monitor who can enter specific areas is crucial in maintaining a safe and secure healthcare environment.

Effective systems help prevent unauthorised access to restricted or vulnerable areas, while also protecting controlled drugs and sensitive materials. This is particularly important in environments such as pharmacies, treatment rooms and records storage, where both security and compliance are critical.

They also support the creation of secure environments for patients, especially in high dependency or specialist units where access must be carefully managed. In addition, access control contributes to safeguarding by ensuring that only authorised individuals can enter certain spaces at the appropriate times.

By improving both control and visibility, modern access solutions play an important role in creating a safer, more secure environment for patients, staff and visitors.

KD236

Where Healthcare Projects Begin

Healthcare projects don't begin on site.

They begin with conversations, these conversations identify priorities and shape the designs, influence the investment, and bring together the expertise needed to create healthcare environments that are safer, smarter, and better prepared for the future.

That is why **Healthcare Estates**, taking place on **13–14 October at Manchester Central**, is the UK's leading meeting place for everyone involved in the planning, design, construction, and management of healthcare estates.

This year's theme, **"Mind the Gap: Are We Heading Towards a Two-Tier Estate?"**, reflects one of the defining challenges facing healthcare infrastructure today. As significant investment delivers new hospitals, digitally enabled facilities and modern models of care, many healthcare settings continue to manage ageing estates while maintaining safe, compliant services under increasing operational pressure.

Closing this gap will require more than capital investment. It needs collaboration, innovation, and a shared understanding between healthcare providers and those responsible for designing and delivering healthcare environments.

Healthcare Estates provides the forum where these conversations happen.

Insight from the Front Line

Within the Conference, NHS leaders, estates teams, project directors, engineers and technical specialists will share practical experience from projects being delivered across the UK. Sessions will explore capital planning, digital transformation, sustainability, resilience, healthcare engineering, operational performance and strategic estate management, providing valuable insight into the priorities driving future investment and development.

For architects and designers, the Design & Construction sessions provide practical case studies and insights covering neuro-inclusive design, mental health and therapeutic design, retrofitting healthcare into existing buildings. While exploring how the better design and delivery of healthcare facilities can improve patient outcomes while simultaneously support operational efficiency and resilience.

Contractors and project delivery professionals will find valuable learning across engineering resilience, compliance, decarbonisation and infrastructure modernisation, including discussions on district heating, retrofit strategies, ventilation challenges, electrical resilience, and smart hospital technologies.

Where Connections Become Partnerships

At the heart of Healthcare Estates, the packed Exhibition brings together more than **250 specialist suppliers and professional services**, showcasing the latest products, technologies and services across planning, design, construction, engineering, energy, digital infrastructure and facilities management. It offers a unique opportunity to compare solutions, discover innovation, and engage directly with those shaping the future of healthcare environments.

The value of Healthcare Estates extends far beyond the Conference and Exhibition content.

It's within the people you meet, the connections you make and the professional relationships that are built.

Over two days, NHS Trusts, Integrated Care Boards, consultants, architects, contractors, developers, manufacturers and suppliers come together to exchange ideas, discuss shared challenges and develop the partnerships that underpin successful healthcare projects.

For organisations working within the healthcare-built environment, there are few opportunities to engage so directly with the people responsible for specifying, procuring, delivering and operating healthcare facilities. Whether your objective is to better understand client priorities, strengthen existing relationships, identify future opportunities or demonstrate your expertise, Healthcare Estates provides the insight, access and connections to help you move forward.

Successful healthcare projects don't start with procurement; they start with understanding.

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IHEEM

KD16

basements could provide a solution to uk cities office squeeze – *if managed correctly*

__Mike Jones__, Head of UK Specialist Services at Peter Cox, looks at how basements can provide a cost-effective option for both businesses and landlords if managed correctly...

Half a decade on from the COVID-19 pandemic, more workers than ever are scaling back on 'WFH' in favour of 'IRL' interactions with colleagues.

Some of this is driven by our social instincts, the allure of unlimited biscuits and the promise of air conditioning as the mercury rises, but much of it is mandated. Nearly half of employers have enforced a return to office mandate or increased the number of days in the workplace, meaning the pressure on space in prime locations is becoming harder to ignore.

