

Green Construction Roundup

November, 2008 No. 177

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Construction News

Green consultants risk witch doctor label

Prashant Kapoor, head of sustainable planning and research at WSP, stated that the green industry needs a professional body like the RICS or RIBA to champion quality and consistency, otherwise, sustainability risks being viewed as an 'alternative medicine', rather than a mainstream practice.

Building. 28 November (Pg. 14)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3128723>

Aukett is ditched from pioneering eco home

Aukett Fitzroy Robinson has been axed as the architect of an eco-home using hemp, set to be built at the Building Research Establishment's innovation park.

Two months ago, the practice was jointly commissioned by DEFRA and the National Non-Food Crops Centre (NNFCC), for the Hemp House, which aimed to reach level six of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Building Design. 28 November (Pg. 5)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=725&storycode=3128627>

Only 22 homes crack the code

Only 22 developments have been certified under the since it came into force a year and a half ago. Alan Yates, BRE's technical director, has told the Home Builders Federation conference that only 22 schemes had received Code for Sustainable Homes certificates between May 2007 and October 2008. He blamed the low figure on the length of time the process takes and that he would expect that number to grow reasonably quickly.

Almost 3,000 schemes have registered for the code, which means they may apply for certificates in the future.

Building. 21 November (Pg. 10)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3128162>

RICS to bring in whole-life cost standard

The RICS is to publish its Rules of Measurement in stages over the next two years, comprising of three sections: cost planning, procurement and whole-life costing. The introduction of guidance for the cost planning stage is viewed as the most significant change.

The cost planning section is expected to be published in spring 2009, followed by procurement at the end of the year and whole-life costing at the end of 2010.

Building. 21 November (Pg. 14)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=3128120>

Architects see red over latest BRE Green Guide

Much bad feeling seems to be emerging around a recently published BRE Green guide. A spat has emerged over the ratings given to PVCu windows compared to the timber. PVCu has leapt from a C

standard in the 1999 version of the guide to an A in the new version. Given the origin of plastic, concerns have arisen over how PVCu had made such a marked improvement.

Building Design. 21 November (Pg. 15)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=453&storycode=3127991>

Europe to get green energy from Africa

Funding has been secured for five green energy pilot schemes that will pipe clean electricity from north Africa to mainland Europe. The projects will each supply 500MW of mixed photovoltaic, concentrated solar power and wind power energy via a high-voltage direct current grid to Europe, and are trials for a total of 20GW of power supply. The final scheme is projected to cost £67.5bn.

New Civil Engineer. 20 November (Pg. 12)

http://www.nce.co.uk/energy/2008/11/europe_to_get_green_energy_from_africa.html

Milton Keynes levies carbon offset tax on new homes

Money raised from taxing the carbon emissions of new developments in Milton Keynes is being spent on upgrading the energy efficiency of existing homes. Under the initiative, developers pay into a fund according to the additional carbon emissions generated by their buildings in return for planning permission. The council has set up a not-for-profit company to administer the scheme, which offers cavity wall and loft insulation at the subsidised price of £95 per item.

Building. 14 November (Pg. 13)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3127442>

UK may get first Passivhaus school

Sustainability consultant Inbuilt Consulting and Sir Robert McAlpine are to work on the UK's first school based on the German low-energy PassivHaus standard. The school, which will be part of the Building Schools for the Future initiative, is at bid stage but its location has not yet been revealed.

PassivHaus dwellings aim to achieve an energy saving of 90% compared with traditional housing.

Building. 14 November (Pg. 14)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3127452>

Prasad reveals RIBA recession strategy

RIBA president Sunand Prasad has unveiled a radical plan to boost architects' workload in a recession by calling for a massive government-financed programme to make millions of homes energy-efficient.

Building Design. 14 November (Pg. 3)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3127561>

Eco towns planning policy fails to stem tide of criticism

Latest Government efforts to resurrect its eco-towns initiative have been criticised for failing to outline how public transport schemes for the sustainable towns can be delivered.

Housing Minister Margaret Beckett has issued a draft Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement which sets out to define tough green standards for new developments, however, the Campaign for Better Transport, among others, has warned that without paying attention to public transport the ethos of the projects will be undermined.

New Civil Engineer. 06 November (Pg. 6)

http://www.nce.co.uk/water/news/2008/11/new_eco_towns_planning_policy_fails_to_stem_tide_of_criticism.html

Periodical Articles

Greening your office

Article looking at how three practices have made their offices exemplars of sustainability; Atkins' new office within the Hub, a speculative office building in a business park on the outskirts of Bristol; John Thompson and Partners refurbishment of a 1920s warehouse at Clerkenwell, London; and Bere Architects creation of a roof garden at their studio office at Newington Green, London. These projects demonstrate how the architects have addressed sustainability; making it a credible environmental solution, achievable within the realities of today's marketplace.

