

Green Construction Roundup

May, 2008 No. 171

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Construction News

US to revise green assessment system

The LEED assessment method used in the US and Dubai is to be revised after criticism that it allows energy-guzzling buildings to get a top rating. It is understood that the US Green Building Council will announce proposals in the next few weeks with the aim of finalising the changes by November 2008. The main change to the LEED assessment is understood to be the introduction of minimum standards for energy and water use.

Building. 16 May (Pg.14)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3113649>

Eco town faces challenge from Leicestershire council

Leicestershire council is considering becoming the first public authority to openly challenge the government's proposals for 10 eco-towns.

Leicestershire council, which is controlled by the Conservatives, is considering a judicial review of the short listing process. It has already made clear its opposition to the Co-op's proposed 15,000-home eco-town at Pennbury.

Building. 16 May (Pg.22)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=555&storycode=3113614>

Building regs hinder green refurb, RIBA tells MPs

Building Regulations are a barrier to the government's carbon reduction targets, the RIBA has told a parliamentary inquiry into retrofitting commercial property. Written evidence from the institute to Parliament's all-party urban development group claimed Building Regs were a stumbling block to greening buildings such as shops, offices and warehouses because the rules delay and complicate such retrofitting by requiring planning permission.

Building Design. 16 May (Pg.5)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=426&storycode=3113783>

Call to redefine zero carbon for new homes

The UK Green Building Council has proposed redefining zero carbon to make it easier for developers to meet government targets. The GBC report *The Definition of zero carbon*, claims that around 80% of new homes will not be able to meet the present definition.

Building Design. 16 May (Pg.5)

Small sites may be let off zero carbon rule

Housebuilders could be allowed to avoid reaching the highest environmental standards by paying a levy to offset carbon savings under plans to be unveiled soon.

The Zero Carbon Task Group is expected to recommend that small or difficult sites be exempted from the highest levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes by paying a charge. This charge would be used to pay for equivalent carbon savings in other areas, such as improving the existing housing stock.

Building. 09 May (Pg.10)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=284&storycode=3113199>

EPC costs balloon to 10 times more than planned

Energy performance certificates could cost 10 times more and take four times longer to assess than the government has estimated, costing £1.5 billion this year, rather than £148 million, assessors have warned.

Last year, the communities department suggested that EPCs would cost £148m to implement in non-domestic buildings in 2008 and £1.5bn between now and 2020.

Building. 02 May (Pg.12)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=284&storycode=3112753>

Office owners overestimate their buildings energy ratings

Two-thirds of office landlords believe their buildings will get higher energy performance ratings than those anticipated by experts.

The results of a survey by *Building* magazine and the British Council for Offices, has revealed that 67% of office landlords and occupiers expected their buildings to receive either a C or D rating. Only 27% anticipated a rating of E to G. The E rating is roughly equivalent to the 1995 Building Regulations Part L.

Building. 02 May (Pg.12)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3112706>

DECs requirement slashed

Energy assessors have accused the government of a rethink that could halve the number of buildings requiring the new display energy certificates. Only public buildings more than 1000m² that are 'frequently visited' by large numbers of people will need a DEC, according to a DCLG document distributed at a closed meeting with industry representatives recently.

The change has been prompted, allegedly, by Ministry of Defence concerns about security risks in public buildings.

Building Services Journal. May 2008 (Pg.9)

<http://www.bsjonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=96&storycode=3112622>

Periodical Articles

Why Gordon Brown and green don't mix

Gordon Brown's plan to roll out eco-towns across England looked good — on paper at least — when first announced last summer. Ten towns, with up to 20,000 homes each, would be built to the highest environmental standards, tackling Britain's acute housing shortage and the global battle against climate change head on.

However the idea is seen more and more as another example of a prime minister who is refusing to listen; so much so that experts are now forecasting the project will be quietly dropped.

Article looking at the prime ministers high hopes for eco-towns, and discussing why Richard Rogers and others have said that the towns aren't sustainable at all.

Building Design. 30 May (Pg.9)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=449&storycode=3114780>

Wolseley Sustainable Building Center

Specifiers love to shop. However, over the past five years or so, they've become increasingly uncertain what they ought to be buying. Sustainability has unleashed a vast number of products onto the market, and

travel to all the manufacturers in the UK and abroad to work out which ones they should be buying is unsustainable in itself.

Now materials giant Wolseley thinks it has an answer. It has built the Sustainable Building Center, using many of its own range of 7,000 eco products. The idea is that specifiers can see the products in action and get all the information they need in one place. This article looks at how well Wolseley's idea stands up.