Commercial landlords have sensed the opportunity, and record rents in London and other major cities like Manchester and Liverpool suggest the demand for high-quality office space is beginning to outpace supply. So landlords and businesses that own their premises (or have them on a long lease) are looking for smart – and cost-effective – ways to expand or adapt their physical workspace.

One solution gaining traction is the conversion of basement and below-ground spaces. In cities where building out or up is limited by planning constraints, conservation concerns, or cost, utilising below-ground areas can significantly increase a building's usable footprint without altering its external profile.

These spaces can unlock much-needed capacity – think not just office space, but storage or workshops, or transport-focused facilities like car and bike parks. If facilities managers can navigate maintenance requirements and demands correctly, an overlooked space can be reimagined as a valuable one.

Understanding the risks

As basement conversions' role in addressing the current office shortage evolves, businesses are wising up to the technical challenges that need to be carefully planned for and managed.

As always, the four main elements need to be factored in: ventilation from above (air), structural adaptations to handle constraints from the ground (earth), safe access in case of emergency (fire), and the ability to withstand water.

Addressing waterproofing and environmental resilience is crucial early in the design process. Basements are inherently more exposed to moisture due to surrounding soil and fluctuating water tables, so site conditions and drainage need to be carefully assessed from the outset.

KD238

Without this upfront planning, water ingress can quickly undermine the quality of the space. Damp and mould are often the first signs, but over time the impact can extend to structural degradation and poor indoor air quality. To avoid this, waterproofing should be approached as a long-term strategy rather than a one-off fix, with systems designed to withstand ongoing pressure and moisture exposure.

Getting this right from the outset helps protect the space long term and avoids unnecessary cost and disruption further down the line.

The role of waterproofing

Many commercial buildings in UK cities are older and were not designed to modern waterproofing standards. As a result, they are more vulnerable to hydrostatic pressure and prolonged moisture exposure. Any historic conversion should begin with a detailed structural and condition assessment, followed by a retrofit approach tailored to the building's existing construction.

At its core, this involves an in-depth plan to prevent water from entering the below-ground space and to manage any moisture that does reach the structure.

Modern waterproofing approaches are typically designed in line with recognised industry standards such as BS 8102:2022, which set out best practice for protecting below-ground structures from water ingress. Crucially, they emphasise a tailored approach, considering the building's construction, ground conditions and intended use and require specialist input to deliver effectively.

A recent Peter Cox project in Surrey reflects this in practice, where a below-ground space was transformed from one plagued by recurring damp into a dry, fully usable environment through a considered waterproofing design. A discreet drainage system and pump were installed to manage moisture and keep the space consistently dry, enabling not just a resolution to the immediate issue, but a space that can support long-term use and future adaptation.

Specialists often recommend a combination of different waterproofing methods to achieve the required level of protection. For example, barrier systems, commonly referred to as "tanking", can be used to resist water penetration, while cavity drain systems are designed to manage and safely redirect water away from the interior environment.

Designing for long-term performance

Designing a successful basement workspace requires a joined-up approach, first starting with waterproofing as the foundation, supported by careful attention to ventilation, thermal performance and air quality. Get these elements right, and below-ground spaces will feel just as comfortable and functional as those above them. And as more workers return to the office, WFH might just be replaced by 'WFB' (working from basement).

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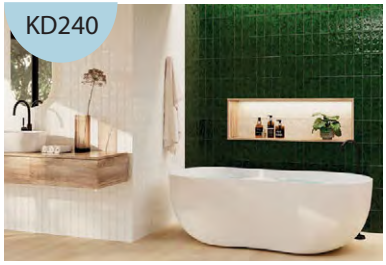
KD240

Two-tone sanctuaries

For years, bathrooms have been dominated by safe, neutral palettes, but homeowners are now embracing a more confident approach to colour. Rather than committing to a single shade throughout, two-tone bathrooms are on the rise, using complementary and contrasting tile colours to add personality and drama to spaces.

The latest ceramic and porcelain collections from **Tile of Spain** demonstrate how combining two colours creates bathrooms that feel stylish, timeless and effortlessly individual.

María D Arráez, Director of Tile of Spain UK, comments on the trend: "Bathrooms don't have to be neutral to feel timeless. Choosing two colours that work together gives you far more flexibility and creates a room with more character – whether you choose soft earthy tones or a bolder contrasting combination. We are seeing more homeowners looking to add personality with pattern – and vanity areas and showers are key spaces to do this. Providing opportunities to be playful yet sophisticated with bathroom design, introducing tiles in alternating stripes and checkerboard layouts is proving popular, naturally drawing the eye in and making everyday areas more of a statement.