Architects Journal. 27 November (Pg. 44-54)

Building pathology – solar heating

Solar heating system problems can be categorised into three general groups: system issues such as deterioration, failure of components or faulty system design; integration issues between the solar heating system, building and supplementary heating systems; and installation and maintenance issues. Article, in which Peter Mayer of Building LifePlans, looks at problem-free running of these renewable technologies.

Building. 21 November (Pg. 83)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3127901>

Can a green house ever be graceful?

The first person to design a gracious zero carbon home will have to be a genius; the insulated house-box must have no thermal bridges; make good use of sunlight and internal heat gains; be built tight as a drum; and provide adequate ventilation, plus efficient heat recovery. Only when all these demands have been met can we even begin to consider what such a house might be like to look at or to live in.

This article centres on Germaine Greer's investigation of the eco credentials of Barratt's Home for the future.

Architects Journal. 20 November (Pg. 22-27)

Steam team

Steam autoclaving is a mechanical heat treatment process using a pressurised rotating vessel which, through a combination of steam, pressure and agitation, results in the organic fraction of waste being separated and broken down into a fibre. At a 2ha brownfield site in Blaydon, Gateshead, fibre accounts for only 20% of what comes out at the end of the process, the rest comprises materials such as glass, plastic and metals, which can be recycled.

Article looking at the Derwenthaugh EcoPark project, which will initially install three, 4m-diameter, 20m-long steel autoclaves housed in a steel framed shed, with associated equipment to provide the steam and waste grabbers to sort waste into its various recyclable materials.

New Civil Engineer. 20 November (Pg. 22-24)

A great new way of dishing the dirt

Plenty of eco-planning has gone into the ground beneath the BRE Innovation Park. All the earth around the show homes was carefully landscaped to help BRE reach the top rating. Sustainable drainage systems and biodiversity were an integral part of the grounds' green credentials, but the foundation of all these efforts was the earth itself: topsoil.

There are several options for dealing with soil on a site if it is found to fall short of requirements. This article looks at what to do with topsoil that isn't in tiptop condition

Building. 14 November (Pg. 70-71)

http://www.building.co.uk/regen_story.asp?sectioncode=331&storycode=3127383

What it costs – insulated renders

Externally applied insulated render systems provide an effective means to insulate walls while offering a choice of colours. Issues such as thermal bridges and disruption to occupants are minimised, though detailing and application are critical.

Article summing up the variety of choices in insulated render systems, highlighting some topical issues and lifecycle costs.

Building. 07 November (Pg. 87)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3126941>

Solar gain in glazed facades

Article exploring how four different practices have tackled heat gains through glazing; Fielden Clegg Bradley's Runnymede Civic Centre; HKR Architects' the Hive at Lever St, Manchester; Dixon Jones' Kings Place at 90 York Way, London; and Sheppard Robson's Westminster Place, London.

Architects Journal. 06 November (Pg. 37-40)

Web Resources

UK-GBC

UK companies still see sustainability as a priority despite the credit crunch, according to a survey by the UK Green Building Council. The survey found that 92% of British companies felt that sustainability would either

grow as an issue or stay at the same level despite the economic downturn. For further information, and to see the UK-GBC press release for the survey, visit <http://www.ukgbc.org/site/news/showNewsDetails?id=110>

Recent Publications

EPB – guide to implementation

The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) has published a guide to help firms ensure that they are compliant with energy and carbon emissions regulations. *Energy and carbon emissions regulation: a guide to implementation* is a source of information on the *Energy performance of buildings regulations*. It provides organisations with compliance advice on Energy Performance Certificates, Display Energy Certificates and the inspection of boilers and air conditioning systems. Energy and carbon emissions regulation: a guide to implementation. CIBSE, 2008.

[Energy and carbon emissions regulation: a guide to implementation](#)

Sustainable energy management

Moves towards sustainable energy in the UK are being hampered by old ways of thinking according to a new report published by Foresight. *Powering our lives: sustainable energy management and the built environment* looks at how the country's buildings and spaces will need to evolve to help cut carbon emissions. The report concludes that there is no magic bullet to reduce carbon emissions or decarbonise our energy use. However, it does propose behavioural and regulatory changes which could be introduced over the next 50 years.

Powering our lives: sustainable energy management and the built environment – project stakeholder engagement. Foresight, 2008.

<http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Energy/EnergyFinal/12924%20stakeholder%20action%20plan%201st.pdf>

Greenhouse gas bulletin

Greenhouse gases continue to increase and carbon dioxide concentrations reached their highest level ever in 2007, according to a publication released by the United Nations World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

WMO's *Greenhouse gas bulletin No.4* found that the amount of carbon dioxide has risen 0.5 per cent from the previous year, while concentrations of nitrous oxide, another climate-warming substance, also reached record highs in 2006. The new report, however, says that it is too early to judge whether there is an upward trend in levels of methane, whose concentrations have been fluctuating over the past decade. Greenhouse gas bulletin No.4. World Meteorological Organization, 2008.

<http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/arep/gaw/ghg/documents/ghg-bulletin-4-final-english.pdf>

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