Building. 16 May (Pg.48-50)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=583&storycode=3113666>

Altered towers

It might not have the glamour of a BedZed or the latest Code for Sustainable Homes design and there are no green roofs, photovoltaic panels or wind turbines. But what's happening on a 1960s housing estate in north London could be just as important when it comes to slashing emissions from UK homes. The £150m refurbishment of the five tower blocks at the Chalcot estate near Swiss Cottage has been described as a 'real world project'.

The bulk of the flats on the estate are housed in four identical 23-storey towers and a smaller 19-storey block. Knocking these down and replacing them with low-rise housing wasn't an option. This article looks at the refurbishment of a sixties north London estate, which could serve as a template for cutting emissions from existing housing.

Building. 16 May (Pg.68-70)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=331&storycode=3113501>

Monks adopt an earthy approach to insulation at Berkshire's Douai Abbey

The sight of Father Oliver in his full habit, scrutinising a pile of mud lying next to a deep hole, makes a rather intriguing scene. But the bursar of Douai Abbey is looking at the mud for a specific reason. It will soon be part of the building.

David Richmond and Partners and structural engineer Price and Myers are creating a rammed earth wall using local soil for a new library and archive at the Abbey. This article examines the progress so far.

Building Design. 30 May (Pg.18/19)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=453&storycode=3112955>

Energy Performance Certificates: Don't Kid Yourself

According to a recent survey, building owners and occupiers are confident about the energy performance of their stock. However, for many, that confidence may prove entirely misplaced.

Article analysing the latest survey, from the British Council for Offices, of building owners and landlords, suggesting that for those who think getting a decent energy performance rating will be a pushover, may be seriously deluding themselves.

Building. 02 May (Pg.59-60)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=662&storycode=3112437>

Eco-towns: One hell of a job

Gordon Brown's eco-towns are going to be built on a legal minefield. First of all, they will generate opposition, so those involved in promoting sites should be keen to ensure that the sustainability appraisal for their site is sound. As part of its support for eco-towns, the government will submit the 15 shortlisted sites to a sustainability appraisal, with a view to adopting a nationwide PPS later this year.

Proper consultation on the sites by councils will also be essential. However, in some parts of the country it will be some time before up-to-date planning documents are in place. That is where the new PPS will provide the policy justification. Article looking at how the proposed development of eco-towns promises to bring a complex set of legal issues for all involved.

Building. 02 May (Pg.64/65)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=57&storycode=3112392>

High society

Europe's tallest building; the tapering Moscow City Tower will soar 600m above the streets, outstripping all rivals except the Burj Dubai. At its summit, a public viewing deck with restaurants and bars will provide a spectacular visitor attraction, 5km west of the Kremlin. However, what may be unexpected is that this

colossus will be one of the most energy efficient buildings in Moscow. Waterman International, the services designer, is aiming for LEED gold accreditation.

Article looking at how the services at Moscow City Tower will have to overcome huge extremes of climate, doing all of this in an energy efficient manner; and in a country where abundant oil supplies mean the price of energy is cheap.

Building Services Journal. May 2008 (Pg.30-34)

<http://www.bsjonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=93&storycode=3112405>

Modern arts

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Mies van der Rohe would have been tickled by Sheffield University's Arts Tower. The 20-storey landmark, completed in 1965, is a homage to his Seagram Building in New York, completed seven years earlier.

After three decades as Sheffield's most prominent navigation point, the Arts Tower's architectural credentials were affirmed when English Heritage granted it grade II* listed status. About the same time, it became clear its services and skin were on borrowed time.

Investigates how the 1960s tower is to be transformed from one of Sheffield's worst environmental performers into its best, by near-invisible facade engineering

Building Services Journal. May 2008 (Pg.37-40)

<http://www.bsjonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=94&storycode=3112503>

Natural rhythm

Efficient natural ventilation depends largely on how responsive a building is to changing conditions both indoors and out. Even in otherwise well designed buildings, an inappropriate reaction can cause major operational problems. This may mean levels of comfort and energy consumption are unsatisfactory. Natural ventilation isn't necessarily as green as it sounds. For best energy performance, its controls need to be highly responsive to changing conditions

This article examines a potential solution, an intelligent control strategy, to provide the required ventilation rate and cooling capacity.

Building Services Journal. May 2008 (Pg.60-62)

<http://www.bsjonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=95&storycode=3112544>

Recent Publications

The Definition of zero carbon

This is the final report from the UK-GBC Zero Carbon Task Group which was established to review the current definition of 'Zero Carbon' as laid out in the Code for Sustainable Homes Technical Guidance, and propose amendments where required in order to support effective implementation of Government's stated targets for zero carbon buildings in the future.

<http://www.ukgbc.org/site/resources/showResourceDetails?id=180>

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