"Instead of covering every surface in the same tile, combining two different colours helps define different zones within the bathroom. It's an easy way to introduce colour without feeling like you've committed to something too bold."

www.tileofspain.com

50 years after summer '76, Britain's water challenge is becoming the new normal


KD241

As another exceptionally hot and dry summer places pressure on water resources across the UK, **Cistermiser** is urging the industry to make water efficiency a higher priority, warning that the conditions which led to the company's creation half a century ago are no longer a once-in-a-generation event.

The summer of 1976 remains one of the most severe droughts in UK history. Fifty years on, the UK is once again experiencing record-breaking temperatures and prolonged dry conditions and 2026 has seen all time temperature records broken in consecutive days.

Despite growing awareness of sustainability, significant volumes of treated drinking water continue to be wasted in commercial and public buildings through inefficient washroom controls, ageing cisterns and poorly managed water storage systems.

Cistermiser's range of water-saving technologies, including infrared sensor controls, direct flush systems and intelligent urinal flushing products, are designed to reduce unnecessary water use without compromising hygiene or user experience. By ensuring water is used only when required, these solutions can help facilities managers and building owners achieve substantial reductions in water consumption across offices, schools, healthcare facilities and other commercial premises.

www.cistermiser.co.uk

It's all about the flush: Geberit launches TurboFlush technology at every price point

Geberit has expanded its range of WCs featuring the innovative TurboFlush technology, giving retailers access to enhanced flush performance at every price point.

TurboFlush is now available across Geberit's Aspire and Bathroom Collections, which means greater choice for all customer groups, irrespective of their budget or design preference.

With this expansion, the manufacturer is urging bathroom retailers to 'focus on the WC system' – highlighting that the most important decision in the bathroom is the one people don't realise they're making. This follows research from Geberit which shows 85% of people have felt frustrated that a toilet flush didn't work properly.

Only half of people can remember being given information about flush performance when buying a toilet, even though 42% said it was more important than 'look and style', 39% said more important than colour and 42% said more important than price.

A spotlight on (Turbo)Flush

Geberit's TurboFlush technology sets the standard by powering and directing water into the toilet interior – boosting performance, minimising cleaning requirements and reducing noise.

It uses an asymmetrical inner geometry to guide the flush water in a powerful vortex through the bowl, ensuring thorough and complete cleaning. As a result, it exceeds the flush performance required by international standards by up to ten times and minimises flushing noise.

The technology is now available on 20 designs at all price points across wall-hung and floor-standing designs, including the iCon, Acanto and Geberit ONE ranges (Aspire collection), plus Selnova and Smyle ranges (Geberit Bathroom Collection).

Sophie Weston Head of Marketing for Geberit said: "With TurboFlush now available at all price points, we're giving retailers the opportunity to focus on the flush – providing innovative technology that boosts performance, reduces cleaning effort and delivers a whisper-quiet flush, across all price points."

www.geberit.co.uk


KD242


Images: Ben Harrison Photography

Historic Whitby Abbey facilities benefit from lift modernisation

One of England's most famous historic monasteries, Grade I Whitby Abbey, has invested in a lift modernisation by **Stannah Lifts** to offer reliable step-free access to visitors.

Originally founded in AD 657 and occupied by the Anglian community, Whitby Abbey was later rebuilt as a Benedictine monastery. Today, the 7th-century ruins remain a popular heritage landmark in North Yorkshire, now housing an award-winning visitor centre repurposed from a 17th-century banqueting hall.

Whitby Abbey House Visitor Centre, developed in the early 2000s beside the abbey ruins, includes a souvenir shop, museum and café. The passenger lift is located on the ground floor, providing access to the museum and exhibition area on the first floor.

Whitby Abbey is managed and maintained by English Heritage, which issued a tender for the lift works. Following a rigorous tendering process, Stannah, acting as the lift supplier, worked with Cundall consultants to determine the best approach for this modernisation project.

The challenge

Whitby Abbey attracts over 150,000 visitors each year, so keeping the visitor centre open was important to fulfil the customer experience. The shop's closure was kept to a minimum to ensure the safe transportation of equipment and initial start of works. This also allowed the on-site team to establish a safety perimeter, prioritising visitor safety. Following this, the shop remained open for the duration of the project.

As this was the only functioning lift in the building, it was important to complete the modernisation as quickly as possible to avoid long disruptions to shop operations and visitors.

The solution

Working collaboratively with Cundall, lift modernisation was proposed in place of full replacement, a recommendation supported by Stannah Lifts to achieve a cost-effective outcome with minimal impact on day-to-day operations.

By upgrading key mechanical and control components, the lift's reliability, performance and long-term serviceability are improved while shortening installation time and minimising downtime.

The lift modernisation solution included a new Hydroware control panel to improve reliability and lift response times, a hydraulic tank unit for more efficient system operation, and a borehole ram to provide safer and smoother travel. A new stainless steel car operating panel (COP) and landing push stations were installed to improve passenger usability, accessibility and lift reliability.

The installation of a variable voltage variable frequency (VVVF) electronic drive improves ride comfort by delivering smoother acceleration and deceleration, reducing any jerking movements and mechanical wear, while also improving energy efficiency. The shaft lighting was also upgraded to LED to improve visibility for engineers during future work.

New vinyl flooring was chosen to enhance the interior appearance while providing a durable, hard-wearing, and easy-to-maintain surface suitable for high-traffic use.

Results

The lift modernisation was completed within five weeks. Overall, these modernisation upgrades successfully enhanced the lift's reliability, operational efficiency, ride comfort, safety and energy performance, while reducing the risk of breakdowns frequently associated with ageing components.

The new stainless steel COP, updated indicators and vinyl car flooring also modernised the appearance of the lift car, providing a more durable, accessible, and user-friendly experience for passengers.

Upgraded lift components, such as the VVVF drive, help to deliver a smoother ride while also reducing operating costs by more efficient motor control and reduced energy consumption.

Matt Bishop, National Project Manager at English Heritage, said: "We are pleased with how all the teams involved came together throughout the lift upgrade. Stannah Lifts kept in consistent communication at every stage, particularly around delivery schedules and installation timelines, which helped everyone to stay aligned and manage our expectations. As a result, visitors were able to regain step-free access to upper floors as quickly as possible once the project was completed."

Lift modernisations are particularly effective for systems experiencing frequent callouts, breakdowns, repeated repairs, high running costs from outdated systems that consume a lot of power and worn finishes.

For more information on lift modernisations, visit: **www.stannahlifts.co.uk**

KD244

Restoring the light at Swansea Stadium 20 years on

The refurbishment of the roof on the east stand of Swansea Stadium, which saw the like-for-like replacement of the original **Brett Martin** Marlon CS polycarbonate sheets, not only addressed weather damage but also restored the light transmission of the roof, improving the spectator experience. The roof was replaced in seven weeks with zero disruption to matchdays.

In 2025, Swansea City AFC contacted Brett Martin and specialist commercial roofing and cladding contractor Central Group for support in addressing storm damage to the roof, which had led to water ingress. Despite having a projected lifespan of less than ten years, the original Marlon CS had continued to perform for 20 years.

Central Group was tasked with carrying out immediate repairs using Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) panels supplied by Brett Martin. Central Group also conducted a full survey of the roof and recommended a full replacement of the 1,200m^2 of Marlon CS roofing panels on the East Stand, which was subsequently carried out over the course of seven weeks.

To find out more about Brett Martin's daylight solutions for stadia visit **www.brettmartin.com**

KD245

Tata Steel refreshes Colorcoat Prisma offering

Building on more than 20 years of success with Colorcoat Prisma, **Tata Steel** is proud to introduce a refreshed collection of its widely specified pre-finished steel.

This latest development showcases an enhanced colour palette, including several distinctive new shades, a more streamlined product offering, and an improved Confidex Guarantee period.

This latest update reaffirms Colorcoat Prisma as the refined choice for modern building design. A particular highlight is the Confidex Guarantee duration which has now been extended for roof applications.

The refreshed 'Seren' range features a new selection of colours, including beautiful bronze tones, each offering a timeless, strong aesthetic. Included in the palette is Seren Oren, Seren Aurum, Seren Champagne, Seren Titanium and Seren Mirage.

With extensive experience of producing the three-layer Colorcoat Prisma product, all new Seren colours are now a nominal 65 microns as standard, facilitating a more consolidated product offering. Combined with the advanced three-layer technology and the benefits of strength, performance and reliability, Colorcoat Prisma is ideal for wall and roof applications.
www.colorcoat-online.com

Ways to safely insulate and ventilate for Net Zero

As the UK moves towards more energy-efficient homes and net Zero targets, insulation upgrades are becoming increasingly common. However, improving thermal performance without considering ventilation and moisture can lead to damp, mould and long-term damage to the building, explains Simon Trenerry, Technical Advisor at **Safeguard Europe**.

Good weather presents an ideal opportunity to carry out building improvements delayed by wind and rain, with insulation often ranking as a top priority. For many properties, insulation retrofit improves occupant comfort, reduces heat loss and lowers energy bills. However, a successful project requires a holistic view of the building. A science-led solution tailored to the property is essential, rather than simply installing insulation without first assessing damp risks and ventilation adequacy.

The UK Government has affirmed the commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050. This goal shapes how we retrofit homes and increases the importance of energy performance in the housing market.

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is a requirement when selling or letting a property. The current minimum EPC standard for privately rented homes in England and Wales is band E. As part of the new Decent Homes Standard, the government has already confirmed its intention to reform the EPC system, which includes raising the standard to EPC C for social housing by 1 April 2030 and for domestic private rented properties from 1 October 2030.

Forward-thinking landlords, homeowners and building managers should be exploring options to improve the EPCs of their properties in a safe, effective and suitable manner.

Building pathology remains critical to insulation and ventilation retrofit. Every property behaves differently, and older homes require careful assessment.

Insulation changes how a building performs. While a newly insulated room may feel warmer, it often leads to a change in ventilation patterns. Reduced air leakage may mean that moisture has fewer escape routes. Poor installation creates cold spots in the building fabric and leads to condensation. This is often a problem in new builds, which are more airtight by design.

Dampness affects the performance of internal, external and cavity wall insulation, as well as the building itself, often leading to persistent damp and mould. Before any major upgrade is carried out, the property must be sound, dry and able to manage moisture properly.

Ventilation matters as much as insulation. As homes become more airtight, moisture from cooking, bathing, drying clothes and day-to-day occupation builds up. Without effective extraction and air movement, the result is higher humidity, condensation formation and mould growth. A prudent approach considers insulation and ventilation as part of the same conversation. Never install insulation measures to properties already suffering from rising damp, penetrating damp or traumatic damp without addressing the moisture source first.
https://safeguardeurope.com/

KD246

The importance of safe, accessible green spaces to England's communities

The iconic six-week summer holiday – a time when the classroom gives way to hobbies, games and adventures – has long been a staple of British childhoods. With the Government's decision to ban social media for under-16s, many nostalgic parents will be hopeful that, in the future, this landmark move will see our children swap screen time for the seemingly endless outdoor play which defined the holidays of their own youth.

For those breaking up from school, the weeks ahead should be filled with excitement, adventures and, yes, the boredom and unoccupied time that prompts children to use their imagination and come up with new games and ideas. The performances we saw in this year's World Cup, of course, serve as extra inspiration to children who take on-screen stars as their muses. But a critical ingredient of that summer of freedom is access to places to run, play and hang out with friends. At **Fields In Trust**, the UK's leading green space protection charity, we realise that the essential infrastructure of parks, playgrounds and playing fields is not being prioritised in tandem.

Last month, the Government announced its landmark plans to prohibit access to social media for under-16s, set to take effect by Spring 2027. By ushering children away from screens and the pressures represented by social media, the measure could have a transformative impact on young people's mental and physical health. But a ban alone is not a sufficient plan.

If children are to lose access to digital communities, we have a responsibility to implement alternative provisions including opportunities for local sport and play. Yet, for the third of children under nine who do not live within a ten-minute walk of a playground, that alternative does not exist.

According to YouGov polling commissioned by Fields in Trust earlier this year, 93% of people think green spaces are important assets in encouraging young people to spend less time on screens. A former World Cup footballer herself, our President Jill Scott advocates for green spaces not only as a venue for grassroots sports, but as a site of discovery for children to make positive memories. Despite their intrinsic value, these spaces do not have statutory protection in the UK, and over the last decade alone we've seen the closure of 800 parks and playgrounds. Public opinion stands firmly beside the country's playing fields, with 82% of those surveyed agreeing that the Government is not doing enough to protect them.

Still, their future security is set to grow weaker. The current Planning Reforms being consulted on by the Government propose removing Sport England – the body responsible for growing grassroots sport – from its statutory consultee role, which has historically helped to protect or improve facilities in 94% of relevant planning applications. If the social media ban is to be effective and long-lasting, we must intervene on behalf of green spaces around the country.

Moving forward, green space provision can and should be incorporated into plans for sustainable housing developments. The Government's ambition to build 1.5m new homes should be taken as an opportunity to invest in healthier, happier childhoods. Our set of Standards, already used by developers, planners, and councils across the UK, prove that housebuilding targets should not come at the expense of quality green space for all.

It is the UK's most deprived areas which are facing the highest rates of green space depletion, affecting communities that already experience greater health inequalities such as childhood obesity and mental illness. New figures show that more than a million children in England now have an active referral to mental health services, almost double the number recorded less than a decade ago.

Meanwhile, a growing body of evidence shows that time outdoors, in nature and in play, is one of the most effective and least expensive tools we possess for protecting children's mental health. Welcoming green spaces are proven to combat loneliness, and their associated benefits for health a nd mental wellbeing save the NHS £111m each year.

Additionally, with the rising cost of living, activity clubs and holiday camps have become luxuries, no longer affordable for many families. Last year, summer holiday clubs cost parents an average of £1,076 per child, meaning children from less affluent backgrounds are being priced out of structured opportunities for hobbies, sports and socialising. This means that accessible, free-to-use green spaces are not just nice-to-haves. During school holidays, they become a lifeline for children and young people.

Ministers are right to act on social media. But a ban without a plan is only half a policy. If this government is serious about giving children their childhoods back, it must back up the ban with access to the spaces that make that happen.

Access to green spaces is a right, and it must be extended to every community, family and individual in Britain. When we invest in green spaces, we invest in childhoods – for today's young people, and for generations to come.

https://fieldsintrust.org

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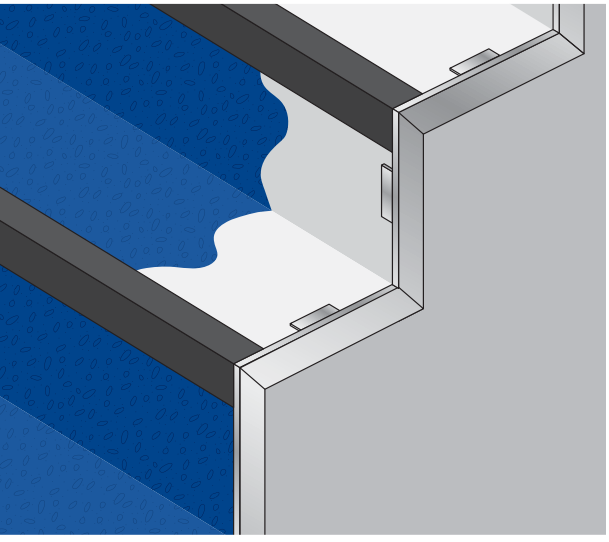

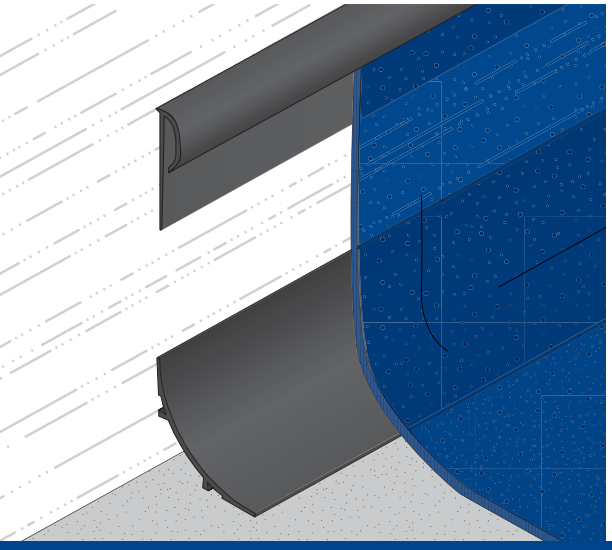

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